

More and Better Education

What Makes Effective Learning in African Literacy Programs?



From darkness to light, oil on canvas,
Georges M'bourou, Gabon



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Lessons learned from the
ADEA 2006 Biennale on Education in Africa
(Libreville, Gabon, March 27-31, 2006)
on
**Characteristics, Conditions and Factors Underlying
Effective Schools and Literacy and Early Childhood
Development Programs**



Association for the
Development of
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Africa

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The chapters in this book were presented for the first time as conference documents for the 2006 ADEA Biennale, which focused on the theme "Characteristics, Conditions and Factors underlying Effective Schools and Literacy and Early Childhood Development Programs". The documents were subsequently edited to integrate the exchanges and the comments made at the Biennale. The Working Group on Non-Formal Education (WGNFE) contributed in methodological terms to the exploration of effective literacy policies and practices.

The views and opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors and should not be attributed to ADEA, its members or affiliated organizations, or to any individual acting on behalf of ADEA.

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Foreword

Since the 2000 Dakar Global Conference on Education, more children in Africa are attending school. However, the number of children who have never gone to school or who have either dropped out of school or completed primary school without effectively learning is even higher. In Africa, where seven out of ten children are likely to become semi-literate adults, literacy is a priority. Over 150 million youth and adults have either never become literate or have lost their literacy skills. In eighteen countries in Africa, more people are illiterate than literate; and in some countries in Africa, only 20% of women are literate. In only a few countries is 90 percent of the population literate. Increasing the number of literate individuals is a huge challenge that must be met.

ADEA has focused on improving the quality of basic education since its 2003 Biennale. The 2006 Biennale highlighted effective policies and practices for improving learning in schools and in literacy and early childhood development programs. The ADEA Working Group on Non-formal Education (WGNFE) commissioned over 30 studies on literacy for the Biennale, to critically review policies and programs and to identify conditions and factors for effective programs based on innovative approaches in Africa. Country-specific studies examined the longitudinal development of national literacy policies and programs; thematic studies addressed the policy, institutional and program dimensions in African contexts; illustrative case studies outside the continent came from Brazil, China and Thailand (see Annex 1 for a complete list of papers). At the Biennale, the WGNFE organized sessions on literacy at which 25 studies, primarily by African practitioners and researchers, were presented to Ministers responsible for literacy and to representatives of development agencies.

During the session discussions, recommendations were formulated in four areas: i) the fundamental role of literacy; ii) international development agendas and Africa's national education policies; iii) programming, and, iv) financial support for literacy. Major recommendations were to:

- make literacy a priority of national development;
- have education reform consider more holistic, lifelong learning perspectives with an emphasis on providing quality learning opportunities in formal, non-formal and informal settings;
- develop national literacy policies with multi-sector and private-public partnerships;
- professionalize educators and providers of literacy programs by providing improved training and incentives.

Literacy policy, costing and financing, pedagogy and delivery, three Biennale topics, were further analyzed and presented at the African Regional Conference in Support of Global Literacy organized by UIL/UNESCO in September 2007 in Bamako. The Bamako Appeal expressed the commitments of African governments to global literacy. In partnership with ADEA, UNESCO will support them and civil societies in carrying forward their commitment.

This publication presents selected studies from the 2006 Biennale that address the prospects for a literate Africa, effective and promising literacy strategies and programs, building linkages between school and non-formal education, stimulating environments for a literate society, mobilizing resources and enhancing capacities, and moving from literacy to lifelong learning. The studies highlight the innovative and fruitful approaches in Africa and the policies to enhance learning societies.

It is my strong wish to create stronger financial commitments from inside and outside Africa in order to put the recommendations into motion. Scaling-up the innovative policies, strategies and practices analyzed in these studies could provide good quality learning opportunities and environment for youth and adults who have been denied the basic right to a quality education. The past trend of spending less than one percent of the national government budget for adult literacy programs should change, given the importance of the target population, the challenges and the positive impact literacy has upon local capacity building.

I should like to thank all the authors of the Biennale studies who took the time to present evidence in literacy despite weak documentation and research. Many have requested that national literacy programs be more extensively evaluated and include more research.

Many people and organizations supported this publication. The external reviewers and peer reviewers provided excellent guidance to the authors. The ADEA Secretariat, UIL and UNESCO colleagues and WGNFE members provided technical support. Financial support was graciously provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), l'Organisation Internationale de la francophonie (OIF), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

The WGNFE very much appreciates the fact that ADEA has heeded demands from African countries to include adult literacy, non-formal education and other alternative modes of education into its purview. I hope that this publication can play a role in heightening the understanding of the benefits of literacy and the arguments for serious political commitment and greater

investment by government and cooperation partners to overcome the chronically low funding in this education sub-sector.

Adama Ouane,

Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

About ADEA and the Biennales

The ADEA Biennales are the most important regional meeting in the educational cooperation field. Every two years since 1993, they have brought together African ministers of education and training, senior representatives of multi-lateral and bilateral development agencies, academics, practitioners and other professionals working to promote education in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 500 participants, including some 40 ministers and deputy ministers and many development cooperation organizations, NGOs and civil society organizations attended the 2006 ADEA Biennale, held in Libreville, Gabon, from 27 to 31 March 2006. Biennales offer an exceptional venue for meetings, dialogue, partnerships and sharing of experience and knowledge on an important topic selected by African ministers of education and development agencies. Dialogue during the Biennales is characterized by a professional and development-oriented approach that allows participants to learn from one another and to promote the shared understandings that underpin dynamic, constructive partnerships.

The 2006 Biennale on effective learning, and effective education and training systems

The 2006 Biennale on the theme "Characteristics, conditions and factors underlying effective, schools, and literacy and early childhood development programs" builds on one of the primary lessons drawn from the 1999 Biennale, which brought to the fore and analyzed successful experiences in Africa: the combination of broader access, increased equity and improved quality is a necessary condition for the success of development-oriented education policies.

Access to schooling in Africa has increased but rates of effectiveness in education in Africa are among the lowest worldwide. Attention to and investment in the quality of education are critical. After reaching consensus with the Bureau of African Ministers of Education, the ADEA Steering Committee therefore decided to focus the 2006 Biennale on improving the quality of education and reinforcing the effectiveness of learning in education and training systems. Ministers supported the exploration of three sub-themes

focusing on the effectiveness of schools, literacy programs and early childhood development programs that can be scaled up.

The ADEA 2006 Biennale Studies

For the 2006 Biennale, three ad hoc groups were created to conduct over 80 studies on the three sub-themes of the Biennale in order to:

- (i) give more wide-ranging consideration to relevant policies, strategies and practices, taking into account their contexts;
- (ii) identify African solutions developed by African countries in response to African problems related to strengthening effectiveness;
- (iii) encourage the emergence of enriched political visions and commitments.

The focus was on the analysis of country experiences identified and conducted in and by African countries and a review of the literature related to educational effectiveness.

The ADEA Working Group on Non-formal Education

The ADEA WGNFE was created in 1996 to help African governments achieve education for all by supporting the development of quality education through appropriate policies, regulations and measures to enhance NFE in a holistic education system. During 2005-2006, WGNFE coordination was located at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg. In response to ADEA's strategy to strengthen African ownership, the coordination has been transferred to the Association for the Promotion of Non-formal Education located in Burkina Faso.

For the latest news and activities, visit www.adeanet.org/wgnfe or write to gtenf@fasonet.bf

List of Acronyms and abbreviations

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Uganda
AFDS	Agence du Fonds de Développement Social
A3F	Learning Basic and Functional French (<i>Apprentissage du français fondamental et fonctionnel</i>)
AGETIP	Public Works Agency (<i>Agence d'exécution des travaux d'intérêt public</i>)
ALD	Apprentissage libre à distance
ALF	Adult literacy facilitators
ALZOZ	Adult Literacy Association of Zimbabwe
AME	Association of Educating Mothers (<i>Association des mères éducatives</i>)
ANFE	Adult and Non-formal Education
APE	Parent-Teacher Associations (<i>Associations parents enseignants</i>)
APENF	Association for the Promotion of Non-Formal Education (<i>Association pour la promotion de l'éducation non-formelle</i>)
APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Program of Education for All
ARED	Associates in Research and Education for Development
ASECA	A Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults
AU	African Union
BAEA	Botswana Adult Education Association

BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
BPE	Educational Projects Office (<i>Bureau des projets education</i>)
BREDA	Regional Office for Education in Africa (<i>Bureau régional pour l'éducation en Afrique</i>)
CAEB	Benin Council for Educational Activities (<i>Conseil des activités éducatives du Bénin</i>)
CAL	Reading Learning Center (<i>Centre d'apprentissage et de lecture</i>)
CAPAL	Support Committee for Promoting Literacy Activities (<i>Comité d'appui aux activités de promotion de l'alphabétisation</i>)
CAPES	Center for the Analysis of Social and Economic Policy (<i>Centre d'analyse des politiques économique et sociale</i>)
CBA	Competency-based approach
CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBS	Credit Bank System
CCA-ONG	Comité d'Appui aux Activités de Promotion de l'Alphabétisation
CCE	Center for Continuing Education
CCEB-BF	Burkina Faso Framework for NGO Collaboration (<i>Cadre de concertation des ONG/associations actives en éducation au Burkina Faso</i>)
CDD	Community-Driven Development
CE	Continuing Education
CEB	Basic Education Center (<i>Centre d'éducation de base</i>)
CEB	Basic Education District (<i>Circonscription d'éducation de base</i>)
CEBNF	Non-formal Basic Education Center (<i>Centre d'éducation de base non-formelle</i>)
CEDEAO	West African Economic Community (<i>Communauté économique des états de l'Afrique de l'Ouest</i>)
CFJA	Training Center for Young Agricultural Workers (<i>Centre de formation de jeunes agriculteurs</i>)
CEP	Primary Education Certificat (<i>Certificat d'études primaires</i>)

CGE	School Management Committee <i>(Comité de gestion d'école)</i>
CHIPA	Council to Harmonize Literacy Projects <i>(Conseil d'harmonisation des projets d'alphabétisation)</i>
CICE	Centre for In-service and Continuing Education
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CILSS	Permanent International Committee Against Drought in the Sahel <i>(Comité permanent inter-états de lutte contre la secheresse au Sahel)</i>
CIRAC	Circle for International Reflect Action and Communication
CLC	Community Learning Center
CLUSA	Cooperative League of the USA
CNCAT	National Collaborative Committee for Technical Support <i>(Comité national de concertation et d'appui technique)</i>
CNEA	National Committee to Combat Illiteracy <i>(Comité national d'élimination de l'analphabétisme)</i>
CNF	National Budget Committee <i>(Comité national de financement)</i>
CNRE	National Center for Educational Resources <i>(Centre national de ressources éducationnelles)</i>
CNR-ENF	National Resource Center for Non-Formal Education <i>(Centre national de ressources – Education non-formelle)</i>
CONGACI	Collective of NGOs Working in Côte d'Ivoire <i>(Collectif des ONG actives en Côte d'Ivoire)</i>
COPE	Complementary Opportunities Program of Education
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Union
CPAF	Permanent Literacy Center <i>(Centre permanent d'alphabétisation)</i>
CPF	Provincial Budget Committee <i>(Comité provincial de financement)</i>
CRF	Regional Budget Committee <i>(Comité régional de financement)</i>
CSLP	Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction <i>(Cadre stratégique de lutte contre la pauvreté)</i>
CSO	Community Service Organization
DALN	Directorate for National Language Literacy <i>(Direction de l'alphabétisation et des langues nationales)</i>

DDEN	Departmental Delegation for National Education <i>(Délégation départementale de l'éducation nationale)</i>
DGAENF	National Literacy and Non-formal Education Service <i>(Direction générale de l'alphabétisation et de l'éducation non-formelle)</i>
DGCRIEF	General Directorate for Research and Innovation in Education and Training <i>(Direction générale du centre de recherche, d'innovations éducatives et de formation)</i>
DLCA	Anti-Illiteracy Service <i>(Direction de la lutte contre l'alphabétisme)</i>
DAF	Department of Finance <i>(Département d'administration financière)</i>
DEP	Research and Planning Department <i>(Département des études et de planification)</i>
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DGAENF	General Literacy and Non-formal Education Service <i>(Direction générale de l'alphabétisation et de l'éducation non-formelle)</i>
DNEB	National Basic Education Service <i>(Direction nationale de l'éducation de base)</i>
DPEBA	Provincial Basic Education and Literacy Service <i>(Département provincial de l'éducation de base et de l'alphabétisation)</i>
DPEF	Young Women's Education Promotion Department <i>(Département pour la promotion de l'éducation des jeunes femmes)</i>
DPLN	National Language Promotion Service <i>(Direction de la promotion des langues nationales)</i>
DPEBA	Provincial Delegation for Basic Education and Literacy <i>(Délégation provinciale de l'éducation de base et de l'alphabétisation)</i>
DRE	Regional Educational Service <i>(Direction régionale de l'éducation)</i>
DREBA	Regional Delegation for Basic Education and Literacy <i>(Délégation régionale de l'éducation de base et de l'alphabétisation)</i>
EFA	Education For All
ECB	Community Primary School <i>(Ecole communautaire de base)</i>
ECD	Early Childhood Development

EGEF	Assembly of Education and Training (<i>Etats généraux de l'éducation et de la formation</i>)
ENEP	National Teacher Training Institution for Primary Teachers (<i>Ecole normale de l'enseignement primaire</i>)
EPA	Civil Service Institution (<i>Etablissement public à caractère administratif</i>)
ESP	Education Sector Policy
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDC	Foundation for Community Development (<i>Fondation pour le développement communautaire</i>)
FJA	Young Agricultural Workers' Training (<i>Formation de jeunes agriculteurs</i>)
FABE	Family Adult Basic Education
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FCB	Complementary Basic Training (<i>Formation de base complémentaire</i>)
FLP	Family Literacy Project
FONAENF	Fund for Non-Formal Literacy and Education (<i>Fonds pour l'alphabétisation et l'éducation non-formelles</i>)
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
FTP	Financial and Technical Partners
FTS	Specific Technical Training (<i>Formations techniques spécifiques</i>)
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GCSE	General Secondary Education Certificate
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
IA	Academic Inspectorate (<i>Inspection d'académie</i>)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ICAE	International Council of Adult Education
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IDEN	Inspection Départementale de l'Education Nationale

IL	Initial Literacy
ILO	International Labor Organization
INA	National Literacy Institute (<i>Institut national d'alphabétisation</i>)
INADES	Africa Institute for Economic and Social Development (<i>Institut africain pour le développement économique et social</i>)
INEBNF	National Institute for Non-Formal Basic Education (<i>Institut national d'éducation de base non-formelle</i>)
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KEDI	Korean Education Development Institute
LCB	Local Capacity Building
LGA	Local Government Areas
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LSDS	Learning Support Delivery System
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEBA	Ministry for Basic Education and Literacy (<i>Ministère de l'Éducation de base et de l'Alphabétisation</i>)
MEN	National Education Ministry (<i>Ministère de l'Éducation nationale</i>)
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NALSIP	National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFE A&A	Non-formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency System
NFLP	National Functional Literacy Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLPN	National Literacy Program in Namibia
NMEC	National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NTI	National Teachers' Institute
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORD	Regional Development Organization (<i>Organisation régionale de développement</i>)

OSEO	Swiss Workers' Support (<i>CŒuvre Suisse d'entraide ouvrière</i>)
PADEN	Literacy Project for Local and Elected Notables (<i>Projet d'alphabétisation des élus et notables locaux</i>)
PADLOS	Sahel Local Development Support Project (<i>Projet d'appui au développement local au Sahel</i>)
PAFPNA	Newly Literate Professional Training Support Project (<i>Projet d'appui à la formation professionnelle des néo-alphabétisés</i>)
PAIS	Senegalese Intensive Literacy Program (<i>Programme d'alphabétisation intensive du Sénégal</i>)
PAMISEC	Support Project for Curricular Testing (<i>Projet d'appui à la mise à l'essai du curriculum</i>)
PAPA	Support Project for National non-formal action plan (<i>Projet d'appui au plan d'action éducation non-formelle</i>)
PAPF	Literacy Project Prioritizing Women (<i>Projet alphabétisation priorité femmes</i>)
PDDEB	Ten-year Basic Education Program (<i>Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation de base</i>)
PENF	Partnership for Non-formal Education
PDEF	Ten-year Education and Training Program (<i>Programme décennal de l'éducation et de la formation</i>)
PDIS	Integrate Health Development Program (<i>Programme de développement intégré de la santé</i>)
PENF	Partnership for non-formal education (<i>Partenariat pour l'éducation non-formelle</i>)
PLCP	Anti-Poverty Project (<i>Projet de lutte contre la pauvreté</i>)
PNIR	National Program for Rural Infrastructure (<i>Programme national des infrastructures rurales</i>)
PP	Priority Provinces
PRL	Recognition of Prior Learning
PRGA	Participatory Research and Gender Analysis CIGAR (Columbia)
PROLIT	Project Literacy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Program
RIOF	Integrated Network of Women's Organizations (<i>Réseau intégré des organisations féminines</i>)
RNPE	Revised National Policy on Education
SADEC	Southern African Development Community

SAEP	Permanent Literacy and Education Division (<i>Service d'alphabétisation et d'éducation permanente</i>)
SAQA	South Africa Qualifications Authority
SC (USA)	Save the Children, United States of America
SCNCDEF	National Sub-committee for Dialoguing Non-formal Education Development (<i>Sous-comité national de concertation pour le développement de l'éducation non-formelle</i>)
SE-AENF	National Non-formal Literacy and Basic Education Service (<i>Service étatique-alphabétisation et éducation non-formelle</i>)
SEAENF	National Secretariat for Literacy and Non-Formal Education (<i>Secrétariat d'état à l'alphabétisation et à l'éducation non-formelle</i>)
SOLO	Sudan Open Learning Organization
SP (PDDEB)	Permanent Secretariat for the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Program (<i>Secrétariat permanent du Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation de base</i>)
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematical and Science Study
TSC	Teachers' Service Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Fund For Population
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNIVA	University Village Association
UNLD	United National Literacy Decades
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZALA	Zimbabwe Adult Learners' Association

Introduction

Education By All: A Brief for Literacy Investment

by Peter B. Easton

1. Introduction

The Stakes: What, Where, Why and How

Nyininkàlikèla te fili

The one who asks questions doesn't get lost.

Bambara (Mali)

UNESCO estimates that there are 771 million illiterate adults (age 15 and over) in the world today, of whom nearly two-thirds (64%) are women.¹ Illiterate adults comprise just under a quarter (24%) of the world's adult population. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there are over 140 million illiterate adults, the majority of whom - 85 million - are women. Illiterate adults constitute 40% of the region's population, the highest proportion for any major area of the globe. In addition, there are another 10 or 15 million school-age children who are not or who are no longer in school.

The situation is very serious, therefore, in the midst of the United Nations' Literacy Decade and the period chosen to implement UNESCO's Literacy for Empowerment (LIFE) strategy to boost attainments in the countries in greatest need² before the next EFA deadline in 2015. Much remains to be done.

1. Unless noted otherwise, statistics are taken from the EFA 2006 *Global Monitoring Report* (UNESCO, 2006).

2. Officially defined as those having more than 50% illiteracy or an illiterate population of 10 million or over.

This paper addresses the question of how to effectively to promote widespread literacy. First, it examines the ongoing challenge of development in Sub-Saharan Africa and the historical trends and current conditions in African literacy. Then it examines, very synoptically, literacy programs across the region: administrative and planning, instructional methods, the way in which lessons learned are applied and the relationship with the broader context. Finally, it considers the costs and benefits of literacy work, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for future practice.

► *Literacy and “literacies”*

“Literacy” is “a metaphor for many kinds of skills,” and has come to mean what people wish and agree that it means. In the 1950s, UNESCO was to consider as literate “a person... who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life.” UNESCO subsequently defined “functional literacy” as follows:

A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community’s development. (UNESCO 2005, p. 30)

Definitions differ slightly from country to country.³ The more general sense of literacy is *the ability to decipher, use and understand some given code of knowledge or procedure*, and then apply it to initial levels of competence in many different fields of endeavor: information literacy, civic literacy, media literacy among others. Given the variety of definitions, literacies in the plural has come to replace “literacy” in the singular.

The working definition for literacy used here includes the basic forms of written or numeric literacy. The ABCs do not always come first and later “literacies” constitute much of the substance of lifelong learning.

► *Multiple venues for literacy programs*

Worldwide and historically speaking, as many people have become literate through a variety of informal means – including “each one teach one”

3. For example, in Mali, someone who has not attended school is by definition illiterate. In Namibia, those who can read and write “with understanding” in any language are deemed literate. In Cameroon, the language must be French or English. In Benin, Burkina Faso and Tanzania, any language will do. In the Seychelles, a literate person must be over 12 years of age (UNESCO 2005, p. 157).

phenomena and self-directed learning – as in schools or official literacy centers. Census data suggest that this is also true of Africa today. “Literacies” are acquired in many ways in Africa, from age group initiations to traditional apprenticeships, from religious instruction to military training, from exposure to the media, to travel, from literacy programs to formal schooling, and through myriad other venues. Even the basic forms of alphabetic and numeric literacy are disseminated in diverse fashions. All of these venues and styles of instruction contribute in one way or another to achieving literacy and EFA.

The ADEA Biennial examines the acquisition of literacy by out-of-school children, adolescents and adults, principally in *non-formal education*, a category of provision that is highly diverse and includes the range of terms used for programs: adult literacy (AL), adult basic education and training (ABET), non-formal education and training (NFET), adult basic learning and education (ABLE), adult and non-formal education (ANFE), among others.

These varied initiatives all target people who have never had or never took the opportunity to attend formal primary school and/or who retain too little of what was taught to be functionally literate in one or more of the written codes used in their living and working environments (sometimes referred to as “aliterates”). Literacy programs refer to all organized efforts addressing the learning needs of these people, including national campaigns and small projects.

► *Why Invest? Human rights and economic returns*

Two reasons have been consistently cited for acquiring literacy and for promoting its dissemination: i) the relation of literacy to basic human rights and ii) the benefits or “returns” to learners, their families and their communities. Regrettably, the two arguments have tended to be opposed to each other although they are complementary.

The “basic human rights” argument was strongly argued in development circles in the 1970s and has come back to the fore in recent years as national and international agencies alluded to the “right to development” and the United Nations solemnly affirmed the universal right to literacy. For this to have any meaning, however, *there must be a commitment to creating an environment in which the right to literacy can be readily exercised* and in which the literacy or “literacies” acquired can be used to genuinely benefit those concerned. That means addressing individual and collective “returns” to literacy as well.

The Context

Kòlòngosi bè dlòn fe, sen t'a la.

The tortoise loves to dance, he just doesn't have the legs.

Bambara (Mali)

Adult education and literacy cannot be divorced from the continuing challenge of African development and its cultural, economic and political aspects.

Recurrent drought, civil unrest, structural readjustment, the sclerosis of key institutions and governance malfunction and corruption have led the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole to *shrink* between 1975 and 2003 (average growth rate of -0.7% per annum). For the 1990-2003 period, growth was +0.1%; in 2004, growth reached a rate of 5%. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the poorest region of the globe with the greatest income inequality,⁴ and the fastest growing population: 2.7% per annum from 1990 through 2003. The primary school net enrollment rate has increased more for girls than for boys but not fast enough to meet the EFA or the MDGs.

► *A brief history of literacy in Africa*

Literacy work in Africa, well summarized in the 2006 *Global Monitoring Report*, has included a succession of styles and strategies for spreading the word: religious and scholastic literacy, functional literacy, integrated rural development, Freirian “conscientization,” NGO provision and more recent trends of increasing participation by women and new linkages between literacy and livelihoods. These phases continue to influence the implementation of new programs and designs.

Just as strategic models for literacy programming have changed, so too has our understanding of literacy itself. The “autonomous model” of literacy in the 1950s and 1960s has evolved to an appreciation of the many different forms that literacy can take and the different uses people make of it. The question in the “new literacy studies” is not just what literacy can do for people but what people (can) do with literacy.

Despite several international policy meetings about literacy in Africa, only a few African countries have specific literacy policies. Botswana, Rwanda,

4. Income distribution data are available for 125 of the world's 177 nations. The 20 countries with the greatest income inequality are in Sub-Saharan Africa, as are 35 of the 40 most inequitable (UNDP, 2005).

South Africa and Tanzania. In general, the visions of African nations on literacy “are mostly integrated into the national planning framework through [strategies for] expanding formal schooling.”

Few countries in Africa have used national policy instruments to promote literacy beyond schooling although it can be argued that the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) requirements have left governments relatively little room to maneuver in this regard.

► *Indicators of progress*

The 2005 *Global Monitoring Report* offers considerable data on current and historical levels of adult literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Overall literacy rates in the region have approximately doubled since 1970 and more than doubled for women. (A weighted estimate puts the overall figure for 2005 at about 55%.)
- The ratio of women’s to men’s literacy rates has gone from approximately just under one-half (45%) to nearly three-quarters (75%) with striking differences among countries, varying from under 20% (rates for women only one-fifth of those for men in some countries) to nearly 90% in others.

The number of illiterate adults in region remains in excess of 140 million. Literacy rates have improved by almost ten percentage points since 1990 but the absolute *number* of illiterates has grown by nearly 12 million.

- Sixteen of twenty-four Sub-Saharan countries have not yet reached 80% of their EFA goal; seven are within 80% and 94% and only one has passed the 95% mark. Only Botswana and Malawi are recognized to be achieving EFA goals.
- From an equity perspective, only three African countries of the 40 for which data are available have attained or exceeded gender parity in literacy rates (Botswana, Lesotho and Seychelles); three others are within 5% of parity; and only nine of the forty have gender parity indices above the average for all developing countries.

There has thus been definite progress in terms of coverage and of equity but, as a Bambara expression reminds us, *N’ba wolola ani n’ba tilara, u te kelen ye*: “Saying ‘My mother has given birth’ and saying ‘My mother has finished her work’ are not at all the same thing.” The end is not yet in sight.

2. Examining the Record

*Da an ce da kare, "Tuwo ya yi yawa a gidan biki," ya ce,
"Ma fa gani a k'as."*

*When the dog was told there was food for everyone at the
feast, he said, "We'll check that out at ground level."*

Planning and Provision

This area involves the functions and units responsible for making policy, for procuring funds, for supervising the work and for providing literacy services at all levels. The decentralization of many of these programs and the accelerated diversification of provision over the last two decades, provoked in part by the budgetary austerity that accompanied structural adjustment, have changed the situation in some fundamental ways and led to creative outsourcing solutions and efforts to promote local ownership and adaptation of programs.

► *Diversification of supply*

The most important innovation on the supply side of literacy programming has been the creation of cooperative arrangements with NGOs, community service organizations (CSOs) and private grassroots providers and the outsourcing to them of service delivery responsibilities in recent years. In Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda to cite only those examples, NGOs of diverse types play major roles in providing literacy services. In Ghana, private commercial providers have met much of the need in those sectors - like irrigated farming - where effective local demand is intense enough to support a business approach to training.

Where they are well designed, implemented and monitored, outsourced or decentralized systems like this have proven to have many virtues: they adapt programs to local needs, programs are more closely supervised, and local communities support them; it is easier to go to scale and reach a broad range of localities. When they are not thoughtfully designed, well implemented or closely supervised, these approaches have had problems. NGOs or "local partners" - from international organizations like Action Aid or Save the Children to local groups established by newly literate adults themselves, from voluntary associations to commercial ventures - are not a panacea. Good evaluation and accountability mechanisms including *downward* accountability to the local communities concerned are needed;

their interests risk being ignored in the negotiations between government agencies and private or nonprofit contractors.

The emerging partnership between government literacy agencies and private or nonprofit providers has begun to indicate a *new division of labor* in which institutional partners work together to increase the scope and the quality of literacy provision, while local stakeholders acquire new rights and responsibilities.

National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya and Uganda are an essentially different but potentially complementary strategy for diversifying supply. NQFs define levels of basic skills and knowledge that bridge formal, non-formal and informal education and establish means to validate knowledge and skill acquired and use this qualification elsewhere. Such schemes also allow people to obtain recognition for things learned in alternate ways - including through informal education and self-directed learning - and so can have the effect of further diversifying supply. NQFs have not always been easy to implement, however, and is only complete in one country. But a new environment for literacy and post-literacy provision is gradually being created.

► *Challenges of language planning*

Development of a successful partnership or outsourcing system does not resolve planning challenges like identifying and developing environments that are supportive of literacy or optimal targeting of participant groups. For example, a perfectly outsourced program in a region with few uses for literacy can have real difficulties.

The challenges of language planning and of developing appropriate educational language policy are significant. From a human rights perspective, all people are entitled to acquire and use literacy in their mother tongue, but with more than 2000 languages and as many as 8000 dialectics, the issue is serious.

Languages like Swahili, Hausa, KiKongo and Bambara-Malinke offer a compromise in many cases that can be inadequate when their adoption means teaching participants to read and write in a language they do not speak with facility or hardly understand; and how best to arrange the exchange between these languages and the international ones that many learners also need to master remains an issue.

Participation and Learning

*Ntaa wigira kwôga mw-ibenga.
No one learns to swim in deep water.
Kinundi (Burundi)*

The great diversity of programs and clientele in adult literacy and non-formal education means equally varied patterns of participation, curriculum design and instructional methodology.

The variations create in fact a living laboratory of literacy strategy if attentively monitored and evaluated; but the structures, habits and resources necessary to capitalize on that natural experimentation are not yet in place.

► *Trends in participation*

In most countries of the region, literacy programming has grown and diversified over the last several decades and participation has broadened concomitantly, but there is considerable wastage and dropout, especially where support and monitoring are weak or benefits to learners seem limited. Most often, only 10-50% of starters finish the programs.

Other noteworthy trends in program participation include the following.

- a. *Women make up an increasing proportion* – and in many countries an outright majority – *of literacy students*. In most regions, they have had distinctly less access to formal schooling than men and increasingly must manage homes and communities in the absence of male family members. Perhaps as a consequence, women have generally been quick to respond to opportunities for instruction and have prized and put to good use the opportunity to meet with other women, share experiences, extend networks and formalize them into associations.
- b. *The average age of participants has tended to drop over the years* due to an influx of adolescent (and younger) school dropouts, who hope to resume their education or gain access to new employment possibilities through these adult literacy courses.
- c. Programs have been increasingly developed for or adapted to *special populations* like street and working children, refugees from zones of conflict or famine and victims (direct or indirect) of HIV/AIDS. They also include newly-elected local officials, informal economy artisans and managers of start-up local businesses, many of whom can benefit greatly from literacy enhancement and training.

- d. Finally, there has been an ongoing “*hybridization*” of literacy programs with projects in other sectors like agriculture, health, natural resource management, public administration, and “livelihood” training in general.

► *Trends in instruction*

In the early stages of most programs, literacy instruction typically remains quite traditional and didactic. However, the conditions and challenges of literacy instruction are different enough from those of primary education to have forced some fundamental changes:

- a. *Participatory and “conscientizing” methods.* Experienced literacy programs tend to adopt methods that promote students’ active participation in learning. Full-fledged or “strong” participation, of course, goes beyond this and means learning to play a role in decision-making – first about the content and conduct of programs and then about applications in the real world. Human rights curricula have increasingly become a means of helping participants to discover their capacity for enhanced roles in society, often borrowing from Freireian pedagogy the notion that adults can learn to read and write “the world as well as the word.”
- b. *Livelihood and empowerment strategies.* Livelihood strategies have come to combine selected elements and sequences of the “three Rs” (plus numeracy) with the development of trade and income-generating skills. Livelihood programming *plus* conscientization or a human-rights focus often produce a uniquely effective empowerment approach.
- c. *From chalk and talk to varied technologies.* The technologies used in instruction have typically been limited to chalkboards, dog-eared manuals, notebooks and pens and dilapidated infrastructure. Solutions have ranged from initiating instruction with more accessible “literacies” like group problem-solving skills or skill apprenticeship to undertaking full Freireian dialogue through which participants both identify and critique these obstacles. Computer-assisted instruction holds great promise but its application is largely limited by cost and infrastructure to data basing and teacher training.

► *Upgrading teacher training and instructional design*

The opportunities and complexity of instruction in literacy programs have created a need for a highly competent and dedicated teaching corps. New means have been found in recent years to improve teacher training and to enrich and systematize the university preparation of those who in turn recruit, train and monitor new teachers: namely, the personnel of literacy

agencies and of relevant ministries and NGOs. But each level of the structure will require increased capability to respond to these challenges.

Needs for training local actors across the spectrum of local development concerns will increase, as the goal of Literacy for All is reached and people move on to the many other “literacies” required to effectively manage their own affairs and durably achieve the MDGs. As a consequence, staff of literacy and non-formal education agencies must be equipped to become professional training consultants and instructional design specialists who can effectively assist other agencies in devising, administering and monitoring a variety of types of instruction in a variety of practical curricular areas.

► *Strengthening learning assessment and evaluation*

In the sometimes-threadbare economy of literacy programs, evaluations tend to be last funded and first cut. Regular and proficient formative evaluation and monitoring of literacy activities can be hard to find. Yet conscientious evaluation is critical for donors and for improving programs, and a way to turn the mix of strategies and curricula in any region or country into a laboratory for identifying best practices.

There have been laudable if sporadic efforts by government ministries and external donors to bolster staff competence in evaluation methods. More is needed, and methods that combine solid professional skills with participatory design will be the most valuable.

Downstream Factors: Application and Use

Magana ba ta kai tsofuwa kasuwa

Sweet talk alone won't get the old woman to go to market.

Hausa (Niger/Nigeria)

Downstream from the instructional domain, daily life in which lessons learned are – or should be – used to benefit participants, their families and their communities. Unfortunately, the environment and circumstances of most illiterate people tend to be chronically poor in opportunities to use their new skills there are no readily available reading materials in the language of literacy and few if any accessible options for further instruction, financial resources and employment possibilities that might enable new literates to use what they've learned or to create new economic ventures of sufficient

scope and durability to require them. Literacy program designers and implementers have at least become increasingly aware of the dilemma over the years and have moved from a concern with lifelong learning in the early 1970s to a recognition of the problem of “post literacy” later in that decade; more recently, there has been a concern to create “literate environments” that lend themselves to and support the exercise of new literate competence while creating a true basis for lifelong learning.

► *Defining a Literate Environment*

Dooley jën dox

The strength of the fish lies in the water.

Wolof (Senegal)

Four principle opportunities arguably constitute a “literate environment” in which to apply and use new literacy skills:

1. *Access to reading material* of direct interest: books, brochures, newspapers, magazines, messages, letters, and other practical documents - which supposes publishing facilities and use of the language in relevant media.
2. *Available, continuing education* in one or both of two forms: **formal schooling** to which the learner may accede by establishing an equivalence between the acquired skills and a given level of the formal system and by virtue of open or age-neutral enrollment policies; or varieties of organized **non-formal training** (i.e. organized trade apprenticeship) that provide other skills or knowledge of interest to the learner.
3. *Opportunities to assume sustainable new functions* in existing organizations or institutional structures (like local governments, agricultural cooperatives or extension systems) that require and exercise literacy skills.
4. *Opportunities to start and help manage sustainable new business or non-profit endeavors* that require and exercise literacy skills.

The combination of these four in forms and to degrees dictated by circumstances, human imagination and available resources constitutes a truly “literate environment” and creates the strongest, most durable demand for literacy training.

► *Dissecting “post-literacy”*

Tupu agu enwe onye na ako akuko ifo ya, akuko nta ka na eto ndi na achu nta.

*The story of the hunt will be tales of glory
until the day when the lions have their own historians.
Igbo (Nigeria)*

Since literacy is a *continuum* and “literacies” should be thought of in the plural, the term “post-literacy” makes little sense as there is no end point “after” literacy where learning is complete. Learning is lifelong. While this line of reasoning is certainly true, it misses a critical point. The notion of “post-literacy” puts the spotlight on the literate environment and its deficiencies.

Literacy was invented some 4000 years ago on the irrigation schemes and farming communities of the Fertile Crescent to manage transactions for large-scale water allocation when food exchange became too complex to handle by oral means alone. Though it soon acquired important political, religious and cultural functions, the initial motivations and uses for literacy have remained closely linked to the exercise of resource management; witness its frequent pairing with local credit and marketing initiatives in current development work.

Effective demand and the local resources for written communication *assumes new powers and resource management responsibilities* in commerce, local government, public service delivery, political development or organized religion. Communication among these nodes of new activity and the exchange with the outside world that it requires are most likely to multiply the volume of written material seen or prepared by new literates. But with few resources and no complex organizational responsibilities, people typically lack the stimulus for literacy and for the spread of written communication, as is the case of most low-literacy environments in Africa. What means are available and what methods have proved successful for escaping that trap? At least two things can be done:

- I. *First. Provide reading materials and opportunities for continuing education* using some of the following initiatives to enrich the post-literacy domain and create sufficient effective demand to drive the literacy effort:
 - Provide better and more varied reading material in the languages of literacy;
 - Adopt these languages in official documents and media alongside the relevant language of international communication;

- Introduce the languages into the formal school curriculum as vehicles and/or subject of study;
- Design and provide continuing education and trade training opportunities to which new literates can gain access;
- Create bridges and equivalencies between literacy instruction and formal primary schooling.

Such initiatives are very much worth pursuing, and there are encouraging examples of progress in each of these areas. At the same time, approaches that only provide reading material in local literacy languages and adopt them in official documents and media have problems: literacy agencies simply cannot create a dense and sufficiently durable “literate environment” on their own to meet the needs of their potential students. At the most, they can offer prototypes and “prime the pump.” Establishing a literate environment depends fundamentally on developing in parallel locally-managed enterprises, functions and services that must communicate with each other and continually upgrade the capacities of their personnel, their stakeholders and their clientele. In short, it depends on domains III and IV in the scheme above .

II. *Second. Promote locally driven development and then creating inter-sectoral linkage* so that literacy and NFE programs serve to nurture, broaden and continually upgrade the local capacity required (categories III and IV above). The need for local capacity building (LCB) is already acute. The increasing disparity between State budgets and development needs and efforts to decentralize and democratize on the other have put the issue of transferring responsibilities and resources into qualified local hands on the agenda of most technical ministries and related donor organizations. The UN Millennium Project places “training large quantities of village workers in health, farming and infrastructure” sixth among seventeen priority investments; the World Bank speaks of “rural development from below.”

In short, LCB is becoming a practical necessity in other sectors of development. The more democratically-oriented the strategies, which is to say, the more local participation in decision-making and technical execution is structurally provided for, the *broader* the training needs entailed.

Unfortunately, educators don’t typically deal with these needs and tend to be a bit tone deaf when it comes to perceiving or exploiting opportunities in categories 3 and 4 above. In fact, however, most of the important opportunities

for post-literacy *lie in other sectors of development* like agriculture, natural resource management, health, governance, credit and banking, public works and even the local management of schooling. Yet few mechanisms exist at present, outside of selected NGOs with a multi-sectoral approach, for effectively linking literacy programs to capacity-building needs.

Strategies that unite these two sides of the post-literacy coin have a chance of making the largest contribution that literacy programming can to accomplishing EFA and the MDGs. They help create a new layer of local civil society – organizations, communities and businesses managed by literate people of many varieties – without whose active intervention there is little hope of attaining the MDGs. And the same groups offer the best means of transforming EFA which however noble an objective has a deficient and uniquely supply-side strategy – into the sort of *Education By and Of All* the sort of locally-rooted and supported schooling movement that alone will close the gap.

► *Empowerment as an alternate strategy*

Management is not the only viable application of literacy competence of course. Women's literacy programs have taught us otherwise. Given the situation and potential of African women in many areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, these programs often *contain their own initial post-literacy*. When women have the opportunity to consult with each other, to organize their own associations, to forge new identities and to begin their own forms of investment and business – even if initially very limited – this may constitute a sufficient number of uses to fuel strong and sustained motivation, at least in the medium-term.

These efforts illustrate the pertinence of human rights and related forms of conscientization to literacy work. Programs that directly address key issues of human rights, including factors of inequity that help to explain the dearth of investment, employment and post-literacy opportunity in a given region or help to illuminate and renew gender roles, can both awaken and sustain the motivation to complete training without many immediate functional outlets. What was first an educational movement necessarily becomes a political reality in this case. As a Kirundi proverb puts it, *Mu-nda haraara inzara hakavyuka ka inziyo* – If hunger passes all night in the belly, resentment awakes in the morning. Better to combine the effects of empowerment and a literate environment than to pit the first against the forces that obstruct the second.

Strengthening the domain of literacy application requires that proponents and sponsors of literacy programs somehow devise living linkages other sectors of development that can put acquired skills to use durably and generate new literacies in addition.. Experience suggests that true “empowerment” weaves both internal and external components – personal transformation that comes from facing limit situations, creating new identities and discovering new solidarities and the social transformation that comes from establishing new institutions, assuming new roles and managing new resources.

External Support Where it Counts

Sên gâe-a a to piirê gâee tênga

*The one who sleeps on a borrowed mat should remember
that he is sleeping on the cold hard ground.*

Mooré (Burkina Faso)

The external support that interests us here means financial, political and technical assistance provided to literacy programs by governments, donor organizations and NGOs. Literacy, like adult education, has generally been the “poor cousin” of the development (and even the education) family. Some projects have been well funded but literacy and non-formal adult education as a whole have seldom received much strategic attention or garner more than 1% of national budgets compared to formal education that can account for more than 40%.

Increased support is richly warranted, given the strategic importance of literacy and non-formal education in building local capacity for development yet the support that seems the most important – from governments, donors and NGOs – is *political* or policy-based: endorsement for the development and use of written African languages as media of communication, alongside relevant international languages and implementation across sectors of decentralization and local investment initiatives needed to jump-start grassroots development and to make literacy programming an instrument of local capacity building. Yet government ministries and donor organizations remain partitioned making it difficult to design and support cross-cutting investments.

3. Conclusions

Ku la abal i tànk, nga dem fa ko neex

*If someone loans you his legs, you go where he wants you
to go. Wolof (Senegal)*

► *Measuring the costs*

Tracking the costs of literacy programs is important to measure effectiveness and contribute to cost-benefit calculations and to ensure good management and fiscal accountability. The indicator that typically interests decision-makers and outside stakeholders is the amount per literacy student (good), per person made literate (better), or per person by unit of “pre-post” increase in literacy level achieved (best). Yet such data are rarely available.

The 2006 Global Monitoring Report presents results from a convenience sample of 14 programs across 14 Sub-Saharan countries assessed in the last five years. Calculations suggest an estimated cost of between \$100 and \$400 per durably literate program completer, depending on circumstances.

Compared to Colclough’s (2000) estimates for public unit costs of primary schooling across Sub-Saharan Africa (about \$65 per student/year or \$250-\$300 for the four years putatively necessary for a child to become durably literate and somewhere in the neighborhood of \$500 when wastage is taken into account), it is evident that the two are roughly comparable.

Both systems certainly could and should become more efficient, but they operate at roughly comparable levels of performance at present albeit in two largely different population groups. The internal variations are at least as great as the differences between the two kinds of education. Primary schooling and non-formal literacy programs are approximate equivalents and the important complement should be based on the mutually supportive vocations of each.

► *Assessing the benefits*

The benefits of literacy tend to comprise a laundry list – plausible individual effects across several areas including health, communication, political behavior and agricultural innovation, continuing education, generally based on correlation studies. Many of these, such as women’s literacy and children’s health and schooling, are both encouraging and intriguing.

But such discussions tend to leave aside *the collective, structural and tactical effects of literacy programming*: that is, what happens when – deliberately or spontaneously – people who have gotten a new vision of their own future and a new set of skills in literacy or non-formal education programs set

about to change their circumstances and find enough support internally and externally to modify their environment in fundamental ways. There are enough examples of this happening to remove any doubt about its possibility.

The most reasonable conclusion is that literacy can have a major effect on reducing poverty, redeeming rights and upgrading human welfare if a threshold is reached: not just a threshold reading speed but a threshold of *application opportunity* that allows people to “reinvest” the intellectual capital they have acquired and to reap its yield in enhanced capacity to manage their own enterprises and grow new ones.

New Directions, New Hopes

Sila kilin té sila ti
A single road is not the road.
Malinké (Guinea/Mali)

What picture emerges from the practices, problems and progress in the four interrelated domains of literacy – the upstream administrative and policy functions, the core processes of instruction and curriculum, the downstream domain of application and post-literacy and relations with the surrounding environment?

► *Post-literacy as bottleneck*

The biggest obstacle to expansion and to improved performance in underserved areas is the *lack of a literate environment and related deficiencies in the post-literacy domain* produced by the dearth of reading material, media resources and continuing education opportunities in the languages of literacy. The lack of linkages between literacy programs and other development activities that require and use literacy skills to participants’ benefit can help underwrite further expansion of learning and greater intensification of written communication.

Current policies too often make literacy programs appear to be “poor education for poor people:”

- dividing them from local capacity-building needs and potentials in other sectors or offering them as a recompense to regions where nothing else will be done;

- keeping formal and non-formal education isolated from each other;
- ignoring African languages; and
- allocating less than 1% of education budgets to adult education.

Innovation

Policy neglect is the “bad news.” The good news is the new approaches that have emerged in recent years that underscore the potential for increased investment and return:

- *New partnerships with civil society* to provide literacy services plus the improved division of labor and enhanced “reach” that they make possible.
- *Increased use of written African languages.*
- *Greatly increased participation of women* in literacy programs and the benefits that portends for the next generation.
- *Improved training of staff*, thanks to the establishment of new programs for advanced training of literacy and adult education personnel in African universities and the deepening of extant programs.
- *Further experience with livelihood training* and mixing literacy programs with development projects in other sectors.
- *Numerous innovative program directions* for new categories of participants such as HIV/AIDS patients and families, newly-elected local officials and refugees from civil conflict.
- *Infusion of human rights into literacy programs*, spurred in some instances by the greater representation of women help participants to develop their own visions of “another” development and to begin promoting bottom-up democratization by creating electoral, accountability and participatory mechanisms in local institutions.

4. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Ka xoxoa nu wogbia yeyea d’o.

A new rope is woven at the end of the old one.

Ewe (Ghana/Togo)

Cement the Link between Literacy and Development

If sustainable development and genuine human welfare are the goal, then literacy must be much better dovetailed with the other local development initiatives that require and create uses for it This requires policies relevant sectors to empower local communities and actors, and to equip literacy workers for the critical training tasks they must accomplish.

Promote “Education BY All” through Better Coordination of Formal and Non-formal Systems

The most important contribution of literacy programming to Education For All lies in helping turn schooling itself into more of a local movement, governed and supported to an increasing extent at the community level by helping the school system overcome its divorce from local development. To transform “Education For All” into “Education By and Of All,” bridges and equivalences must be established and newly literate adults engaged in propelling schooling at the local level and by emulating the methodology of the best adult literacy programs in adapting instruction to the needs of the environment.

Reinforce Democratization and the Development of Civil Society at the Grassroots by Supervised Transfer of Powers and New Resources to local Institutions

Literacy and democracy are intimately linked. True democratic accountability and participation that transform local enterprise requiring training a few technicians who ultimately stimulate widespread literacy. Without them, the benefits of grassroots development investments are much less equitably distributed and much less sustainable. But local actors must have something to account for and literacy workers must be able to assist them in learning the ropes of democratic management.

Progress from Empowering Pedagogies to Lifelong Learning

Literacy programming that empowers participants to take charge of their own lives and connects them with initiatives in other sectors of development that employ their new skills provides at the same time the surest bridge to - and the most reliable support for - lifelong learning.

Sharing Half the Sky: Promote New Roles for Women

Uwa na kiwon Janta, can yà sha nono

The mother cares for her child and [if you provide for her, she herself] will provide for the child in due time.

Hausa (Niger/Nigeria)

Literacy programs have increasingly become a means through which woman throughout the region forge new identities and increase their contributions to local development. They have also become a basis for new comity between the genders. Carrying this movement forward requires that women access new “literacies” by enhancing their roles in social governance.

Train trainers for Broader Roles and Cross-Sectoral Intervention

For literacy programs to become more effective or play new roles in development, the staff must master the skills involved. A literacy agent will increasingly merge resemble a trainer for a variety of learning agendas linked to local development.

Invest in Literacy Financially and Politically

Sai da ruwan ciki a ke ja na rijiya.

It takes water in the belly to draw it from the well.

Hausa (Niger/Nigeria)

The contribution of literacy program to EFA and the MDGs depends on a political decision to empower and invest responsibility, entitlements and resources in local actors and their associations. Locally-driven development cannot succeed without increasingly widespread literacy. *Investing in literacy* becomes a moral imperative and an activity with unbeatable returns.

Finally, enhancing the contribution of literacy to EFA and to the MDGs depends on those in positions of responsibility and influence as much as on those in the field because it will require renewal of policy and support to realize the vast potential of local effort. A Touareg proverb reminds us that “The difference between a garden and a desert is not water; it is people.”

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AL	Adult Literacy
ANFE	Adult and Nonformal Education
ARED	Associates for Rural Education and Development (Senegal)
BREDA	Regional Bureau for Adult Education (<i>Bureau Régional de l'Education des Adultes</i> , UNESCO/Dakar)
CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDD	Community-Driven Development (World Bank)

CILSS	Comité inter-état de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel
CONFINTEA	International Conference on Adult Education (<i>Conférence Internationale sur l'Education des Adultes</i>)
CSO	Community Service Organization
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EFA	Education for All
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LCB	Local capacity building
LIFE	Literacy for Empowerment (UNESCO)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals (UN)
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFET	Nonformal Education and Training
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OAU	Organization for African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PADLOS	Support Project for Sahelian Local Development (<i>Projet d'appui au développement local au Sahel, CILSS/Club du Sahel-OECD</i>)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (World Bank)
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US\$	United States dollars
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization (UN)

Prospects for Literate Africa

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Chapter 1.

Literacy and Globalization: Towards a Learning Society in Africa: Growth Points for Policy and Practice

by Catherine A. Odora-Hoppers

1. Introduction

Literacy mobilization has hit a historical moment of uncertainty that calls for bold, new, and strategic sets of actions. These would include investing in an understanding of root causes, retrieving signals that may have been missed earlier but might be instructive today, building on new echoes and human “cries” of the moment, and creating strong feedback loops from scattered innovations that persist despite the paralysis at macro level.

This paper seeks to address the issues of literacy and globalization in a way that sets some foundations for reconstructing literacy strategies in the African context. “We are fumbling around in education because we know so little about the future and do not bother to know enough about the past.” (Ulich) We seldom invest in rethinking what general education should be about. How we view Africa and craft strategies to respond to its needs is our decision and hinges directly upon our convictions about the kind of future we wish for the continent.

The past two decades have generated many successes in citizen-based resource management, locally controlled peacemaking, rehabilitation of child soldiers, and the recovery of whole communities following brutal war and calamities such as drought, flood and cyclone. Research at the micro

level demonstrates the enormous ingenuity and energy that Africa's farmers, traders, and migrants put into managing and developing their activities. Against all this stands globalization understood as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness, and identified with a process of intensifying worldwide economic integration. But this contrasts sharply with the heightened nationalism, reassertion of geo-politics and national hegemony, strong states and borders rather than an opening of borders (such as in Europe).

Globalization is transforming the finance, currency, trade, employment and social systems, as well as modes of living, the formation of societies, and even training policies in very uneven ways. It is removing competence from the national context, redrawing the world economic map, dismantling institutions of social protection in developing countries, and further marginalizing the poor, recasting their deprived condition as a natural collateral damage along the path of progress!

Underlying these different conceptions are significant methodological disputes about how complex historical and social phenomena such as globalization are best understood and responded to. There must be a clearer understanding of the role that civil society is or should be playing to avoid unproductive tensions and to garner optimum use of stakeholders.

Along with globalization, the notion of information societies and knowledge economies has also emerged. However another information revolution with greater significance for Africa is a revolution in the way we think about issues. In other words, what is the MEANING of information, and what is its PURPOSE? How does the existing flood of information actually assist Africa to find its bearings in a globally competitive, predatory world system? Which concepts have outlived their utility and need to be reframed?

What is sometimes needed is to redefine information, to explore new ideas and concepts, and to give these ideas a meaningful direction, because ultimately, knowledge rests in people. For Africa and other developing countries, the challenge is how to build on people's local knowledge as concomitant to working with global knowledge and information.

Attempts at integrating formal and NFE and at implementing lifelong learning have also been far more difficult and complex than anticipated.

The fragmentation and biased assumptions underpinning formal and non-formal education and the polarized, partisan camps of professionals were grossly underestimated

History teaches us that literacy work requires wider goals such as nation-building, societal reconstruction or transformation, moral or political, so as to provide the crucial kick-starts for new directions in policy impetus, governments must consistently demonstrate their willingness to valorize the large and small initiatives that are implemented within the national or regional jurisdictions.

The Nordic Council of Ministers provides useful arguments. The first of these relate to the balance between *universal access to learning and specialized competences*. At a time when all countries are facing the challenges of global competition, of balancing economic and social development, of protecting human rights and the environment, it is clear that growth cannot be defined only in terms of the production of more and more goods. Growth has to be underpinned by ideas that combine an agenda for an expanded provision and development of levels of competence for the entire population, and which target the deepening of knowledge and skills needed to ensure cutting edge competence and renewal. The second relates to the problem of *uncertainty in and inadequacy of the traditional skills categories*, which together make the case for lifelong learning. The increasing need for an active and fully informed citizenry for democratic participation, coupled with the fluid nature of an internationalized labor market that requires flexible skills and versatile competences make an urgent and compelling case for lifelong learning. Africa can affirm that the educational requirements of the future are international understanding, linguistic skills, ability to interpret symbols, a spirit of cooperation and participation, flexibility, a holistic approach, the ability to use both sides of the brain, openness, and the motivation to seek constant development and learning. These qualities are human, rooted in upbringing, family ties, security, self-esteem, and inner strength... Tomorrow's adult learning must unite intellect and feelings, progress and caring, vision and substance, the ring and the arrow, fusing them to form a creative spiral. (Nordic Council of Ministers, 1995, p. 8)

A lifelong learning framework requires appropriate policy supported by concrete preparation and financial support at all levels and loci of the education system to encompass and validate in a purposive way formal learning in

schools, as well as non-formal learning ranging from structured on-the-job training to informal learning acquired through informal apprenticeships in homes and communities. For its part, lifelong learning must:

- Unify the broader perspective and deeper insight, capacity for action, specialist knowledge and wisdom to broaden the arena and locus of learning beyond the school to the community level.
- Help combat unemployment partly by improving competitiveness, and partly by re-appropriating the individual citizen's life span allowing for periods of paid work, education/training, and other activities.
- Lead to development of new methods and new tools to be applied in the field of adult education. These may include the acquisition of new skills, and the retooling of old roles. Bridges must be built between learning in the classroom and learning in unconventional places.
- Play a key role in the democratization of knowledge and combating the risk of technocratic dehumanization, the creation of dual societies, and the further deepening of the divide between those who do and don't know.

All these points resonate for Africa. The validation of indigenous knowledge systems as a legitimate knowledge base for literacy and a knowledge society must become a policy issue. If African countries have undertaken massive literacy campaigns before. Is it not possible to propose massive post-literacy campaigns with strict conditions linking social welfare provisions to literacy achievement over a given timeframe? Literacy efforts must be thought of as part of a long-term strategy. Short-term evaluation and scary statistics should not put practitioners and policy makers off from this track that requires patience and commitment.

Advocacy for literacy should devise flexible and easily adaptable tactics depending on the nature of the challenge. Strategic thinking may involve building new alliances at national and provincial levels, e.g. dialoguing with influential personalities in other sectors e.g. the police, the military, etc. who are humanistic in their inclinations, to bring them into direct advocacy for literacy. Finally, Africa has been beset by generations of negative prefixes such as "un"-developed, "non"-literate, "il"-literate, "under"-developed. In world politics, we have seen the tensions around the use of the word "Third" as in "Third World" brought out by Sauvy and used by developing countries during the Cold War, versus "Third" as in "hierarchy" which is insisted upon by the Western countries when they will not accept the South as an authentic voice. Once the ranking paradigm is established, Africa, Asia and South

America become second, third, and fourth “bests.” This political economy of statistics should be deconstructed.

2. Africa in the 21ST Century: Choosing our Future

In his preface to *Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom*, Robert Ulich writes, “we are fumbling around in education because we know so little about the future and do not bother to know enough about the past.” When we do look at the past, seldom do we invest in rebuilding the lost contact between the surface and the depth of civilization; or in giving some fresh thought as to what general education should be all about. The beautiful and complex tapestry of human significance is often submerged or hidden behind the often chopped up and atomistic activities of life and professional fields. “Nobody can inspire who does not have deep convictions; [convictions] are the results, but also the feeders of the spirit.” (Ulich, 1954, p. v)

How we view **Africa** and subsequently craft strategies to respond to its needs is our individual and collective decision. It hinges directly on our convictions about the kind of future we wish for the continent. We can take Africa as the heartbeat of crisis and disasters, the land of endless poverty, or we can proceed with a pragmatic diagnosis and purposeful prognosis to find possible pathways to the future.

Recurrent problems and failures that appear so crudely on the continent are frustrating. The core problems of the post independence period - poverty, hunger and disease - have mutated into a new pernicious world-scale trio of power, greed, and ignorance that has led to widening disparities in the quality of life and to environmental bankruptcy, leaving the bulging problem of poverty dangerously unresolved. World market prices for many of Africa’s raw materials are at an all time low (UNCTAD, 2004), and most countries remain dependent on foreign aid while HIV and AIDS deplete Africa’s next generation.

However, many underlying causes and processes that might lead to sustainable development are much better understood now than they were 50 years ago. Millennium debt cancellation, human rights and peacemaking are highly profiled through international civil society movements, generating hopes for more focused attention if not solutions (Toumlin & Wisner, 2005).

The emphasis on “fair free” trade in the global economy in reports like the *World Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalization* (2004) headed by the presidents of Finland and Tanzania, as well as continental moves within Africa, e.g. the formation of the African Union (AU), the infrastructure development program of NEPAD and the fermenting undercurrent of the African Renaissance, provide us with new grounds on which to confront existing problems with a future orientation.

Twenty years ago, Africa was free game for briefcase-wielding experts from the North pontificating to Africans about their problems and solutions, which seemed “obvious” to them. The ‘culture’ has not yet disappeared, but the terrain for self-diagnosis **has** changed, slowly but really. Africans are standing up and pinpointing the link between the impoverishment of African peasant farmers and their inefficient and unacceptable farm subsidies in Europe and the United States that make the life of a single cow in the West more valuable than an African rural farmer’s cow.

Africa **has** moved on. Mozambique, Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia are creating new dynamics for recovery in the aftermath of destabilization and civil war. Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation, has civilian government, and is playing a peacekeeping role in many parts of the continent. African approaches to conflict resolution and promotion of healing using traditional African jurisprudence of restorative justice have shifted world thinking.

The Rwanda crisis, the wars of the Great Lakes’ region, the self-destruction in Somalia, and the genocide in Darfur (western Sudan) continue to challenge us as Africans. But the continent continually displays its tremendous capacity for recovery and transformation. Botswana and Mozambique have both achieved progress against the odds and are today offered as examples of good governance to other parts of the world. (Ferraz & Munslow, 1999; Samatar, 1999)

African approaches to conflict resolution and promotion of healing using traditional African jurisprudence of restorative justice have shifted world thinking. For instance, *Ubuntu*, an African indigenous philosophy is taken seriously and is incorporated into syllabi of various educational institutions in different parts of the world. Its special significance is derived from the African mores: “I am human because you are human.” This philosophy emphasizes human dignity, combining the practices of compassion,

kindness, altruism and respect; it is well illustrated in the South African context in the manner in which African people call for reparation rather than retaliation, adopt a posture of understanding rather than vengeance, and practice *Ubuntu* rather than victimization. *Ubuntu* embodies the concept of mutual understanding and the active appreciation of the value of human difference. It requires knowing others to know oneself and to understand one's and others' place within a multicultural environment (Gevisser & Morris, 2002, p. 193).

The liberation of South Africa and the nascent constitutional democracy have given recognition to the concept of *Ubuntu* as the principal African indigenous world outlook and value system that underpins nation-building efforts.

There have been many successes during the past two decades in citizen-based resource management, locally-controlled peacemaking, rehabilitation of child-soldiers, and the recovery of whole communities following brutal war and calamities such as drought, flood and cyclone. Research at the micro level (Toumlin & Guèye, 2003) demonstrates the enormous ingenuity and energy that Africa's farmers, traders, migrants put into managing and developing their activities. Africa's stories of promises and successes rarely get into the press, yet this growing body of experience and promise holds the foundation and potential for new social contracts which would deliver informed and unwavering service to the continent.

Africa must speak up for its diversity (more than 1000 spoken languages), its size and scope (7000 km wide and 8000 km long), its ecology, culture, religious beliefs, practices, histories, social and political systems. It must reject the lumping together of a tremendous life force represented by 785 million inhabitants, into a homogeneous 'Sub-Saharan Africa,' a short step from denying historical depth, and rendering this immense continent into an easy control case for simplistic comparisons with other regions of the world (Reader, 1997, Toumlin & Wisner, 2005).

The real challenge for scholars, policy makers and agencies that support Africa is to balance the pragmatic acknowledgement of problems like limited resource allocations to literacy efforts, questionable political will, and Africa's position. To recognize the limitations of 'special projects' and 'success story' syndromes that trap interventions into narrow initiatives.

The celebration of “success stories” should not become pathology, but rather should culminate in strategic learning at policy and political levels.

The decision-makers and stakeholders should move boldly towards a strategic validation of the heuristics and wisdom gained from those initiatives as part of a ‘national commons.’ It is only by working systematically to sift through the bewildering array of village, community or thematic projects that valuable insights can reach policy makers for national or regional consideration and incorporation into active policy formulation processes. This is especially possible now that African states are recovering their ground (historically threatened by neo-colonialism, but more recently taken away under the structural adjustment programs) as custodians of public policy.

3. Globalization: the Midas Curse or Aladdin’s ‘Open Sesame’?

In Greek mythology, King Midas ruled over the people of Phrygia, an ancient nation in Asia Minor. In return for a favor, the god Dionysus offered to grant Midas a wish. Midas asked that all he touched turn to gold. His wish was granted, but when he touched food, drink or his beloved daughter, they all turned to gold. His blessing was a curse. He had limitless gold at the price of life (Korten, 1999).

Globalization is understood as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness. McGrew (2005) informs us that in the political economy literature, globalization is identified with a process of intensifying worldwide economic integration, which contrasts sharply with the wider social science views in which globalization is far more multi-dimensional. Underlying these two conceptions are significant methodological disputes about how to study and characterize complex historical and social phenomena such as globalization.

Globalization is often connected to notions of economic liberalization, internationalization, universalization, westernization or modernization. The emphasis is on economic interaction and interconnectedness (a rescaling of economic space and relative denationalization) marked by patterns of convergence and divergence. Underlying the shifts in economic scale are contemporary information technologies and infrastructures of communication transportation. Thus globalization is about **techniques** (technological

change and social organization), **economics** (markets and capitalism), and **politics** (ideas, interests and institutions).

Citing other skeptical views, McGrew balances this with positions taken by those observing recent events in the West where regionalization and triadization, i.e. the growing dominance of the EU, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and East Asia dominate trends in contemporary world economy. In the aftermath of September 11th 2001 for instance, there has been talk of ‘the end of globalization’, ‘de-globalization’, and the ‘post-global age’. The war on global terrorism appeared to presage a world of heightened nationalism, the reassertion of geo-politics and United States’ hegemony, the strong state, and the re-imposition of borders rather than an opening of borders as advocates of globalization keep on opining, confirming the suspicion that globalization is no more than ‘globaloney’ (McGrew, 2005).

Others argue that globalization needs closer vigilance. David Korten (1999) explores the link between globalization, the single world order, and the death of substantive democracy. He argues that capitalism triumphed over communism in the 1980s and in the 1990s, it triumphed over democracy. For those who grew up “in house” believing that capitalism is the foundation of democracy and market freedom, it has been a rude awakening to realize that under capitalism, democracy goes to the highest bidder, and global mega corporations larger than most states plan the market. In many African countries, the present era of globalization stretches back to the intensive bulldozing of national sovereignty by the World Bank and the IMF Structural Adjustment Programs in the 1980s. As deep doubt was nourished and then cast on the role of nation states, the new concept of “marketplace” for the production, distribution and consumption of goods was emphasized.

Globalization is transforming in very uneven ways finance, currency, trade, employment, social systems, modes of living, the formation of societies, and even training policies. For analysts of the fate of the State, globalization has been credited with removing competence from the national context: the untrammelled global flow of capital increasingly weakens the possibility that a nation-state can carry out an economic policy based on national premises. For those who still have memories of human solidarity, globalization has redrawn the world economic map, permanently marginalizing the poor, and recasting their condition as a natural collateral damage expected along the path of progress!

In the context of globalization, the true nature of power is not revealed, its changing contours are rarely explored and its goals and targets, rarely identified. Within nation states almost worldwide, the “silence of the democrats” is most astounding. In this regime of “see no evil, hear no evil”, democratic accountability and vision are replaced by a spacious gloss, doctored by an assortment of marketing and public relations experts and their fellow travelers, the journalists (Pilger, 1998, pps. 4-5). Instead, the echoes of revolt are sustained by civil society organizations, braving pepper sprays and rubber bullets as they protest against this official silence.

Devoid of any social and moral content, what began as “liberal containment” (Pilger, 1998, p. 62) gradually evolved into a global strategy of targeting countries with popular governments and nationalist leaders who sought a non-American way for their people. In Samora Machel’s Mozambique, the *Mandate for Leadership* Volume III (Hanlon, 1991) advised on targeting conservative American think-tanks, The Heritage Foundation, and gave policy recommendations for the Reagan and Bush I administrations.

The economic direction of every country would be planned, monitored and controlled in Washington; industries would be deregulated and sold off; public services such as water, health care and education would be diminished. Subsistence agriculture, which has kept human beings alive for thousands of years, would be converted to the production of foreign exchange-earning cash crops. In a strange twist of fate, “tax holidays” and other “incentives” such as sweat labor would be offered to foreign investors (Pilger, 1998, p. 63), by poor countries keen indeed to *become* and *remain* attractive to capital increases. Producing a mating dance with globalized capital seems to follow a routine choreographed by the ideology of neo-liberalism (Marais, 1998, p. 119).

Other views maintain that globalization is driven by market expansion that serves people and their rights. Markets are neither the first nor the last word in human development. Falk, for instance, argues that globalization is creating new threats to human security. Dismantling institutions of social protection has meant greater insecurity in terms of jobs and incomes. Moreover, pressures for global competitiveness have led countries and employers to adopt more precarious work arrangements. Far from being isolated incidents, financial crises have become increasingly common with the spread and growth of global capital flows (Falk, 1999).

Some would quickly point out that globalization opens people's lives to culture and its creativity, but the new culture carried by expanding global markets is disquieting, unbalanced, and heavily weighted from the rich to the poor countries. Deregulated capital markets, advances in technology and cheaper transport **have** heightened illicit trade in children, women, weapons, drugs and laundered money. On top of this, globalization has changed conflicts through the unfettered trafficking in weapons.

Increasing inequalities within and between countries are also attributed to globalization. In fact, it is argued that globalization tends to break down the division between the north and south, east and west into a dual economy system in which each region or country consists of skyscrapers and shantytowns existing side by side in a new psychic knot.

The new global language is English. Almost 80% of all websites are written in English yet less than one in 10 people worldwide speak it. Corporations define research agendas and tightly control their findings with patents, leaving poor people in the margins in a proprietary game defined on individualistic and corporatist terms that are largely incompatible with communalist and collective ownership (UNDP, 1999).

New patent laws not only pay scant attention to the knowledge of indigenous people, but have also facilitated the growth of a burgeoning cadre of bio-pirates, seeking to patent human and plant lives and turn them into private property. This has gone to the extent that patented terminator technologies are now designed to manufacture sterile hybrid seeds to replace indigenous seeds to ensure complete dependency on multinational companies (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1999).

David Korten leaves us with an image of a deep moral tension to grapple with in every situation during this era of globalization. He points out that as the 20th century ends, we are pulled back and forth between parallel universes operating according to different rules and values. In the one reality, we have the living world, consisting of all essential things to life: air, clean water, soil, trees, communities, places, animals, insects, sunlight and so on. It includes material artifacts such as tools, buildings and machinery.

The other universe is a creation of the human mind and has its own logic. It consists of money and the institutions of money, primarily corporations and

financial institutions and has no meaningful existence beyond the confines of our consciousness. Its institutions are designed to collapse without sustained growth in profits, stock prices, output, consumption, trade, investment, and tax receipts. Whatever exists today, more is required tomorrow. Everything, even life has a price. With time, we have come to imbue money with almost mystical significance.

4. Civil Society and Globalization

In all aspects of social development, civil society is rising up and gaining a unique and central role in the implementation of development projects and in monitoring development outcomes. In relation to State formation, civil society was seen as a “civilized political community” participating within a law-abiding framework. The existence of the rule of law lays the basis and enables the building of “civic partnership.” This understanding was gradually linked with the search for the most appropriate political forms of administration of justice (Williams, 2005).

Later on civil society was viewed as the intermediate realm between the state and the family. The state was the highest form of organization, and civil society was conducive to the realization of freedom. Gramsci’s idea was that the sphere of coercion and domination (represented by the State) was distinguished from the sphere of civil society in which hegemony is maintained through consensual rather than coercive mechanisms. Since Gramsci, the shift has been from civil society being associated with the State, to the current one of being juxtaposed to it.

Thus, over time, several distinctions have emerged:

1. Civil society as free association of a group of individuals in pursuit of a common aim. Membership is voluntary.
2. Civil society as distinct from the State, though boundaries between State and non-State may not always be so distinct. It is separate but below the state.
3. Civil society as a sphere distinct from the market (non-profit oriented).
4. Civil society as a political space inhabited by a variety of associations who negotiate argue, struggle for or against centers of political authority.
5. Civil society as a space for civility and a channel for democracy (for the construction of democratic politics, although some civil society may be far from civil as some include fascist and racist groups.

The term 'social movement' refers to a collection of individuals and groups united on the basis of shared values, interests and identities in the collective pursuit of common political goals. They mobilize and pool resources in order to effect social change. They may include experts including academic and research institutes, business lobby, CBOs, consumer groups, religious organizations, etc.

Some groups are **conformist** (supporting the status quo), **reformist** (accept fundamental premises of liberal capitalism whilst admitting that reform is essential), **transformative** (seek structural change) or **anarchist** (fragmentation and decapitation of the present system often without an alternative vision).

In the era of globalization however, civil society has moved beyond national borders due to cross-national linkages and international activities. One way of accounting for the existence of global civil society is by noting the intensity and extensity of interconnectedness between civic associations transcending domestic politics; by noting the existence of issues that are intrinsically trans-national in character, and by noting the nature of trans-national goals that the civic associations share. Here, the idea of a cosmopolitan citizenship is not so far fetched (Williams, 2005).

The recent increased awareness of civil society activities does not mean that they were previously absent from the global political economy. Indeed, the actions of the anti-globalization protesters present a highly visible face of civil society activism in the world economy. Despite their visibility, these actions represent only a small fraction of CSO work and their impact on global economic activity. Overall, globalization has generated a conflict among State and non-State actors and prompted a search for regulatory frameworks to lessen the impact of globalizing processes, and devise alternative forms of governance.

In terms of educational delivery, the involvement of civil society is very marginal in the formal schooling sector. It is much wider in the non-formal sector. The State has remained in full control of education while society goes along with what is decided rather than motivates these decisions.

Despite numerous examples of community participation and innovative approaches in many areas such as literacy and the education of girls and

women, the involvement of civil society in African education remains rather scattered and uncoordinated. Many statements in major conferences refer to the new partnerships between the state and civil society organizations (CSOs) or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, given the diversity of service providers, especially in the area of non-formal education, efficient management of the opportunities offered by such partnerships is crucial to the realization of the agreed goals. To be considered in the post-Dakar period are the following crucial pointers:

1. Consolidation of political will to build a more inclusive partnership by availing all the related resources to the common cause.
2. Greater involvement of civil society to address social problems related to educational issues,
3. Improvement of the understanding of the concept of partnership at all levels.
4. Establishment of effective mechanisms for coordination of project activities implemented by CSOs to avoid costly and inefficient disruptions of educational services (UNESCO, 2001, p. 65).

To sustain its flame, literacy today depends on civil society organizations working in partnership with governments and private sector, shedding light on forgotten public policy issues that have bearings on livelihood, quality of life and poverty reduction.

5. The Information Society, ICTs, and the Global Knowledge Economy

Following the agricultural revolution of the 18th century and the industrial revolutions in the 19th century, the 20th and 21st centuries are now marking eras of the “information revolution” underpinning the new knowledge economy. Post-industrial societies envisaged in this new “era” are dominated by information, services, and high technology more than the production of goods. Advanced industrial societies for instance, see a shift toward an increase in service sectors over manufacturing and production.

The information revolution refers to the dramatic changes taking place during the last half of the 20th century in which service jobs ranging from high technology, highly-skilled professions to low-skill jobs like short-order cooks are more common than jobs in manufacturing or agriculture. The product of skilled professionals is the information or knowledge they

provide. The information revolution itself began with the invention of the integrated circuit or computer chip. Those chips have now revolutionized the lives of many, running household and industrial appliances, providing calculators, computers, and other electronic devices to control our world.

The ramifications that this new kind of society will have for social life cannot yet be identified or assessed. Even the term “post-industrial” belies the fact that we do not yet quite know what will follow industrial societies or the forms they will take. But clearly changes such as the information super-highway permitting people to communicate using computers all around the globe, fax machines, satellite dishes, and cellular phones are changing how families spend their time, the kind of work they do, and many other aspects of urban lives (Drucker, undated).

From Technology to Concepts

Another information revolution has greater significance for Africa: a revolution in CONCEPTS and the way we think about issues. So far, for 50 years, the information revolution has centered on data - their collection, storage, transmission, analysis, and presentation. It has centered on the “T” in IT. What we need to be asking in Africa is: what is the MEANING of information, and what is its PURPOSE? How does the existing flood of information actually assist Africa find its bearings in a globally competitive, but also in a globally predatory world system? Which concepts have outlived their utility and need to be reframed?

We also know that while the “T” of Information Technology is greatly appreciated for advances to medical research and surgical procedures, for example, computer and information technology **have so far had practically no impact** on the decision of whether or not to build a new office building, a school, a hospital, or a prison, or in defining their function. They have had no impact on the decision to perform surgery on a critically sick patient or on the decision of the equipment manufacturer about which markets to enter and with which products or on that of a major bank to acquire another bank.

For top management or policy level tasks, IT has been a producer of data rather than a producer of knowledge, without realizing that what is sometimes needed is to **redefine information**; to explore new ideas and **concepts**, and to give these ideas a meaningful direction, because ultimately, knowledge rests in people rather than in ICTs, databases or services.

Nonetheless, there is a growing consensus that the 21st century will witness a quantum leap in the development and exploitation of ITs with corresponding ramifications for social and economic organization, the environment, culture and the development of a global information infrastructure. Policymakers and international organizations will be concerned about the extent to which this major transformation has benefited all aspects of society and the ways and means of achieving a truly global knowledge infrastructure.

Knowledge Rests in People

A recent review of the impact and utilization of ICTs worldwide shows that the problem is not simply the lag in the diffusion of these technologies or in accessing the new technologies and services; there are substantial problems in embedding and integrating these capabilities into new policy measures and strategies. Another problem also lies upstream, i.e. in acknowledging that knowledge primarily rests in people rather than in ICTs, databases or services. For Africa and other developing countries, the challenge is how to build on local knowledge while working with global knowledge and information.

It is an irony that the value of vernacular knowledge is noticed in developing countries only after developed nations have recognized its utility. Self-imposed barriers need to be removed if countries are to be a part of the growth of the knowledge economy. With the advancement of ICTs, the removal of this barrier becomes even more imperative for developing countries because knowledge flows and emerges where it is recognized, enriched and valued. ICTs can make this flow faster.

If we begin to rethink some of the fundamentals, i.e. that all humans are born with an innate and unique capacity to think, learn and relate, which is the basic ingredient in creating knowledge, then the foundation of knowledge societies has to start with incubating knowledge in human minds, a process dependent both on the individual and the external environment.

Developing countries need to **recognize, value and capitalize** on their human resources in order to identify the forms of knowledge that work for the poor and promote social equality. The wealth of knowledge, in turn will create opportunities for developing countries to emerge from dependence of low-cost labor as a source of comparative advantage, increasing

productivity and incomes. Avenues therefore need to be created for knowledge incubation, supplemented by capacity building and enabling policy frameworks. These will provide opportunities for people to use the power of their local knowledge in conjunction with acquired knowledge to propel their development.

From Information to the Knowledge Society

After the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, international interest in the growth and development paradigm of “knowledge societies” has grown. We are witnessing the emergence of a need for clarification of its aims as a project of society and here, an important distinction needs to be made.

According to some recently concluded series of studies (UNESCO, 2005), “knowledge societies” should not be confused with “information societies.” **Knowledge societies** contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and communities and encompass social, ethical and political dimensions. **Information societies** are based on technological breakthroughs that risk providing little more than “a mass of indistinct data” for those without the skills to benefit from them.

Cultural and linguistic diversities are also central to the development of knowledge societies, e.g. local and traditional knowledge can be invaluable for agriculture and health. This category of knowledge, often found in societies without a written language is particularly vulnerable. With one language estimated to be dying out every two weeks, much of this traditional knowledge is being lost. “Nobody should be excluded from knowledge societies, where knowledge is a public good, available to each and every individual” (UNESCO, 2005).

The transformation of existing societal structures by knowledge, as a core resource for economic growth, for employment, and as a factor of production, constitutes the basis for designating advanced modern society as a “knowledge society.” The transformation of global economies to knowledge economies therefore does not guarantee economic growth with “equity” or respect for diversity either within or between nations. This is because knowledge (despite its public good characteristics) becomes a much-valued resource for its economic benefits. The value accrued to individual users

through the availability of information is different, and has the potential to widen the economic and knowledge gap: picture here traditional holders of medicinal and pharmaceutical knowledge in developing countries who are often unaware of the global value of what they know or the potential value of absorbing the available information. What would a knowledge society with “equity” look like? In a perfect knowledge society **all forms of knowledge are recognized, valued and benefit** society.

Lifelong Learning in a Knowledge Economy

From a lifelong learning (LLL) and skills acquisition perspective, a knowledge-based economy relies primarily on the use of ideas rather than physical abilities, and on the application of technology rather than the transformation of raw materials or the exploitation of cheap labor. Global knowledge economy then transforms the demands for labor market throughout the world. It also places new demands on citizens who need more skills and knowledge to be able to function in their day-to-day lives.

Equipping people to deal with these changes requires a change in the organization of education and training. A LLL framework needs to encompass in a purposive way formal learning in schools, non-formal learning ranging from structured on-the-job training to informal learning acquired through informal apprenticeships in homes and communities. The issue of “access whenever needed” then becomes a reality crafted into policy strategies (World Bank, 2003).

ICT can facilitate learning by doing. It can vastly increase the information resources available to learners, thereby changing the relationship between teachers and students. In Chile and Costa Rica, ICT has helped create a more egalitarian relationship between teacher and learner: learners make more decisions about their work, speak their minds more freely, and receive consultations rather than lectures (World Bank, 2003).

However, the introduction of computers in the learning environment does not suffice to explain these outcomes. Appropriate policy supported by concrete preparation and investment such as in training of teachers or instructors, provision of qualified technicians and support staff, funding of maintenance costs, access to the internet etc., all basic requirements taken for granted in the richer countries.

ICT has already forced decentering within formal institutions as distance education and distance learning become increasingly common and available at convenient locations, at user-friendly times of the day, and best of all, at competitive prices. However, these have also brought challenges of governance, quality assurance, quality monitoring. In many industrialized countries, governments that once focused exclusively on public financing and public provisions of education and training are now trying to create flexible policy and regulatory frameworks that encompass a wider range of institutional actors. These frameworks include legislation and executive orders; arrangements for ensuring coordination across ministries and other institutions involved in education and training activities; and mechanisms for certifying the achievements of learners; monitoring institutional system performance, and promoting learning pathways.

It is also recognized that traditional measures of education progress such as enrolment ratios and public spending as a proportion of GDP do not capture important parts of lifelong learning. Similarly, total education spending includes more than just public spending. Traditional indicators also fail to capture learning in the non-formal and informal sectors.

National systems need better and clearer benchmarking systems for lifelong learning outcomes. Continuous reform is needed to accelerate the pace of reform and to deepen the extent to which fundamental transformations of learning are carried out. Reforms that are inflexible and do not consider the rapidity of change will be declared obsolete even before they have seen the light of day.

6. International and Regional Frameworks on Education, Development and Africa's Renewal

The African Union

The African Union (AU) is the highest governance organ in Africa and is crucial for political mobilization. Founded in July 2002, it is the inter-governmental organization successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The heads of state and of government of the OAU issued the Sirte Declaration on September 9, 1999, calling for the establishment of an African Union, followed by the Lomé summit (2000), which adopted the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and the Lusaka summit in 2001, which adopted the plan for the implementation of the African Union. Modeled after the European

Union (but currently with powers closer to the Commonwealth of Nations), its aims are to help promote democracy, human rights and development across Africa, especially by increasing foreign investment through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) program.

The AU was to accelerate the process of integration on the continent so that it could play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing the multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded by certain negative aspects of globalization.

The AU is inspired by:

- The continent's aspiration and commitment to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation among the peoples of Africa.
- Its struggles for political independence, human dignity and economic emancipation.
- Contemporary multifaceted challenges that confront the continent and its peoples in the light of the social, economic and political changes taking place in the world.
- The need to accelerate the process of implementing the treaty establishing the African Economic Community in order to promote the socio-economic development of Africa and to face more effectively the challenges posed by globalization.
- The need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among our peoples.
- The acknowledgement that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda.
- The need to promote and protect human and peoples' rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture, and to ensure good governance and the rule of law.

The AU has a number of official bodies including the Pan-African Parliament located in Midrand, South Africa; the African Commission located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the African Court of Justice; the Executive Council; the Assembly (which is like a cross between the European Council and the United Nations General Assembly); the Permanent Representatives' Committee; the Peace and Security Council, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council.

The AU has adopted a new anthem, which begins “Let us all unite and celebrate together *O sons and daughters of Africa, flesh of the sun and flesh of the sky, Let us make Africa the tree of life.*” It is the highest political formation on the continent, and any issue that is endorsed at its level has the possibility of gaining currency and deep respect within the continent.

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)

NEPAD is a vision and strategic framework for Africa’s renewal. It arose from the mandate given to the five initiating Heads of State: Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa by the OAU to develop an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa. The 37th Summit of the OAU in July 2001 formally adopted the strategic framework document. NEPAD is designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent: escalating **poverty**, **underdevelopment** and **marginalization** of Africa needed a new radical intervention to develop a vision that would guarantee Africa’s renewal spearheaded by African leaders.

The primary objectives of NEPAD are to eradicate poverty; to place African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development; to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy, and to accelerate the empowerment of women. NEPAD stresses among other things:

- Good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development.
- African ownership and leadership and broad and deep participation by all sectors of society.
- Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people.
- Partnership between and amongst African peoples.
- Acceleration of regional and continental integration.
- Building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent.
- Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world.
- Ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the millennium development goals and other agreed development goals and targets.

NEPAD is a holistic, comprehensive and integrated sustainable development initiative for the revival of Africa that emphasizes among other things,

human development with a focus on health, education, science and technology and skills development; and the building and improving infrastructure, including ICT, energy, transport, water and sanitation.

It stresses that Africa must adopt and implement principles of democracy and good political economic and corporate governance, and that the protection of human rights must become properly entrenched in every African country. Effective poverty eradication programs can accelerate the achievement of set African development goals, particularly human development. Poverty is more than just a lack of material things. Poor people are excluded from decision-making and from basic services the state ought to give. It is an urgent matter of basic human rights, social justice and sound economics as a healthy and skilled workforce is more productive and fulfills its potential with dignity. Both the Millennium Development Goals and the EFA framework for Action provide a sound basis upon which provisions for basic education for children, youth and adults can be made.

The African Renaissance

Because the “African Renaissance” so easily provokes belittling comparisons with the European Renaissance, some background analysis may help place its relevance to the social reconstruction and affirmation efforts of the continent in the present and future.

It has been said that at independence, most national governments of Africa were rightly convinced that they held a responsibility to promote the social, political and economic welfare of their people. To fulfill this obligation, governments took over to a considerable degree the socio-economic planning of their countries, which they supervised at national level. It was thought that only in a society where the principal means of production were controlled by the State could socio-economic progress be viable.

Hence, during those years, justice and social progress meant socialism. Most African countries tried to set in place strong centralized states with elaborate bureaucratic structures extending from top to bottom, with one political party influencing every sphere of society’s life, etc. These were seen as the requisites for harnessing all energies and resources in order speedily to end Africa’s economic backwardness and solve its formidable ethnic problems (Tusabe, 1999).

Nevertheless, after more than four decades of independence, Africa is still largely socially, economically and politically underdeveloped. The only form of development that can be asserted undeniably is underdevelopment. The majority of Africans live under dictatorships, in poverty in the form of poor health, unemployment, sustained hunger and malnutrition. Today's environmental decay does not give much hope. Ethnic violence is a living experience in most parts of Africa; military coups have become a traditional phenomena of changing political power; foreign aid projects have collapsed, and there is widespread evidence of large scale corruption in most of Africa's social, political and economic institutions (Tusabe, 1999).

As Africans seek to find the causes of this, an increasingly common answer to the inquiry is that Africa's effort at development was built on the **wrong foundations**. The strongly centralized structures adopted at independence with their elaborate bureaucratic structures extending from top to bottom together with centralized economic direction, were doomed to reach an impasse because any strong regimentation of society's activities from the top carries the danger of treating human dignity with disrespect and underestimates the power of democracy. Indeed, it reduces individuality to a common standard and suffocates the power of human ingenuity.

Through rigid laws, the State hampered the development of voluntary social groups and associations, which would have contributed to the development of their communities. In the long run, such restrictive policy has proven detrimental to the entire socio-economic fabric in Africa. It is argued that since Africa's pursuit of progress was built on the wrong foundations, there is a need to rebuild Africa on a new foundation. Hence a need for social reconstruction aiming at decentralizing socio-economic planning and management, and effectively integrating the people into developmental activities through civil society.

The African Renaissance therefore presents a conceptual jar holding together the agenda of moral renewal on the continent. Its attention to the "reciprocal other" and its focus on the person and community illustrate a movement to retrieve and preserve unique African cultural and civilization values and make them the basis of a modern society.

Knowing that African history has been distorted by colonial powers in their quest for domination of the African continent, the African Renaissance can

be seen as a search for a normative ethical concept of the human person as being essential to motivating the functioning of African society.

The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound, quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions: income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion, while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights: the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.

At the World Summit of September 2005 in New York, world leaders committed to adopt and implement by 2006, comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. Such "MDG-based poverty reduction strategies" were a core recommendation of Investing in Development. The UN Millennium Project has worked extensively with countries already engaged in preparing MDG-based poverty reduction strategies.

The MDG goals are different in that they are time bound, measurable, based on global partnerships, and stress the responsibility of developing countries for getting their house in order. Leadership at the highest levels in both developing and developed countries, civil society and major development institutions embraces them. From the literacy point of view, the crucial link is with the MDGs objective of poverty reduction and livelihood questions. Around this, substantial mobilization of political and financial capital is possible if literacy is linked with poverty reduction. Taken together, these frameworks provide for the literacy activist and policy maker alike: legitimate reference points upon which to anchor any mobilization or sustainable policy initiative.

The Dakar Goals on Education for All

Education for All (EFA) is a key guiding principle for the provision of education. Importantly it encompasses the provision of educational opportunities for people in all regions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The six Dakar goals aim at:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

In order to reach these EFA Goals, governments should prepare national action plans with the participation of civil society. Greater space should be given to civil society for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. A global initiative should be established immediately to mobilize the additional resources needed to achieve EFA; and an authoritative annual monitoring report should be instituted to assess progress towards these goals.

From a literacy point of view, the apprehension is the extent to which Dakar ends up like the Jomtien Declaration, whose implementation over the decade leading to Dakar proved catastrophic for the non-formal education sector when "Education for All" became collapsed into "schooling for all."

7. African Basic Education and Literacy in a Globalizing World

Literacy remains the core skill and competence for building societies worldwide, especially in Africa. Literacy has been at the heart of UNESCO's concerns and a core mandate. When this is combined with the fact that the right to education is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, followed by a succession of international declarations, statements of commitments and pledges over the past 50 years, literacy should be the least difficult of mandates to execute!

The basic agreement at the Jomtien conference on EFA was to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade. The focus in the Declaration was on meeting basic learning needs to develop strategies for the 21st century. The World Declaration on EFA went far beyond a renewed commitment to earlier targets set for basic education. It spoke for universal access to education as a fundamental right of all people, for fair and equitable treatment of all learners – infants, children, youth, and adults. It underlined the need for better learning environments, for new partnerships, for improved quality in educational procedures and results, and for more resources as well as improvement in resource utilization. But when the time came for its implementation, EFA became “schooling for all,” nearly burying alive the non-formal sector in the process.

Today, the EFA movement has once again put literacy high on the agenda among the six Dakar goals by defining it as an essential component of basic quality education. Before that, a world conference held in Hamburg (1997), focused on the issue of adult education and literacy. Then as now, literacy was framed within a broader context beyond the original three Rs of the 1960s. In the 1980s and 1990s, debates emerged about what literacy really means, how it is acquired and how it is applied. Literacy as a technical skill was distinguished from literacy as a set of practices defined by social relations and cultural processes.

The EFA Declaration introduced the concept of basic learning needs, featuring literacy in a continuum encompassing formal and non-formal education for children, youth and adults. This was buttressed by the ‘four pillars of education’ of the 1996 Delors Report (learning to know, to do, to live together, and to be), which were solidly linked with the notion of lifelong learning.

In all these generations of declarations, literacy is portrayed as a key element of lifelong learning in its lived context. By linking such plural definitions of literacy with citizenship, cultural identity, socio-economic development, human rights and equity, these proclamations call for the context sensitive and learner-centered provision of literacy along with the establishment of literate learning environments.

Over the five development decades, Africa has witnessed some sparkling successes of literacy campaigns such as those in Tanzania and Mozambique showing that the way literacy is defined nationally influences the goals, strategies and programs adopted and designed. Its definition also determines how progress and achievements in overcoming illiteracy are monitored and assessed.

At Dakar (April 2000), governments, donors, and civil society organizations reaffirmed the global commitment to education for all and pledged to achieve six goals by the year 2015 (World Education Forum, Dakar 2000). EFA was further endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly as part of the Millennium Development Goals (A/RES/56/326) and as part of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/RES/55/210#17). This resolution emphasized the crucial role of both formal and NFE in enabling those living in poverty to take control over their lives. By then, literacy was re-established not only as a component of basic quality education, and as a foundation for lifelong learning, but also as a lifelong process.

UNESCO has furthermore recommended several strategies for literacy work at country level with a view to achieving education for all. These include placing literacy at the centre of national education systems and development efforts; giving equal importance to formal and non-formal education modalities; promoting environments supportive of literacy; ensuring community involvement as well as their ownership; building partnerships at all levels; and developing systematic monitoring and assessment supported by research and data collection (UNESCO, 2004).

Several facts remain relatively unchanged. One of them is that over 800 million adults without literacy competence worldwide. Ten years after Jomtien, the rates of illiteracy have remained generally very high compared in Africa to other regions. Women are the worst affected, with illiteracy rates reaching up to 80 or 90%. Of the 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 39 submitted information on the state of literacy in 1999. One-third of these had very high literacy rates (over 75%). But another one-third had literacy rates of 46% or lower.

Resource allocations, both nationally and internationally, remain eschewed in favor of formal education. Approaches to literacy delivery remain fragmented and weakly coordinated. For some reason, literacy retention levels remain

quite low, and in some instances, literacy seems to be perceived as irrelevant relative to the costs in terms of time and effort that have to be put into it.

Enabling factors to the improvement of the conditions of basic education have been identified at systems level as political will, long term planning, decentralization, integrating and targeting of specific groups such as women and girls. Innovations such as the integration of various forms of education, the use of non-conventional staff, the creation of community schools and experimental approaches to the curriculum have been the starting point for important developments in the management of education and its effects (UNESCO, 2004).

But from a mobilization point of view, the wide gap between repeated, underlined, and re-emphasized wordings in international declarations, and disjointed, fragmented action at points of implementation, stands out as a crucial disconnect in the chain. Practitioners and policy makers now realize that though the declarations may have come easy, the infrastructure for negotiating and implementing the complex initiatives implied in the declarations are slow to put in place, if ever at all. Where some of the ideas in the declarations were inserted into national policies, problems arose in actually managing the emergent programs.

Attempts at integrating formal and NFE and implementing LLL in practice have, for instance, been far more difficult and complex than anticipated. The degree of fragmentation and biased assumptions that underpin the formal and non-formal system, along with the polarized and partisan camps of professionals aligned to these sectors was grossly underestimated and evidently not planned or catered for. LLL seemed unproblematic until the differential interpretations of its meaning and related questions of resource availability for its implementation emerged. With pressures from the globalization and related market ideology, lifelong learning was soon collapsed right before our very eyes - into skills training very much akin to the vocational paradigm that was so well registered for its shortcomings decades ago.

Over time it became very difficult for policymakers to distinguish the nuanced but profound distinction between the market-driven notion of human resources, and the more holistic, developmentally driven notion of the 'human being' (as in sustainable human development). In the ensuing contest between competing interpretations of 'lifelong learning', the human

resource school of thought, well endowed with financial resources, gradually won, and their version quickly permeated the critical spaces of public policy. Human resources soon took precedence over the human being.

Taking a step back and looking at the wider patterns, it is possible to discern that in the larger globalizing landscape, the economist logic that drives globalization has not only led to a proliferation of management schools routinely using this jargon of 'human resource', but has also been promoting the primacy of total productivity. These two concepts work well in industry and private sector, but are incommensurate with the nature of the challenges facing national and local systems, including rural and cultural development. As this logic took root, human labor began to undergo further and deeper processes of depersonalization and de-socialization.

Petrella (1997) captures this situation most aptly when he states that the individual becomes recast as a "corporate asset", a "human resource" with two consequences. At the first level, human labor at both the individual level (the worker), and at the collective level (groups and categories of workers) is no longer an effective interlocutor in dialogue, negotiations, conflicts and agreements with capital in its individual form (the capitalist) or in its organized form (groups, categories of capitalists). Having become a "resource", human labor ceased to be a social subject. Instead, it was to be organized by the "capital-enterprise" and the "economy society" to make the *greatest possible contribution*, at the *least possible cost* to the company.

At the second level, stripped of all significance as a social subject, the human resource becomes an object, positioned outside any political, social or cultural context. This new "atom" has no voice in society, has little or no civic, political or cultural rights. Its main, if not only goal is to contribute to the company's smooth running and further development and profit building. In short, it has become a means whose monetized usage and exchange value is determined by the company's balance sheet. Positioned at the center of the battle between total productivity and total quality, the human resource is organized, managed, upgraded, downgraded, recycled, and above all, abandoned by the enterprise whenever deemed expedient. Having become a 'resource' the working man no longer has as his alternate the man of capital. His alternate reference point today is the machine, usually a so-called "intelligent" machine, and intelligent tool, a robot. It is in relation to the tool that his continued presence and or replacement are determined... (Petrella, 1997, pps. 21-22)

The same problem affected LLL. Started by UNESCO in the late 1960s, LLL drew from the humanistic tradition, and was connected with democracy and self-development. In the 1960s, pressure for expansion of educational opportunities had strong social roots. A more even distribution of investment in education and training would equalize individual earnings. This assumption was important because it linked the economic justification for education reform with social demands for equality of opportunities. It was democratization through education. As the position of UNESCO weakened in the late 1970s into the 1980s, the OECD obtained an increasing influence on education policies, especially in the Western countries. It was to be the beginning of the gradual erosion of the commitment to equality and the total dominance of the economic imperative. The new “lifelong learning” to emerge from this period was based on the neo-liberal conception regarding education as an investment in “human capital” and hence the focus on “human resource development”.

The justification for support for adult education was given only in economic terms, and nothing was said regarding issues of social justice. The humanistic and democratic tradition was more or less replaced by a version framed within a new political economic imperative. The current discussions about education accentuate highly developed human capital, and science and technology to support economic restructuring and greater international competitiveness through increased productivity (Korsgaard, 1997).

New directions mean that policymakers must show that they comprehend these fault lines and what they do to the visions to which they committed themselves. The clues to the future cannot be found in the failures and successes of individual village programs regardless of whether these programs or projects were initiated by a government department or by an NGO. It is the degree to which the initiatives feed back into the national vision that can make the difference in terms of their chances for “going to scale”.

If the projects are to provide the crucial kick-starts for new directions in policy impetus, then governments must consistently demonstrate their willingness to valorize in an on-going manner, the small and big initiatives that are implemented within the national or regional jurisdictions. Governments and the other service providers also need to check that the learning loops within which shared values, insights, challenges, experiences can be traded,

are clearly established. In other words, the relationship must become conscious and purposive rather than ad hoc.

In pointing out the difference between policy and policy action, Nelson Mandela drew attention to the South African situation. In the foreword to the *Spirit of the Nation: Reflections on the South Africa's Educational Ethos* (Mandela, in Asmal & James, 2002), he posited the struggle against apartheid as one of the great moral struggles of the 20th century. The subsequent triumph against it can be seen as a success of humane values, an assertion of the common humanity of a people, and an affirmation of human dignity as primordial. The country's history enjoins its people and the rest of humanity to find ways of living and working together to create the conditions for realizing the ideals of equality and dignity for all. This approach to nation building has been under-girded by a series of institutions created to support its consolidation and ensure the successful implementation of the noble values and related policies.

However, as Mandela says, institutions as a system of elements or rules are *only expressions of democratic intent*. Core social values do not propagate themselves. Adults have to be reminded of those values and children must acquire those values (pps. ix-x) in order that appropriate interventions supporting those institutions are generated and structured in an on-going basis. The challenge is therefore to move society from routine injustice to constitutionally ordained justice, to enter boldly into the realm of moral conduct, to accommodate diversity, and embrace the notion of active compassion and reciprocal human caring (Asmal & James, 2002). To achieve this, the different pieces of the infrastructure must consciously co-create the pathway, reading themselves against the national constitution, against national policies and agreed norms, and citizens' expectations.

8. The Learning Challenge: Insights from other Histories

As we contemplate new futures, the past can provide useful insights. Experiences from different parts of the world tell us that education, like technology, is not a mere exterior aid to personal development. It leads to interior transformations of consciousness. At the core of education lies literacy, which changes the way we perceive, record and transmit information to one another, and across generations. It also changes the way we speak and think,

or structure our experience. Literacy therefore holds the key, not only to the alleviation of poverty, but also to the promotion of self-respect and independence. Literacy contains the pin-codes, and education represents the modality for what Jeffrey Sacks has called the democratization of human dignity (Sacks, 2002, p. 125).

According to Sacks, we need to have a long-term perspective and thus patience when we contemplate dealing with issues that transform human existence. Literacy efforts undertaken today will not yield results the next day. Its impact will only be known many decades later. History from different parts of the world, including from Europe, reminds us that widespread change can best be activated through reading materials.

Thus, when we consider how we may give impetus to 21st century African processes and especially as we acknowledge the nearly cataclysmic situation of Africa as the continent seeks to simultaneously renew itself, it may be useful to examine how literacy was used in similar situation elsewhere.

H.S. Bhola has defined a national literacy campaign as “a mass approach that seeks to make all adult men and women in a nation, literate within a particular time frame.” A campaign suggests urgency and combativeness; sometimes it is the moral equivalent of a war (cited in Graff, 1995, p. 270). Indeed, the idea of a campaign to promote massive and rapid increases in rates of literacy is not unique to the twentieth century. **Major and largely successful campaigns to raise levels of literacy have taken place over the past 400 years since the Protestant Reformations:** USSR (1919-1939), Vietnam (1945-1977), the People’s Republic of China (1950s-1980s), Burma (1960s-1980s), Brazil (1967-1980), and Tanzania (1971-1981). Only the Cuban literacy campaign took one year or less. The Nicaraguan literacy campaign lasted only about five months.

They all share common elements that may be instructive for our purposes.

- In terms of rationale, large-scale efforts to provide literacy have not been tied to the level of wealth, industrialization, urbanization or democratization of a society, nor to a particular type of political regime. Instead, they have been *related to efforts of centralizing authorities to establish a moral or political consensus*, and over the past 200 years, *nation building*.
- They have been part of larger *transformations in societies*. These transformations have attempted to integrate individuals into more comprehensive political or religious communities.

- They have involved the mobilization of large numbers of learners and teachers by centralizing authorities that have used elements of *both compulsion and social pressure* to propagate a particular doctrine.
- Campaigns, since the Protestant Reformations of the 16th century in Western Europe, have used a variety of media and specially developed materials commonly involving a *special cosmology of symbols, martyrs, and heroes*.
- They have often been *initiated and sustained by charismatic leaders* and usually depend on a special “strike force” of teachers to disseminate a particular faith or worldview.
- A belief in the efficacy of literacy and the printed word has been an *article of faith*. Then as now, reformers and idealists, shakers and movers of societies and historical periods have viewed literacy as a means to other ends - whether a more moral society or a more stable political order. No less today than 400 years ago, individuals have used literacy to attain their own goals.

In the 20th century, particularly during the period from the 1960s, literacy has been deemed a process of *consciousness-raising and human liberation*. Just as frequently, literacy is affirmed in relation to other goals (even though these may be national development and social order goals defined by elites), not as an end in itself (Graff, 1995, p. 270).

What distinguishes 20th century literacy campaigns from earlier educational movements (in Germany, Sweden and Scotland, which spanned over 200 years) is the telescoped period of time of the mobilization.

What we learn is that piecemeal literacy without any concrete mission or vision may not be enough to raise a society out of its post-war or cataclysmic moment. Rather, wider goals such as nation building, societal reconstruction or transformation, raising moral or political consensus are essential mobilizing tools in successful literacy campaigns. If we distinguish between literacy campaigns of the 19th century and earlier and later campaigns, interesting distinctions also emerge.

Earlier Campaigns

These campaigns were preceded by *more gradual changes* such as the spread of religious doctrine, growth of market economies, rise of bureaucratic and

legal organizations, and emergence of national political communities (e.g. Sweden after a series of great wars; and in the US where competition for souls among various religious denominations is accompanied by a belief in a republican government with its need for an educated citizenry).

There was a profound *cataclysmic triggering event or rationale* e.g. a religious reformation (i.e. joined to the grand design of a spiritual renewal of state, society and the individual) or political revolution, the gaining of political independence (anti-Catholicism spurred the movement to educate the populations on principles of Protestantism; while military defeat contributed to renewed emphasis on literacy in Prussia in 1807, France in 1871, and Russia in 1905; the abolition of serfdom in Russia in 1861 unleashed enormous energies both at the local and at State levels).

Linkages that were made by elites of both progressive and conservative leanings between *literacy and the process of modernization* in strengthening the state also gave force to literacy campaigns (sometimes the process of becoming literate is seen in relation to nation building, evangelical Protestantism and technological innovation). Wealth and resource levels have not been a critical factor in shaping the scope and intensity of a war on ignorance. Rather, it is the *political will of national leaders to effect dramatic changes in personal belief, group behaviors and major institutions emerge as the key factors*.

Luther's dilemma was whether the literacy effort should focus on the young or the old, a dilemma that persists. Literacy is seen as a *badge, a sign of initiation and endorsement* into a select group and or larger community. *State direction was the staple*.

In Sweden, the unique feature was that *literacy was based on reading but seldom on writing* with a special emphasis on the educational role of the mother in the home. This explains women's high literacy rate at par with men.

In the US, no central government orchestrated a policy that brought power and resources of the nation-state, but the impetus was generated by the *competition of religious denominations*, the proliferation of religious and secular presses, and the exhortation of leading secular and clerical authorities as well as local civic activities. Most activities were organized and directed by individual states rather than the federal government.

Certification ensured status and recognition. For instance in Russia, new recruits who could produce a primary school certificate or demonstrate reading ability had their terms of enlistment reduced. Social compulsion and positive inducements were common in Sweden where once a year every household was gathered to take part in an examination supervised by the local clergy in reading and knowledge of the Bible. The adults who failed the examination could be excluded from communion and *denied permission to marry*. In Scotland and Germany the Church had the right to *exclude the grossly ignorant from communion*. Other social pressures included efforts to *shame the illiterates*.

Carefully prepared materials were developed to convey prescribed content. Attempts were also made to simplify texts and use mnemonic and heuristic devices. *Pedagogy was by basic drill and repetition with a goal of uncritical internalization of revealed truth or doctrine or unquestioning patriotism*. The experience was that of “training to be trained”, socialization in discipline, orderliness and obedience (Graff, pps. 274-285).

Later Campaigns

There is common reference to the *creation of the “New Socialist Man”* in a society organized according to the principles of cooperation, egalitarianism, altruism, sacrifice and struggle (the USSR, Nicaragua, Cuba, China, Vietnam, Ethiopia). Despite initial large-scale efforts of both the young and adults, *a narrowing eventually occurs with greater emphasis placed on the formal education of the young*. Literacy and basic education over time become conflated or confused with State-organized and regulated systems of schooling (Graff, pps. 274-275).

In Tanzania, *literacy is linked directly with individual consciousness raising and social change* (i.e. the change they want and how to bring it about). In Brazil, *conscientization* was the overt goal of literacy.

Overall, the spirit is captured in the Declaration of Persepolis, which states that the goal of literacy is not just the process of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also a contribution to the liberation of man and his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions and aims of society in which man lives. It also stimulates initiative and participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it,

and of defining the aims of an authentic human development (in Graff, pps. 275-280). These words formed the basis for a number of literacy campaigns (Cuba, Tanzania, Nicaragua, and Guinea Bissau). However, the translation of these goals into outcomes remains very much open ended, and depends on the mechanisms, methods, materials and teachers that are employed in large-scale literacy efforts.

National and political will of the power elites and individual charisma of political or revolutionary leaders feature prominently. The symbols attached to these leaders are those of salvation, redemption and recreation of society that had suffered under colonialism.

The issue of language of instruction still haunts literacy providers. Gillette notes the opposition in participating countries in the EWLP to the use of international funds to privilege dominant languages over minority languages in national settings. This raised sensitive cultural and political questions. Only in Tanzania where Kiswahili was used, was the language used positively to make the diverse identities cohere into a national identity. The question of language of instruction leads to the question of whose language and values form the medium and content of a literacy campaign.

The use of selected primers helped to awaken people to examine their past exploitation and to their role as agents of change in a society now reorganized along radically different principles.

In terms of methodology, andragogy [facilitation approach] is recognized as a new approach to instruction. Andragogy stressed an inductive approach using adults' own ideas and insights; experiential learning that relates to the prospects of applying new acquired knowledge and skills, and a variety of techniques and a flexible approach that reflect the fact there is "no magic solution to the problem" (Graff, pps. 285-287).

The approach Africa needs is a broadly based literacy that connects critical thinking with the skills of critical reading and writing in politics, economics and social relations as well as in a larger cultural sphere, a literacy no longer limited to alphabetical abilities and to a historical basis that is static and acculturative. Critical literacy recognizes the significance of common knowledge, but sees it as changing and transforming, not as inflexible and timeless. It does not separate "skills" from "content", but strives to link

them dynamically. The critical literacy we are seeking must be based not only on a radically revised and more demanding curriculum, but also on an epistemology and theoretical critique that grasps the centrality of ambiguity, complexity and contradiction to literacy and to life itself (Graff 1989, pps. 51, 334).

The relationship between the “word” and the “world” is crucial because reading the world always precedes reading the word and vice versa. Even the spoken word always flows from our reading of the world. However, more than this, reading the world is also circumscribed today and acted upon by text that has been written about that same world. This means that literacy should also entail the two levels of reading the world as we see it, and as texts written elsewhere have forced an image of it upon us. Critical literacy sways uncomfortably between emancipation and deconstruction, as well as affirms potentials that literacy can bring along.

According to Shor, learners’ diverse cultures, speech and thoughts make up the grounds on which a de-socializing curriculum first plants its feet. The emphasis should therefore be on developing interdisciplinary literacy (integrating reading, writing, critical dialogue, and cooperative learning across the curriculum). Major dangers come from overloading concepts (semantic overload) with expectations that they cannot fulfill.

Sharing the understanding that today’s crises in education and literacy are one of historical purpose and meaning, Giroux urges critique to be more specific. Reconstructing literacies should entail a commitment to **historical education**; development of new **perspectives** and **critique** that are specific; a **consciousness** of the sum effort and sacrifice which the present has cost the past and which the future is costing the present; remembrance (acknowledging that while the past is not for dwelling upon, it is a reservoir of experience both of tragedy and hope from which we draw in order to act); and imagination, which commands that we recognize the present as history and thus consider the structure, movement, and possibilities in the contemporary world that shows us how we might act to prevent the barbaric and develop the humanistic (Giroux and Kaye, 1989).

As Africa seeks to maneuver through the rapidly changing world, the way information is recorded and transmitted will affect the ability to cope and participate in opportunities that globalization brings about or to mitigate

the negative consequences of globalization. In a democratizing and globalizing world, access to knowledge is the basis of a free society. However, it is also a feature of globalization that huge profits today go to those with ideas, to owners of concepts, and to those with intellectual and creative skills. Education investment with literacy as its nucleus should be seen within a lifelong perspective.

9. Affirming the Amazing Sparks in Ongoing African Literacy Programs

Moving away from history and theory, the MDGs, NEPAD, Dakar goals all acknowledge the existence of the acute impact of poverty on human development. Most of these frameworks are rather thin on practical ways to confront this poverty. Yet, somewhere in the attempts to confront poverty from the perspective of education, many interesting cases shed light on the unique intersection between training in livelihood skills and basic education for illiterate and semi-literate youths and adults. Livelihood skills refer to knowledge, skills, and methods used to obtain food, water, clothing, and shelter necessary for survival and well being whether the economy is subsistence, monetized, or a mixture of both.

Important questions include how effective training in livelihood skills can be developed as an add-on to large-scale literacy programs; do those programs that add literacy education to usually small-scale livelihood skills provide more effective combinations? Studies such as those conducted by the German Adult Education Association seem to conclude that combinations of livelihood skills training and adult literacy education do help improve poor people's livelihood.

This conclusion is drawn from the “empowerment effect” i.e. that learners acquire enhanced confidence and social resources from literacy training that help them take initiatives to improve their livelihoods. Literacy and numeracy skills also create advantage in the market transactions in the informal economy, and are thus critical for successful entrepreneurship. Thirdly, more productive agricultural and livestock practices result from learning new vocational skills at whose base lies literacy (see for instance Society for the Development of Textile Fibers - SODEFITEX, Senegal). These skills in turn also open us pathways to securing credit (Oxenham *et al.*, 2002).

Five very useful program categories for disaggregating implementation approaches on the ground have been identified:

1. ***Literacy as a pre-requisite or in preparation for training in livelihood or income generating activities.*** Here, training in livelihood is the longer-term aim, but people are encouraged not to start training in livelihood until they have sufficiently mastered reading, writing and calculating to cope with the livelihood's operating and development requirements. There is a planned progression between the two.
2. ***Literacy followed by separate livelihood and income-generating activities.*** Here, learning literacy is regarded as a stand-alone, worthwhile aim in itself and is undertaken first. Thereafter training is offered in either livelihoods or some form of income-generating activity. There are no systematic connections between the two components.
3. ***Livelihood training or income-generating activities leading to literacy.*** Here, groups start to develop a business, but realize that they need literacy skills in order to record their incomes, calculate more comprehensively, and read their records. The content of literacy grows out of the livelihood activity.
4. ***Livelihood and income-generating activity is integrated*** i.e. training in livelihood and instruction in literacy and numeracy begin simultaneously, often with the content of the literacy derived from or influenced by the livelihood activity.
5. ***Literacy and livelihood and income-generating activities take place but in parallel and unconnected structures.*** There is no systematic connection between them.

The 17 cases examined in this extensive report (Oxenham *et al.*, 2002) illustrate the varying degrees of application of the above typologies. A few conclusions could provide a basis for further discussions:

- A key factor appears to be maintaining interest of participants and adapting the programs to the conditions of the participants. Question: *Who, at the national level, is responsible for gauging the "conditions of participants"? How can particular program experience feed into national systems?*
- People who have completed literacy courses seemed to more confident and willing to take initiatives in developing their livelihoods, or in taking an active interest in the operations of their cooperatives.
- Education and training for very poor adults need to offer very clear, concrete and immediate reasons to justify enrolment and ensure

perseverance. In some cases, participants resist enrolment in literacy/numeracy that is not connected to their livelihood concerns! *This context relevance could be emulated upstream at the level of policy, whether national or provincial levels.*

- Programs that start from livelihoods skills stand a stronger chance of success as they can demonstrate an immediate reason for learning. *How is the question “Literacy for What?” answered at the national level in different countries?*
- Deriving literacy/numeracy content from livelihood skills and integrating it upfront with the livelihood training seems more promising than either the parallel tract approach or using the standard literacy materials to prepare people to train for livelihood.
- Programs that bring together people with a common sense of purpose have better perseverance and completion rates.
- Programs whose objectives and methods are negotiated and well adapted to the needs of the learners seem to be more effective than “cut-and-paste” models that lack relevance.
- Experience also shows that arranging for both livelihood specialists to work together with literacy instructors is more prudent than relying on literacy instructors to undertake livelihood training.

► *Examples from two innovative literacy delivery models*

Senegal: Women’s Literacy Project (PAPF) Outsourcing and Partnership Approach:

Key features worth discussing in a strategic manner with policy makers at continental level:

- Delineation of responsibility between government and NGO provider. Government maintained responsibilities for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, while private sector was given the responsibility for implementation including the setting up of the literacy courses and management of funds.
- 200,000 beneficiaries over a five-year period. How is PAPF acknowledged nationally and regionally across the continent?
- A large percentage of women participants.
- Over 300 sub-projects were financed with flexibility being exercised in terms of language of instruction and learning, scheduling based on decisions made by the learners themselves.

- Secondary outreach into existing organizations (service providers, management agencies), partnership with who anchored this initiative and ensured sustainability and contextuality.
- Existence of providers' associations to ensure transparency and build trust, and outsourcing strategies to improve efficiency.

A major criticism has been the absence of **proper monitoring and evaluation system**; and weak feedback loop of information to program managers and policymakers, i.e. upward and lateral transmission of insights, issues, and experiences. (Nordtveit, 2003)

Uganda - Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Program

The Functional Adult Literacy Program turns the “L” in the national program from standing for “Literacy” to “Learning”. What is the conceptual and operational difference between “Literacy” and “Learning” when it comes to running an integrated program targeting the poor illiterate communities?

- The systematic adaptation of national literacy texts to concrete realities of buying and selling as a business by ADRA can be discussed in terms of adequacy of exiting national level standard texts and the possibility of wider publicity to the adaptation method being used by this particular provider. What are its possibilities when a wider and more diverse group e.g. at national and regional levels is being contemplated?
- The stages used by ADRA span between nine to 12 months, totaling between 250-300 hours. ADRA's first step is the adaptation of texts to concrete situations followed by instructing learners on how to assess the feasibility of a pilot project with a modest income generating activity followed by learners being asked to form solidarity groups based on trust to open a bank account into which they pool their savings. Restoration of trust is central to the spirit of rebirth at the heart of the African Renaissance!
- High retention rates in ADRA's FAL can be discussed alongside other national or project initiatives to determine what method best ensures retention if a nation wishes to implement long-term literacy campaigns or programs.
- The enormous success of organizational and institutional development competence at grassroots level can also be discussed from the point of view of competency and capacity building and support of local administration authorities working with communities in other areas of

development. *To what extent can NGO competencies be more comprehensively mined in service of other branches of the national system?*

- Is it better to have a literacy first, literacy alongside, literacy integrated with livelihood or a go-it-alone livelihood, and a go-it-alone literacy program?

Where does a hugely successful project like Senegal's PAPF and Uganda's ADRA sit in respect to global frameworks like the MDGs or the EFA Goals? How are these organizations and initiatives valorized and acknowledged within these international commitments? Alternatively, are they fragments that cannot be added together and are condemned to remain voluntary, incidental flashes of goodness?

Are they mentioned in the foreground or are they part of obscure appendices embedded in the amorphous group of stakeholders known as civil society providers, always third in ranking to government and private sector, or are they recognized distinctly as innovative and highly successful providers key to the realization of the MDG and Dakar Goals? Some scholars have stated that discourse is about **who** can speak, **when**, and with **what** authority. The forced inconspicuousness of these courageous and innovative projects parallels uncomfortably the strategic obscurity that has bedeviled the literacy and adult education domains.

Finally, what is the nature of feedback loops at regional and continental levels that can enable Africans to hold mirrors to themselves and take pride? How can Africa ignore the significance of these grounded experiences with confronting poverty, so central to the MDGs, Dakar goals and the requirements of the knowledge society?

10. Some Conclusions

Africa can affirm that the educational requirements of the future are international understanding, linguistic skills, ability to interpret symbols, a spirit of cooperation and participation, flexibility, a holistic approach, the ability to use both sides of the brain, openness, and the motivation to seek constant development and learning. These qualities are not technical or academic, they are human, rooted in upbringing, family ties, security, self-esteem, and inner strength... Tomorrow's adult learning must unite intellect and feelings, progress and caring, vision and substance, the ring and the

arrow, fusing them to form a creative spiral... (Nordic Council of Ministers, 1995, p. 8)

The arguments of the Nordic Council of Ministers relate to the balance between *universal access to learning and specialized competences*. As all countries face the challenges of global competition, of balancing economic and social development, of protecting human rights and the environment, it is clear that growth cannot be defined only in terms of the production of more and more goods. Growth has to be underpinned by ideas that combine an agenda for expanded provision and development of levels of competence for the entire population that target the deepening of knowledge, skills needed to ensure cutting edge competence and renewal. There is also the problem of *uncertainty in and inadequacy of the traditional skills categories*, which together, make the case for lifelong learning. Here, the increasing need for an active, fully informed citizenry necessary for democratic participation coupled with the fluid nature of an internationalized labor market that requires flexible skills and versatile competences, make an urgent and compelling case for lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning must:

- Unify the broader perspective and deeper insight, capacity for action, specialist knowledge and wisdom. This broadens the arena and locus of learning beyond the school to the community.
- Help combat unemployment partly by improving competitiveness, and partly by re-appropriating the individual citizen's life span allowing for periods of paid work, education/training, and other activities.
- Lead to development of new methods and tools for adult education, including the acquisition of new skills, and the retooling of old roles. Bridges must be built between learning in the classroom and in unconventional places.
- Play a key role in the democratization of knowledge and combating the risk of technocratic dehumanization, the creation of dual societies, and the further deepening of the divide between those who do and do not know.

All these points resonate for Africa. More specifically, the validation of indigenous knowledge systems as a legitimate knowledge base upon which literacy builds and contributes to Africa as a knowledge society must become a policy issue.

If African countries have undertaken massive literacy campaigns before, is it not possible to propose massive post-literacy campaigns with strict conditions e.g. linking social welfare provisions to literacy achievement over a period?

Literacy efforts must be thought of as part of a long-term strategy that requires patience and commitment. The advocacy for literacy should devise flexible and easily adaptable tactics depending on the nature of the challenge. We have to confront the fragmentation of practitioners across the formal/non-formal divide from an ethical, efficiency, public accountability, and human development standpoint. Strategic thinking may involve building new alliances at national and provincial levels, e.g. dialoguing with influential personalities in other sectors, e.g. the police, the military, etc., who are humanistic in their inclinations, to bring them into direct advocacy for literacy.

Africa has been beset by generations of negative prefixes such as “un”-developed, “non”-literate, “il”-literate, “under”-developed. In world politics, we have seen the tensions around the use of the term “Third World” brought out by Sauvy and used by developing countries during the Cold War. Once the ranking paradigm is established, the continents of Africa, Asia and South America become second, third, and fourth “bests.” This political economy of statistics leaves much to be deconstructed.

We need to pay attention to conceptual distortions from negative descriptors that have been associated with Africa; as well as to the political economy of such descriptors and trans-valuations, the scientific and other alibis associated with them, seeking at all times, the tools for either rendering them open to critique, exposing the evil or inadequacy inherent in them, and proposing new concepts to populate the spaces vacated by the obsolete and debunked concepts (Judge, 1989).

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Uganda
AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
IME	International Monetary Fund
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement

NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFE	Non-formal Education
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PAPF	Women's Literacy Project, Senegal

Chapter 2.

Literacy Visions, Policies and Strategies in Africa

by Tonic Maruatona with Juliet Millican

1. Introduction

The World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien 1990), the fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) in Hamburg in 1997, and the *Dakar Framework For Action* in 2000, all called on the international community to make a commitment to meet the educational needs of children, youth and adults, and frame a conducive political context for attaining the MDGs and EFA goals through literacy education. The Dakar World Education Forum (2000) set specific Education for All (EFA) targets and charged UNESCO with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating adult learning initiatives. However member nations, particularly in Africa, still need to convert visions into policies and concrete programs of action, and identify appropriate sources of investment.

Literacy is seen as an essential right for full participation in development and a powerful tool for poverty alleviation, but different ideological perceptions exist as to what it entails. Narrowly conceived it incorporates the skills of reading, writing and calculating in order for individuals and communities to fit in to a broader political context and to assist with the state's economic development. More broadly defined, it is seen as an empowering and transformative process, which enables individuals to challenge existing power structures and to have more control over their destinies. This study looks at the various literacy campaigns, programs and projects in sub-Saharan Africa, and discusses rationales and justifications for investing in them. It places literacy provision within the context of the current United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012).

Evidence of increased funding for literacy programs, for instance since 1998 (the launch of the Paulo Freire Literacy Decade for Africa), confirms strong political and governmental support. Indeed, where nations have increased funding they have generally also recorded an impressive move towards meeting their EFA goals. A global vision exists for the provision of literacy, developed from the Hamburg CONFINTEA V Declaration (1997) to the Dakar Framework for Action (2000); this which could serve as a basis for strengthening both policy making and strategic planning in Africa. As used here the term “Vision” encapsulates the perceived relationships between program objectives and future outcomes. The development of a long-term vision entails an in-depth philosophical and political analysis of the kind of society and citizens African leaders wish to develop. The African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) appreciate the value of literacy in achieving an accountable, democratic, transparent and peaceful Africa and the critical role of education in national development with regard to key priorities and emerging challenges such as poverty elimination, HIV and Aids prevention and mitigation, as well as good governance for democratic societies.

The chapter analyses several national visions to illustrate their importance in achieving national development goals. It highlights disparities between the current state of affairs and what is desired and intended in the future, between majority and minority cultures, male and female participation as well as resulting gender issues, and rural and urban contexts. It shows how grandiose African visions, such as that of NEPAD and those of individual states, translate into policies and strategies for implementation. It concludes that in many cases, the link between vision and practice is often inadequately documented and rarely fulfilled operational terms.

Literacy programs have disturbingly little priority in educational policies that therefore overlook large sections of society, namely youth, adults, and marginalized groups. While agreeing to EFA goals, in practice, African states have concentrated their efforts on achieving universal primary education at the expense of adult education, and literacy in particular. Some countries such as Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cape Verde, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Senegal and Uganda are making efforts to link national vision to policies and strategies for education. The chapter makes a critical assessment of literacy practice to illustrate efforts made by some African nations to attain a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.

One of the greatest challenges in realizing the fourth EFA goal is rooted in policy design in Africa. Nations such as Rwanda have developed separate policies for basic education and literacy, which keeps literacy in the sites of budgetary allocations. Other countries, such as Botswana, have incorporated literacy into broader educational policy, which makes it less of a priority, treated in a 'business as usual' manner without any urgency.

Some African nations have demonstrated relative success in reconciling their policies with visions; increased political will, strategic planning and monitoring, and adequate funding, could improve literacy delivery in Africa. Kenya, for example, has increased school enrolments.

In Senegal, the use of public private partnerships to deliver literacy has had some impact on literacy rates, and the state has increased its share of the education budget allocated to literacy as a sign of its commitment to attain the EFA goals. South Africa decentralized and outsourced all Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) to allow partners such as the non-governmental organisation Pro Literacy (PROLIT) and the University of South Africa (UNISA) to develop materials, train teachers and run classes: specialists meet deadlines, work under a clearly defined regulatory regime and legal framework and free up time for literacy education staff to effectively supervise and coordinate their other activities. The disadvantage is that outsourcing might become costly technocratic machinery that is complex to coordinate and synergize, playing into the hands of World Bank and other agencies who argue that literacy is not cost effective.

These choices by African governments are made on the basis of ideological differences. Conventional programs have been criticized for providing literacy for domestication, to enable learners to fit into national agendas and better serve their designated place in society. Campaigns often claim to provide literacy for liberation, to transform society, to build on indigenous knowledge, to empower learners and destabilize the status quo. Governments ultimately need to agree on a vision of a literate population and to back this up with strong policies and efficient systems of implementation. This entails being clear on the priorities behind programs and the resources and approaches likely to deliver on these. In some countries these priorities are associated with economic gain and the inclusion of income generation activities, in others it is increased citizen participation and democratization.

Literacy in sub-Saharan Africa as elsewhere has also proven to be an effective mechanism for behavioral societal change regarding gender equality. It has empowered women. Literate African women do better in all measurable ways, including health and well-being, age of childbearing, ability to control fertility, reported sense of happiness and sense of power in the household and in the community. Their children are healthier and almost 100 percent more likely to go to school. For literate women, the potential freedom of wage labor may mean that they work fewer hours for far greater economic returns, evading the strenuous life of some forms of subsistence farming for instance. Importantly, they can also save wages and get loans based on their job status that provide capital for investment in small businesses.

Educational campaigns have therefore linked literacy to social change and to poverty alleviation. Indeed, poverty is associated with weak endowments of human and financial resources, such as low levels of education with associated low levels of literacy and few marketable skills, generally poor health status and low labor productivity as a result. Poor households typically have few if any financial assets and are often politically and socially marginalized. Social exclusion isolates these populations unreached by programs aimed at changing sexual and other behaviors. Even more fundamental to poverty are social and political exclusions.

This chapter analyzes policies and strategies for literacy and proposes how to enhance political will to deliver demand-driven literacy programs. It also identifies several promising practices such as decentralization for increased learner involvement and improvement in the recruitment, continuous training of literacy teachers, such as in Namibia, which has moved away from using volunteers to hiring them on an annual contractual basis. It stresses the importance of considering the gender bias of particular literacy approaches, of lifelong learning as an educational strategy, of the use of mother tongue as a mode of delivery such as in Mali, and of working in partnership with civil society and NGOs. These coherent policies have had a profound impact on the acquisition and the effective use of literacy in sub-Saharan Africa.

This chapter deals with vision, policies and strategies for literacy and its effective implementation in sub-Saharan Africa. Literacy is seen as a fundamental human right, with political and social instrumentality; and as an essential foundation for development, a pre-requisite for the development of

skills and competency for better work and employment, control of fertility, reduction of mortality, and fostering improved quality of life and increased life expectancy (UNESCO, 1995).

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development (March, 6-12 1995) highlighted the importance of education for social equity and social justice and the fight against poverty, to create productive jobs, strengthen social fabric and achieve human security. The programme emphasized the need for access to education through provision of literacy, basic education and primary health care (United Nations, 1995). The CONFINTEA V Conference (1997) enlarged the vision of literacy by stressing its central role in facilitating participation of all citizens of the world, the importance of engaging men and women from all walks of life if humanity is to survive and meet the challenges of the future (Conference Declaration). It portrayed education as a gateway to an enhanced social, cultural and economic life (UNESCO, 1997). Given the magnitude of the problems of illiteracy, poverty and disease on the continent, literacy remains an indispensable priority in most African countries. Problems of high general and infant mortality, high school drop out, low life expectancy, low rates of economic growth, low school enrolments and high illiteracy rates could be ameliorated by well conceptualized, effectively implemented literacy campaigns, programs and projects. Subsequent to CONFINTEA V, UNESCO and the international community were invited to launch, starting as early as 1998, a *Paolo Freire Decade on Literacy For All* in the perspective of learning throughout life together with the *African Decade for Education for All*.

This chapter provides a critique of African national vision statements, development and educational policies and strategies to determine how far they make literacy central to development discourses at national, sub-regional, and continental levels and to determine whether there is a discernable trend in the relationship between vision, political rhetoric and the practical realities guiding adult literacy provision. This includes assessing the role of international conventions and protocols and their impact on the national process of planning for literacy delivery. It highlights the role of literacy in the changing African situations with regard to its response to globalization and structural adjustment policies, and initiatives such as the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The contributions of umbrella networks responsible for literacy in Africa such as PROLIT, and

PAMOJA are assessed. The chapter analyses national visions and policies as a basis for a model to assess progress in building political and social consensus on making literacy a priority in national development. The use of national educational policies, evaluation and national literacy survey reports will determine the importance of literacy in an international or national vision for education, and what it is intended to achieve. The chapter also provides some examples of promising practice from across the continent and attempts to evaluate their impact on learners.

Literacy: A Definition

Literacy is a dynamic concept that encompasses a whole range of “more complex and diverse skills and understandings” (Lonsdale & McCurry, 2004, p. 50). The Global Monitoring Report (2006) defines literacy as a “contextually bound continuum of reading, writing and numeracy developed through the process of learning and application, in school and in other settings appropriate to youth and adults.” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 30)

In Africa, as in other continents, definitions and models of literacy contingent upon the schools of thought of different proponents and their objectives have proliferated. These have had implications for models of provision as well as for assessment of outcomes. For example, some definitions focus on the skills needed by individuals for work, education, social interaction and negotiations of every day living. Such an approach adopts a cognitive, individual-based model associated with a psychometric tradition, quantifiable levels of ability and a deficit approach. Illiteracy is assumed to be both an outcome of individual inadequacy, and a casual factor in unemployment (Lonsdale & McCurry, 2004). Such conceptualization attracts “economics driven [models], associated with workforce training, productivity, functional literacy and notions of human capital” (Lonsdale & McCurry, 2004, p. 14). Other programs aim to empower individuals and communities to change their status quo and adopt “socio-cultural models associated with contextualised and multiple literacy practices, valuing of the ‘other,’ and a strong critical element” (Lonsdale & McCurry, 2004, p. 14).

Literacy can also be understood as focused on imparting reading, writing, numeracy and oracy skills, and thereby emphasizing cognitive abilities, independent of the social context in which such skills are acquired and used. As such it is seen as a single, autonomous skill and an indispensable

component of social and economic development in society. Alternatively it can be viewed as applied, practiced and utilized according to the social and cultural context in which it is organized, and therefore governed by different rules and conventions (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1996; Street, 1995). In the former approach, literacy is seen as a neutral decontextualised skill necessary for the survival of the recipient and which can therefore be organised by technical experts. Learners need cognitive abilities to acquire reading and writing skills. When viewed as practices (Street, 1995) literacy focuses on the social context of the learners, the different uses they make of literacy and the meanings and the norms which surround these uses. A social practice model sees it as unrealistic to make claims for literacy as a single autonomous skill, and tends to use the term literacies to indicate the range of diverse uses and meanings people associate with reading, writing, numeracy and oracy, and the values drawn from these. Taxi drivers in Johannesburg, fisherfolk in Sierra Leone, female traders in Burkina Faso may all need different kinds of literacies for different purposes. In a social practice model, programs should be designed locally by people who understand the context and with the active involvement of learners.

Most literacy programs in Africa focus on the provision of basic or rudimentary skills of reading, writing and numeracy but there are differences with regard to who designs the programme and how the content responds to the learner's needs. Lonsdale and McCurry, (2004) define literacy as follows:

Literacy is a responsive and context specific multi-dimensional lifelong learning process designed to equip beneficiaries with specialised knowledge, skills, attitudes and techniques to independently engage in practices and genres involving listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy, technical functioning and critical thinking required in real life.

This definition is used here because it captures the view of literacy in Africa as a continuous, lifelong process that will move individuals, families, and communities from acquiring basic reading and writing, and numeracy skills to wanting to use it to empower themselves and transform their lives.

Conventional and Transformative Approaches

Conventional literacy programs proceeds from the assumption that governments can engage in planned development change, equating growth with

efficiency. These programs are often centralized although neither the stated goal nor literacy are treated urgently. The curriculum is carefully defined in terms along with methods and materials that are centrally developed (Weber, 1999). The program is carried out in accordance with demands for social accountability and assumed needs of individuals and the nation, without properly understanding the diverse needs among the people involved. (Hearth, 1999). For example, in Kenya, the literacy programs claims to increase increase people's participation in development by enabling adults to read development information in agriculture, health, co-operatives, political party, and the government (Abdullah, Gachanja, & Mujidi, 1999) and provides utilitarian skills, which farmers are expected to use immediately. The goal of the state is to use literacy to facilitate orderly personal and national development to meet broader development goals. Many other African countries, especially those that have endorsed the capitalist approach to development, share these goals. Programs are intended to help people acquire basic prescribed literacy and numeracy skills considered essential for survival with the assumption that individual concerns can be reconciled with national political goals (Wagner, 1999).

While some conventional programs start with mother tongue and use national languages, their goals are often not transformative. By contrast, transformative literacy engages learners in social action to use literacy skills to improve the quality of their lives and exercise their freedoms as citizens (Beder, 1991; Giroux, 1995). Here, literacy is viewed as an empowering experience, bringing about critical reflection and problem solving skills facilitated by dialogue between teachers and learners. As in the REFLECT programs in Uganda and the Gambia, participants may be assisted to critique 'discourse maps' of society to transform it (Gee, 1996). This approach assumes that literacy provides people with the tools to understand society, and that by understanding it they can change it.

Transformative literacy often becomes a campaign approach, as when a state needs to foster transition after a revolution: Bholá (1999) observes that states treat campaigns as a priority. Lind and Johnston (1990) argue that with decolonization, literacy came to be seen by the state as a tool for economic growth. Transformative literacy uses multiple languages and consultative strategies. For instance, in Tanzania, the program was built into the cultural life of the people by using locally relevant materials and links with performance arts and crafts (Rassool, 1999). This resonates with Amartya Sen (1995) who

observes that development occurs when people see the possibility to achieve something that makes their lives valuable and worthwhile. Different conceptions of literacy have implications for planning and implementing. Overall, in Africa, most government-sponsored programs are conventional.

Whatever the approach, literacy should go beyond basic reading, writing and numeracy to ensure that people acquire life skills and knowledge essential for their development. Literacy has to address the negative impacts of illiteracy, which has been linked to poverty, disease and exclusion. It inhibits progress and productivity, hinders cultural and spiritual advancement, and fuels the chronic dependency of entire societies, Africa suffers these challenges more than any other continent and literacy is seen as an essential element in the struggle for justice, human dignity and equality.

This study argues that literacy could be beneficial given certain conditions and argues that economic change to improve lives requires that people be involved in the development process, assisted to define their needs and be involved in the planning, organization and implementation of programs that meet them.

Funding Literacy

African leadership should invest more resources in education to achieve the goals of the African Renaissance. Dakar recognized that investment in quality education is a prerequisite to the empowerment of Africans. It acknowledged that the provision of basic education must be transformed for inclusiveness, relevance and gender responsiveness. In a joint statement ministers of education committed themselves to removing all barriers that hinder African children, youth and adults from gaining access to quality education (UNESCO, 2000). The 2006 *Global Monitoring Report* challenges the assumptions that investing in school-going children is more important than in education and training for youth and adults, and argues that claims for greater cost effectiveness of primary education as compared to that of literacy, adult and other forms and level of education are unfounded.

There has been a proportional reduction in investments in youth and adult education as more resources have gone to achieve universal primary education (UPE). However according to Abadzi (2005) available studies by the World Bank do not provide categorical and conclusive evidence on the unit costs of

providing literacy to youth and adults to be usefully compared to unit costs in primary schools. She argues that since literacy education uses volunteer teachers, cost per participant may underestimate the real cost of literacy instruction. In a comparative analysis of Indonesia, Ghana and Senegal, administrative costs in both Indonesia and Ghana were higher than Senegal, while NGO programs have lower unit costs than government programs. This indicates that because evidence is inconclusive, there is no basis to justify low investment in literacy compared to primary education. There are some signs that youth and adult education could cost less in some cases and more information on these success stories is needed.

The more that states are willing to spend on literacy education, the better their chances of achieving the fourth goal of the Dakar Framework of Action. As the former South African minister of education, Kader Asmal remarked, literacy is a strong weapon through which Africa could claim its rightful place among the continents of the globe. It is therefore imperative that every child, youth and adult in Africa must learn to read and write. African leaders and experts must commit themselves to making this happen.

Investments in literacy today will, over time, decrease the need for foreign aid by creating income-generating capacities in communities. By providing the necessary ground for professional training, literacy leads to the improvement of local economies. Only by increasing the rate and the average level of literacy and education nation-wide, can African hope to ease serious public health, demographic and environmental problems (Asmal, 1999).

The African Renaissance and Literacy

President Nelson Mandela first used the term the African Renaissance in 1994 at an OAU summit in Tunisia. In his keynote address at the Fifth General Conference of The African Academy of Sciences (Tunisia, 1999), Ali Mazrui states that the Renaissance requires three major revolutions - a revolution in skills, in values and in gender. He further provides one possible definition of development that the African Renaissance has to deal with as being modernization minus dependency. "But what is modernization? One possible answer is that modernization is change, which is compatible with the present stage of human knowledge, which seeks to comprehend the legacy of the past, which is sensitive to the needs of the future, and which is

increasingly aware of its global context. This is the positive interpretation of modernization. Skills and values are at the core”, (Mazrui, 1999).

This echoes Kader Asmal's view that one of the challenges facing the African Renaissance is ensuring that children are given the best possible opportunities to tackle the future in a fast globalizing world, while addressing the distortions and inequalities of the past. He stressed that the promotion of literacy should be accompanied by a sense of a common citizenship in a caring society where the development of all people, rather than a privileged elite, is given prominence. In a world where competitive practices marginalize the poor, the unemployed, women and people living in rural areas, the westernized notion that literacy leads to wealth and prosperity is as misleading as the assumption that illiteracy is the only primary cause of poverty and degradation.

That illiteracy breeds dependence cannot be denied. It alienates individuals from socio-political and economic activities, rendering them unable to contribute to the development and growth of the nation. Neither can they make informed choices and exercise their basic rights. It is therefore important that Africa should become a caring society where all people have a basic reading skill.

Women in Africa face many difficulties as a direct result of poor literacy levels. Ironically, they are often left to care for the education of their children. It is neither accident nor coincidence that women in Africa lead the way in the campaign to promote literacy and education on the continent.” (Asmal, 1999)

Literacy and Gender Relations

Since the 1970s, women's literacy projects throughout the developing world and especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Bown, 1990) have been a focus. Many EFA goals reflect this, setting targets aimed at girls' and women's the participation in school and adult literacy programs, and the end of gender disparities by 2015. Accompanying statistics showed that in sub-Saharan Africa the gap between male and female literacy rates (19%) narrowed only slightly between 1980 and 1995 but further to 16% by 2005. Reports claim that between 50-75% of women from different states were still illiterate by 2004.

Such reports are difficult to verify and depend on many different definitions and measurements of literacy. However, while the reasons for male/female

disparities are closely associated with traditional and cultural attitudes to schooling and easy to understand, huge claims have been made in support of women's literacy:

- Women's literacy is the single most important factor in development.
- One of every three women in the world is illiterate. Infant mortality and malnutrition are significantly lower with mothers who have completed primary education.
- Women are responsible for 70% of food production in Africa.
- Literate women are more likely to use contraception, family planning and to have their children vaccinated.
- Literate women support their own children, including their daughters throughout their schooling and assist with homework, significantly raising attainment
- With the rise of HIV/AIDS, women are becoming heads of households and responsible for supporting their families
- Women are generally responsible for marketing and income-generating activities

Robinson-Pant (2004) points out how the policy discourse surrounding women's literacy has remained largely unchanged since 1990 and International literacy year. She also indicates that since the 1970s, evidence has begun to emerge that there is no necessarily causal link between education and health, women's literacy and fertility rates. Recent research has also highlighted the danger of focusing on women's behaviour in isolation. Many men share are concerned about the health and welfare of their family and influence the family environment, though the amount of time they spend with their children varies in different cultures. The 1970s Women in Development approaches are gradually being replaced by Gender in Development (GAD) perspectives, but women still tend to be viewed as a homogeneous group. Bown (in Robinson- Pant, 2004) emphasizes the need for policymakers to respond to diversity rather than to "solve mass problems with mass solutions." Ethnographic research into women's literacy indicates that a range of coping strategies influence women's behavior at home and their response to health or welfare messages and that literacy is one of a range of factors to take into account.

Similarly changing understandings of literacy, and moving from an autonomous to a praxis approach, highlights the need to understand the kinds of literacies that women need, when, and whether they do indeed form part of

the literacy curriculum. McCaffery, (in Robinson-Pant, 2004) among others, observes that the single undisputable claim for literacy acquisition is that it gives women new confidence, which should inspire policy makers to take women's literacy seriously.

The gender picture is complex and beginning to change. The recent UNDPF report on gender equality in primary education (2004) shows that in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, girls' enrolment in primary schools lagged only slightly behind that of boys (83% compared to 86% of boys) although figures vary by country: in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, only 75 girls are in school for every 100 boys at primary level, a figure that becomes the norm at secondary level, partly for historical reasons. As children enrolled today in primary move to secondary level, the differentials may begin to change (UN MDG Report, 2005). Drop-outs among boys far exceed that of girls and youth literacy rates only vary by 11% between young women and young men. Today, the majority of participants in literacy classes are female but future literacy rates will begin to reverse.

Shifting patterns of gender norms and relationships are related to education, health and economics and the complex relationship between them. Changing household patterns through migration, failing harvests and shifting economies can alter gender power relationships. Lind (2004) points out, "women seem to be more interested in literacy learning than men," and argues that new trends "have a tendency to marginalize men." In Zambia, for example, the proportion of women having completed basic education exceeds that of men.

The most common approach to gender analysis is to target women (e.g. Zambia and Senegal, ICAE 2003) and women constitute three-quarters of adult literacy learners. Programs may need to look as seriously at barriers to male participation. An evaluation in Namibia (Lind, 1996) found that cattle herding, negative attitudes among other men and female-dominated classes were all contributing factors. While innovative approaches were used in the national literacy program - including male classes run under different names — these are isolated. It is only in very male areas, such as the work place or the armed forces (projects in Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa etc) that adult men seem to outnumber women in classes. Studies in Uganda showed how economic and political changes, including affirmative action and new legislation have helped to promote women's education and

employment. As a result of the AIDS pandemic single women have become more acceptable, and female-headed households more common. Women are showing themselves to be better prepared for the new market economy than men, and more able to operate within it.

A vision that includes gender equity in national policy and a clear strategy requires that planners and policy makers not oversimplify the situation to reach international targets. Regional, national and continental contexts must be examined; patterns of literacy need and acquisition vary between generations. Nor can it be assumed that women or men are a homogeneous group, that literacy is a single concept, equally measurable and relevant to all contexts. Between vision and policy and implementation lies an ongoing need for research.

2. Visions for Literacy

UNESCO's global vision for literacy was expressed in the 1997 Hamburg conference, which persuaded other partners to involve all stakeholders if literacy was to effectively facilitate democratic participation. The notion of setting an agenda for adult education demonstrates UNESCO's concern with the present state of literacy delivery, where declarations are not followed up with concrete action. However, visions and focus of UNESCO and its partners, for example the World Bank, do not always mesh. The World Bank's vision for exclusive attention to Universal Primary Education in practice undermines funding for youth and adult literacy. In its 1994 review, the World Bank decried the fact that literacy shows poor results for the money invested. The poor performance of adult literacy programs in the 1970s and 80s led to the decision to focus on primary education. The basic argument was that the effects of literacy acquired through childhood or schooling influenced quality of life while those of adult literacy were not known (Abadzi, 1994).

In fact, a World Bank study carried out in Uganda at Makerere University compared learning results between government Functional Literacy Program and one ran by REFLECT-based community based organization: it found no difference between participants in these programs. Rather, they found adult literacy programs to be cost effective in terms of reading and other basic competencies (Carr-Hill, *et al.*, 2001). Torres (2003) also argues that there is no basis to sustain the argument that school literacy does better than out of school literacy. If anything, the evidence suggests poor performance

in school literacy acquisition, retention and use. In Africa, the World Bank sends contradictory messages in countries where it funds some literacy programs whilst at the same time requiring them to fulfill UPE goals at the expense of adult literacy as a condition for assistance. In spite of this, Africa has developed its own regional and national vision(s), policies and strategies to combat illiteracy

National Literacy Visions, Policies and Strategies

Several African countries such as Botswana, South Africa, Rwanda, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal have different visions for literacy guiding their future development planning processes. Each national vision aims to develop educational policies to transform Africa and the nation into a vibrant and engaged continent, and rid itself of dependency and oppression. To a varying degree, nations have endorsed the priority areas identified by Ministers of Education, civil society and international partners cited above. National visions connect available and projected resources for education with identified future goals, and seem to incorporate the UNESCO declarations and guidelines from Hamburg and Dakar and reflect the NEPAD educational priorities and MDGs. A review of the seventeen PRSPs, some of which are in Africa, revealed that EFA and the MDGs related to education were receiving considerable attention in poverty alleviation and education plans (Bagai, 2002 cited in UNESCO, 2006).

Botswana *Vision 2016* was developed in 1996. Critical to it is the need for equal access to educational opportunities regardless of a person's socio-economic status. One of the seven pillars advocates for the creation of "an educated and informed nation", and a flexible mode of educational delivery to allow people to enter and learn at all points of their lives without being inhibited by age or by structural limitations. (Presidential Task Force, 1997). This is in line with the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE), which argues for learning as a lifelong process that should be accessed by all regardless of their circumstances and age and reflects aspects of the EFA goal on increasing access to learning opportunities for youth and adults. Hence, the vision provides citizens with a widened mechanism towards the development of a comprehensive advocacy for the provision of adult education and literacy.

Botswana's vision contrasts with that of other countries such as Rwanda which has developed a six pillars Vision 2020 intended to shape the develop-

ment path for the country. Its main pillars include the promotion of good governance, decentralization and popular participation in decision-making processes. The third pillar indicates the nation's broad perception of human development and its role in the over all national development initiative. The vision document states, "emphasis should be put on literacy and numeracy to the maximum benefit of the majority of the Rwandan people" (Vision 2020, 2000, p.11). The vision provides an overarching frame for the delivery of the Rwandan development of a futuristic agenda and guides educational policy.

South Africa's vision for the delivery of literacy education and training has been encapsulated in its Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) program: a literate South Africa within which all citizens have acquired basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation. The ABET concept subsumes both literacy and post-literacy by connecting literacy with basic adult education and with training for income generation. Learners can progress through an integrated system from non-literacy to general, further and higher education and training opportunities (McKay, 2004). The National Qualifications Framework appears to be an exemplary way of achieving this although basic education program has suffered from some of these processes (Aitchinson, 2006).

In Nigeria, Vision 2010 was created in 1996 by a government committee comprising 248 members to make Nigeria a developed nation by 2010, its 50th anniversary of independence: a united, industrious, caring and God-fearing democratic society, committed to making the basic needs of life affordable for everyone, and creating Africa's leading economy. Regarding education, in 1996, only about 50% of children between 5-24 were enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions, with enrolment ratios at 88% for primary school children. By 2010, primary school enrolment should be almost 100% and at least 26% of government budget (at federal, state and local levels) should be devoted to education. The Vision's commitment to primary education delivery is commendable but does not currently extend to adult and youth literacy in Nigeria.

Overall, these cases bear witness to how these countries learned from the global vision and its anticipated outcomes as stipulated in the *Dakar Framework of Action* and the MDGs. Beyond the rhetoric, the true social transformation advocated by each document requires dynamic and dedicated

leadership backed by political will and preparedness to secure resources for education. However, without evidence of actual deliverables, the pillars do not go far beyond rhetoric. Ideals need to be translated into reality by comprehensive policy development that encourages popular participation if literacy is to be transformative. As indicated above, the successive *Global Monitoring Reports* since 2002 reflect some movement in this direction.

From Vision to Policy

There is no single way to develop policy to translate vision. In Botswana there have been two national commissions on education: in 1977 convened by the President to look into the problems of education and suggest how to improve delivery, and in 1992 to revise the achievements of the previous commission and suggest the way forward for all spheres of education including literacy. The process involved extensive consultations with communities around the country to elicit their views on the future direction of education (Ministry of Education, 1994). In South Africa, it involved democratic participation of all the nine local provinces and other stakeholders culminating in the development of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) program (McKay, 2004). The policy framework in this regard places learners at the heart of literacy delivery. Policy-making acknowledged the diversity of learners and individual and community circumstances. The focus was on determining learners' needs and resources to help them improve their lives through literacy. The policy framework has to assume a heuristic framework where the emphasis is on recognizing context, learner characteristics, the process of teaching and learning, and articulating tangible outcomes (UNESCO, 2005).

Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe included a declared policy on literacy in either their national development plans or in separate policies on adult basic education or literacy. Botswana, for example, has no separate policies on literacy; it is part of the overall Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) and subsumed under basic education. In South African, literacy, literacy is part of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Zambia has no clearly articulated national policy on adult education but has adopted specific programs on literacy, creating a different understanding of the concepts and use of literacy education on the continent (ICAE, 2003). However, even more critical is the conspicuous lack of documentation on literacy campaigns and programs and qualitative and quantitative longitudinal research on the impact of literacy on participants (Torres, 2003; Walters, 2001).

3. Analysis of Policies and Literacy Education Practices in Africa

National Planning and Literacy Delivery

The thrust of current discourse on planning and implementation of literacy education in Africa is shifting towards assessing what planners can or ought to do to be more inclusive. Educators stress the need to improve policy planning and implementation to make them participatory rather than technical. Literacy delivery is mostly integrated into the national planning framework through expanding formal schooling. Schools in Africa are the major source of acquisition of basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Africa has various forms of formal education, which were established before the advent of colonialism and Western schooling. These were called initiation schools where individuals were initiated into adulthood in their respective societies. According to UNESCO (2006) these schools were destroyed, assimilated or transformed by missionary education. The Europeanization of education in Africa brought about massive expansion; some countries have continued to expand provision along the same lines, resulting in higher rates of literacy. Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique had expansive formal schooling during the colonial period because of large settler populations and a stronger support for education mostly from churches which raised adult literacy rates (UNESCO, 2005), as did initial exposure to primary schooling to up to at least four years.

Botswana offers an example of combined government and NGO effort to implement international conventions. After Hamburg, in 1997, the country's delegates convened a national stakeholder workshop to develop a *country plan of action* to define an *Agenda for the Future*. They examined the ten themes endorsed at Hamburg to determine which could be implemented. Based on that, they developed a *National Action Plan for Adult Learning* comprising of 23 action items. Each was assigned to organizations and given a time frame. The plan provided a national road map for providing adult learning activities. These activities were to be carried out by NGOs, private sector organizations, the Botswana Adult Education Association (BAEA) and other local and central government departments (Botswana National Commission for UNESCO, 1999).

The nation also organized a working group to develop a country report on efforts towards EFA and a national stakeholder workshop to harmonize national education goals with those of the *Dakar Framework For Action*. The

plan focused on the expansion and improvement of early childhood education for vulnerable groups, improving the quality and relevance of education and training; ways to expand early childcare and education programs and improve response mechanisms to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Ministry of Education, 2003 indicating national commitment to international agreements. However, neither plans includes indicators of success or clear time lines for anticipated delivery.

Literacy Campaigns, Projects and Programs

Literacy planners in Africa can opt for a delivery mode depending on their context and political expediency. Literacy delivery in Africa is framed by the vision, policy and availability of resources from states or NGOs. To meet EFA goals, nations have organized campaigns, programs or projects depending on their political persuasion, availability of human resources and general perception of literacy. Bhola (1999) distinguished between a program and project: a project tends to be small scale, less bureaucratic with more capacity to respond adequately, stratified and clearly defined objectives restricted to a small group of people while projects are decentralized, participatory and include some local and NGO institutions. In a given context, projects primarily depend upon the needs and motivations of the people served and the essential flexibility to provide literacy learners with what they need. They will invariably need to be supplemented with larger scale formal schooling to increase their impact.

► *Literacy Campaigns*

Some African nations such as Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Tanzania have used campaigns to address the problem of illiteracy or to provide literacy opportunities to their citizens who missed schooling during colonialism and to address the EFA goals. According to Bhola (1999) campaigns are primarily motivated by a sense of urgency and combativeness in post- revolutionary settings on the part of the political leadership to redress past injustice. Nations have reformed literacy policies and decentralized decision making to give campaign leaders the freedom to be innovative. Campaigns have been organized both as one offs and as longer-term. They demonstrated the potential for learner empowerment in Algeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia and Tanzania in the transitional period after independence. For example, Mozambique organized four campaigns from 1978-1982: in the first two 500, 000 people participated although far fewer participated in the last two campaigns (Lind, 1988 cited in UNESCO, 2005). Consequently,

mass literacy campaigns are viewed as “constituting forms of strategic state intervention to redefine the social character in terms of specific development goals identified [with] society as a whole at a particular moment in its development” (Rassool, 1999, p. 101). Campaigns are viewed as critical for literacy delivery in Africa because they involve people in ongoing dialogue and debate about choices of language and other aspects of their lives. However, they tend to work better in monolingual societies than in African nations with multiple languages.

► *Literacy Programs*

In most countries, literacy programs achieving impressive increases in literacy have been part of a broader national planning framework and articulated in *National Development* and *District Development Plans* or decrees. Both primary education and adult learning in these cases are almost exclusively planned and sponsored by governments and treated as part of the national development effort (Youngman, 2000). In these contexts, educational provision is centralized and the language and content of instruction in both formal and literacy programs are prescribed by the state. In some cases, literacy provision is a planned and systematic process that could be large scale and time bound just like a campaign intended to eradicate illiteracy. The provision of large-scale adult literacy programs in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Kenya and Zimbabwe clearly sought to gradually provide literacy as part of national development plans and human rights initiatives (Lind and Johnston, 1990). Planners seek efficiency because the provision is part of a government effort to address other development objectives. One language or two are chosen. Usually, in relatively stable nations such as Botswana, the language is intended to reflect an underlying nationalism and cultural integration based on principles of unity and efficiency. This may be at the expense of a recognition of learner identity and minority communities (Maruatona, 2004).

In Nigeria several efforts were made, such as establishing the *National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) in 1991 by Decree 17 of 1990* to try and address adult literacy concerns to actively involve State agencies for Adult and Non-formal Education (ANFE). It was also inaugurated in all the states of the federation including the Federal Capital to expand the program and reduce administrative bottlenecks in its promotion. The Local Government Areas (LCA) were equally involved in the delivery of literacy education, reaching people at the grassroots level but

sustaining government control of what is taught in the programs. Nigeria had an initial Universal Primary Education (UPE), which was developed into the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999.

The major limitation is that literacy in these cases is often out-competed by formal schooling in allocating both the development and recurrent budget allocations. For example, in Botswana the national literacy program receives about only 1.1 % of the recurrent budget (Youngman, 2000). Some countries were more innovative in the way they increased school enrolments for example, Kenya introduced free primary education, targeted school meal programs, a textbook fund for poor households and a bursary fund to help students from poor families. Unfortunately, others such as Botswana are regressing by announcing the re-introduction of school fees 2006 after almost two decades of free but not compulsory education up to tertiary level. This unfortunate development is justified under the pretext of cost sharing and recovery (Maruatona, 2003). Benin's comprehensive approach for instance is reported to have included measures to increase demand, improve the quality of literacy programs, increase funding and strengthen decentralized management systems (UNESCO, 2006). These cases point to the value of organizing literacy programs that are complementary to the effort to achieve universal primary education.

► *Literacy Projects*

In Mali the use of projects enabled the state to provide literacy in Banbara, Mandingo, Fulah, Songhay and Tamasheq. In Burundi, the Niger, and Togo, literacy materials were prepared in local languages.

Overall, campaign gains were short lived in some cases but their drive, to mobilize resources was unprecedented. Programs, through gradual and long term, suffer a major set back of being too centralized and mostly not reflective of the reality of the learner. Projects seem to be the most appealing since they complement programs and primary education and reach the most difficult to reach. They should be encouraged in communities of indigenous people or remote area dwellers.

Government and NGO Partnerships

Since CONFINTEA V, there has been a clear and concerted effort by NGOs and civil society to collaborate with willing governments in the delivery of

education. Data reveals that in some countries, NGOs play such a prominent role that their contributions overshadow those of government, which plays a more coordinating role. A key strategy identified at Dakar as critical to achieving EFA is the continued engagement of civil society and NGOs in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national literacy strategies. There is some evidence that various countries have accepted their role in educational policy formulation and the preparation of national EFA plans (UNESCO, 2000). Two regional literacy organizations — PAMOJA, and PROLIT — played major roles in helping to further the goal of literacy education in Africa.

PAMOJA, established in 2002 by African Reflect practitioners, facilitates learning, sharing and continuing evolution of Reflect practices in Africa. It is part of CIRAC (Circle for International Reflect Action and Communication), which is a global organization of Reflect practitioners, set up in 2000. CIRAC won the UNESCO literacy award for the year 2003. Its vision is to strive to see that the poor men and women in Africa are able to take control of their destiny by influencing policy makers to listen to their voices, and to challenge all dominant power structures to build a wealthy self sustaining African society. Its task is to help communities fight poverty and engage in sustainable development, thereby serving to play a generous role of fulfilling one of the goals of the MDGs.

Project Literacy, on the other hand, has a longer history of involvement in literacy work in South Africa dating back from an individual initiative in 1973 intended to provide literacy to live-in domestic workers. Founded then by Jenny Naser, Prolit has played a crucial role in the provision of literacy over the years. It was one of the first organisations to be accredited as an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) literacy provider. Its role in administering funds from different organizations testifies to its credibility as a provider of literacy education.

The implementation of literacy education in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia depends heavily on NGOs. In Kenya, ACTIONAID, Plan International, Literacy and Evangelism, Bible Translation and Literacy, Kenya Adult Education Association and Kenya Adult Learners Association made significant contribution over the years in promoting adult literacy. In Senegal, literacy provision is based on a wider support of all sections of society for the eradication of illiteracy. These programs are planned and

implemented with the active participation of NGOs that work among communities. NGOs in Nigeria have supported literacy programs at the state and local government area level, thereby stabilizing literacy centers, initiating new strategies and mobilizing citizens for participation in adult literacy education. Some examples of NGO involvements in Nigeria include the Department of Adult Education at the University of Ibadan, which won the UNESCO Literacy Prize in 1989, and the University Village Association [UNIVA]. Started by Michael Omolewa and supported by his colleagues at the University of Ibadan. UNIVA organized an information shop since most people did not know where, how and when to access interactive literacy learning (Aderinoye & Rogers, 2005). It was the runner-up in the UNESCO Institute for Education Literacy Research competition in 1992 and won the Honorable Mention by the Malcolm Adeseshiah Literacy Prize in 1999. This illustrates how individuals and groups can take charge to provide literacy to less privileged members of society even under a very hostile military regime.

South Africa already experiences the problem of NGO fatigue and only some NGOs such as PROLIT have continued with their literacy activities on a small scale. The state is trying to establish a fairly elaborate policy where they take over different aspects of ABET such as the training of teachers to ensure the few remaining NGOs continue to support the country's efforts to deliver literacy as a basic human right and essential service (Mangena, 2002).

In Zambia, most literacy work is undertaken by NGOs: over 40 NGOs, especially churches involved in the provision of adult basic education, are working alongside the national program in places that are difficult for the state to reach (Mwansa, 2002). It could be argued that national policies in Africa allow for collaboration with NGOs, which was a direct offshoot from their extensive involvement at the 1997CONFINTEA V deliberations. A clear policy for how NGOs and Governments can work together is needed. Abadzi (2005) argues that NGOs and grassroots organizations are indispensable in the delivery of literacy but donors can only accept and work with them if strong central government institutions are responsible for their work. Governments must at least closely supervise these voluntary and community associations so that they develop the capacity to reach program participants, train teachers, produce and distribute large quantities of materials, supervise, and monitor. This study endorses some of these concerns about NGOs mishandling funds but recognizes that African governments may also be inefficient in the use of resources.

Abadzi (2005) cautiously indicates that government could outsource literacy funds to some providers but must make the process more transparent and tenders should be awarded to organizations best positioned to deliver literacy. For example, since 1995 the *faire -faire* scheme in Senegal has involved the state and civil society in an alliance where NGOs were implementers of public policies with state guidance. In spite of their success, Torres (2003) cautions against the state's abrogating its responsibility to provide basic education to all as a right. This negative trend in Africa has resulted in adults and youth being made to pay for their education as part of cost sharing and privatization of literacy delivery. The following section examines the strategies employed by government and NGOs to deliver literacy in Africa.

Literacy Delivery and Decentralization

Literacy delivery in Africa is narrowly conceived and planned programs need to be decentralized if they are to reflect the true reality of the user and make learning demand-driven. One of the most critical aspects of literacy education in Africa is the centralization of planning with limited learner involvement. Despite the national NEPAD vision statements, planning is conducted by bureaucrats, and decision-making authority is concentrated at the top of the hierarchy. Adult literacy delivery in Africa tends to facilitate political control by the state. The curriculum represents the perspectives of the politically powerful. This approach gives teachers and learners minimal influence on curriculum content and choice of literacy textbooks and language (Maruatona, 2002). The centralized curriculum has also been criticized for not being customer or demand driven, and unlinked to other educational opportunities (Ntiri, 1998). It is therefore argued that a centralized literacy curriculum would not serve the interests of African learners and would need to be decentralized if programs are to have any impact.

Ministries charged with literacy delivery tend to have a lot of responsibilities, which justifies the need for a decentralized approach. As used here decentralization denotes the transfer of authority from high echelons of the state to geographically dispersed local government agents, thereby strengthening local literacy providers to make decisions on their daily work. In the context of Africa there has been two exemplary ways in which this was obtained. First, in South Africa the planning of Adult Basic Education and Training was decentralized in ways that could be instructional for other nations both in its successes and failures. Post-Apartheid democratic South Africa

instituted ABET to enable various elements to deliver literacy education and training. In so doing, it recognized the roles played by a multiple stakeholders from the public (state), non-governmental and private (economic) sectors. The process also reached a diverse range of learning constituencies including organized labor; self-employed and under-employed individuals, adults in the urban areas and rural areas and rural women. The planning was based on principles of equity, redress, democracy, development and reconstruction, development and integration. McKay (2004) notes that ABET policy sought to develop an enabling environment in which high quality programs can flourish throughout the country by providing guidance to providers, rather than through control and prescriptive measures. It is thus envisaged that policy development in this field will be an ongoing process.

Literacy and Language Choices

In recent years, the value of linguistic legacies has raised the question of the language of literacy and of teaching in general. However, most languages in Africa are spoken but have no known orthography which raises literacy issues for local languages. Language policies being developed today are mostly aimed at multilingualism. For example, the African Union states. “The official languages of the Union and all its institutions shall be Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Kiswahili and any other African language.” The choice of language policy therefore continues to be pivotal in making programs accessible and plays a crucial role in the choice of teachers and the availability of materials. Provision is not homogeneous across languages and has implications for access to power.

Despite NEPAD's rhetoric, certain choices such as the designation of official or national languages are made arbitrarily. Nations choose a language of instruction in schools and literacy programs, campaigns and projects without clear policy guidelines. Official languages — English, French and Portuguese — are typically imposed by the political elite because they are languages of the former colonial powers (Maruatona, 2002; UNESCO, 2005). School languages are often a combination of a national *lingua franca* or a national language associated with powerful groups and an official language. In most cases, learners start with a national language and later transition to an official language, which is used up to the highest level of education. Many organizations claim mother tongue as the preferred language of instruction in literacy programs as it allows for creative teaching in a familiar language.

(UNESCO, 2005). The best option might be bilingual education where learners start literacy education in their mother tongue and later shift to the national or official language depending on their preference. The most critical consideration should be adequate numbers of trained teachers and materials that facilitate teaching in mother tongue. The greatest challenge is that learners might prefer to learn in national or office languages to open opportunities for themselves (Maruatona, 1998).

Literacy Teacher Training and Support

Training of literacy teachers and their support is crucial in literacy delivery. All global visions and policies and those of Africa, especially NEPAD, point to the value of well trained teachers in the delivery of literacy. The relative success of different programs depends on the quality of instructors and proper training. Many facilitators are local people or volunteers with no formal qualifications; others are full time or part time NGO or development workers. Full time teachers from other sectors of education also teach adults on a part time basis (i.e. Tanzania) and full time qualified adult educators are employed within the program of basic education and training (UNESCO, 2005). However the majority of literacy teachers are unqualified which has negative implications for the kind of teaching they provide, though motivated and dedicated, they might not have the requisite skills to teach. In countries such as Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia, instructors are trained to teach literacy by being exposed to the principles for teaching adult learners. In Botswana, teachers are recruited from different ethnic and language communities before being trained; the recruitment of literacy teachers involves community leaders. After recruitment, individuals are given an *initial training* at district level and are assessed during it; if they fail, they are discontinued (Maruatona, 2001). These volunteer teachers are given a small honorarium per session.

The training of literacy educators is primarily the responsibility of government ministries, departments or directorates responsible for adult basic, literacy and non-formal education. Trainees are posted to both governmental and NGOs providers (Ellis, 2002; Torres, 2003). The only exception to this was found in Namibia and Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, NGOs such as the Adult Literacy Association of Zimbabwe (ALAZ) and the Zimbabwe Adult Learners' Association (ZALA) are responsible for training of instructors (Mudariki, 2002) most of whom are hired as volunteers. It is only in Namibia, where after

training, they sign an annual contractual agreement with the Directorate of Adult Basic Education, of the Ministry of Basic Education Sports and Culture which gives them the opportunity to test their interest and gives their supervisors a chance to test their commitment (Ellis, 2002). In the Ghanaian National Functional Literacy Program, teachers are recruited from among their local communities and after completing a literacy batch are given a bicycle or sewing machine publicly in recognition of their contribution (Lauglo, 2001). It has been noted that in all these cases, teachers are provided with refresher courses to ensure that their skills are sharpened every year and to enable them to share successes and frustrations. The challenge is for people to be hired on relatively permanent basis or, as in Namibia, properly contracted.

Closely related to poor teacher training is lack of inbuilt assessment and evaluation mechanisms. Adult Basic Education delivery in Africa lacks a system to determine internal efficiency and establish a consistent measure of performance. UNESCO, national governments and other competent partners in evaluation need to establish assessment mechanisms that are flexible enough to allow teachers and other national agencies to determine the impact of literacy.

Recommendations

The most critical shortcoming of African literacy policies is their failure to endorse the principle of lifelong learning as a framework and to ensure that African communities become learning societies. Most promising African policies share the following features:

1. *Literacy as a basic human right* in which the state invests because it is viewed as having a positive effect on personal, family, community and national development initiatives.
2. *Integrating literacy, training and basic education opportunities and policies.* In South Africa, for example, ABET encompasses all learning opportunities from basic literacy to grade 10 with clear progression routes between them. This level of integration helps to break the artificial categorizations of academic and practical skills. An integrated program helps to address the needs of learners across the spectrum of society without discriminating against any category. This would be the best strategy to address the EFA goals for women and girls.
3. *Endorse lifelong learning as an organizing principle* for planning literacy policies. A few countries such as Botswana, Namibia and South Africa

mention this in their educational policies but no infrastructure ensures access to learning on a lifelong and life wide basis.

4. Africa needs a comprehensive policy on the shared use of resources. The best way to deal with it is to acknowledge that *investment should be spread reasonably between schools and NFE programs, projects and campaigns.*
5. *Partnerships with NGOs:* States should coordinate NGOs and other providers who bring much needed resources and expertise and often take a transformative approach, to have umbrella NGO bodies that coordinate NGOs working to provide literacy in each nation. Government or donor funds could support such NGOs to work in disadvantaged, rural and remote sections of the Africa societies. Governments must, however, have ultimate responsibility for the delivery of education for all and not leave it to NGOs and donors as has been the case in many nations such as Zambia. The state must effectively supervise and coordinate literacy education efforts of NGOs if EFA goals are to be met in Africa.
6. *Improving the quality of facilitators:* Namibia presents the best practice in dealing with the assessment of community-selected teachers who are made to sign an annual contract subject to renewal based on performance and willingness to work. The current four week long training on average is sufficient, provided there is in built support and refresher courses. The need for teachers could also be alleviated by hiring university trained *Certificate in Adult Education* holders, who are unemployed in most countries. The key here is for the state to be willing to reward these people for their expertise or to encourage them to see teaching adults as a social service before assuming a commensurate job. In some countries, universities students are engaged as adult literacy tutors and encouraged to see literacy teaching as contributing towards their degree.
7. *Decentralization of services to improve delivery* of literacy education. Decentralization overcomes the exclusion of local level cadre in the planning of programs, which in turn deprives society of the benefits of full participation in decision-making. Learners and local teachers should be allowed to participate in curriculum planning, and the teaching-learning process. It is strongly recommended that literacy delivery in Africa be decentralized to helped local staff emphasize the problems in their districts and for their learners to develop a sense of program ownership. Planners should be encouraged to integrate the socio-economic and cultural practices of their host communities and at the same time expose them to national and global issues.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ADEA	Association of the Development of Education in Africa
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALF	Adult literacy facilitators
ALOZ	Adult Literacy Association of Zimbabwe
ANFE	Adult and Non-formal Education
AU	African Union
BAEA	Botswana Adult Education Association
CCE	Centre or Continuing Education
CE	Continuing Education
CICE	Centre for In-service and Continuing Education
CIRAC	Circle for International Reflect Action and Communication
EFA	Education For All
ESP	Education Sector Policy
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GNP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
ICAE	International Council of Adult Education
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LGA	Local Government Areas
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFLP	National Functional Literacy Program
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NMEC	National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education

NQF	National Qualification Framework
PROLIT	Project Literacy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
RNPE	Revised National Policy on Education
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Fund For Population
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNIVA	University Village Association
UNLD	United National Literacy Decades
UPE	Universal Primary Education
ZALA	Zimbabwe Adult Learners' Association

Effective and Promising Literacy Programs

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Chapter 3.

Assessing the *Faire-Faire* Approach to Literacy Programs

by Amadou Wade Diagne and Binta Rassouloula Aw Sall

1. The 'Outsourcing' Concept: Genesis and Evolution

The Emergence of the 'Outsourcing' Strategy

Why outsource?

i) Previous approaches had shown their limits (unsatisfactory results, lack of insight into the data, questionable information provided by stakeholders acting as judge and jury, inadequate supply in relation to demand, recurring illiteracy).

ii) A more effective and participatory approach was clearly needed (requirements by funding bodies of good governance, emergence of new actors from civil society, claims for more significant involvement at the community level, development of different management approaches in sectors other than education with attractive results, etc.).

iii) Non-formal education in general (and adult education in particular) has been identified as a strategy for addressing disparities in access to basic social services, and as a vector of accelerated universal education.

In the 1980s and 1990s the non-formal education sector in the countries of the Sahel was characterized by high illiteracy, uneven growth, a disregard for its potential, lack of recognition for high-quality programs, and a notable lack of coherence among various actors. This state of affairs can be attributed to the following:

1. **Lack of a national, federal program to fight illiteracy.** Despite the presence of certain structures operating in the non-formal sector, there was rarely any general policy outlining a logical and consistent interventional framework.
2. **Significant burdens including** a large institutional apparatus to manage small programs; insufficient planning, coordination, and follow-up capacities in the relevant partnerships; the poor technical skills of available human resources, due to a lack of training in adult education; difficulties in collecting reliable data; the scarcity of the means allocated to the sector in national budgets; the low quality of the learning outcomes registered to date; and the absence of precise and consistent post-literacy policies or programs.
3. **Several options for coordination arose**, depending on the country:
 - **laissez-faire approach:** various literacy programs coexist without coordination from any ministry; where guidelines exist, they are seldom known or followed.
 - **Project approach:** primarily formulating autonomous projects in response to specific sector needs or in conjunction with development programs. independently designed projects are implemented by ministerial departments or civil society organizations, without reference to an overall policy.
 - **Program approach:** Government defines a general policy with partners on an agreed action plan and a strategic framework for actions, coordination, and optimization.
4. **No agreed regulatory sector framework**, despite significant investment by national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across very different fields.
5. **Standardization** of programs into a 'one-program-fits-all' model in which programs are conceptualized centrally, with little attention to the needs expressed by communities, heavily intellectual content orientation emphasizing isolated instrumental knowledge at the expense of daily life (reading and arithmetic); with a standardized format for program delivery.

6. **The absence of visibility of results:** given the concentration in the hands of a sole promoter (be it State, NGO, project, or private sector, of all program aspects, it has not always been possible to obtain reliable data and particularly on program success.
7. **Recurrent illiteracy:** the combined effect of programs' standardization and low profiles are most probably the cause of their low efficiency and poor results. Participants bear witness to their repeated involvement in training sessions without developing lasting skills.
8. **State technical and financial fatigue:** budgetary constraints caused by the 1980s structural adjustment programs hinder the development of the social and education sectors and led to inequitable access to basic education, lack of teachers, and low enrolment in adult literacy programs.
9. **Decentralization.** The emergence of outsourcing remains strongly linked to the decentralization which was imposed as a condition of financial assistance to the South, "where the State is asked to partially step aside and make room for private initiatives, regardless of whether they come from the population, NGOs, or businesses." Decentralization calls into question the State's central role in the context of "strengthening the economic conditionality to development aid through the implementation of adjustment policies in the 1980s."
10. **A supportive international environment and renewed commitment to Education For All** and greater support from international institutions for the social sectors. Government literacy and basic education policy fits into the framework of the 1990 Jomtien Conference advocating EFA, and, an international climate favorable to policy on literacy and to basic education. United Nations agencies and more recently the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank are paying increasing attention to the "social compensation aspects of adjustment, targeting the most vulnerable groups and focused on employment, food, health, or education"

The *Faire-Faire* Concept

The strategy consists in making each partner play his or her own part; where there is a clear comparative advantage, 'each does what he does best'. The 'faire faire' strategy is one of decentralization, namely a deliberate and organized delegation of the conception and implementation of programs that address an educational need on the ground, expressed by known stakeholders recognized as being able to implement within the State framework. It is an agreed, accepted, and sensible distribution of roles and responsibilities in adult education, carried out according to terms and guidelines set out

in a handbook or to flexible, negotiated procedures. It is also a way for the administration to play its role as a policy-maker, regulator, evaluator, and source of assistance. *Faire-Faire* is not *laissez-faire* nor does it make the State less responsible or disengaged from providing minimal education to all its citizens. The following principles pertain:

- Separation between the orientation, follow-up, and assessment functions of the Ministry and the operational functions of literacy groups.
- Contractual basis for those literacy missions to be performed with public funds made available by the Ministry.
- Equal access to funds for all service providers whose proposals are consistent with a set of eligibility criteria that all partners acknowledge as appropriate.
- Impartiality and transparency of the funding allocation system.
- Prompt payment for services rendered by providers, who in most cases have limited funds of their own and limited resources.
- The *Faire-Faire* strategy does not mean not letting things be..
 - It does not mean letting oneself be dictated to.
 - It does not mean relieving the government of its responsibilities.
 - It does not mean government disengagement from its obligations to ensure that all citizens receive a basic education.

Fundamental Principles

- **Harmonize interventions:** all activities that play a part in reaching literacy objectives should fit within a consistent framework established with the participation of all stakeholders; a framework for exchanges, coordination, and suggestions should be created at all levels. The Committee to Support Literacy Activities (*Comité d'Appui aux Activités d'Alphabétisation*, CAPAL) in Chad, for example, needs to open and make use of local outlets.
- **Decentralization** is about enhancing the responsibility of communities and civil society organizations at all stages in the process of designing and implementing policy.
- **Dispersal:** peripheral departments of the Ministry need enhanced competencies including planning, management, information, monitoring and evaluation, coordination etc.
- **Partnerships and participation:** hierarchical relationships should yield to a partnership-based approach where the conscious, willing participation of all stakeholders is a priority.

- **Transparency and equity:** the system should ensure equitable access to available resources on the basis of set criteria and according to a mechanism based on transparency.

The Development Context

The following conditions are propitious for using the ‘outsourcing’ strategy:

- The presence of NGOs and community organizations created in the 1970s, and the claim to greater community involvement.
- The principles of good governance increasingly make results-based management a condition of donor funding.
- The international community is more and more committed to EFA.

► *Why Involve Civil Society?1*

In some countries, subcontracting NGOs is the prevailing government policy for implementing literacy programs: Senegal, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, and Niger have all taken this course. Several other West African countries may amend their policies to fully or partially subcontract NGOs.

Several arguments favor a policy of close collaboration with NGOs and other associations:

- A partnership can raise more financial and human resources in favor of literacy.
- NGOs have significant experience, from which partnerships could benefit.
- In accommodating a diversity of service providers, NGOs can be flexible enough to adapt to local conditions.
- Involving communities and their organizations is a means of ensuring much-needed support for literacy at the local level.
- The development of a national association of NGOs and community organizations can provide Government with the reactions and comments of independent interest groups.
- Collaboration depends on the existence of common goals and mutual trust. These prerequisites tend to reinforce each other as Government becomes more receptive to a pluralist civil society.

1. Lauglo, J., 2001. *Engaging with Adults: The Case for Increased Support to Adult Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

2. Learning From Implementation

Institutional Aspects

Effective delegation presupposes the existence of four support frameworks:

1. **Political framework:** a clear sectoral policy that is well-anchored politically and institutionally adapted and stable, enjoying consensus at the highest levels.
2. **Framework for dialogue** that is participatory and consensus-driven, where unity of thought can be achieved and nurtured.
3. **Current financial framework:** a body capable of handling transfers efficiently and of receiving funds from all contributors (State, public or private, domestic and international).
4. An effective, appropriate **technical support framework:** a specialized national institution and/or strong technical leadership.

► *The Political Realm*

Unfinished Institutional Changes

In Burkina Faso, the following advances are noted at the sector level (see also Bayala, Benoît, Diagne, and Napon, 2004. *Evaluation de la stratégie du «faire faire» au Burkina Faso*):

- The creation of a consistent, comprehensive management framework through a ministerial *cabinet* created to oversee the sector, the establishment of a resource center, and the reorganization of technical service provision through the general directorate for literacy and non-formal education (DGAENF), the directorate for research and innovation in literacy (DRINA), and the basic education catchments (CEB).
- ***The establishment of a national program to implement the non-formal education development plan, with the support of a private management body (the Fund for Literacy and Non-formal education or FONAEF)*** whose actions are completed by those of other technical and financial partners and NGOs in the field.

The existence of these advances notwithstanding, certain problems persist, such as the institutional instability relating to the status of the above *cabinet*, insufficient or insufficiently trained staff, and its unfinished reorganization. The *cabinet* lacks a communications and problem-solving strategy to address the major changes brought about by the adoption of the 'faire faire' strategy. Indeed from 2000 to 2002, there was a shift from a state secretariat for literacy and non-formal education (SEAENF) to a delegated *cabinet* for

literacy and non-formal education within the Ministry of basic education and literacy (MEBA), an office without any autonomy or executive power. This situation partly explains why the Assistant Minister appears to lack control over the sector.

In addition, the various reiterations of the MEBA organizational chart have only further undermined the sector's institutional strength. The creation in 2002 of the DGAENF and the transformation of the INA into the DRINA caused a blockage in the implementation of literacy activities as each structure wanted to lead. This situation led to overlap in the execution of political and technical programming.

There was a similar situation in Senegal, where political instability was chronic. Indeed, the literacy sector went through five assistant or full ministers from 1993 to 2006; one minister remained in office for five years and developed a vision for the future, a plan, and projects later supported by the Government and its partners but no other minister remained in office for more than two years. In addition, there were frequent changes in the division of State services and the creation or merger of entities that did not always have time to evolve (such as the Directorate for the promotion of national languages) or thrive for lack of a regulatory framework (such as the National Resource Center, the Academy of Languages, and the Office of Planning, Coordination and Evaluation attached to the *Cabinet*).

In Mali, the Government took the following institutional measures:

- The National Directorate for Basic Education (DNEB), which is responsible for literacy, was reorganized to enhance its principal responsibility of providing leadership in the non-formal education sector.
- The national resource center for non-formal education (CNR-ENF), which is equally prominent and ranks as highly as the DNEB, now acts as a technical and financial executor of the plan.

However, conflicts regarding responsibility, and problems regarding precedence and positioning, continue to destroy sectoral operations for lack of political arbitration and dialogue.

Sector Management: Not Always Effective

There are areas where some progress in management has been made:

- Shared development plan for NFE, for education in general, and an annual plan for each project/program.
- The elaboration of planning mechanisms at the level of the MEBA executive office, technical departments, and decentralized structures.
- The elaboration of a mechanism for the coordination and regulation of partnerships (in the case of State/TFP partnerships), and of debriefing and planning workshops.
- Effective coordination of partner interventions.
- Consensus on the need for a programmatic approach with one technical and financial executor (or executing agent).

Certain problems persist nonetheless:

- Poor mastery of information (insufficient indicators for the non-formal sector, unreliable data, weak data collection and analysis strategies.).
- Insufficient and under-skilled personnel at all levels.
- Relative invisibility of the non-formal sector at the decentralized level: in Burkina Faso's new organizational chart, for instance, literacy offices have replaced literacy departments and are now part of a primary education department, headed by a manager from the formal sector with no experience in literacy.
- Lack of a functioning platform for creating dialogue (irregular meetings, lack of follow-up...) partly accounts for the limited success in mastering an agenda and harmonizing various programmatic and costing approaches.
- In Senegal, difficulties with regard to the implementation of a program-based approach, unlike Burkina Faso where a multi-donor fund uses a common handbook for all participants.

► *The Technical Sphere: A Difficult Birth*

The Government of Senegal's sustained interest in non-formal education led to the creation of an assistant minister for literacy appointed in 1989. Several changes have taken place since: an assistant minister in charge of literacy and the promotion of national languages (1993-1995), an assistant minister in charge of basic education and the promotion of national languages (1995-2000), and finally an assistant minister in charge of literacy, technical education, and professional training (as of April 2000). This evolution may present the advantages of better visibility for the sector, and allow for management more closely aligned to the initial objectives of the exercise.

Throughout these political and institutional metamorphoses dictated by technical or political need, the directorate for literacy remained stable in its mission and institutional grounding. Given the scale of the tasks, the complexity of the innovations and the current state of organization and human resources, as well as the need for coherence between new missions and organization in a period of advanced decentralization, the directorate assumes major responsibility for the coordination and management of non-formal programming at all levels. The directorate emphasizes the monitoring of progress through a database of actions and results, follow-up and evaluation, the production of directories (didactic material, facilitators aides, and books on national languages...), the formulation of an editorial policy for national languages, and the elaboration of a non-formal basic education curriculum.

A different directorate for promoting national languages (DPLN) was created to support a more energetic national languages policy, in a more institutionalized setting but, was short-lived: it was put on hold first and then resuscitated for a short but productive period, only to be subsumed into a new directorate called the Directorate for Literacy and National Languages (DALN) under the pretext of a more rational organization of State educational services.

► *Partnerships*

In Senegal, a national committee for steering and technical support (CNCAT) was created within the national committee for the elimination of illiteracy (CNEA); the latter went through a period of lethargy in the wake of problems within the World Literacy Program under the aegis of UNESCO.

In Chad, a new partnership system entitled the support committee to promote literacy activities (CAPAL) will pursue the following objectives:

- Participate in defining national education policy.
- Mobilize all partners in order to implement action plans.
- Examine implementation results, and generation of corrective measures as necessary.
- Approve regulatory texts and procedural handbooks.

These goals can be reduced to functions of dialogue, coordination, exchange, participation, and advice in support of Government decision-making and good governance more generally.

In Mali, a permanent framework for dialogue between the State and its civil society partners has been erected: it is the National Steering Sub-committee for the Development of Non-formal education, the SCNCDEF.

Table 3.1. Organization of Partnerships

Level	Administrative area	Civil society area	Partnership area
National	Ministry of Education with the following particularities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistant minister offices (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Chad) ▪ Dedicated Ministries ▪ Existence of several full ministries, including those in charge of basic education and literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senegal: National coordination of literacy facilitators (CNOAS). ▪ Burkina Faso: Association for the promotion of non-formal education (APENF) and Steering Committee for educational NGOs and associations operating in Burkina Faso (CCEB-BF). ▪ Mali: Steering committee for NGOs operating in Mali (CCA-ONG). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senegal: National committee for dialogue and technical support (CNCAT) ▪ Burkina Faso: Steering sub-committee for non-formal planning ▪ Chad: Support committee for literacy development in Chad (CAPAL)
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional educational directorates ▪ Academic inspectors (IA) 	Regional committee for the coordination of facilitators (Senegal)	Regional support committee for literacy promotion activities (Chad)
Departmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Departmental inspectorates (IDEN) or provincial delegations 	Departmental committee for the coordination of facilitators	Departmental support committee for literacy promotion activities
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literacy and lifelong education services in Chad ▪ Basic education catchments (CEB) in Burkina Faso 	Local committee for the coordination of facilitators	Local support committee for literacy promotion activities

In Burkina Faso for instance, progress has been made in the following areas.

- Some substantive political dialogue on orientations, strategies, etc. in forums and seminars.
- Mobilization of all actors on behalf of literacy.
- The implementation of a partnership approach that has made it possible to mobilize all sector stakeholders in support of literacy.
- Favorable reception of the policy and an action plan conceived on a participatory basis.

Partnerships have the following problems:

- Weakened political dialogue because the steering committees of almost all countries do not function.
- Problems related to creating a proper framework where service providers can interface with the Government and TFPs, in some countries including Chad, Morocco, and Côte d'Ivoire... It sometimes appears that the State and the TFPs are taking the decisions exclusively.

The Organization of Service Providers

Literacy facilitators and service providers are the engines of the sector and need to be involved in all operations, as program success largely depends on their commitment, skills, and professionalism. Experience has also shown that their relationship with administrative structures always generates some degree of skepticism, mistrust, and even defiance. Given the diversity of statutes (NGO, association, development business, private practice, growers' associations, etc.) there is no suitable umbrella to regroup them and manage their participation and representation.

In Senegal, service providers have established a National Coordination of literacy facilitators (CNOAS) that the Government supported by virtue of the unsuitability of existing structures. In Mali, by contrast, the implementation of the delegation strategy relied on existing organizations. Thus the steering committee for NGOs operating in Mali (CCA-ONG) brings together 85 national and international NGOs. In Burkina Faso, the only existing steering committee for NGOs in basic education (CCEB-BF), which represents service providers from both formal and non-formal education, is not open to more recent arrivals on the scene.

► *The Financial Sphere*

In Senegal, the National Center for Educational Resources (CNRE) was established as a pillar of the partnerships among and between sector stakeholders (ministries, civil society organizations, private sector, local associations, and communities). It is a privileged site for dialogue, information, documentation, training, and technical support and the seat of activities related to fund-raising, capacity building, and the development of efficient and lasting partnerships among the parties involved. The CNRE is also expected to act as a technical and financial executive agency for the non-formal basic education program.

In Burkina Faso, discontent has been noted in relation to the 'Association' status of the Fund for Literacy and Non-formal education (FONAENF) among MEBA authorities. The MEBA seeks better representation in the various FONAENF bodies (national funding committee, administrative board, etc.). The MEBA sees the FONAENF in its current form as being controlled by the TFPs. In practice, the real issue is a tug-of-war between the wish to control resources and the attempt to secure resources otherwise gathered and used only on the basis of results.

In short, institutional actors see the FONAENF in its current structure as a TFP Foundation:

- The State's capitulation regarding its creation (the state secretariat for literacy and non-formal education, SEAENF, never wanted such an association but eventually yielded..
- Uncertainties regarding the State's will to diligently manage funds.
- The weak State presence in key positions (Chairman of the administrative board, Fund Director, and Presidency of the national financing committee)
- The co-opting of powerful service providers on the administration who are TFP allies.
- An absence of parallel structures: DREBA and DPEBA preside over the CPF and CRF where TFPs are absent; at the national level, the CNF eludes the DGAENF and thus the State (the DGAENF does not preside over the CNF).

Partnerships

In Senegal, several steering committees have been formed as the basis of partnerships whose dynamism largely underpins the success of the 'Faire Faire' strategy.

- I. **The National Committee for the Elimination of Illiteracy (CNEA)** was established in 1986 as an inter-ministerial body for orientation, decision, and execution; it is mandated to monitor the achievement of national literacy policy goals.
- II. **The National Committee for Coordination and Technical support (CNCAT)** was created in 1996 as a technical branch of CNEA to facilitate exchanges among stakeholders, to centralize, apply, and disseminate the results of literacy-related research and studies, and to provide technical support.
- III. **The Council for the harmonization of literacy projects (CHIPA)** provides an appropriate framework for the facilitation of communica-

tion, exchange, and synergy between projects. **Steering committees** periodically assess the progress of various projects, and provide remedial assistance and orientation under the direction of the Ministry. In addition, a **National Center for Educational Resources (CNRE)** serves as a place for encounters, exchange, communication, training, and technical support for all stakeholders in non-formal basic education.

Decentralization

In Senegal, the 'Faire Faire' strategy involved decentralizing nine areas of activity to the local level, including education. The transfer of responsibility consisted in conferring all that was supposedly better positioned locally: education, literacy, the promotion of national languages, and professional training.

Technical Aspects

► *Revising Programs: Taking a Demand-Driven Approach*

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the National Literacy Institute (INA) developed a three-stage literacy program:

- An initial training stage focuses on acquiring instrumental skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic).
- An additional basic training stage focuses on basic education, that is to say the acquisition of skills related to social and cultural activities (health, citizenship, environmental protection).
- A more specific technical training stage, during which professional technical skills are acquired and some independence is established through continuing education.

This program runs intensively from January to May over 50 days at an average of six hours per day. For lack of funds, only the first two stages are carried out, thereby compromising any development of technical skills such as those necessary for income-generation. Yet the non-formal education development plan, like the decennial program, targets poverty reduction by focusing on priority areas and on the most disadvantaged with a view to improving the quality of life through improved means of income-generation.

An analysis of innovative practices in the field of literacy, and of the suggestions made by the service providers and resource persons interviewed during surveys, suggests a need to reorganize the three literacy stages into two learning cycles:

- a. A **literacy/basic training cycle**, comprised of two learning levels of 300 hours each;
- b. **An à la carte** or optional training cycle to give literate learners immediate access to one of three further training programs offered.

Senegal

In Senegal, an agenda was drawn for curricular development for literacy and for Community Primary Basic Education schools (ECB). There were two particular concerns:

1. The need to provide quality basic education that would open doors to the many possibilities for further study and development studies that equity and social justice demand. This explains the presence of classical instrumental skills in the curriculum (reading, writing, arithmetic, command of the French language).
2. The need to add meaning to education by boldly inserting entrepreneurship as a highway to social, economic, psychological, and cultural autonomy for the target audience. A pedagogical approach combines theory and practice, intellectual growth based on facts and experience, and practical learning activities untainted by productivity considerations (entrepreneurship thus includes field investigations, manual labor, creation and management of economic interest groups, project management, basic accounting and marketing techniques.).

► *The Development of a Literate Environment*

There is a rather poor literate environment in the countries under discussion for various reasons:

- Illiteracy and low levels of formal education.
- Poverty: literate persons do not always have the means to buy schoolbooks and newspapers, and therefore the NGOs' and other projects' dissemination strategies are based on free access rather than cost recovery.
- For various cultural reasons, people read little (they are not used to reading, find it difficult to isolate themselves to read, live in an oral culture, etc.).
- Publications in national languages have increased in number and quality in those countries featuring with a system of subsidies, such as Senegal. In addition, the development of major literacy initiatives supported by

TFPs (Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Niger) has allowed for the large-scale production of printed didactic materials.

- In all the countries, publication distribution and dissemination networks operate with various degrees of success and often outside regular channels. Community networks and the commercial circuit for literacy providers associated with independent distributors (and their substantial discounts) have shown the best results.
- There has been some resistance to the use of national languages, for example, in Mali where some schools in the Regional Administration of Bamako record very low attendance rates “where a definite lack of interest among school authorities and parents is observed regarding *bilingual pedagogy* in general, and the use of national languages in particular.” The situation is similar in Niger: parents see French as a gateway to their children’s success and therefore resist national languages by withdrawing children from schools or not enrolling them.
- A book policy has not always managed to promote books in national languages; in Senegal, the Directorate for Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages (DPLN) produces a directory of publications in national languages but the National Directorate for Books has no idea about any specifics despite its stated intention of giving national languages their rightful place in the national system.

► *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Burkina Faso

Establishing an effective monitoring and evaluation system is one of the pre-requisites for realizing the goals of quality, planning, information, and monitoring set in the national non-formal education development plan. Given its strategic importance in the decision-making process for literacy policies and projects, this system should rely on the following principles and methodological principles:

- A clear definition of the relevant indicators, made on the basis of stakeholder roles.
- The creation of program databases at all levels to facilitate follow-up evaluation and management.
- Considering all aspects of training (instrumental and development-related).

An analysis of the realities on the ground points to the need for greater effort in addressing the current weaknesses of non-formal education, regarding the following:

- Insufficient involvement of center management committees in follow-up activities because of illiteracy and a lack of adapted monitoring tools.
- A logistical, material, and financial crisis limiting the centers' potential certification, follow-up, and evaluation by decentralized MEBA services.
- Skill deficit among literacy officers at the level of the CEBs and in the field of pedagogical follow-up, as the former have not mastered the transcription of the taught languages or the strategies for effective social communication.
- The confusion of roles among the technical arms in the area of follow-up (CEB vs. SA).
- Administrative slowness, which causes delays in the financing of follow-up and evaluation activities by the Education Projects Office (BEP).
- The persistence of certification problems identified in the course of a capacity-building survey, and the disregard of implementation guidelines for the new certification strategy proposed in the same.

Senegal

The implementation of solutions encountered in monitoring and evaluation activities resulted in the following:

Table 3.2. *Strengths and Weaknesses of Monitoring and Evaluation in Senegal*

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existence of a harmonized monitoring system 2. Existence of a set of monitoring and evaluation tools for non-formal basic education programs. Improved supervision. 3. More frequent monitoring. 4. Availability of sufficient data for databases (local and national). 5. Implementation of a literacy impact study. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of monitoring personnel at the decentralized level (IA/IDEN), as compared to a massive increase in the number of facilitators and centers. 2. Low-skilled personnel in charge of monitoring activities at the central and peripheral levels. 3. Lacking material and logistical resources for local monitoring. 4. Political hijacking of logistical apparatus. 5. Delays in the decentralization of the monitoring and evaluation system. 6. Discontent of service providers and projects regarding the performance of the directorate for literacy (unsatisfactory planning, implementation delays, unused reports, work overload, etc.) 7. Weakness in the management of impact studies.

Capacity-Building

► *Insufficiently Developed Capacities among Service Providers*

With the exception of major service providers sponsored by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, most literacy facilitators operate with small budgets, a small number of specialists, and small-scale programs for specific groups in limited geographical areas. Little is known regarding the efficiency of programs developed by the small providers, or whether they have the professional capacity to develop and operate larger projects.

► *The Support Structure: Still Fragile*

Despite efforts in the field, the following problems still persist.

- Small providers/facilitators are incapable of creating consortia because there is no management framework that would allow for constructive dialogue nor are there any well entrenched habits of collaboration or a shared democratic culture. Without these elements, organizational efforts are fruitless.
- Absence of incentives encouraging established providers to export their know-how to other deficient areas and to provide technical support to the newer associations.
- Small providers fear being swallowed by the major ones who tend to limit competitors' growth possibilities to maintain their lead.
- No national strategy to enhance the literacy facilitators' assistance/support system, due to institutional uncertainty and insufficient consideration of the non-formal education sector in the course of current institutional reforms.
- Limited collaboration and sharing of a democratic culture, without which organizational efforts become sterile.

► *Too Few and Under-Qualified Personnel in Decentralized Areas*

The question of the availability of sufficient numbers of literacy personnel in decentralized areas remains critical. Depending on the country, there are on average one, two, or three officers in the field, most of whom are novices in the field and unmotivated for lack of incentives or face the rigid educational legislation which limits their career prospects.

In Chad for instance, there are now literacy sections in the Departmental Delegations of National Education (DDEN) with only one officer usually in charge. In the *sous-préfectures* there are literacy and lifelong education

services (SAEP) composed of one officer and a staff of primary school teachers or teachers without any specific training in non-formal education who have often been arbitrarily appointed.

The material shortages these services are confronted with (there are very few offices with any logistical means at all) act as real limits on the capacity and work of their officers, particularly as they have no means of actually getting to the literacy centers.

Funding Literacy

► *Senegal*

Non-formal education programming went through two distinct stages flowing from the sector's development and the interest of political authorities. In a first stage (1989-1993), programs were funded either by the Government, specific projects in the field with a non-formal education dimension, or by development agencies. In a second stage (1993-2000) that corresponds to the elaboration and implementation of a non-formal sector policy and 'delegation strategy', the financing of the government program was provided by the following:

- State funds, through funding of Senegal's intensive literacy program (PAIS).
- Major government projects in the education sector, with the literacy project targeting women (PAPF - US\$14 million from The World Bank), the support initiative for the Action Plan on Non-formal Education (PAPA - CAN\$15 million from CIDA), and the Literacy Project for Local Elected Officials and Notables (PADEN) and the Alpha Women Project (both GTZ).
- Sector-wide projects including a literacy dimension, assigned to different technical ministries.
- Activities carried out by NGOs and associations capable of mobilizing external and internal resources through their dynamism and networks.
- In-kind or financial contributions from the communities whose average value is 2,500 CFA francs in nature or in kind, depending on the interventions.

For example, literacy activities in the year 2000 were financed with 4.6858 billion CFA Francs contributed as follows:

- Canadian Cooperation (CIDA): 39%
- World Bank (IDA): 47%
- German Cooperation (GTZ): 5%

► *Burkina Faso: Constantly Increasing but Still Insufficient Funding*

The published Action Plan for non-formal education development shows an insufficient commitment from the national budget, which was also difficult to increase (cf. the evaluation of the 'Faire Faire' strategy in Burkina Faso). This state of affairs accounts for the debts owed to providers and facilitators, the closure of the permanent centers for functional literacy (CPAF), and exaggerated dependence on exterior funding.

The establishment of FONAENF was a beginning in addressing these concerns. The start of the fund's missions allowed for the mobilization of significant additional resources, as shown in a summary of funds committed and received from January 2003 to July 2004 (below):

Table 3.3. Funds Committed and Received, January 2003-July 2004

Funding Sources	Contributions Committed		Contributions Received	
	Amount in (000) CFA Francs	%	Amount in (000) CFA Francs	% of Amount Committed
Burkinabé state	804,000	15.19	400,000	49.75
BPE/ Canadian Cooperation	600,000	11.33	100,140.196	16.69
BPE/ Dutch Cooperation	1,200,000	22.67	1,088,958.675	90.75
BPE/ Swedish Cooperation	650,000	12.27	227,253.730	34.96
BPE/ Danish Cooperation	200,000	3.78	0	0
Swiss Cooperation	600,000	11.33	400,000	66.67
BPE/ Belgian Cooperation	800,000	15.11	0	0
French Cooperation	40,000	0.76	22,154.2	55.39
World Bank	400,000	7.56	0	0
PENF (Canada)	0	0	58,913.780	
TOTAL	5,294,000	100	2,297,420.581	43.40

Fighting Illiteracy: The Results

► *Senegal*

In 1988, the illiteracy rate in Senegal was among the highest in the world. It was estimated at around 68% of the population over six years of age, with a 59% rate for men and a 77% rate for women (as compared to an average of 65% for women in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole). From 1994 to 2002, various literacy programs enrolled 1,501,881 learners, with an annual average of 166,876. Women represented 77.13 % of this total (or 1,158,441 people).

Table 3.4. Enrolled Participants, 1994-2002

Program	Men	Women	Total
1000 Classes Project/PAIS	98,414	260,817	359,231
PAPF	29,040	280,095	309,135
PAPA	42,967	225,976	268,943
PADEN	10,891	2,844	13,735
Alpha Women	473	8,687	9,160
Other Programs	161,654	380,022	541,677
Total	343,439	1,158,441	1,501,881
%	22.87	77.13	100

Source: DALN

With regards to quality, PAPF performance and end-of-cycle performance 1997-2002 were evaluated as follows.

Table 3.5. Performance of Facilitators in the PAPF, 1997-2002

Subjects	Years					
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002/3 (PIEA)
Reading	55.7%	54.2%	57.3%	75.2%	69.10%	5.8%
Writing	28.25%	33.6%	43.8%	63.3%	55.42%	38.7%
Arithmetic	5.7%	18.7%	28.5%	44.1%	43.31%	22.7%

Source: DALN

► *In Burkina Faso*

In 2002/2003, FONAEF received 197 petitions from 33 provinces whose analysis resulted in financing 91 projects. Table 6 gives results for 2002/2003 provided by the DGAENF for the entire country, and for 2003/2004 provided by FONAEF. These are the only available data for comparative results.

Table 3.6. Initial Literacy (IL) Success Rates

Types of Training	Success Rate* (%)			Attrition Rate (%)*		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
FONAENF Funding 2003/2004	72	80	75	40	35	38.00
National Average	62.28	76.78	68.66	46.05	36.71	41.75

*Dropout rates are evaluated $\frac{\text{enrolled} \times 100}{\text{enrolled}}$; attrition rates includes dropouts and academic failure: $\frac{\text{successful enrollments} \times 100}{\text{enrolled}}$.

The Concept's Effects on Other Sectors

In Senegal, for example, the following sectors have adopted the 'Faire Faire' strategy for their own use:

- The Ministry of Health in its integrated health development program (PDIS).
- The Ministry of Planning in its social development funds agency (AFDS), which manages certain aspects of the fight against poverty.
- The Ministry of Family and Social Action, within its poverty reduction project (PLCP) supported by the African Development Bank.
- The Early Childhood Development Agency, in piloting community models in the field of early childhood education.

All projects of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing, and Farming (including the Djourbel agro-forestry project, the animal breeding support project, the rural development support project, etc.).

Implementation Outcomes²

► *At the political level*

I. *A coherent vision and clear action plan in the field of literacy*

The establishment of ministerial departments, ministerial *cabinets* or secretary of state for non-formal education shows governments' commitment to a consistent policy vision in this field.

II. *Renewed interest in non-formal education*

This sub-sector has always been ignored in the educational system of most African countries. The sustained financial support of development partners has largely contributed to raising interest in it. NFE has been given a different place in education policy as indicated by the growing number of partners supporting its activities.

III. *Partners' mobilization of sustained funding*

This is undoubtedly a major success. The significance of the funds invested in the sub-sector since the launch of action plans in Senegal in 1995 and Burkina Faso in 2000, and the diversity of partners who were once reticent

2. FAYE, W., « Le rôle du financement dans la politique du « Faire-Faire » au Sénégal, Financement et pouvoir de décisions, Qui paye décide ? Educations et Sociétés (sous la direction de Annie Vinokur), l'Harmattan, 2007.

to provide financial support, are proof of the achievement of sustained funding - also one of the goals of the 'Faire Faire' strategy.

IV. *Support for strengthening and mobilizing civil society*

If the government in Senegal has been largely responsible for the rapid emergence of an organized group of service providers who had previously been marginalized and now oversee programs, in other countries like Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso the authorities rely on existing organizations (CCA-ONG, CONGACI, CCEB-BF).

V. *Difficulty harmonizing methods and costs*

Despite the efforts made to harmonize and standardize practices and interventions, difficulties do persist at the level of the financing partners (c.f. unit costs, the nature of programs) in Senegal; in Burkina Faso, the issue has been taken care of through the associative structure of the new Fund.

VI. *An Incomplete process of decentralization*

The 'Faire Faire' strategy is by its nature a form of decentralized educational provision that perfectly addresses the need for decentralization, which is unanimously recognized as necessary and irreversible. Education is a transferable skill. Despite the measures taken to date to devolve greater responsibility to the grass roots, communities do not yet exercise these responsibilities for several reasons.:

- Their weak financial and technical capital.
- Ambiguities articulating the processes of deconcentration and decentralization.
- An approach that focuses on service providers and relegates local administrations to the role of observers.
- Poorly defined local interventions.
- Mutual distrust among actors on the ground, who find it difficult to establish the foundations of participatory decision-making.
- The institutional legitimacy of these organizations is not always recognized.

► *Partnership level*

- I. *The rapid emergence of a class of providers* entrusted with carrying out interventions, whose number in Senegal rose from under 100 in 1995 to over 500 in 2000. The State was obliged to satisfy one condition laid down by its financing partners: the existence of a civil society capable of

carrying out the actions and being a participant in discussions about the definition and management of policy. This gave the 'Faire Faire' strategy its innovative character but also created the initial sources of bias and drift in implementing policy. The measures taken to facilitate the emergence of facilitators also account for their massification where management skills to carry out the activities in an appropriate manner are not always verified. The statistics suggest that the policy led to the creation of a diversity of structures with murky motivations.

- II. *An organized partnership with frameworks for dialogue that do not always manage to assume their functions.*
- III. *Stakeholders have an ambiguous attitude:* the sustainability of the State-civil society partnership is being put to the test. Can the durability of the State-civil society partnership stand the test of time? There are areas of tension and conflict at several levels in the relationship which should be assessed, given the financial and power-sharing stakes.
- IV. *The place of the beneficiaries in the system.* Beneficiary organizations and communities have little access to the projects' technical and financial management. The focus is on the providers to the detriment of the beneficiary communities whose role focuses on organizational aspects concerning operations, such as establishing and checking participant lists, appointing trainers, setting up and operating relays, raising in-kind or financial contributions from each learner to build a center, verifying that students and the trainer come regularly and training, creating a management structure...).
- V. *An accepted division of roles and responsibilities* among the different parties. The prerogatives of each actor are complementary and should not conflict.

► *Technical management*

- I. *A poorly adapted planning system. We observe that deconcentrated structures* find it difficult to master data on literacy, the poor cousin in the education sector family that nonetheless presents its own distinct features (targets, contents, training strategies).
- II. *A supply-driven strategy* The Senegalese experience appears in many ways to be a supply-driven strategy (or *how to offer educational services whose need is solicited and with little basis in an analysis of the demand* for literacy services in the communities; in many cases, the communities do not express this need which is entirely created by providers who

continually take advantage of their lucrative position between the State and the communities).

- III. *The provider's triple function* In every country where this strategy is being used, the service provider is at one and the same time the acts gauge of the demand, project promoter, and executor. This is one of the greatest weaknesses of the system, since there is no assurance that the demand is reliable, given the limitations of decentralized technical services, numbers of trained personnel, derisory logistical means, and weak support from local academic authorities.
- IV. *Significant financial contributions* The long neglected sector of the educational system is now receiving significant financial support without necessarily being prepared to administer it properly. This can provoke a 'gold rush' mentality and jockeying for control of lucrative resources.
- V. *Procedures: between ideal and practices* The very coherent conceptual framework devised for the strategy is not always respected, for political reasons: delayed deposits to please a particular clientele, bailing out foundering or inexperienced facilitators, dividing up contract so that everyone gets 'a piece of the action', changing membership in technical analysis committees to better influence decisions, etc.

Table 3.7. Overview of Lessons Learned

Area	Progress	Problems	Recommendations
1- Organization	<p>1. Implementing coherent and comprehensive sector management, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appointing a responsible Minister. ▪ Creating a resource center. ▪ Creating an operational steering committee. ▪ Reorganizing technical services through the DAEB, the DPLN and technical support group (CAT) in Senegal, or creating the DGAENF in Burkina Faso. <p>2. Setting up major projects/ programs to implement the action plan with the support of a private management structure or an association acting as a financial executive agency.</p>	<p>1. Institutional instability about the status of the office (Full or Associate minister?), personnel (five Ministers and five DAEBs in 10 years), and technical directorates (DAEB, DPLN, and DALN in Senegal, INA, INEFNEB, DGCRIEF, and DRINA in Burkina Faso).</p> <p>2. Legal issues regarding the unofficial status of some bodies and the absence of a stable, official organizational chart.</p> <p>3. Resistance, insecurity, and weakness in information-sharing with regard to structural and program innovations, and to the explanation, assignment, and acceptance of roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>4. Dissatisfaction about financial management and calls for an association.</p>	<p>Three conditions for policy success:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong, permanent political support. 2. Stable sector organization (allocate time to formulate and implement a clear vision). 3. Judicious selection of managers and technical personnel.

Area	Progress	Problems	Recommendations
2- Steering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existence of a national program, common action plans, and an annual plan for each project/program. 2. Setting up planning mechanisms at the Ministerial (planning and strategic follow-up groups), technical directorate, and project levels. 3. Setting up a coordination and regulatory mechanism for the partners (steering committee, joint committee), for projects (steering committees), and for programs (harmonization of literacy project interventions). 4. Effective geographical coordination of partners' interventions. 5. Agreement on the need for a program-based approach with an agency for technical and financial execution. 6. Existence of a structure to coordinate research on languages (DPLN and Academy of Languages in Senegal). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor command of basic data (absence of non-formal indicators, unreliable information, data collection and analysis strategies, human resources, methodology and processing of databases, contradictory sources of information). 2. Difficulty in planning program operations including a clear and accepted distribution of roles. 3. Absence of conflict arbitration. 4. Steering mechanism is dysfunctional (irregular meetings, lack of follow-up...). 5. Poor command of the agenda of activities. 6. Difficulties harmonizing the types, approaches, and costs of programs. 7. Difficulties implementing a programmatic approach (resource centers, handbook...). 8. Weak coordination of research on languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting up a reliable database with pertinent techniques and the availability of sufficient, skilled personnel at all levels. ▪ Creating a single, autonomous agency for technical and financial execution. ▪ Creating a mechanism for governmental interventions in literacy (inter-sector).
3- Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moments of productive political dialogue on orientation, strategies... (Colloquia, national workshops, forums on knowledge-sharing, partnership structures...). 2. Partnership approach featuring the 'delegation strategy' adopted at the national and regional levels. 3. Support to the emergence and development of appropriate civil society structures. 4. Acceptance of the policy and action plan realized with the participation of all the actors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uneven political dialogue (repeated and prolonged gaps) reflected in the non-operation of CNCAT for several years now in Senegal or of CAPAL in Chad. 2. Issues related to the operation and the professionalism of service provider organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reestablishing the partnership approach (redefinition of scope, involvement, nature of relationships, organization, regulatory mechanism...). ▪ Enhanced professionalism of service providers (organization, personnel...).

Area	Progress	Problems	Recommendations
4- Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of funds for the sector. 2. Diversity of funding sources. 3. Existence of support funds and resource centers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weakness in the national mobilization of resources. 2. Limited resources in some sub-sectors, relative to their importance and activities (literate environment, research...). 3. Difficulty in raising and allocating funds within set deadlines. 4. Disagreements regarding the status of national funds and the centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater share of national resources committed to program funding. ▪ Diversification of national funding sources (local administration, private sector...) ▪ Improved resource management.
5- Capacity-Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existence of a capacity enhancement plan for human and financial resources. 2. Existence of a national team for action research and training and of a Canadian agency for the implementation of 'capacity-building and partnership development' in Senegal. 3. Organization of training for personnel of the Ministry, decentralized services, service providers, administration, projects... 4. Actual expertise in non-formal education (consultants, cabinets and offices...). 5. Improved working conditions for the agents at both the central and peripheral levels of the Ministry. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insufficient use of committed and available resources. 2. Absence of steering with regard to the capacity-building plan (human resources department...). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definition of a national capacity-building strategy. ▪ Setting up an implementation system for the above strategy.
6- Decentralization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existence of legal (laws, decrees, delegation of powers...), institutional (regional councils), and technical structures enabling the decentralization of literacy in Senegal. 2. Existence of a specific experimental program put in place to implementing decentralization (the PAIS). 3. A start to the decentralization of the selection process for non-formal education project requests and petitions. 4. Growing involvement of regional councils in the effective enforcement of the law. 5. Increased financial contributions and organizational involvement of the regional councils. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited capacity of local administrative bodies regarding the management of literacy and the promotion of national languages (human resources, organization, strategy...) 2. Weaknesses at the implementation level in the decentralization of literacy and the promotion of national languages. 3. Inexistence of an effective plan regarding the transfer of competencies. 4. Delays in the availability of resources. 5. Defective conception and operational problems regarding the use of PAIS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer jurisdiction over to the regional councils regarding the conception and implementation of regional non-formal education programs. ▪ Integration of PAIS in the global literacy program. ▪ Elaboration and implementation of a jurisdiction transfer mechanism.

Area	Progress	Problems	Recommendations
7. Deconcentration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability in deconcentrated areas of skilled personnel posted to the NFE sub-sector. 2. Improved logistical capacity (availability of motorcycles, gas...). 3. Non-formal education is now given greater consideration. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate selection, and insufficient number of personnel. 2. Local academic authorities reticent about NFE and its strategies. 3. Local academic authorities relatively uninvolved. 4. Insufficient and undocumented decentralized monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stricter selection of personnel. ▪ Create a literacy service in deconcentrated services staffed by skilled personnel. ▪ Reduce staff numbers in central services. ▪ Take measures to improve local NFE management. ▪ Appropriate human and financial resource management resulting from the decision to decentralize.
8- Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced the value of NFE and promoting national languages. 2. Unanimous agreement on the importance of communication about policy and the action plan. 3. Existence of a communications network, even if not effective in all countries. 4. Existence of a communications plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weak implementation of communications plan. 2. Insufficient communications resources. 3. Insufficient consideration of non-formal sector communications in education development program (involvement of private sector, marginalized groups, local administration, communities...). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make sector achievements more visible. ▪ Assign a State media staff to the CNRE. ▪ Renegotiate the communications budget allocated to the non-formal sector.

3. The Bases for a New Iteration

A New Position for Communities

To have communities be more involved and better grasp the interventions, the major challenge consists in changing their attitudes toward the process. The following measures could be considered:

- *Create the conditions for the funds to follow the learners (and thus the communities) rather than the service providers:* this would require identifying real demand and work on a contractual basis with the communities themselves.
- *Take the communities' opinions into account:* opportunities for intervention should not depend only on the opinion of the local academic authority, administration, or facilitator/provider, but should result from a decision taken jointly with the communities.
- *Transfer some management responsibility:* creating and managing infrastructures (literacy building, library, purchasing pedagogical materials,

financing income-generating activities, and trainers' salaries) should be transferred to the local level, based on commonly agreed guidelines.

Harmonization with Local Development

Most rural communities in Senegal have local development plans with detailed diagnostic elements and priority lines of action. Literacy actions can only benefit from being included in these new structures.

A Flexible Strategy

To remain consistent with one of the ground rules of the 'Faire Faire' strategy and to adapt efforts to local social, cultural, and economic realities, it would be beneficial to review certain elements of the strategy having to do with the ideology as well as contents and management standards.

Reviewing the Supply Strategy

Even if illiteracy is a handicap, it clearly exists alongside others that are often more acute and which take precedence. Literacy actions cannot continue to 'act alone' as they do now. Supply needs to be grounded in actual need, and literacy actions should be positioned upstream, downstream, or at the conclusion of the process, as the case may be, and according to local specificities.

Rooting Interventions in Existing Social Structures

The formalization of local structures through the acquisition of legal status is one objective of the program and a condition for more sound contractual bases. This should give way to an effort to adapt management procedures to the organizational configuration of each locality. The procedures and the approach should be differentiated in order to embrace this dimension.

Further Points

Several specific issues deserve particular attention:

- I. *Articulate literacy programs with national strategies for poverty reduction and with the NEPAD.*

If ... poverty also means not being able to participate in decision-making, being excluded from power, having no possibility of giving one's opinion' and if '... the poor are those whom we do not consider simply because we cannot

hear them, then literacy – a means of economic, social, cultural, and psychological liberation – should constitute a cross-cutting strategy for poverty reduction. Therefore, the following should be done:

- Show how NFE could and should contribute in a decisive way to poverty reduction.
- Emphasize its cross-cutting character.
- Specify a coordination mechanism for the government and its partners' action.
- Include literacy components in all projects and programs.
- Finance NFE through favorable arrangements.
- Adopt an inter-sectoral approach.

II. *Brain Drain: A Prickly Topic*

Not only is the current NFE sector unappealing (poor resources, no career opportunities, poor remuneration...) but the few staff members trained at great expense (scholarships to study abroad, expensive internships, study visits...) tend subsequently to work in more attractive sectors. It is difficult to find skilled statisticians, evaluators, sociologists, or teaching staff in literacy directorates.

III. *Establish NEF studies' in francophone Western African universities*

The *Centre de Formation des Cadres de l'Alphabétisation*, located in Niamey is the only institute of higher training in the Sahel but its sphere of influence has not lived up to expectations.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AFDS	Social development funds agency (<i>Agence du Fonds de Développement Social</i>)
AGETIP	Contract-Managing Agency (<i>Agence d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Public</i>)
APENF	Association for the promotion of non-formal education (<i>Association pour la Promotion de l'Éducation Non-Formelle</i>)
ARED	Associates in Research and Education for Development
A3F	Learning of basic and functional French <i>Apprentissage du Français Fondamental et Fonctionnel</i>

BPE	Education projects office (<i>Bureau des Projets Education</i>)
BREDA	UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in Africa in Dakar, Senegal (<i>Bureau Régional pour l'Education en Afrique</i>)
CAPAL	Support committee for literacy promotion (<i>Comité d'Appui aux Activités de Promotion de l'Alphabétisation</i>)
CCA-ONG	Steering committee for NGOs operating in Mali (<i>Comité de Coordination des Activités des ONG actives au Mali</i>)
CCEB-BF	Steering committee for educational NGOs and associations operating in Burkina Faso (<i>Cadre de Concertation des ONG/associations actives en Education au Burkina Faso</i>)
CEB	Basic education catchment area (<i>Circonscription d'Education de Base</i>)
CEDEAO	Economic community of West African states (<i>Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest</i>)
CHIPA	Council for the harmonization of literacy projects (<i>Conseil d'Harmonisation des Projets d'Alphabétisation</i>)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CNCAT	National committee for steering and technical support (<i>Comité National de Concertation et d'Appui Technique</i>)
CNEA	National committee for the elimination of illiteracy (<i>Comité National d'Elimination de l'Analphabétisme</i>)
CNRE	National center for educational resources (<i>Centre National de Ressources Educationnelles</i>)
CNF	(<i>Comité National de Financement</i>) National financing committee
CPF	(<i>Comité Provincial de Financement</i>) Provincial financing committee
CRF	(<i>Comité Régional de Financement</i>) Regional financing committee
CNR-ENF	(<i>Centre National de Ressources – Education Non-Formelle</i>) National resource center for non-formal education
CEBNF	Center for basic non-formal education (<i>Centre d'Education de Base Non-Formelle</i>)
CONGACI	Steering committee for NGOs operating in the Ivory Coast
DALN	Directorate for literacy and national languages (<i>Direction de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales</i>)

DDEN	Departmental delegation of national education (<i>Délégation Départementale de l'Éducation Nationale</i>)
DGAENF	General directorate for literacy and non-formal education (<i>Direction Générale de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Éducation Non-Formelle</i>)
DGCRIF	General directorate of the center for research, educational innovation, and training (<i>Direction Générale du Centre de Recherche, d'Innovations Éducatives et de Formation</i>)
DLCA	Directorate for the fight against illiteracy (<i>Direction de la Lutte Contre l'Analphabétisme</i>)
DNEB	National directorate for basic education (<i>Direction Nationale de l'Éducation de Base</i>)
DPLN	Directorate for the promotion of national languages (<i>Direction de la Promotion des Langues Nationales</i>)
DPEBA	Provincial delegation for basic education and literacy (<i>Délégation Provinciale de l'Éducation de Base et de l'Alphabétisation</i>)
DREBA	Regional delegation for basic education and literacy (<i>Délégation Régionale de l'Éducation de Base et de l'Alphabétisation</i>)
DRE	Regional directorate for education (<i>Direction Régionale de l'Éducation</i>)
ECB	Community primary school (<i>Ecole Communautaire de Base</i>)
EGEF	General congress on education and training (<i>Etats Généraux de l'Éducation et de la Formation</i>)
EPA	Public institution of an administrative nature (<i>Etablissement Public à caractère Administratif</i>)
EFA	Education For All
FTS	Specific technical training pathways (<i>Formations Techniques Spécifiques</i>)
FONAENF	Fund for literacy and non-formal education (<i>Fonds pour l'Alphabétisation et l'Éducation Non-Formelle</i>)
IA	Academic inspectorate (<i>Inspection d'Académie</i>)
IDA	International Development Association
IDEN	Departmental inspectorate of national education

IL	Initial Literacy (<i>Inspection Départementale de l'Education Nationale</i>)
INA	National literacy institute (<i>Institut National d'Alphabétisation</i>)
INEBNF	National institute for nonformal basic education (<i>Institut National d'Education de Base Non-Formelle</i>)
MEBA	Ministry for basic education and literacy (<i>Ministère de l'Education de Base et de l'Alphabétisation</i>)
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAPA	Literacy Support Program (<i>Projet d'Appui au Plan d'Action Education Non-Formelle</i>)
PAPF	Women's Literacy Project (<i>Projet Alphabétisation Priorité Femmes</i>)
PADEN	Literacy project for local elected officials and notables (<i>Projet d'Alphabétisation des Elus et Notables Locaux</i>)
PAIS	Senegalese intensive literacy program (<i>Programme d'Alphabétisation Intensive du Sénégal</i>)
PDDEB	Decennial basic education development program (<i>Programme Décennal de Développement de l'Education de Base</i>)
PDEF	Decennial education and training program (<i>Programme Décennal de l'Education et de la Formation</i>)
PDIS	Integrated health development program (<i>Programme de Développement Intégré de la Santé</i>)
PENF	Partnership for non-formal education (<i>Partenariat pour l'Education Non-Formelle</i>)
PLCP	Poverty reduction project (<i>Projet de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté</i>)
PAMISEC	Support initiative for curricular testing (<i>Projet d'Appui à la Mise à l'Essai du Curriculum</i>)
PNIR	National program for rural infrastructure (<i>Programme National des Infrastructures Rurales</i>)
RIOF	Integrated network of womens' organizations (<i>Réseau Intégré des Organisations Féminines</i>)
SA	Literacy service (<i>Service d'Alphabétisation</i>)
SAEP	Literacy and lifelong education service (<i>Service d'Alphabétisation et d'Education Permanente</i>)

- SCNCDEF** National steering sub-committee for the development of non-formal education (*Sous-Comité National de Concertation pour le Développement de l'Education Non-Formelle*)
- SEAENF** Statesecretariat for literacy and non-formal education
- TFP** Technical and Financial Partners (*Secrétariat d'Etat à l'alphabétisation et à l'Education Non-Formelle*)
- UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Chapter 4.

Pedagogical Innovations in Literacy Programs: Lifelong Learning as both a Method and a Goal

by Sonja Fagerberg-Diallo

1. Trends in non-formal education and literacy today

This article is centered on pedagogical innovations in non-formal lifelong learning in general, and more particularly on literacy classes in Africa. But in researching and writing it, we were confronted by two questions. Are we looking at the individual innovations carried out by projects, teachers and organizations? Or are we looking at the long-term trends in educational programs in Africa? This article is organized around the long-term trends in non-formal literacy education, and how approaches have evolved in Africa over the past 20 to 30 years. Some of these trends could be called “innovative”, while others are more “business as usual”. Both inform this article.

But interwoven into that narrative are the individual experiences which are promising and creative, and which achieve noticeable success rates. The problem with these experiences, be it a government project or an NGO, is that it is difficult to determine if they can be “scaled up” to reach the large numbers of people in need of an education today. Often smaller, experimental programs succeed because they have been able to tailor their programs to the needs and interests of particular groups of learners. Nevertheless, these innovations play an essential role in what we are looking at in this article.

This tension, or synergy, between long-term trends and specific innovations is fundamental to the discussion about education in Africa today, as the reader will feel throughout this article.

The challenges to non-formal education

In 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action identified six key educational goals to address over the next decade(s). These were:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality,
 - Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs,
 - Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults,
 - Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality,
 - Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.
- (UNESCO, 2000, p. 3)

However, in the same year the Education for All Global Assessment Report pointed out that in those countries which carried out evaluations, only 5% of primary school students had attained or surpassed the minimal level of competency which should be acquired by the end of primary school. The need for creating and promoting new educational approaches is painfully evident. In spite of these statistics, funding for alternative forms of education to either pick up students who did not succeed in the formal system or those millions of adults who have never been in it, is dismally low. In most countries, government funding for non-formal or “out-of-school” education programs is usually less than 1% of their education budget.

While most major donors and governments do put some resources into the non-formal sector in the name of basic education, nevertheless “basic education” has come to largely mean “primary school education”. Formal primary school education absorbs the majority of resources of both governments and donors, even at the expense of secondary education in many places (Bregman, 2005). According to Rosa-Maria Torres:

The 1990s started with the International Literacy Year and the World Conference on Education For All proposing an ‘expanded vision of basic education’ – children, youth and adults. However, there was no real commitment toward adult education in Jomtien.... EFA was interpreted as a worldwide commitment to ‘universal access to, and completion of, primary education by the year 2000’. In practice, since Jomtien, all was reduced to children; basic education to primary education; and universal primary education to enrolment. (Torres, 2002, p.82)

This is a serious challenge to educational providers, and it is echoed in most of the references in this article. A study done by the Institute for the International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV) echoed this viewpoint in very strong terms:

Following the Dakar World Forum on EFA... a commitment was expressed to ‘achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women’. In the followup, however, we realize that basic education through state schools has become the dominant feature, which has led several critical colleagues to question whether EFA means ‘Except for Adults’. (Hildebrand and Hinzen, 2005, p. 35)

The challenges to an educational program which attempts to confront the mission of the Dakar Framework for Action are multiple and diverse. Every educational program has at least some of the following goals in mind:

- to help the individual learner to fully achieve their individual goals and potential in life, to teach basic skills such as literacy and numeracy (which are supposedly “neutral” in terms of content, but which carry a strong social and cultural charge),
- to transmit a fixed body of knowledge and information which is deemed important by leaders in the community and/or outside experts (as in the example of religious education, agricultural extension work),
- to help individuals learn the skills and information they need to play an active role in local social issues in order to promote the development

of their community (such as managing a budget for a group activity, or learning to lobby for local interests),

- to work towards the preservation, adaptation and expansion of local knowledge and of the culture of the community, to work towards the creation of new knowledge by empowering individual learners to explore, putting known and new information together in a creative manner.

And any educational program should have at least some of the following impacts, including:

- human benefits (increased self-esteem, selfawareness, empowerment, increased participation in groups and associations),
- political benefits (increased political participation, attention to ethnic equality),
- cultural benefits (knowing ones' cultural heritage, understanding cultural change, preservation of cultural diversity, exploring and supporting indigenous knowledge),
- social benefits (including new knowledge about health, information about reproductive behavior, information about the spread of HIV/AIDS, promotion of gender equality),
- economic benefits (including a better understanding of production systems, increased efficiency in production, planning, budgeting). Given the wide range of goals and impacts, it is little wonder that effective education programs are complicated to design and to implement.

This is made even more complicated by the fact that we need to talk about education for children, adolescents and adults; in both formal and non-formal institutions; in a multilingual context where various languages are very unevenly developed.

Alan Rogers gives a vivid description of education which shifts the focus from teaching to learning. He writes about how adults learn, and how educational systems can better meet their needs. He says:

Adult learning is continuous and chaotic. Adult learning is not preparatory to any activity; it co-exists with the activity. And it is not sequential, starting with easy tasks and moving to more difficult tasks, for life itself is not sequential. Adults learn from the immediate tasks which face them day by day, however difficult these may be.... Adults learn by and from their own experience. And this means that learning is highly individualized as well as being collaborative. (Rogers, 2005, p. 238)

The internal struggle in all educational systems is the need to somehow organize, standardize, and evaluate on the one hand; and the imperative to meet individual needs, learning styles, talents, and interests on the other. This is the challenge.

The place of non-formal education in the educational arena

The word “non-formal” somehow implies that this is not a legitimate form of education, associated with non- and out-of notions. However, non-formal education includes any educational activity organized outside of the formal school system and intended for any person wishing to receive specific training in a topic or skill which interests them — in a place they can get to, at a cost they can afford, with a time investment which matches their needs. Long before there was formal education there was non-formal and informal education, which will always play a role in educating members of any society.

By its very nature, non-formal education is innovative. It is not constrained to teaching a pre-established curriculum but rather on finding educational responses to real-life questions and needs. There have always been alternative learning and teaching systems, from apprenticeships to religious education to parent-child teaching to radio broadcasts which meet information needs, etc. Education is a very large concept, and non-formal education plays an important role in it.

Formal, centralized, top-down, standards-(test)driven, funded-by-the-government education only took root worldwide in the 20th century. In Europe, formal education:

... was created in the late nineteenth century and was designed to prepare the poorer classes in Europe for working in the mills. Its aim was to create obedient, diligent, persistent, and uncritical workers.... Classes of same-level students progressing strictly sequentially formed the core structure.... This model was exported in an early phase of globalization to colonized societies, destroying in full or in part their indigenous learning systems; and on achieving independence, many countries adopted this as the key to the apparent success of the West. (Rogers, 2005, p. 241)

In Africa, the concept and implementation of this top-down type of education took place during the colonial period. In this system exported by the

colonialists, a “basic education” took 9 months per year, roughly 5 hours per day, for a total of roughly 5400 hours in the classroom. This only covered the education of 7 to 12 year olds. If a student went on, roughly the same number of hours were needed in order to achieve the level of a high school diploma. This taught what the colonialists needed in order to educate a small minority for the posts they needed to fill.

Non-formal education plays a role at two levels. It can either contribute to completing the needs left unfulfilled by the formal system, or even better, it can propose educational systems which meet real-life needs. Both forms will be discussed in this article.

The place of literacy in the educational arena

Since the 60's, a special form of non-formal education has been developed and has spread throughout the world as part of an effort to confront the inadequacies of the formal system: literacy programs. While many forms of education assumed that the student needed to learn to read and write as the basis for continuing education, the concept of literacy programs in Africa was originally driven by the concept of quickly promoting this skill in isolation, without foreseeing the broader, long term educational needs.

According to the UNESCO EFA Global Report, literacy can be analyzed from four crucial perspectives:

- literacy can be seen as an autonomous set of skills, meaning that the only objective of an educational program is to impart the capacity to read and write, and perhaps do basic math,
- literacy can be seen as a skill which is applied and necessary in real-life situations, becoming literate can be seen as a step in the learning process — especially learning how to learn independently,
- being literate can be seen as being able to use and interpret written text to both express ideas and to learn something new. (UNESCO, 2005, p. 148)

In literacy programs today, some put the emphasis on learning a skill in isolation. This is by far the least expensive option because only the “simple” transfer of a skill needs to be considered. It is shorter, and takes less preparation and expertise. However, many so-called literacy programs today actually address real-life needs which are often driven by the need for information. Being literate is a skill which allows the learner to continue

in the learning process. Issues can be addressed before becoming literate, while becoming literate, after becoming literate. If learners see the dynamic connection between becoming literate with their lives and livelihoods, it is because the program has put a lot of thought and preparation into developing the materials and training the teachers.

This difference makes it difficult to compare programs, but also puts the emphasis on the needs of the learner, which is the major trend in non-formal education today.

A crucial paradigm shift in educational strategies

Given this complexity, the UNESCO term lifelong learning and lifewide learning are very appropriate expressions. It means finding educational approaches (educational “offers”) which accept and celebrate diversity, as the following examples and case studies show. This diversity includes the diversity of learners, goals, languages, learning styles, time invested in the classroom, funding, political settings, etc. This is the context for the discussion which follows, which searches to present approaches at all levels which have an impact on non-formal education and literacy classes, from both the viewpoints of the learners and the providers. And specifically the goals of the LIFE (Literacy Initiative for Empowerment) program (launched by UNESCO in 2005 to address the needs of roughly 34 countries worldwide which are the home of 85% of the world’s illiterates) is especially relevant.

The need for innovation is a constant in educational systems, because the needs of learners and resources of providers constantly change. Ideally, innovations should take place on several levels, more or less at the same time, including:

- crucial decisions in policy and planning,
- innovations in the classroom, focused on learner-centered curriculum and methodologies,
- supporting the context to make these programs successful, including creating a literate environment, recruiting personnel, and methods of evaluation.

These are the main topics which will be explored in this article. Clearly the vast majority of innovations are taking place at the level of curriculum development and methodologies in the classroom. Policy and planning are

less active, as well as creating a supportive context. For any government, this poses a serious question of how to incorporate these new methodologies into their global program for Education For All.

In our research we have identified trends or characteristics which have a great importance to education today. Effective non-formal education is becoming more learner-centered, more responsive, more participatory, more flexible, and wider in the educational options being offered. Also, the use of maternal or national languages has become the norm for most programs. The shift has been from teaching to learning; from standardized, uniform curriculum to a curriculum which adapts to individual and social needs; from a focus on literacy as an independent skill to literacy embedded in a contextual need. This is the essence of innovation today.

But the programs which embrace these ideals are faced with monumental challenges such as limited funding, training and maintaining personnel, limited access to materials including books, being able to scale-up in order to meet growing needs, a need for validation to provide a pathway between educational systems, needs for certification for the work world, etc. So even the most successful programs, whether governmental or NGO programs, all face the constant need to adapt, innovate, read the social context, search for funding, interact with learners, grow.

2. Crucial decisions in policy and planning

Generally everyone assumes that policy decisions should be the underlying support in creating and supporting educational systems, whether they be formal or non-formal. The UN General Assembly Report suggests that: "The State must play the central and crucial role in planning, coordinating, implementing and financing Programs for Literacy for All." (UN General Assembly Report, 2002, p. 8) In the words of a Ugandan researcher: "...if universal literacy is not a national priority with accompanying measures to ensure that local governments also treat it as a priority, it will likely not be achieved by 2010 or 2015. While the NGOs, which interest themselves in literacy education, will doubtless fund their programs reliably, they cannot on their own handle the entire national need." (Okech *et al.*, 2001, p. 102)

Researcher Wedin suggests that there are four archetypal forms of modern education: exclusionary, assimilationist, multicultural, and pluralist (Wedin,

2004). Every country in the world needs to constantly re-evaluate which of these forms of education are, and should be, in practice in their time and space in order to adapt to constantly changing needs. Happily, there has been a long-term concern with the role of non-formal education, and governments often search for ways to better work with non-formal providers, since this collaboration is crucial in multilingual contexts.

The necessary interaction between policy and pedagogy

As Hassana Alidou has said “there is no pedagogy without policy” (oral communication, UNESCO UIL, 2006). However this part of the total picture is probably the slowest to respond to rapidly growing changes and needs. By definition, it is not on the innovative edge. However, it is so important that we need to consider its place in the role of educational innovations today. And in fact when and where it has been actively carried out, this level of decision making has had a forceful impact.

► *The fundamental choice in non-formal literacy programs: language*
The most decisive choice in any educational program is the language of instruction. While the language choice in formal programs is dictated by the educational system, in nonformal education the decision is more often determined by the needs of the learners. As researchers have found: “A more grassroots driven approach to language planning and policy work could proceed from the linguistic needs of language groups, including the promotion and cultivation of alternative literacies in multilingual contexts.” (Stroud, 2002, p. 22)

A primary school education in the formal system requires from 5400 to 7200 hours of classroom time, if we assume five to six hours per day, nine months out of the year, for six years. And ultimately this system gives very poor results, with less than 5% of students arriving at the minimal level of achievement. In sub-Saharan Africa high failure rates can be associated with the fact that education is being passed through a language (English, French, or Portuguese) which the majority of students don't understand or speak when they enter school.

On the other hand, non-formal literacy classes, which take place in a language which participants understand, are rarely funded for more than 400 hours. Compare 5400 hours to 400 hours in the classroom. One of the

major reasons that literacy classes achieve acceptable levels at all is that the language of instruction is one which students and teachers speak, and the task therefore becomes a task of teaching literacy skills rather than teaching a second language.

Multilingual Education for Children in South Africa: 'If you paint another language on my skin, my soul cannot breathe.'

"Two of our projects have been working in early childhood and storytelling. Our experiences on these projects provide evidence for the disastrous consequences of this one language as medium choice, particularly in poorly resourced communities in which neither school nor parents have the means to provide environments which are highly saturated with English language and literacy resources. In both these projects, young children used their multiple African home languages purposefully and productively in their oral and performance work and in some instances, improvised short plays of up to thirty minutes, rich with social languages. When we asked them to write a few sentences on their stories, all this rich multilingualism vanished from these tongues, they took out their pencils, and wrote one to two words or sentences in English, a language they do not speak in their life worlds. In addition, they did not have literacy skills in their own languages as a resource to draw on in the making of their meanings. After all this abundance of language and creativity, we saw there was profound loss as they sat down to write. This sense of loss comes from their daily struggle to create meaning in the context of the language constraints which have been imposed on them by those in authority (such as parents and teachers). As one of our students said: 'If you paint another language on my skin, my soul cannot breathe.'... Later students demanded to be allowed to write 'in their own languages'..." (Stein and Newfield, p. 160)

In the past years, more and more funding has gone into programs using national languages; but it is not enough. There needs to be a policy decision that this form of education, whether for children, out of school adolescents, or adults, meets the needs of the country. This is a major issue which deserves much more focus in the future.

The case of Tanzania: Both policy and implementation

Tanzania was the first African country to make a policy decision about the use of a national language, Kiswahili, in public office and in education. Furthermore, both child and adult education in formal and non-formal settings was developed. But a policy decision wasn't enough and Nyerere also

supported an implementation program. According to Alidou: “The two main factors that accounted for the success of the language policy are a sound education language policy and the creation of governmental structures to carry out the implementation of this policy.” In the 70’s and 80’s, illiteracy had almost been eradicated. As the Tanzanian experience in the 70’s and 80’s showed, fundamental policy decisions are one part of the equation. The second part is the creation of implementing agencies which support the process. These included at least six institutions which supported child and adult education in a national language (Kiswahili):

- the Ministry of Culture created in 1962,
- the Institute for Kiswahili Research created in 1966,
- the Tanzania Publishing House created in 1966,
- the national Kiswahili Council created in 1967,
- the Department of Kiswahili at the University of Dar es Salaam, created in 1970,
- EACROTANAL created in 1976,
- the Institute of Kiswahili and Foreign Language created in 1978,
- the Tanzania Culture Fund, founded in 1998. (Alidou, 2006)

Kiswahili was adopted as an official national language in Tanzania in 1962, and the years from 1962 through 1978 demonstrated a continuing commitment to work so that this policy decision could be implemented. However, in 1992 the donor which had made this success possible stopped funding Tanzanian education, and there has been a growing drop in literacy rates. Since the state hasn’t been able to make up for the financing of the process, they are facing a dropping literacy rate today. (UNESCO UIL, 2006)

► *Early-exist and mainstreaming — or additive language acquisition*

There are two types of maternal language programs today which receive widespread recognition, and grow out of a policy debate about how to educate both children and young adolescents. Both focus on success within the formal school system since both focus on exam results as established by the formal system, even though the language of early instruction is a maternal language. One is called “earlyexit” and the other “mainstreaming”.

Early-exist programs are designed around the idea that a student should first be taught in his or her first language (or at least in a language he or she speaks), but within three years these students should be transitioned into a primary school program which is dominated by the official language

(usually French or English). This applies to children between the ages of six and eight. Mainstreaming is a program which picks up children at a later age, usually between nine and fifteen years old, who have either never started or who have dropped out of formal school. The concept is to get them quickly ready to pass essential exams in order to “mainstream” them into the formal official language school system by using mother-tongue education at the start but quickly switching to the official language.

While the concept behind these programs is interesting, their success rates are yet to be statistically demonstrated. It obviously makes sense that students learn basic skills better in a language which they speak, but it is not clear what percentage of students are able to pass exams in the official language. The weight of success or failure is clearly on the students, who must perform for national test standards.

A more interesting and more complex alternative is that of additive language acquisition. That is, students study in length and in depth in a language which they speak, but also learn an additional second (usually international) language throughout their schooling, so that by the end of school, they are competent in at least two languages. This model is one frequently used in Europe, where truly bilingual citizens are important to the nation and the economy.

Multilingual Programs for Primary School in the Zambia

In the 1966 Education Act, Zambia made a policy decision to use English as the medium of instruction in their schools. However, in a ministry study in 1995, it was pointed out that only 25% of 6th grade students could read at a “minimal level”, as defined by the Ministry of Education. And worse, only 3% could read at the “desired level”. Furthermore, they remarked that school was unrelated to life, and rote learning was the major pedagogical tool used in this context. They therefore began a process of developing a new Primary Reading Program which is a carefully designed seven year program which starts with teaching in one of the seven major Zambian languages, and then integrates the teaching of English as a second language.

With support from DFID, a progressive program for teaching reading was developed, with very promising results. For example, in an evaluation in 1999, only 4.8% of second grade students could read at grade level in English. In contrast in 2002, 24% of second grade students had achieved the desired level.

According to recent evaluations, the effectiveness of the Primary Reading Program is due to five basic elements:

- a policy decision to develop a bilingual language approach,
- thoughtful development of an overall curriculum,
- good teacher training,
- involvement of all the major stake-holders, creating a literate environment which promotes reading.

(Linehan, 2004 and Alidou, 2006)

Debating the choice of the language of instruction is automatically part of any non-formal literacy programs. But this is also a crucial debate which should be taking place within formal schools which operate in a multilingual setting. At the very least, formal programs need to be more prepared to teach official languages as a second language, and not depend on official languages as the language of instruction.

► *Funding for non-formal and literacy programs*

Funding for adult literacy and non-formal education has rarely been a priority for governments, which normally spend less than 1% of their national education budget on this sector. The costs are often passed on to NGOs and to community volunteer organizations. This trend is harmful to “out-of-school” education in most countries. As UNESCO pointed out in 2005:

As budget, loan and grant allocations to primary education grew rapidly, adult Programs had their public funding reduced, and responsibility was often transferred from the public sector to NGOs... Although the focus on primary education was justified... it was also limited, for it neglected those who had either not attended school, or who had done so without becoming literate.

(UNESCO, 2005, p. 28)

If policy decisions are to mean anything, they must include concerns about funding local providers. Sometimes the funding can come directly from governments. At other times, it is a question of putting donors and local educational providers in contact, such as in the *Faire-Faire* programs (private-public partnerships) of West Africa in which government plays a facilitating role rather than being the agency of execution.

Another example is that of AlphaSol in Brazil. This non-profit organization created in 1997 has touched over 5 million people in their literacy programs.

But most amazing is the creative funding which they have found for their work. 40% of their funding comes from the federal government, while 60% comes from various private and public sources. From 20 financial partners in 1997, in 2005 they were receiving funding from over 178 sources, a large part being from the private sector.

South Africa also seems to have found a creative way of combining resources. Although adult education is still clearly under-funded, a recent study showed that: “NGOs provide a much larger part of ABET provision (18.5%) than they were previously credited for; the State much less (28.5%) and the Corporate Sector also much more than they were given credit for (41.7%).” (Williams, 1996)

The conclusion is that government and local providers can and should work together to provide a very precious resource to a population which cannot, and should not, pay for this resource themselves.

► *Going to scale: scaling up or reaching wide*

One vision of teaching literacy is that literacy is an independent skill which can be taught outside of a life context. In that case, it was assumed that governments could organize a unified national program:

“The traditional approach has usually been operationalised through the bureaucratic structures of government in a centralised and hierarchical manner. The top-down organisational structure aims to ensure a standardised provision of literacy tutoring throughout the country.” (Mpofu and Youngman, 2001, p. 581)

In contrast to this top-down highly centralized approach, today one of the challenges to any program which shows signs of success is the concept of how to “scale up”. That is, how to expand a successful program to reach ever larger numbers of people. Individual government projects and NGOs which have developed relevant programs are not necessarily equipped to take on that responsibility. In each case, one needs to determine if a successful program in one region, language, or with a specific occupational group, etc. would be applicable with others. Chances are the answer is no. However, lessons learned plus materials and approaches can be exchanged and adapted more easily because they have been successfully tested.

Since non-formal education programs do not have a top-down approach, the concept of “scaling up” is more a question of opening up spaces for negotia-

tion and exchange rather than of simply adding more and more classrooms and participants. Scaling up is usually narrowly seen as simply enrolling more students. But in a context where the educational offer needs to be expanded to fit diverse needs, the first step is to create an exchange between educational systems and the participants.

One compelling example of how a program can expand is that of REFLECT, the ActionAid approach which has made a profound impact worldwide. The original experience started in just three countries (Uganda, El Salvador, and Bangladesh) in 1995, but today is an approach used by more than 260 agencies in over 60 countries. This is not an example of scaling up but of reaching wide. The breadth of the impact of REFLECT programs may not satisfy the needs of a single government, but it is an approach which has affected a large number of local providers.

Finally, when one is considering sharing a promising program (curriculum, teacher training, materials, etc.) on a national level, it is indispensable to involve the district and local level authorities and representatives of the education ministry (oral communication by Salum Ramadhan Mnjagila of the Ministry of Education in Tanzania, UNESCO UIL, 2006). Tanzania was successful in promoting their educational programs in the 70's and 80's through close cooperation with local authorities. And today it is using the same approach to promote the REFLECT program for adult education throughout the country.

► *Cost effectiveness*

There is no question that non-formal education is cost effective. First of all, educational results are acceptable — for example, the equivalent of 3rd grade reading levels after only 300 hours of class — and the cost is very low:

In relation to what the program designers believe can be accomplished under the conditions prevailing in Uganda and within about 300 hours of instruction, the average attainments of the genuinely illiterate learner fall short.... That said, the fact remains that the genuinely illiterate strongly outperformed primary school pupils, who had had three to four years of schooling. The signal is that, even if nonliterate adults do not master the skills of literacy as rapidly as the designers of literacy programs think they might, they do seem to learn those skills at a faster rate than primary school pupils in the same conditions. (Okech et al., 2001, p. 75)

Secondly, while costs vary depending on the resources of the program, they are nevertheless within reason. In Senegal, the Faire-Faire literacy program allows for up to \$60 per student. A national program in Senegal known as PAIS estimates the costs at \$12 per student. In an evaluation of costs for literacy programs in Uganda, the costs for the government program was only \$4 per participant, because teachers were unpaid volunteers. In a local REFLECT program the costs went up to \$9 per participant because teachers were paid a stipend (Okech et al., 2001, p. XVIII). In comparison, the average cost of four years of primary schooling was calculated at \$60 per student. (Torres, 2002, p. 7)

However, the cost of non-formal education is low because everything in the non-formal system is underfunded. There are rarely any classrooms built or maintained; teachers are often volunteers; the training of teachers is usually completed within two to four weeks; books aren't available, etc. It is clear that literacy classes are a viable and extremely important type of educational system in most countries — and also clear that most of the necessary inputs are not being covered financially, but rather through the commitment (“militantism”) of the learners, teachers and the community.

► *Equitable funding in decentralized environments*

In most African countries today there is a major move towards decentralization. This shift has many advantages, in that it brings citizens and their government into closer contact, and can give citizens increased control over their immediate environment. But a major disadvantage is that some districts have less income than others, and adult literacy is often left to the side in those areas:

The government has among its many goals and policies the aims of democratic decentralization and universal literacy. Our observations suggest that the two are not necessarily compatible, since the variations between the districts in budgeting for and actually funding literacy education programs are strikingly wide. It is clear that some local authorities do not attach the same priority as the central government to universal literacy. The second conclusion is that the government will need to negotiate a balance between promoting decentralization and ensuring the maintenance of its priorities. (Okech et al., 2001, p. 98)

While the movement towards decentralized government is both clear and desirable in long-term objectives, local literacy programs are often caught in a major crisis to figure out how to fund their activities given the wide discrepancy between the availability of funds between various districts.

Planning and management of education programs

One of the major trends in the planning and management of non-formal and literacy programs is that responsibility and control is more and more in the hands of the beneficiaries. This is a fundamental step in making educational programs more responsive to real needs.

► *Community involvement in design, planning and management*

A major trend in the development of non-formal programs today is the implicit understanding that participants, and the community, are going to be involved from the design stage through to the management stage. This is often a slow process, with many potential setbacks, but it is the best guarantee of long-term success.

Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV)

The great challenge facing a self-help approach is the need for a functional strategy of disengagement on the part of external agencies, both NGOs and donors. We have identified the following principles for successful literacy practice:

- participatory needs appraisal prior to the planning of the activity-literacy needs must be expressed by the target group, preferably by learners organized in self-help groups,
- identification of the role of literacy in the given development context and validation by the community,
- participatory decision-making with regard to language, time, duration, individual responsibilities, and material and financial inputs,
- a self-management strategy,
- a strategy of financial participation and self financing,
- creation of ownership and responsibility at all levels enshrined in contracts between all those involved,
- opportunities to up-grade the competencies of NGO facilitators and staff,
- constant lobbying and advocacy for literacy, starting at the local level application of suitable instruments for monitoring,
- counseling and evaluation at all levels (from self-evaluation to external evaluation). (Hildebrand and Hinzen, 2005, pp. 41-42)

Clearly, there are numerous decisions to be made throughout the process of providing an educational program, and many are made at the beginning. But with feedback, a good program should also be ready to make changes

and adjustments rather than blindly carrying out a pre-set program. This is a welcome new possibility as communities become involved in making decisions.

However, it is also prudent to point out that education in every country in the world is partially or largely funded through taxes. The idea that “outside donors and NGOs” cannot remain forever does not shift the responsibility of paying for education to individual families. It must be part of a larger collaboration between national government, local government, and projects in which innovative approaches (funded by, for example, NGOs) find new funding through permanent government sources.

► *Non-profit organizations, community based organizations, and governments*

The collaboration between government and local organizations has taken some interesting twists in the past 10 years. A new trend is to put governmental resources (which might actually come from donors) at the service of groups who are active and successful in the field. As John Oxenham pointed out in a recent study:

Indeed, the potentially equal effectiveness of both government and nongovernment programs points the way to the positive partnership attempted by the government of India in 1978: it offered to help finance the programs of proven private bodies. That principle operates in the Faire-Faire contractual partnership of the government and NGOs of Senegal... For policy, the strong signal is that frameworks to encourage complementarity and active partnership between governments and other agencies would best serve the people who want adult basic education. (Oxenham in Okech et al., 2001, p. 110)

Faire-Faire or Public-Private Partnerships

Programs designed around the concept of *Faire-Faire* are some of the most interesting and influential in francophone West Africa today. It is a partnership between donors, government, and local organizations. The core factor is developing a partnership with local organizers of literacy classes who can receive funding through a governmental program, which is supported by international donors.

As stated in the ADEA study carried out by Gueye and Diagne (2006), there are six principles behind the conception of a *Faire-Faire* program:

- It is an appropriate tool to encourage the diversification of the types of opportunities for offering relevant education,
 - The process is decentralized, which favors the diversification of education offerings,
 - This diversification of non-formal programs is essential for the management of education in multilingual and multicultural environments,
 - This diversification allows local knowledge and needs to be valorized in an appropriate educational program,
 - Diversification of educational offerings support innovations in the system,
 - To support this whole enterprise, the publication of books, plus ICTs, are essential elements.
- (Gueye and Diagne, 2006)

Senegal is the first West African country to implement a *Faire-Faire* program but the concept has spread across francophone West Africa today. In Senegal two *Faire-Faire* programs have been in operation for ten years. Each developed a complex procedural manual through which local organizations could apply for funding for local literacy classes. A similar partnership was also created in Burkina Faso in 1999; and since has also touched Mali, Niger and Benin.

The concept behind this partnership is very interesting because it creates a space for negotiation between civil society and government. However there is a down side. The responsibility is “given” to local players, who must then follow rules which are clearly stated by the government supervisory structures, including the number of students per class, percentage of women participants, maximum numbers of books to be used and purchased at a standardized price (which is quite low), etc. This sharing of responsibility is often quite ambiguous and not always easy to manage. Nevertheless, these initiatives are very interesting to follow. The best success rates seem to come from those organizations which have worked in the field for a long time, have developed their own methodologies through trial and error, and have a clear sense of a larger mission than just teaching literacy, such as the non-profit organization Tin Tua in Burkina Faso.

► *Cohesive community groups*

Experience has also shown that community organizations which have the power to make operational choices about hiring teachers, timing for classroom participation, who can participate in the program, managing money, etc. are amongst the most successful. These are obviously not individual choices, but choices made by a group which is participating in the process.

As a study carried out by the African Development Bank concluded: “Another factor which should be taken into consideration is the characteristic of the groups, i.e. the group should preferably have a single cohesive characteristic such as a religious group, a women’s group, a farmers cooperative, etc. According to several authors, the foundation should be built on structures already in existence within the community.” (ADB, p. 45) Researcher John Oxenham concurs with this: “Chances of success are even greater in a program that works with established groups of people who share a common purpose, rather than with individual applicants.” (Oxenham *et al.*, 2002, p. 3)

These two studies point out two related aspects. In one, the focus is on working with established groups rather than creating a new group. And in the second, the focus is on working with a group rather than individuals. Formal education in Africa has usually been a top-down activity, organized far away from the participants. Literacy and non-formal programs offer the opportunity to make a shift in power, being based on local groups who share an objective and have the habit of working together. This decentralization of management and responsibility is a major contributing factor to successful programs.

3. Innovations in the classroom, focusing on learner-centered curriculum and methodologies

The previous section described the macro level in which literacy programs operate. Although there are promising examples of innovations in specific countries, there are few examples of creative change because work at this level requires lots of interaction with formal schooling, with difficult language issues, etc. However, in the following section on curriculum and methodology, there are more and more examples of how programs are adapting to a new imperative — that is, how to focus on learning rather than teaching. This can be felt at two levels. One, curricula are becoming more flexible, more focused on the expressed needs of participants. Secondly, the methodologies in the classroom are becoming more participatory.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum development is a key area in which non-formal education has no choice but to respond to local needs. In formal education, having a pre-established curriculum is a fundamental requirement. In non-formal programs, curriculum (including both content and progression) is often not

clearly defined. However, this is usually because learner needs rather than teaching objectives are at the core of the process. It is flexible and open to input and change. Perhaps after several years of experimentation an NGO or experimental government project will suggest a curriculum which has worked for them — but always in the spirit of being open to change and adaptation based on new experiences and different contexts and new groups of learners.

Core Concepts in Curriculum Development in Non-formal Programs

Curriculum development is a multidimensional task that often involves the input of many different people. Qualifications for curriculum developers should include:

- sound technical skills and knowledge on the curriculum content subject,
- knowledge of the community's needs, as well as social, cultural and economic characteristics,
- knowledge of the principles of curriculum development.

Principles to take into account:

- Target group
- Awareness by the learner of his/her situation, leading to empowerment
- Linkages between basic literacy and postliteracy
- Functionality (do the materials serve a purpose)
- Empowerment
- Flexibility
- Diversified
- Building on the experience of the learners
- Action-oriented (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2000)

This responsive approach to curriculum development is fundamental to non-formal education. It shifts the focus from “what to teach” to “who are the learners”, and the content and timing of the programs must change in turn.

► *Construction of knowledge*

A key question to ask is whether the curriculum of a program is constructed around the idea of “imparting skills and information” or whether it is about “constructing knowledge”. If a program has true respect for the learner, especially adults, it has to take prior knowledge into account. An exciting factor in non-formal education is the development of approaches which help people to become conscious of what they already know, and to be able to express

their ideas on the topic. These programs have the objective of giving learners confidence about their own knowledge, their role in their communities, their capacity to have an impact on decisions being made for and about them.

Core elements of REFLECT:

- power and voice
- political process
- democratic space
- intensive and extensive process grounded in existing knowledge
- linking reflection and action using participatory tools
- power awareness
- coherence and self-organization

(ActionAid, 2003)

An obvious step is to integrate prior knowledge with new information, which can give participants the power to make choices and conduct daily business.

The International Institute for Environment and Development program for pastoralists

One of the more innovative examples of this mix of known and new is the IIED program for the education of pastoralists in the Sahel. This program brings together both literate and nonliterate adults to analyze their production system. Because herders have been told since colonial times that they are the problem because they are not “modern” enough, these participatory trainings begin with a validation of what people already know. But this construction of knowledge also integrates new knowledge, such as an explanation of how to calculate “carrying capacity” which is used by all technicians, and presentations of the legislation which governs this production system. (ARED annual report, 2006)

Integrating the known and the new is a fundamental component of non-formal education today. It is this cross-fertilization which can make education relevant in today’s world. It doesn’t always start with literacy skills, but it can help create a new information environment where literacy skills have a real and important role.

► *Mixing literacy and livelihood skills*

A question which faces numerous non-formal programs is whether to first teach literacy skills and then something practical, known as “livelihood

skills”; or whether livelihood skills should be the base. In the 2002 World Bank study, livelihood was defined as “the knowledge, skills and methods used to produce or obtain the food, water, clothing and shelter necessary for survival and well-being” (Oxenham, 2002, p. 7). For others the concept behind livelihood is income-generation and/or credit schemes. All join together on the concept of linking a real world use of literacy with the learning of literacy skills themselves.

There are five possible relationships between the teaching of literacy and livelihood activities in adult literacy programs:

- literacy in preparation for livelihood activities,
- literacy followed by separate livelihood activities,
- livelihood activities leading to literacy,
- livelihood activities and literacy integrated, literacy and livelihood activities in parallel but separate.

The strong point of programs which combine these two elements is that the needs of learners must be identified with the participation with potential learners before the program can be put in place. But these programs are more costly because they require more teachers; not only a literacy teacher but one or more people who can teach the livelihood skills in question.

The World Bank study, “Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods”

This World Bank study focused on four African countries (Senegal, Guinea, Uganda and Kenya) and evaluated numerous programs within these countries. In the end the report gives seventeen findings and ten recommendations. Amongst the overall remarks in the study, the most compelling are the following:

I. Conditions of effectiveness

- The first observation is ... almost banal : ... whether a program starts from literacy/numeracy and includes some livelihood training, or starts with livelihood objectives and includes literacy/numeracy, it is likely to be successful in both...if it is well adapted to the interests and conditions of its participants and well run.

II. Motivation

- The second observation, again almost banal, is that education and training programs for very poor adults would be wise to offer very

clear, concrete, and immediate reasons to justify enrollment and ensure perseverance....

III. Leading from livelihoods

- This observation...is that programs that start from livelihood skills seem to stand a stronger chance of success. They can demonstrate an immediate reason for learning.

IV. Livelihood leading

- Organizations that are more concerned with livelihoods and other aspects of development seem to be better at designing and delivering effective combinations of livelihoods and literacy than organizations that are more focused on education.

V. Flexibility

- In all the countries studied, the diversity of possibilities for improving established livelihoods and developing new ones appears so wide as to demand extreme flexibility, imagination, and resourcefulness. NGOs seem to have more flexibility than government agencies to respond to local and changing needs.

VI. Savings and credit

- Livelihood-plus-literacy/numeracy programs can substantially reinforce their chances of success if they can start from or at least incorporate training in savings, credit, and business management.

VII. Group approaches and negotiation

- Chances of success are heightened by working with established groups of people who share a common purpose, rather than with individual applicants. (Oxenham *et al.*, 2002)

Worldwide there is more and more interest in figuring out locally adapted responses to combining literacy and livelihood, each welladapted to the learner and hopefully to both aspects of the program. But with these steps forward, we must also stop and reflect on the cost of producing small print-runs books for very specialized types of knowledge for a large population which nevertheless has basic literacy needs, as well as the cost of having more than one teacher in each classroom.

► *Cultural identity and indigenous knowledge*

Learning is first and foremost about anchoring oneself in a social and cultural context. Learning never happens in a vacuum, but always in a social context which makes learning both important and possible. Cultural input is often ignored in many education programs. Most programs see education as

the teaching and learning of something new. However, learning to read and write needs to be integrated into a process of recognizing the value of ones' own culture. Too often programs are designed around the idea of "teaching" or "imparting" knowledge and skills. However, there are more and more examples of programs which focus on interior cultural knowledge as the basis of learning, recognizing prior knowledge, admitting that these must be valued in the world of education today.

In the experience of Associates in Research and Education for Development, an NGO publisher which publishes in Senegalese languages, individual book buyers come in looking for novels, poetry, local history, etc. They are looking for examples of reading as a mirror of themselves and for the pleasure of reading, not just as a way of learning new information. And when reading is a pleasure it is easier to develop fluent reading skills, which are crucial for reading for learning something new. As one researcher was told during her interviews with participants in literacy classes: "We must try to revitalize our culture, and literacy in our language is one instrument for reaching that goal." (Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001, p. 154)

► *Literacy as an embedded social practice*

Thinking about how and why people become literate has shifted today to an awareness of the social reasons for adding this skill. Adults invest time and money to become literate, and their motivations are fundamental to the design and implementation of any literacy program.

The following quotation eloquently expresses a break in the mold of how becoming literate has changed: "There are two paradigms of adult literacy. The traditional conception of adult literacy is derived from the linguistic perspective that views literacy as a technical process of acquiring reading and writing skills.... On the other hand, the socio-linguistic perspective sees adult literacy as embedded in a social context." (Mpfu and Youngman, 2001, p. 575)

This idea of being embedded in a social context has been a major force for change in literacy programs and practices in the past years. In general it is called "situated literacy" or "integrated literacy", as presented below:

A social practice approach emphasizes the uses, meanings and values of reading, writing and numeracy in everyday activities, and the social

relationships and institutions within which literacy is embedded. The social practice approach is drawn upon by the New Literacy Studies which has developed over the last 20 years... This approach sees literacy, numeracy and language as part of social practices which are observable in 'events' or 'moments' and are patterned by social institutions and power relationships. This view encourages us to look beyond texts themselves to what people do with literacy and numeracy, with whom, where, and how. It demands that we make connections with the community in which learners lead their lives outside of the classroom; with notions of situated learning; between learning and institutional power; between spoken language, print and other media; between the literacies and numeracies of teachers and researchers. The focus shifts from deficit or lack, to the many different ways that people engage with literacy and maths, recognizing difference and diversity and challenging how these differences are valued within our society. (Hamilton et al., 2006, pp. 17-18)

According to Brian Street, a researcher who insists on seeing literacy skills in a social context:

1. Literacy is more complex than current curriculum and assessment allows
2. Curriculum and assessment that reduce literacy to a few simple and mechanistic skills fail to do justice to the richness and complexity of actual literacy practices in people's lives,
3. If we want learners to develop and enhance the richness and complexity of literacy practices evident in society at large, then we need curriculum and assessment that are themselves rich and complex and based upon research into actual literacy practices,
4. In order to develop rich and complex curricula and assessment for literacy, we need models of literacy and of pedagogy that capture the richness and complexity of actual literacy practices,
5. In order to build upon the richness and complexity of learners' prior knowledge, we need to treat 'home background' not as a deficit but as affecting deep levels of identity and epistemology, and thereby the stance that learners take with respect to the 'new' literacy practices of the educational setting. (Street, 2005, p. 4)

New developments about curriculum development focus on learner needs and not a pre-established body of knowledge. This movement towards exploring the ways that education can be relevant is a fundamental part of how nonformal education develops programs in which literacy is embedded in a social and cultural context.

► *Learner centered programs*

What does “learner centered” mean in real programs? Basically it is: “respect for the learner, dialogue, participatory approaches, active learning, cooperation and solidarity in the teaching/learning relationship.” (Torres, 2002 p. 63)

Alan Rogers urges that literacy programs be modeled after agricultural extension programs “which provides on-going direct and specific assistance to individuals and groups of farmers with their immediate tasks and needs.” (Rogers, 2005, pp. 256-7) It is crucial to point out that the learner is both an individual and a group, so the needs of both need to be reconciled. He suggests the model of having a “drop-in center” in support of, or in replacement of, formalized literacy classes.

The problem is how one can create a learning program which is individualized while at the same time providing scaffolding and developing opportunities for collaborative learning; which uses the immediate purposes (motivations) of each different adult learner; which builds on the individual experience of each literacy learner; which takes place at their own pace; and which also takes place in their own spaces rather than in a central location at a given time and in a group. (Rogers, 2005, p. 242)

The NGO Associates in Research and Education for Development has found the concept of a drop-in center to be a good model, where learners learn at their own pace, in small groups, and come in to meet with the teacher as they feel the need. This is especially effective when trying to reach “difficult to reach” learners. In the case of ARED, it often focuses on mobile herder groups who cannot come to class on a pre-established timetable. This approach requires true motivation on the part of the learners, since they have more responsibility for their own learning. But if they are motivated, the process of learning can be built around their needs.

The Family Basic Education project in Uganda also has a very creative and flexible approach to making their program responsive to learners. They speak in terms of competencies which are identified by the learners, the facilitators, and the program planners. In the words of Patrick Kiirya: “Competencies are a set of specific, predetermined... performance indicators that give evidence that what was stipulated to be learned has actually been learnt to at least that minimum level. So competencies illustrate what the learners can do.” Amongst the competencies in that program are: “communicate confidently,

effectively and meaningfully in spoken or written language in a wide range of situations”, “use language skills to think, reason, access, and process information”, etc. (UNESCO UIL, 2006) These types of competencies interweave literacy skills with communication skills.

► *Family literacy programs*

In 1983, Denny Taylor introduced the phrase “family literacy” to describe a set of social literacy practices (embedded practices) observed within the family context. In particular, Taylors’ research highlighted ways in which young children engage in reading and writing as they explore and imitate everyday social activities.

Since then, family literacy has been used as an umbrella term to describe a wide variety of literacy intervention Programs that include an inter-generational focus in their design and delivery....

In particular, the term family literacy has been used to describe a specific type of programme initiative, which attempts to break the intergenerational cycle of school failure and undereducation by focusing on parents and children simultaneously, providing both adult basic skills training and early childhood education. These family literacy Programs emphasis that parents are their children’s first and most important teachers, and that they should be encouraged and supported in this role....

A family literacy programme based on this model typically aims to:

- Improve the skills and attitudes of educationally disadvantaged parents;
- Enhance the quality of parent-child relationships;
- Improve the developmental skills of young children;
- Foster better relations between home and school;
- Unite parents and children in a positive education experience.

(Clare, 2000, p. 10)

Encouraging several members and generations of a family to become active in literacy and learning is obviously a practice which can profoundly change education and literacy in Africa today. It means getting parents more active in their children’s learning, and also providing relevant materials to both groups for continued learning. It creates an innovative link between formal and non-formal education, as well as including social involvement by parents who become more responsible for their children’s education.

Family Basic Education (FABE) in Uganda

Another form of partnership that LABE (Literacy and Adult Basic Education) promoted was that between formal and non-formal education through its experimental Family Basic Education (FABE). FABE, being piloted in one district in Eastern Uganda, targets improved educational performance among both primary school children and their parents by promoting shared learning among the two groups. This is done through: sensitization of parents on their parental responsibilities in their children's learning; training school teachers and adult instructors in children and adult teaching methods; producing learning materials for use in adult and children classes and organizing parentshare learning sessions.

The results have been: increased literacy skills among parents; increased visits to school by parents to discuss their children's school progress; improved home and school learning environment and improved performance by the children. Through FABE, LABE has also built strong links with the government education authorities in the district. (Okech, 2005, p. 9)

The results of this approach have the advantage of creating strong links between schools, nonformal education, and the community. However, one of the obvious problems to address is that of language. If children are learning in the official language, and parents aren't fluent in that language, approaches need to be developed which support interaction with a formal education system while also providing language materials which can be shared by both generations.

► *Difficult to reach groups*

With a top-down standardized educational system, there will always be groups who are difficult to reach, including:

- nomadic groups who can't follow the (temporal) constrictions of a pre-designed program,
- people who live in remote areas, and therefore don't have the possibility to participate in highly centralized programs,
- members of minority groups, who are often
- marginalized in community programs, adult men are often identified as a difficult to reach group, since they are often not willing to expose their lack of information or skills,
- those who have been infected with the HIV virus are often stigmatized, and have a hard time gaining access to educational systems,

- participants with physical handicaps, people who have been displaced by either natural or man-made disasters and thereby lose their access to an education,
- areas living with open conflicts are obviously not conducive to the creation and continuation of education, often locally recognized officials exclude themselves because of personal inhibitions, while they are a group who needs access to education most urgently today.

With so many individualized populations to reach, non-formal education is increasingly important; especially in those programs designed by NGOs which live close to both the problem and the population. Before the adoption of the concept of Education For All, it would have been easier to exclude several of these groups simply because they are more difficult and more expensive to reach. But once we have ascribed to the EFA principle, we need to find a multitude of alternative systems, and non-formal education programs offer some of the most inexpensive and productive results.

► *Adult literacy classes as a “secondchance” program*

An aspect of literacy programs that is not discussed enough is the fact that a large number of school drop-outs, who therefore have some level of literacy skills, decide to reinvest their time in adult literacy classes. In the study of Ugandan literacy participants in the Functional Adult Literacy governmental program, the evaluators discovered:

...a high percentage (73%) of people who had actually been to primary school. Half of these had attended five or more years and should have attained at least a usable command of reading, writing, and calculation. Their heavy presence among the programs' graduates raises not only a question about the efficacy of primary schooling, but also the possibility that adult literacy programs may be missing their true target, the completely illiterate population.... The first conclusion then is that FAL (functional adult literacy) is serving more as a second-chance program for primary school leavers than as a literacy education program for people who never went to school. (Okech, 2001, p. 98)

Many programs deplore this, because it leads to mixed levels in the classroom. They are in search of the “...true target, the completely illiterate population”. In fact, this mixing of levels is the reality of the majority of literacy classes today, and as such it is an aspect to be explored and developed. If a

formal education did not give results in the first trial, why not a “second-chance program” through non-formal literacy programs?

It is evident that a standardized top-down classroom has difficulty in incorporating many different levels in the classroom. But when non-formal programs use peer teaching techniques between learners, letting learners teach each other (even at home) rather than waiting for the teacher, this variety in levels can be an asset to any class. When program development takes this reality into consideration, it influences the way curricula are developed to meet potential in all of our classrooms.

► *Teaching of an official language*

Many people who become literate in their first language, or at least in a language they speak, want to go on to learn the official language of their country, whether it be English, French, Arabic, Portuguese, Swahili, etc. The problem is that there are almost no programs which are designed to teach these languages as a second language. Most programs simply use the primer which was used with school children, as if the learner is just seeing the alphabet for the first time; and as if the content for children, adolescents and adults can remain the same. An interesting example is teaching in Swahili, which in eastern Africa is assumed to be a language which everybody speaks, even if not as their first language. But according to Wedin: “Official curricula presumes pupil’s knowledge of Swahili as a first language and although nearly all pupils in the schools have Swahili as a second language, and teachers have no guidance in how to teach Swahili as a second language.” (Wedin, 2004, p. 160)

One interesting example of a planned teaching of French as a second language is that of the NGO Tin Tua in Burkina Faso. Literacy skills in a national language are the base, but in the second year French is added as an oral language. It is only with a firm basis of spoken French that the written script is added (oral communication, Benoit Ouba, UNESCO UIL, 2006).

The teaching of an official language as a second (or third or fourth) language has a long way to go. This is a major problem everywhere. Unfortunately, there are not many examples of innovations in this area. But it is important to point out this deficit in an article about pedagogical needs and developments. And this clearly falls into the realm of curriculum development.

Methodologies in the classroom

In a discussion of pedagogical innovations, it is necessary to see the entire picture, from policy to implementation. But clearly the most innovative experiences focus on methodologies in the classroom. There can be no clear line between curriculum and methodologies, because each depends on the other. But there are a few topics specific to methodologies which are worth reflecting on in more detail.

► *Participatory practices*

The major innovation in most non-formal programs is valorization of participatory teaching and learning. This is a growing practice worldwide, especially in adult education programs. We have already spoken about learner-centered curricula, as well as the construction of knowledge between participants, and between participants and books. Participatory methodologies in the classroom are part of this process.

However, what constitutes participation is a key question. Formal classrooms often claim to be participatory because teachers ask questions of the students. However, upon analysis the questions are usually “closed questions” guided by the teacher, with one right answer. Students reply to a “yes-or-no”, “green-or-red” question, with no possibility for further exploration or personal opinion. This is far from the concept of participatory learning which encourages open debate between participants, which encourages disagreement, and which encourages learners to define what they want to study.

One of the most recognized methods for participatory learning is a set of tools and questions known as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). It was initially developed so that outside researchers could quickly learn about community issues in a participatory style. Today it is being used by local communities so those members who have never been to school can participate in the debate around local issues.

Participatory Rural Appraisal tools

Used by a local community, these tools involve at least three steps. The first activity is formulating a generative question (what are the most important health issues in the community? where are the land tenure boundaries? etc.). This discussion evolves around a visualization which is done on the ground, which impacts the exchange in two ways.

First, participants feel free to keep moving the objects around, since it is easy to change positions in the sand. And secondly, it is a moment of intense debate, as participants move towards consensus on the question. Secondly, once consensus is arrived at, the drawing on the ground is transferred to paper, which allows for the transfer of information over time and space. It is still a drawing, so it can be read by both literate and non-literate community members, but shared with a larger number of people. And finally, text can be created around the drawing. As such, it can be a literacy tool. But text also allows for written explanations of where people disagreed with the final representation. It can expand the memory of the event by giving reasons behind a decision, the nuances in interpretation. (Sonja Fagerberg-Diallo for ARED).

An exciting and significant addition to adult literacy provision is the REFLECT approach, introduced by ActionAid, a British-based international NGO. The architects of REFLECT explain that the approach seeks to build on the theoretical framework developed by the Brazilian Paulo Freire, but provides a practical methodology by drawing on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques. An important characteristic is that in REFLECT there is no textbook, no literacy primer, no pre-printed materials other than a guide for facilitators that is produced locally, preferably with the input of the facilitators themselves. The REFLECT Mother Manual states: “If most literacy Programs have failed then perhaps abolishing the primer may be one of the keys to success.” (Archer and Cottingham, 1996)

In 1995 the pilot phase of REFLECT was evaluated in the three countries where it was being tested: Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador. The findings were published in the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) Education Paper, Number 17, 1996. The Paper concluded that REFLECT was more effective than the literacy approaches using primers. Some NGOs in Uganda plus the government program in some districts have adopted REFLECT.

The 1999 evaluation of literacy programs in Uganda did not find any significant difference in effectiveness between the REFLECT and the government approach in literacy levels (Carr-Hill, 2001). For this, we don't know how this evaluation was carried out, and whether the REFLECT programs had input into the criteria being tested. Nevertheless, the great strength of REFLECT is that it offers a powerful tool for community participatory learning and

action. It promotes participation and action together with learning, bringing individuals together to analyze and act as a group. As a method it is based on community participation, and gives practical information on how to use participatory practices in the field. It is once again an example of embedded literacy, where the “simple” skills of reading and writing are finding a reason for being in a larger social context.

► *Methods for teaching literacy skills*

The major debate about how to teach reading and writing today is the argument between teaching phonics first or using whole language. Brian Street, who has studied literacy in South Africa, writes:

A critical factor regarding literacy acquisition in South Africa is the state of early literacy pedagogy, which, broadly speaking, has worked within a tradition which emphasizes repetition, recitation, and decoding at the expense of meaning-making. Educators have only recently begun to note the differences between the long-standing international debate between phonic-centred and whole language literacy pedagogies. (Street, 2005, p. 27)

The use of phonics-based approaches — teaching the letters of the alphabet, one by one, building syllables in isolation — is still the predominant method in use in Africa today. But there are also more and more innovative programs which look into how literacy skills can be taught using the whole-language approach, which is a very encouraging development.

Phonics versus Whole Language

Those in the phonics advocacy camp emphasize that decodable text should predominate in initial reading materials with only limited access to ‘non-decodable’ text. It is seen as problematic for children to encounter words in reading materials for which the letter-sound correspondences have not been previously taught in an explicit and systematic way... (whereas the whole language approach) encourage students to use the totality of their concepts about print (including knowledge of phonics, contextual clues, and knowledge of the world) to engage with books and other texts that they are motivated to read.

In short, the research suggests that decoding skills can be developed in two ways: 1) through direct instruction of these skills, and 2) through immersion in a literate environment that supports curiosity about and exploration of

printed language. Instructionally, a combination of these two orientations, according to the needs of the individual students, appears to work better than a predominant focus on one end of the spectrum or the other. (Cummins, 2002, p. 115)

► *Text Based Pedagogical Approaches*

One of the methods for promoting a balance between phonics, whole-word, and participatory practices is known as text based pedagogical approaches. This approach which is currently being used with success in experimental classes in Niger (UNESCO UIL, 2006) makes a clear distinction between the micro and macro levels of language. That is, literacy classes cannot only teach the smallest units (letters) of written language, but must also take the larger context (communication) into consideration. They encourage participants to see the use of both oral and written language as a way of accomplishing communication goals. To do this, participants are taught about the many ways that language can be used — to explain, to narrate, to debate, to inform, to make an argument, etc. It is only when language is studied and taught in such contexts that it is meaningful.

The text based pedagogical approach is a methodology which revolves around texts which are elaborated between both the facilitators and participants, especially around issues which are important to the participants. As much as possible, learning takes place in an interdisciplinary context in order to develop the capacity to analyze and communicate clearly. In order to do this, four disciplines are taught: language skills, math skills, social sciences, and life sciences. Each class starts with a critical and participatory discussion which results in a text produced by the class.

Obviously this approach creates an active collaboration between the learner, the classroom, and the curriculum, which is a key to the innovations in non-formal education today.

► *Use of ICTS*

In the words of Bill Gates: “Technology can help, but it always has to be technology that understands the difficult conditions. Are computers in developing countries going to change the educational system? In a lot of countries it’s more: Are there classrooms, are there teachers, is there electricity. Taking new technologies and trying to impose them on developing countries — that’s crazy.” (Time Magazine, February 12, 2007, p. 4)

The use of ICTs in African education is hotly debated today. Unfortunately, the discussion is often limited to computers and access to the internet. But in fact there are many technologies which can greatly help programs, teachers, and participants, including: tapes, radio, television, CDs, DVDs, even mobile phones.

Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI)

The UNESCO/UNICEF Gobi Desert Project in Mongolia used radio to deliver education to 15,000 nomadic women in literacy skills, livestock rearing techniques, family care, income generation and basic business skills. The radio program included visiting teachers and small information centers that serve as meeting places for learning groups. Telesecundaria, a secondary level education television series in Mexico, served over 800,000 students during the 1997/98 school year. By 1990, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Sri Lanka, Thailand and Turkey had all used broadcast media to set up national open universities.

For example, interactive radio instruction (IRI) uses a methodology that requires learners to stop and react to questions and exercises through verbal response to radio characters and engages them in group work.... Short pauses are provided throughout the lessons, after questions and during exercises, to ensure that students have the time to think and respond adequately. Typically used in formal classroom settings, the program also encourages interaction between the teacher and learners as they work together on problems, activities, or experiments. Materials and activities in the classroom compensate for the limited ability that radio has to provide information in various forms and to give students feedback on their responses.

...English in Action, an IRI program for primary students in South Africa, served nearly 25,000 students in 1995. In the Republic of Guinea, IRI was used along with printed materials to help move the country's educational system from one that focused on a lock-step curriculum, teacher-centered instruction, and rote memorization to one in which students interacted more with each other and with teachers, as a result of IRI activities.

The IRI program would prompt teachers to pair students for certain activities, thus facilitating cooperative learning; they prompted teachers to call on girls as well as boys; and they posed questions directly to students that

required higher-order thinking skills such as problem solving and analysis. (Wagner and Kozma, 2003, p. 35-36)

In an educational program which only allows from \$12 to \$60 per participant and usually doesn't have a permanent infrastructure, many ICTs can initially be too expensive to think about. Also, one must weigh the benefits of investing in ICT equipment, training of ICT managers, and maintenance with the cost of investing in teacher training and books. However, these technologies can customize learning, make learning part of an interactive experience, make teaching available in parts of the world where teachers aren't sufficient, and support distance learning.

They are also a vital part of the global world in which participants come into contact, so they need to be familiar with them. According to many, learning to use these technologies is almost as important as learning to read and write: "Digital literacy is already acknowledged as a basic learning need for all." (Torres, 2002, p. 94) The challenge is finding a viable, affordable, sustainable way of integrating them into the learning process.

4. The essential context to make these programs successful, including a literate environment, trained personnel, and appropriate evaluation

So far we have talked about the fundamental decisions and steps in creating a literacy program, and then some of the most promising changes taking place in the classroom. However, there are still three essential elements to look at if these programs are to be supported adequately, including the creation of a literate environment in general, the training and support to teachers and other personnel, and carrying out appropriate evaluations.

Creating a literate environment

Even though setting up literacy classes is crucial, it is equally important to make the effort to create a literate environment in which new literates find things to read. In the words of UNESCO: "A 'literate society' is more than a society with high literacy rates; rather, it is one in which important aspects of social life such as economics, law, science, and government are... what we may call 'textual institutions'." (UNESCO, 2005, pp.31-32)

Creating a literate environment requires printed materials for people to read (posters, books, brochures, newspapers, etc.), but it also requires a system of distribution for these materials (local libraries, book sellers who are close to their market, prices that people can afford, regular supply of books to literacy classes, etc.) In Uganda, the government program entitled FAL (functional adult literacy) found the following when they evaluated their programs:

Those who had passed the tests but were no longer reading, writing or calculating were asked why.... The major reason for not reading is simply that the participants do not have anything to read (in their own language), either because it is not available or because they cannot afford it. The major reasons for not calculating or writing are that the graduates simply do not feel they have acquired the skills to a level where they can use them with enough proficiency to make it worthwhile. (Okech et al., 2001, p. 85)

In the *Faire-Faire* programs of West Africa, there has always been a sizable budget line item for publishing books in African languages, and several hundred new titles have been printed with this financial support. This process also encouraged more people to write. The NGO Soore in Burkina Faso has found that publishing a monthly newspaper is one of the best ways to keep people reading. They have an interesting blend of stories, some being based on both national and international news; some being based on technical information including the latest information on health issues; and many being stories contributed by new literates about their communities. And programs such as text pedagogies and REFLECT create a literate environment by getting people to write themselves.

In a 300 hour literacy class, it is clear that participants can't become fluent readers. That is why it is crucial to develop a literate environment where the supply of materials is very diversified in type and topic.

► *Post-literacy materials*

Most literacy projects soon feel the need to either go beyond teaching basic literacy skills, or to combine teaching content ("livelihood") with literacy skills. In general these materials have been called post-literacy materials, and often are of a didactic nature. And it is crucial that the provision of post-literacy materials be planned for from the beginning. In fact, they may require more time to develop than the basic literacy materials since

they often require specialized knowledge. Not planning for so-called “post-literacy” is a serious limit in numerous programs today.

However, in the experience of NGOs such as Soore and TinTua in Burkina Faso, as well as ARED in Senegal, they have found that new readers appreciate fiction, reflections of their own environment, books that make the reader laugh and cry. Students in a classroom might read a didactic text as part of their program; but individual readers need to be able to consolidate their reading skills with books which are a diversion. So the search for post-literacy materials should not only be for didactic texts, but also how to find and encourage new authors of fiction who know how to write for their audience.

► *Role of editors*

To encourage such a literate environment, it is crucial to develop a publishing industry which is vibrant and responsive. However, publishing in African languages has many more problems than publishing in an official language. Just a few of the challenges include:

- creating character sets in national languages,
- typing in a language one doesn't speak,
- standardizing orthographies,
- working with untrained authors,
- finding illustrators who know the cultural references,
- using non-professional translators, figuring out how to reach a market which is usually rural and poor, etc.

The InWent (Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung) program to train editors in national languages

Fortunately there was a program to train editors in national languages in operation for six years in West Africa, including editors from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal, funded through the German Cooperation. It provides a very good starting point for any future work, especially since seven training guides were produced over the six years. While there are numerous organizations which provide trainings for editors, this program had a unique focus on the particular constraints and possibilities when working in African languages.

One interesting feature of this program was to bring together both commercial editors and NGO editors. That provided for a rich exchange. Commercial editors obviously had a much better understanding of the “editorial chain”,

and how to program for the production of books. However, their investment in national language books was very limited because they didn't master the two ends of the editorial chain — finding good authors and knowing the market.

On the other hand, NGOs often produce low quality books because of a lack of experience and training. However, they can produce exclusively in national languages, they cultivate new local authors, and they have a distribution network through their projects or classes.

(Sonja Fagerberg-Diallo for InWent)

Today there is a growing group of editors who are confronting these issues — everyone from Alpha Editions in Niger to Heinemans in Namibia. There is a pan-African organization known as APNET (African Publishers Network) which has attempted to improve the skills of local editors. The university of Cameroon offers courses to students in publishing, as does CAFED out of Tunisia. But these efforts need to be reinforced by government commitment to put local editors into a favorable environment for work, especially when they are working in African languages.

Recruiting and training literacy personnel

Often literacy teachers are volunteers, or very poorly paid. And of course they are undertrained, while in fact literacy training in a national language requires considerable knowledge of the language, preparation for teaching adults, trainings to be not only literacy teachers but also managers of literacy centers, training to teach topics of social importance (such as talking about birth control, nutrition, sanitation, HIV-AIDS, etc).

Local literacy personnel often prove to be very effective teachers, even given minimal skills. At the LitCam event of the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2006, a literacy teacher who was invited to tell her story had effectively taught literacy classes for seven years before she received her first book! As Pandian and Raman have written: "Studies too, have also shown that effective teachers of literacy did not appear to have particularly high levels of knowledge of language structure and terminology." (Pandian and Raman, 2001, p. 132) The paradox is to continue to push for better resources, more training, recognition for work well done; while at the same time validating a core of teachers who do remarkable jobs with very little back-up.

► *Educational levels of literacy teachers*

This is the fascinating paradox about literacy teachers in the field today. No one disputes their need for more training, including themselves — but they can also be very effective with very little. This is a ray of hope in the world of literacy.

The Projet d'Autopromotion des Pasteurs dans le Ferlo (PAPF)

In the mid-90's, a GTZ (German Cooperation) project which included local language literacy was started in a remote rural area of northern Senegal. To make matters more difficult, the work was with mobile herders who were constantly on the move. The concept was to train literacy teachers who came from the local community. Initially 79 people, most only literate in the local language, were trained in two trainings of two weeks each. The first training was to improve their own capacity to read, write, and do calculations. The second was to train them in how to teach. Of that group, 47 went on to become local literacy teachers for a group of 1341 participants (of which 53% were women). In an evaluation after 300 hours of class, the success rate as defined by the project was between 50% and 60%. Obviously everyone still had work to do to develop and maintain the skill. But it was clear to everyone that these local literacy teachers could do a “good enough” job. (Rapport d'évaluation du programme PAPF, 2000)

► *Training facilitators rather than teachers*

Both children and adults learn by trying, doing, making mistakes, and then moving on to draw conclusions and reinvest their new knowledge in the real world. But it is fundamental that this type of supportive educational system be provided to adults in non-formal education programs. Otherwise, they will simply leave.

So within non-formal programs we have the opportunity to both develop new approaches, such as that of REFLECT, and to train teachers who know how to work with this type of approach. In the PAPF evaluation, almost every participant interviewed commented that their teacher had never humiliated them. That this comment came from so many people is significant, in that it shows how little these adult learners expected from teachers; and more importantly that even a short (four week) training process which consciously taught principles of adult participatory teaching, and demonstrated it, had an impact on teaching styles.

Every program we looked into made specific reference to either andragogy, teaching adults, training facilitators rather than teachers, etc. which is a very positive step in the development of more responsive educational systems. This focus on the difference between facilitating and teaching is essential to the current movement worldwide to create and sustain relevant non-formal programs.

Monitoring and evaluation

Every program in place today has to confront the concept of validating the work done by the participants. Measuring aptitudes can be used for:

- measuring increments in each learner's reading and writing ability,
- enabling learners to measure their own accomplishments,
- deciding when to transfer the learner from one level to the next.

However, validation can be a process of using a predetermined, standardized test; or it can show the progress and capacities of each learner. It can be determined by an outside source, or the learner can be active in his or her own evaluation process.

In light of what has been said about embedded literacy and participatory teaching, many non-formal programs do not use a standardized test which is imposed at the end of a program. Rather, they try to find more creative ways to get learners involved in a process of self-evaluation. And the focus is on getting feedback from evaluations in order to improve the overall program, not as a sanction for or against individual participants. The objective is not only to monitor, but also to mentor both programs and participants.

The Skills for Life program in Great Britain

Today the word 'curriculum' invariably has prescriptive connotations, meeting awarding body standards or national requirements. The national curriculum in Skills for Life has been praised for providing a framework, or criticized for being too narrow, linked to school standards of achievement....

In 1989, ALBSU, together with the BBC, began the Basic Skills Accreditation Initiative, and included consultations before defining the format of the qualification that was to become Wordpower and Numberpower.... Interestingly, the rationale for Wordpower and Numberpower can be contrasted directly

with the current framework. ‘We wanted something that was continuous accreditation and not a test. We wanted something at a number of levels so that people could take it and we wanted it to be broadly user friendly.’ (Hamilton *et al.*, 2006, p. 120-31)

One of the points to be very aware of in talking about evaluation is whether one is evaluating:

- a skill level,
- the acquisition of new knowledge,
- changes in behavior.

Many donors want to see changes in behavior, not just newly acquired skills and knowledge, and this is a challenge for all non-formal programs. We all know the importance of antismoking campaigns, but this doesn’t necessarily change individual behavior. New information alone isn’t enough to change behaviors around complex social issues such as sexuality, eating habits, investing limited resources in improved hygiene, etc. But it is a crucial component to be put into a participatory, creative process of integrating the known and the new.

► *Iterative, participatory evaluations*

The concept of “continuous accreditation” is key to the way many programs operate. For example, many programs keep track of progress through a portfolio, rather than depending on a final exam for assessment. In a professional training project including literacy initiated by the NGO Paul Guerin Lajoie in northern Senegal, a list of skills to acquire are given to these adolescent students who learn by working in local establishments.

The students contact their teachers when they think they have learned the required skill, and at that point teachers access their work. This way, each student can move at his or her own pace, faster or slower, rather than being subjected to a standardized text at the end of an arbitrary period of time. And more importantly, each student becomes responsible for his or her own learning.

Furthermore, programs often find a way to conduct evaluations frequently so that they are not threatening to learners. These evaluations become a diagnostic tool rather than a means for sanctioning.

► *National Qualification Frameworks*

In spite of a general move towards more flexible types of evaluations, there is still a need in some programs, and for some participants, to arrive at a level of standardization which can be measured by national tests. This is particularly evident in Southern and Eastern Africa, where adult education can potentially lead to an equivalency diploma at any age, and can be presented to potential employers.

The NLPN (National Literacy Programme in Namibia), which was initiated in 1993, offers a programme of all together seven years of learning. The majority of learners, however, enroll in Stages 1-4.... Stages 1 and 2 are devoted to mother tongue literacy offering instruction in 11 different languages. In Stages 3 and 6, English is introduced as the language of instruction. Following these, Stages 4-6 comprise the Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) programme. Those graduating from AUPE will have reached a level of qualification equivalent to a primary school-leaving certificate. (Papen, 2007, p. 37)

As the above quotation demonstrates, these programs use the mother tongue only in the first year(s), then switch to the official language. This has obvious advantages for those who are able to invest the amount of time necessary in an alternative-to-school program which is modeled on the program of primary school. It provides a recognized diploma; and there is hope that these diplomas or certificates can eventually be recognized across borders for employment purposes.

The National Qualifications Framework in South Africa "...seeks to enable quality control, but within a process which:

- involves all stakeholders,
- facilitates Open and Life-long Learning,
- effectively recognizes prior learning,
- ensures horizontal portability and vertical articulation by:
 - being structures in a modular fashion,
 - within a single national matrix on which all qualifications must be placed, which are
 - outcomes based and criterion referenced." (Williams, 1996)

This process in South, and southern, Africa is one of the most elaborate on the continent searching for ways to open up the educational offer to previously excluded adults.

The Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Program in South Africa

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is available to adults who want to finish their basic education. An outcomes-based programme, ABET aims to provide basic learning tools, knowledge and skills, and provides participants with nationally recognised qualifications. The four levels of ABET training are equivalent to Grades R to 9.

ABET includes training in:

- Language, literacy and communication,
- Mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences,
- Natural science,
- Arts and culture,
- Life orientation
- Technology
- Human and social science,
- Economic and management science.

Learners can also choose to take courses in:

- Small, medium and micro enterprises,
- Tourism
- Agricultural science
- Ancillary health care. (www.capegateway.gov.za)

Nevertheless, there is still a heated debate over the value of such a highly standardized and formalized system, some saying that this system is slowing the development of adult education because it compares it too closely to the formal school system. These initiatives side-step the question of whether the content of this educational system is best adapted to participant needs, rather than simply being adapted to the demands of a standardized educational system which only values a limited kind of knowledge. In her research in Namibia, Papen researched so-called literacy classes which were based on learning English. But in her opinion, the ultimate objective was to teach minimal skills, not to become fluent in reading and writing and communicating in the language. She writes: "This is exactly the kind of 'literacy practice' that I fight against. Trying to learn enough English to do menial ... tasks by filling out work orders. Is this 'literacy' or just 'label recognition'? It focuses entirely on the power relationships which English creates, not on capacity building for people."

(Papen, 2007, p. 27)

The active debate over qualifying standards is one which is very heated in the non-formal community today. Some reject it because it takes away from the learner-centered approach of many non-formal programs. Others find it to be an interesting bridge between formal and non-formal education; between education and certification for the work world. As such, it is a debate which will continue.

5. Facing the future, given current trends

In the past years, the thinking about literacy has transcended the desire to simply eradicate illiteracy. Rather, programs seek to create a literate environment based on the principle of life-long learning and the creation of learning societies. More and more programs integrate livelihood skills with the learning of literacy skills. Indian educator S. Mohanty makes a crucial comment about the concept of lifelong learning. He writes:

...lifelong learning is not the same as recurrent education within the framework of the formal educational system; lifelong learning is interdisciplinary, it overlaps the borders of different policy sectors. From a state perspective the battery of tools available is expanded; there are a number of alternative ways of investing in and creating conditions for education and learning. Educational policy, labour market policy, industrial policy, regional policy, and social policy, all have a common responsibility. (Mohanty, 2007, p.144)

This is a crucial summary about innovations in non-formal education today. Being learner centered, it involves all members of the society (from learners to surrounding infrastructures) to look for creative and pertinent ways to meet both individual and societal goals. The skill of literacy is embedded into this much larger concept of learning. However, for these goals to be met, at least six aspects of lifelong learning must be promoted.

First, funding is crucial for these programs, and should come from government sources as well as from NGOs, donors, and even perhaps participants. A much, much bigger effort needs to be directed towards the vast majority of the population who need the flexibility and responsiveness of decentralized non-formal education programs (which are a crucial aspect to promoting the habits and skills needed for lifelong learning).

Second, African languages need to play a crucial role in education on the continent. But for African languages to be used effectively, these languages need to be developed to play new and constantly evolving roles in education. This goes from university linguistic studies, to encouraging new authors, to helping editors more fully play their role, to developing new vocabulary, to getting African language character sets on the Internet, etc.

Third, teachers need to be adequately trained. This means considering both the content and the length of their training; and it needs to go on during in-service and recurrent trainings. These teachers need especially to learn participatory methods, and to philosophically shift the focus from “teaching” to “learning”.

Four, books and other support materials need to be available, well-written, attractive, affordable. This especially applies to African languages which very often suffer from a lack of print materials, and which need special support in order to develop a written form of each language. The problem of distributing these materials is also a crucial challenge.

Five, education should grow out of the culture and values of the community. This means creating spaces where people can share what they already know, as well as learning what is new to them. This is a “construction of knowledge” which joins the known and the new in a dynamic way which is rarely used in the transfer of skills and information which dominates formal education. And six, a system of certification needs to become operational, not so that students can pass into the formal school system, but so that adult learners can demonstrate the value of what they have learned in their search for a decent living.

The recommendations of this article are not about “what to do”, since there are no single or easy answers. This would be in contradiction to the entire article which focuses on diversity and learners, not on what to teach. Rather, we recommend the creation of “spaces” for sharing: between the methodologies of specific programs, between programs and policy, between learners and providers, between editors and readers, between funders and participants, etc. The list can go on. The flexibility of decentralized non-formal programs is uniquely adapted to the needs of learners who cannot spend hours each day over several years in a classroom, and governments which cannot afford a population which is both immobilized and subsidized in

formal institutions which do not give good results. The innovations in non-formal education and literacy learning are a pillar in the development of an educated society in Africa.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ARED	Associates in Research and Education for Development
EFA	Education for All
FABE	Family Basic Education
Faire-Faire	private-public partnerships
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IIZ/DVV	International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

Chapter 5.

The PAFNA project in Senegal: An efficient and promising literacy project

by the Paul Gérin-Lajoie Foundation

1. Introduction

Between 1990-2000, Senegal made significant progress in basic education and the gross enrolment rate rose from 53% to 69%. However, in 2000, UNESCO estimated the illiteracy to be 64%.

During the last five years, the country's literacy centers enrolled an average of 184,505 learners a year, 71% of them girls and women. During that same period, basic community schools for children 9 to 14 that had never been to school enrolled 9,933 pupils, 77.3% of whom were girls. (Source: MEN)

However, integrating the newly literate into economic life is a major problem. Learning to read, write and count provides an undeniable edge for personal development, but isn't enough for people to become employed.

Faced with a pronounced deficit of infrastructures, with economic demands, and with selective access to the structured training provided by public and private institutions, the only existing alternatives left to the most disadvantaged revolve around traditional apprenticeship.

Employment statistics in Senegal show that about 54,000 young school drop-outs start apprenticing in the artisanal sector each year to learn a trade and integrate the economic and social fabric; an estimated 300,000 young Senegalese of both sexes are working in traditional apprenticeship, especially

in automotive mechanics and maintenance, artisanal trades, weaving and garment-making, as well as civil and metal works.

The country has also launched an ambitious project designed to bring electricity to rural zones, which has given rise to new needs for related technical expertise such as repair and maintenance of electrical machinery. Electricity thus brings new job opportunities that are in line with the profiles of youths enrolled in vocational training projects.

2. Technical and vocational education and training in developing countries

Children in less developed countries have little opportunity to train in vocational training and find work afterwards. Difficulties at this level are even greater for the most vulnerable among them: girls, the underprivileged, those living in rural zones, and those who are abandoned. UNESCO's Secondary, Technical and Vocational Training Division advocates a new vision of vocational training that emphasizes practical qualifications or "life skills" and that is, above all, in line with national needs and resources.

Historically, education systems in less developed countries are created with an ambitious vision for training but this option has created serious problems because many countries have invested heavily in importing foreign education models. Following this same logic, they have created highly-specialized vocational training centers that are ill-suited to the needs of the local labor market, whose sustainability is not necessarily ensured, and created unrealistic hopes for white collar work that have created cohorts of unemployed graduates.

A new avenue for exploration

Education policies in this area are changing to provide qualifying training and to teach learners to adapt to changing work conditions rather than locking them in outdated or overly specific profiles disconnected from the realities of the working world. This context-sensitive approach requires a diversification of the response to training demand and innovative approaches. The process does not come with a ready-made roadmap; this can also be an asset since it makes possible new approaches, new targets, new actors and new partners long on the margins of the vocational training system.

Indeed, UNESCO indicates that some 80% of jobs in the poorest countries will require some kind of professional qualification in one way or another. The most pressing challenge for less developed countries is therefore for an adequate link between employment demand and the real needs of their societies. Concerned countries must invest in the renewal of qualification modes for future generations, and in the search for innovative, sustainable solutions to the problems in this area.

The PAFPNA project launched in August 2004 in Senegal's Louga and Saint-Louis regions meets the triple challenge of credibility, mobilization and innovation. The project addressed the following challenges:

- Lower-cost access to vocational training;
- Appropriateness to the local context such as language issues;
- Quality, so that vocational training is more in keeping with the requirements of local development and labour market;
- The management of the apprenticeship system as a component of the vocational training sector;
- The gender approach in the supply and demand regarding vocational training;
- Linkage of the proposed apprenticeship training with strategies for combating poverty, which brings up the question of strategies for integration in vocational training programs.

The PAFPNA Project in Senegal: Vocational Training and Education for All (EFA)

The PAFPNA project draws its justification from the ambitious project launched by the United Nations for global achievement of education for all (EFA). In April 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, participants in the World Education Forum — the most important conference of the early century on the subject — agreed on six main objectives to be reached to bring about EFA. These objectives became the Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All. Objective 3 was: “Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills Programs.”

It became evident at this meeting that technical and vocational education and training (TVET), an essential component of such programs, had to be made accessible to the world's countries. However, in many countries, and most especially in developing countries, individuals looking to acquire

skills and qualifications are excluded from formal education and technical and professional training for various reasons:

- The teaching language, often the colonial language, effectively excludes those who did not have the opportunity to attend school. a significant fringe of young people in underprivileged zones;
- TVET is inaccessible to to women for cultural reasons, effectively confining them to domestic work and subsistence agriculture;
- The high cost of training excludes learners from low-income families;
- Limited training opportunities in rural zones as the best vocational training schools and programs are concentrated in the capital and major cities;
- Age selection, which makes it difficult for anyone over a certain age to access technical and vocational paths;
- The weakness private and public vocational training;
- The relatively high cost of creating technical and vocational education and training establishments and centers (infrastructures and equipment);
- The relative inappropriateness of vocational training to the labor market, which raises the issue of the quality in the vocational training system.

Finally, even where the individuals concerned face none of these problems, in many countries, vocational training suffers from strong negative stereotypes and therefore often considered a means of last resort, to be used only when nothing else is available.

It is from these findings that was born the idea of developing a project that would make it possible to side-step all or part of these difficulties. The PAFPNA project appears as a new avenue for training to reach Objective 3 of EFA.

► *Description*

Bilateral cooperation between Canada and Senegal gave rise to the the PAFPNA project that was officially launched in March 2004 by the Minister for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Canada's Ambassador to Senegal.

The Paul Gérin-Lajoie Foundation, a Canadian NGO based in Montreal, is the executing agency and manages the project from the Foundation's Saint-Louis Office. The Foundation works in partnership with the regional councils, chambers of commerce, the academic boards, the artisan trade associa-

tions, and the resources of technical and vocational education and training establishments, officers of decentralized State technical services, artisans, literacy operators, and local communities.

The PAFPNA project experiments with apprenticeship training in six low-technological complexity professional paths in a contractual approach consisting of encouraging hands-on experience with master artisans in artisanal businesses over a concentrated 14-month period.

► *Objectives and Expected Results*

The overall objective of the PAFPNA project is to contribute to Senegal's social and economic development by helping to improve unstructured vocational training. The project is more specifically concerned with helping newly literate and out-of-school young people left on the margins of existing structured vocational training learn, through apprenticeship, a trade that can provide them with employment and is adapted to their profile.

Specific project objectives include the following:

- Organizing and enhancing the status of traditional apprenticeship by exploiting the possibilities provided by functional literacy in national and work languages.
- Giving girls and women access to trades traditionally reserved for men to achieve gender parity in these areas.
- Setting up a participative and responsible system for managing a type of vocational training adapted to the needs of the communities, and involving the regional chambers of commerce, chambers of trades, artisan trade associations, a number of master artisans, and all other relevant local and national education actors.
- Integrating the educational and awareness-raising dimension into trade apprenticeships to better meet the challenges of two major development issues: the AIDS pandemic and the sustainable management of an environment threatened by poorly appropriate professional practices.

The expected short-term results (outputs) by the end of the project in June 2007 include the following:

1. At least 6 low-technological complexity vocational paths documented and used for training programs.
2. At least 12 supervising trainers capable of providing oversight for the vocational training for the newly literate.

3. 600 newly literate, including 50% women, are trained by apprenticeships with master artisans.
4. 100 master artisans are qualified in vocational training for the newly literate.
5. Institutional and organizational partners are aware of the importance of gender equity.
6. The newly literate have acquired basic knowledge in health and safety on the job, environment protection and entrepreneurship.
7. A personal plan for integrating the labour market has been developed for each of the graduating students.
8. A committee to manage and support apprenticeship created in each region.
9. Regional associations of graduate apprentices in each region to provide mutual aid with integration to the labour market.

► *Beneficiaries*

The direct beneficiaries are the newly literate graduating from functional literacy programs (i.e. students from basic community schools) and out-of-school children from primary education as well as all involved actors and partners.

- The Ministry of Education will see its capacities for intervention strengthened by the project on structuring TVET apprenticeships.
- Master artisans will be initiated into a more efficient training method while strengthening their equipment and supplies.
- Local communities and administrative authorities.
- Decentralized technical services and chambers of trades that experiment with and capitalize on a type of decentralized vocational training by being actively involved in all stages of the project;
- Populations from the intervention regions. In Senegal, the project, in its experimental stage, is currently underway in the Louga and Saint-Louis regions. Experimentation.

3. Principle and development

The training proposed is essentially practical, provided by master artisans in their workshops, with the support of supervising technicians, as needed. Half of these technicians are instructors from formal sector training centers, and half are selected artisans. The project thus combines the contribution of academic training with practical mastery. Supervisors

responsible for supervising master artisans and help them improve their practices for training young people in neighborhood workshops and garages have received capacity-building training from Canadian experts. The new approach is based on training plans with specific progress scales that provide complementary modules on financial management, entrepreneurship and marketing, as well as environmental issues, AIDS prevention and gender equality.

Path selection

The basic principle of this approach lies in selecting paths linked to the regions major local economic development options and for which there are existing training opportunities through competent and well-equipped artisan workshops and real and coherent demand for services to guarantee employment opportunities.

This option must be seen in light of the concern to train youths in vocational avenues capable of revitalizing economic development options for which there would be no great difficulty in identifying artisanal businesses to provide training and internal markets ready to absorb the production of goods and/or services. The resulting paths were evaluated by the local community partners (regional councils) and chambers of commerce.

For its first training programs, the project selected six low-technology complexity vocational paths that were promising in terms of job creation: maintenance of agricultural motors, materials, cold storage, farm machinery, metal construction geared to agricultural production, domestic refrigeration, sewing/dyeing, animal husbandry, and farm products processing.

Developing and Testing Training Materials

The project relies on the competency-based approach (CBA) with a view to improving the contents of the traditional apprenticeship offered in master artisan workshops. It benefits from Canadian expertise through the executing agency and the contribution of consultants, but also from the expertise of Senegalese people.

The CBA is a method developed in Québec and inspired by the various research and experiences in education. This approach uses the learners' actions as the main learning tool. The approach centers on an integrated set

of knowledges, abilities and attitudes that enables the learner to succeed in carrying out a task or a work activity.

The curriculum structured according to the competency-based approach has been developed based on work situation analysis (WSA) and in a participative way involving supervising trainers, master artisans and the resources of technical and vocational education and training establishments. It was then validated at regional meetings with the master artisans of the two regions.

Teaching tools have been developed to support the training mechanism, such as various guides for the learners, the master artisans, the supervising trainers, as well as teaching media.

After a 14-month test period, these guides and tools were reviewed in light of the observations noted by the master artisans and the supervising trainers in the course of the training.

Recruiting and selecting learners, master artisans and supervising trainers

The recruitment of learners, master artisans and supervising trainers was conducted following the same principle. Information meetings were held with those concerned, applications were collected, selection committees were set up (with the participation of the technical service responsible for that field and the academic boards, selection criteria were developed and validated by the committees. Finally, a selection was made among the candidates.

Local services in charge of literacy and literacy operators were actively involved in recruiting the newly literate while the chambers of trades and artisan trade associations took part in the recruitment of master artisans. These were selected for recognized expertise and according to the demand for training expressed by the learners registered with the various departments of the intervention regions. The selection of supervising trainers, one for each selected path and region, was done by a committee made up of the Academic Board, the Chamber of Trades and the project after a call for applications was made to chambers of trades, technical and vocational education and training establishments and/or specialized technical services.

In proceeding with the selection, the emphasis was placed on ensuring various profiles, both in terms of curricula (50% of master artisans are experienced business owners and 50% are specialized teachers and civil servants) and gender (because our newly literate target was essentially made up of women).

Training supervising trainers and master artisans

With the support of a Canadian consultant, supervising trainers were trained in the competency-based approach and in building a training curriculum for apprenticeship in the selected paths. They were active in the development of the various training tools and led the sessions designed to validate the apprenticeship guides. They also took part in both the initial and continuous training of the master artisans responsible for training the newly literate recruits. Present throughout the process (work situation analysis, development, validation and reviewing of the guides and teaching materials, training of master artisans in charge of training the learners, etc.), the supervising trainers were the best qualified candidates to supervise the provision of training in the workshops.

For such specific questions as environment protection issues, education on the AIDS pandemic, and management and entrepreneurship, the project had to call upon resource-persons for the initial and continuous training of the master artisans. It should be noted that the project has endeavoured to use local expertise to associate the largest number of resource-persons to the life of the project.

At various times, sharing sessions and pedagogical development days have brought together supervising trainers and master artisans to discuss specific issues. Exchange visits between learners and workshops of a same path but from different communities were also organized quite frequently so that learners could benefit from the best approaches identified. These visits were highly appreciated by both the learners and master artisans.

The apprenticeship monitoring mechanism

For evaluating the training learners received through the PAFNA project, a three-tier assessment mechanism was set up:

- First, learners assessed their progress regularly by checking off in their learner's guide the elements of competencies they deemed they had mastered; they then signed their assessment;
- Second, master artisans confirmed that each element of competency had indeed been mastered by signing and dating the learners' self-assessment in each of the learners' guides.
- Finally, at their weekly visits, the supervising trainers confirmed the competencies validated by the master artisans by observing the learners in normal or created work situations.

4. The challenges

PAFPNA is an economic and social development project that aims to ensure the successful integration of the newly literate into the productive structures of Senegalese society by teaching them good professional skills, using the often neglected resources of the informal sector. Here, upstream and downstream supervision by experts brings strong added value, by codifying the requisite acts and competencies. This doesn't suffice to ensure success considering the many challenges the project faces, particularly, three contextual challenges:

- **Credibility:** The project's approach consists in rooting itself in the informal community of master artisans, which is very often poorly considered by formal training structures. The PAFPNA addresses this particular challenge by raising the awareness of those responsible for providing structured vocational training and by giving them an active role in the training mechanism of the PAFPNA.
- **Mobilization:** In the context of progressive decentralization, involving and mobilizing the central and decentralized services of the Ministry as well as local communities, and more particularly regional councils, is essential for ensuring the project's appropriation and sustainability. The PAFPNA addresses this concern by setting up regional management committees in the project's two target regions as mechanisms for true participative management. Including two civil servants from the Ministry in the project's structure strengthens the will for mobilization.
- **Innovation:** The informal vocational training that the PAFPNA proposes is innovative, and as with all innovation, resistance to change is to be expected. In seeing the actors of structured vocational training appropriating the project, there is a certain amount of risk that its initial specificity could be compromised. To limit this risk, the contents of

the training will not be based on existing vocational training contents. Instead, the contents of each of the selected paths will be specific and will result from a work situation analysis. In addition, the selection of supervisors will not limit itself to vocational training instructors but will also include master artisans and technicians. To these contextual challenges we must add such implementation challenges as:

► *Providing access to basic vocational training at lower cost.*

In many developing countries, technical and vocational education and training is the poor cousin in the education system for several reasons.

- The relatively high cost of technical and vocational education and training infrastructures and equipment, which, in a context of generally scarce resources, limits the capacities of private and public offerings. The status of vocational training makes it a solution of last resort, to be considered only when all other avenues of general education are closed. Indeed, weak pupils who are doing poorly in school are told, *Bo janjul, atelier bi mugilay xaar* meaning that if they don't study well, they'll end up in a workshop.
- The high cost of private vocational training when there are very few public training centers.
- Underbudgeting of technical and vocational education and training in the target countries, even those giving high priority to this type of education in their 10-year education and training programs.

Therefore, a significant fringe of the population in underprivileged communities has found no other resources for their children than to have them apprentice in artisanal businesses so they can learn a trade and earn a living. This sector in Senegal absorbs nearly 60% of out-of-school youths and a good part of children who never went to school, but excludes all children from rural communities when both the private and public formal education offering excludes anyone who does not speak French.

- The PAFPNA project has committed to addressing this challenge of providing access to as many people as possible marginalized by the formal vocational training system .
- Target the newly literate, thereby extending the literacy process and making it more motivating while broadening the choices offered by the vocational training system.
- Turn the workshops of artisans and master artisans, where 60% of children to apprentice, into structures providing qualifying basic vocational training that will make it possible for them to find a job.

- Contribute to thinking about how to restructure apprenticeship as a sub-sector of vocational training linked and/or integrated to other sub-sectors.

► *Improving the level of quality of vocational training through apprenticeship*

Quality is a central concern of ten-year education and vocational training programs in Sub-Saharan African countries. However, analyses of the vocational training sector over the past several decades has revealed the great weakness in making qualified resources available to the labor market leading to problems between the appropriateness of the training and the requirements of businesses and the labor market.

In Senegal, a new policy concerning technical and vocational education and training has created a general reflection on redefining the TVET programs. This work is even more necessary since the country has already opted for a competency-based approach and its corollary, mastery learning. Thus, the pressing concern of integrating apprenticeship to the vocational training system raises the question of developing and testing the curriculum. In this sense, the PAFPNA experience creates new options for the methodology used to define the curricula (programs, teaching media, monitoring/assessment tools, certification mechanisms, etc.).

► *Sustainability and local management of apprenticeship*

Since it was first launched, the PAFPNA project has initiated, through the regional management committees, a model of local management of apprenticeship by the authorities (governors, prefects), communities (regional, municipal and rural councils), decentralized State services (responsible for education, rural development, fisheries, animal husbandry, agriculture, women and family, etc.), trade associations (artisans and literacy operators) and such institutions as chambers of commerce, and chambers of agriculture, as well as local resources from technical and vocational education and training establishments and regional development agencies.

This tool for local project management is the main crucible where the commitment of all stakeholders was forged. It has made it possible to strengthen project ownership.

The reflection initiated on certification and possible bridges between non-formal apprenticeship and the formal vocational training system is an

urgent issue in the context of ensuring sustainability. More than 100 master artisans trained in the PAFNA program have appropriated this approach so much so that they have decided to use it from now on to train apprentices. The project has thus created expertise in practical training in the workshops. In addition, the richness and the level of involvement of artisans from chambers of commerce has made it possible for the chambers to replicate the PAFNA experience and ensure its sustainability with minimum support from the Ministry.

► *Gender*

Literacy programs in African countries have focused on giving priority to women and rural zones to eliminate gender disparities and those between urban and rural communities. Since the training paths were also selected according to priority options for the regions' economic development, the PAFNA project had to propose to the newly literate — almost exclusively made up of women (over 80%) — paths traditionally reserved to boys (metal construction, engine mechanics, domestic refrigeration, agriculture and animal husbandry, etc.).

Therefore, very early on, the PAFNA had to develop a dynamic strategy to motivate girls to register for those paths. This was accomplished through a communication strategy articulated around the following elements:

- Organizing meetings on the training offered by PAFNA to educate village populations on girls' capacity to succeed in those paths, on integration opportunities, and on the challenges.
- Organizing local radio programs on the PAFNA project that provide opportunities for female learners, female master artisans and female supervisors to describe their involvement in the project.
- Providing support to female learners to overcome difficulties preventing them from pursuing their training i.e. transportation, location, food service, etc.
- Implementing positive discrimination regarding project registration and the selection of master artisans and supervising trainers.

► *National Languages*

The first literacy programs provided learners with access to reading, writing and counting. At the end of those programs, maintaining and strengthening learning retention becomes a very pressing issue. The literacy projects and the learning and reading centers have put forward various initiatives aimed

at maintaining and strengthening retention, such as promoting publishing books and newspapers in national languages.

By developing a training program in the national languages for the various paths, the PAFPNA project makes available learning guides that provide learners with a tool for self-assessment of their acquisition of capacities and competencies and informing them of the evaluation of master artisans and supervisory trainers. The learner's guide also provides teaching tools in national languages. In other words, the PAFPNA project has made a vocational training curriculum available for apprenticeship using a competency-based approach, thus strengthening access capacities to training and knowledge.

5. Conclusion

The PAFPNA project in Senegal experiments with a form of vocational training that combines the benefits of formal vocational training, with its planned, documented structure, and those of an informal apprenticeship environment based on the know-how of master artisans and a close link to the needs of communities. After two years of implementation, the project has achieved the following results:

- 150 newly literate trained and 250 in training in the 2 regions and 6 vocational paths of which 74% are women.
- 12 supervisors, of which 4 are women recruited and trained in the PAFPNA approach.
- 84 master artisans of which 38 are women recruited and trained in the PAFPNA approach.
- 56 workshops involved.
- Quality teaching tools for the various paths developed.

We can draw several lessons from this experience:

- The project has earned the support of the community, i.e. community leaders, representatives and individuals, thanks to the awareness-raising work undertaken in the preparation stage.
- Using resources from the informal sector by involving master artisans guarantees relevance to local needs.
- Today, all participants seem to recognize the shared benefits of the project.
- Girls account for more than 70% of the enrolment, attesting to the success of the support program.

- Consolidating and capitalizing on the know-how of master artisans has made it possible to gather a critical mass of information on the competencies to be acquired, i.e., on the definition of the basic relevant profile of the technician to be trained in each of the trades;
- The modules on themes and skills such as sustainable development, HIV-AIDS prevention, and small business management were greatly appreciated.
- The project uses partnership, participation and animation, all highly interactive methods that deliver significant results.

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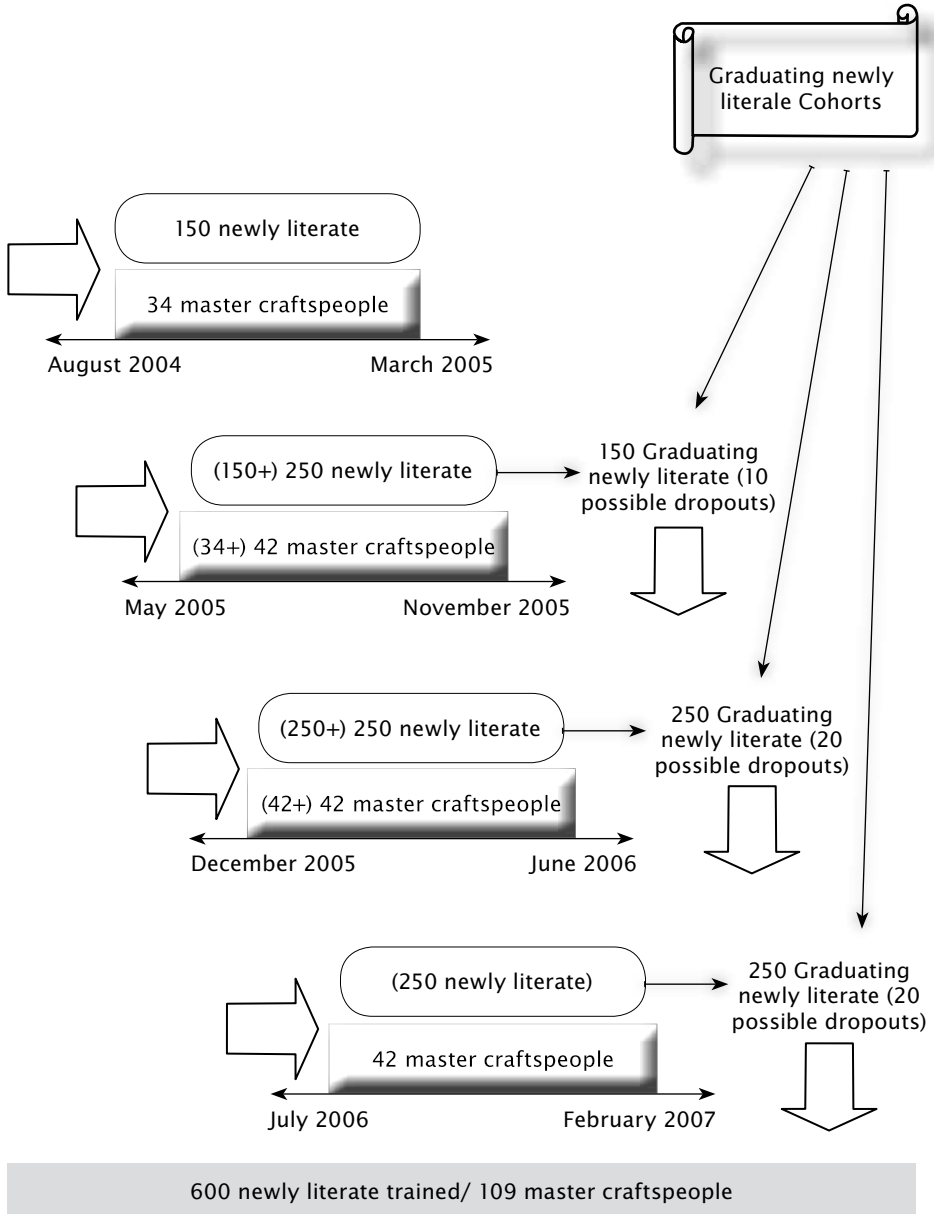
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBA	Competency-based approach
CAL	Centre d'apprentissage et de lecture: a learning and reading centre
EFA	Education for All
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
MEN	Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAFPNA	Projet d'appui à la formation professionnelle des néo-alphabétisés: a project to support vocational training for the newly literate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Appendix

Figure 5.1. 2004-2006 cohort

2004-2007 PAFNA Cohorts



Building Linkages between School and Non-formal Education

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Chapter 6.

Integrating Literacy and Non Formal Education Programs within the Educational Policies of Burkina Faso

by Pierre Balima

1. Introduction

Burkina Faso's statute law includes education as a "national priority" (Article 2, Education Framework Act). The June 2, 1991 Constitution of 1991 recognizes education as a fundamental right for every Burkina Faso citizen. Burkina Faso's educational system has always been considered among the top priorities in economic development programs since development depends on education and training. However, Burkina Faso is one of the world's least developed countries and its illiteracy rates are one of the major barriers to its development. In 2004, the gross enrollment rate was 56.80%, completion rate was 33.5% and a literacy rate of 22%.

To rectify this situation, the Government drew up a development strategy in the Strategic Framework for the Fight against Poverty approved by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in July 2000. The Ten-year Plan for the Development of Basic Education (PPDDEB) reflects the strategic directions of the Strategic Framework and seeks to achieve a 70% enrolment rate and a 40% literacy rate by 2010.

The formal education system has low internal productivity (low promotion rates and high rates of drop-out and repeating grades), students leave school early and there are serious geographic and gender disparities. Given

the inadequacies of the formal system, non-formal education appears to be an opportunity. Non-formal education touches all educational and training activities, structured and organized within a non-educational context. (Education Framework Act, 1996). Three ministers are responsible for education: the Ministry for Social Action and National Solidarity for preschool education; the Ministry for Basic Education and Literacy for primary education and adult and adolescent literacy, with a Junior Minister responsible for literacy and non-formal education; and a Ministry for Secondary Schools, higher education and scientific research and a junior minister responsible for technical and professional training.

This study strives to analyze the development of non-formal educational policies and strategies and emphasizes the process of integrating literacy and non-formal education into the education and development policies of Burkina Faso. It also draws attention to the major challenges in the sub-sector, and suggests better integrating literacy and non-formal education into the country's educational and development policies.

2. Evolving Literacy and NFE Policies and Strategies

Literacy Policies: from the 1960s to the Mass Literacy Campaigns: Alpha Commando and bantaaré

In Burkina Faso, literacy is one of the wide-ranging activities undertaken as part of NFE. During the post-colonial period, the objective of literacy was primarily to have people acquire instrumental knowledge — reading, writing and arithmetic: literacy was delivered in a “traditional approach.” The literate person was someone who mastered these three instruments and could use them in daily life. The results of this approach and practice of literacy were disappointing, i.e. students became illiterate upon returning to their communities. A second “functional approach” was born the 1965 Teheran conference when the Experimental World Literacy Program was launched. The Burkinan government had decided to continue to try to eradicate illiteracy and focused its efforts on a “functional literacy” approach. These two phases made a fundamental mark on literacy in Burkina Faso and gave rise to several experiments.

► *The Rural Schools Experiment*

The decree of June 14, 1961 created rural schools to overcome the financial difficulties making it illusory any increase in enrollment rates. Within three years, this system was to “*give elementary schooling, training in civic life, and professional tools to illiterate rural young people*” (A. Tiendrebeogo, 2000).¹ However, villagers very quickly had a very negative perception of the system in addition to which the training turned out to be inadequate in terms of useful knowledge and for providing professional skills and in 1973, the rural school system had to be overhauled especially with respect to content and to mindset. The revamped schools then became training centers for young agricultural workers from 14 to 17 years old placed under of the aegis of the Ministry for Planning and Rural Development rather than the Ministry of Education. The centers were to train young people over the course of a three-year program so that they could identify and develop their local resources rationally, serve as agents for social development who energized their surroundings.

However, young people and their parents were dissatisfied and about one-third of the students dropped out. According to A. Tiendrebeogo, “One of the reasons for this disaffection was the tendency to compare the Training for Young Agricultural Workers with the classical educational system, which created frustrations among graduates and their parents. A two-tier system evolved: classical schooling for city dwellers and agricultural workers’ training for rural folk, with the former being the only path to social advancement.” In addition to the ERs, there were other innovations such as **cultural reciprocal support** and **adult courses** that promoted literacy.

The objective of all of these innovations was in some measure to supplement classical schools, which were judged to be costly, discriminatory and ill adapted. However, since literacy meant French literacy, most students reverted to illiteracy when they returned home while thousands of rural learners emigrated to the cities and coastal countries.

The obvious conclusion was that despite budgetary efforts, innovations and the political will to achieve full literacy, illiteracy persists and endures. The Burkina government remains committed to pursuing the struggle against illiteracy and targets functional literacy.

1. Alice Tiendrebeogo, Minister for Basic Education and Literacy (1988 – 1996)

► *The UNESCO-Upper Volta experiment and other innovations*

The new “functional literacy” approach launched in Tehran in 1965 during the World Congress of Ministries of Education allowed the Burkina government to undertake other experiments: literacy in national languages supported by UNESCO. Enrolment rates at the time were 12% overall and only 7% for girls. With UNESCO’s help, the government set up a ten-year experimental project entitled “UNESCO-Upper Volta project for girls’ and women’s access to education.” *“This project aimed at civic and family education, technical training for women, higher enrolments and functional literacy so as to improve the working conditions and productivity of women and contribute to national development”* (A. Niameogo, 1996).²

One of the important innovations was achieving literacy in national languages: especially *mooré*, *jula* and *kasim*, in which the teaching was done. Several other private and semi-public sector projects adopted the national language literacy approach:

- The “Frères des Hommes” charitable association developed a functional literacy course in 1970 for Mogteedo agricultural workers, fishermen and shopkeepers.
- A 1973 ORD experiment successfully applied the functional literacy techniques that they had developed.
- Catholic and Protestant religious missions used functional literacy approaches and also produced numerous publications — dictionaries, grammar books, collections of proverbs and folk tales, and religious writings — in several Burkina Faso languages.

On all fronts, national language functional literacy is evolving rapidly because it is viewed as being an efficient tool for economic, social and cultural development. However, certain factors have checked the momentum: untrained trainers, a dearth of post-literacy publications, and lack of coordination among organizations dedicated to fighting illiteracy.

Some of these problems were resolved only in 1974, when the National Office for Permanent Education and Functional and Selective Literacy was created and coordinated and provided support for literacy initiatives in national languages. In 1978, this office became the Department for Functional and Selective Literacy (DAFS) and in 1983, the National Institute

2. Anatole Niaméogo, General Director of the National Literacy Institute, 1989-1996.

for Literacy and Adult Education; from 1993 onwards, the National Literacy Institute; the National Institute for Non-formal basic education in 2002 and today, the Research and Innovation Division for non-formal education and literacy under the Center for Educational Research, Innovation and Training (DGCRIF).

Creating Permanent Literacy and Training Centers (CPAF) 1986-1991

In 1983, the democratic and popular revolution of August 4 provided a new turning point, which, like the Cuban revolution, manifested the political will to totally eliminate illiteracy in Burkina Faso. Two vast literacy operations seeking mass change resulted: Alpha Commando (1986) — “commando” because of the speed of its implementation — and in 1988, *bantaaré*, or fulfilled “ascension,” “promotion to a higher stage” in the national language.

► *Alpha Commando*

At the end of this 50-day program, trained learners in ten national languages were supposed to be able to read, write, and do basic math in the national languages and be able to use these skills for their professional activities (note taking, writing summary reports, drawing up statements and writing letters). “This literacy policy was aimed at furthering the advancement of agricultural workers as the spearhead of consciousness and freedom” (A. Tiendrebeogo, 2000). In terms of the numbers of villages effected, literacy was supposed to be massive but it was in fact selective in that only involved the representatives of male and female village groups, members of defense committees for the revolution, young agricultural workers, village midwives, etc. Approximately 30,000 learners were scattered over 1,070 literacy centers operating as boarding schools. A total of ten languages were chosen. A total of 13,700 peasants or 48.06% of those evaluated were declared literate. Political mobilization was significant, with the creation of headquarters responsible for supervising the operation at national, regional, provincial, and village levels. In 1987, post-Alpha was launched to bring those who had been declared literate up to standard; 1,600 agricultural producers were involved.

► *The bantaaré Operation*

Very few women participated in the Alpha Commando movement (16% of enrollments). Consequently, a specific campaign targeting them —

the *Bantaaré* operation was undertaken in 1988 to teach peasant women to read, write and do arithmetic in their own language. The training was intended to reach 10,000 women but involved 13,269 women in 470 centers. Besides acquiring the skills to read, write, and do arithmetic, learners received information about hygiene, health, nutrition, and family planning. Among these women, 43% were declared literate.

The commando operations were enthusiastically received and inspired the population with real confidence in literacy, they were too expensive and it was impossible to continue this policy in the Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy?

► *Permanent Literacy and Training Center*

Low enrollments and illiteracy led Burkina Faso to create a new Ministry for Basic Education and Mass Literacy (MEBAM) in 1988 to promote school-going and increase literacy. “The MEBAM was well aware that mass operations had to be terminated because of their high cost and dubious results. Indeed, on one hand, due to the absence of a post-literacy policy, it was difficult to safeguard the achievements of a literacy policy; and on the other, the main financial partners had expressed their concern about the cost of these campaigns. It was thus necessary to rethink the literacy policy to make it more efficient and less costly, while taking into account what had been acquired during the Alpha Commando and *bantaaré* campaigns. It was also deemed necessary to make the beneficiaries increasingly responsible by encouraging their own contributions.” (A. Tiendrebeogo, 2000) The Ministry therefore proposed the creation of Permanent Literacy and Training Centers in 1990 that was approved by the Cabinet in December 1991 and defined as training structures and frameworks to support development and self-promotion through literacy.

3. Current Literacy and NFE Policy

Defining Concepts and an Implementation Framework

► *Defining a General Basic Education Policy*

Since its creation in 1988, the Ministry’s primary concern was to promote an integrated policy to eliminate literacy by combining formal and non-formal resources. To achieve this, it was first necessary to fully understand the concept of *basic education*; within the Ministry, the formal and non-formal

sectors both represent basic education. The January 1989 *Koudougou* Seminar made an exhaustive inventory of basic training activities in other ministries to define the concept of basic education, propose broad lines for a new policy, and draw up an action plan for implementation. Basic education was defined as being “a process destined to give each and every Burkinian a level of minimum education corresponding to the needs and potentialities of the country. It must provide a basis for continuing and complete education aimed at improving the conditions of life, existence, and ensuring individual and collective advancement” (Koudougou Seminar Report, 1999). Thanks to this vision of basic education adopted by the new Ministry, the two sub-systems worked more closely together ; until that point they’d worked in a relative void.

The Koudougou Seminar ... recommended interaction between formal and non-formal resources ...such ...that eventually both subsystems... coalesce within a common framework for applying what has been learned from education and literacy. For example, national languages should be introduced on the formal side while adults should be encouraged to learn basic French.
(Alice Tiendrebeogo, 2000)

► *National Committee for an Integrated Plan for Eliminating Illiteracy*

The National Committee for an Integrated Plan for Eliminating Illiteracy, the precursor of the ten-year educational reform program provided the framework to implement the vision. Coming under the responsibility of the Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy, this committee went further than simply integrating basic education/literacy; it involved all ministries connected to basic education: the Ministry of Secondary Education, Universities and Scientific Research which is also home to the National Commission for Burkina Faso Languages; the Ministry of Agriculture and Husbandry, responsible for disseminating agricultural information; the Ministry of Water, which produces post-literacy booklets on the managing water resources and irrigated areas; the Minister of the Environment and Tourism which publishes documents encouraging environmental protection; the Ministry of Health, responsible for health matters, hygiene and family planning; the Ministry of Education and Culture which is responsible for creating awareness and mobilizing resources concerning the fight against illiteracy. Each of these ministries was encouraged to get involved in post-literacy activities by organizing talks and activities.

The creation of a national languages unit in each ministry was proposed to answer letters from newly literate persons and translate post-literacy documents for specific technical training, thereby creating an interaction between persons conversant in national languages and in French. The Committee issued a report on “integrated strategies for eliminating illiteracy” by proposing a shared agenda bringing together technical partners, sponsors and institutions involved in basic education. It was important that these institutions share a common approach, where individual efforts would be complementary and based on equitable task sharing. The report, entitled *Integrated Strategies for Eliminating Illiteracy* was the precursor of the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Plan.

► *Non-formal Basic Education*

Chapter 2, Article 18 of the Education Outline Act of May 9, 1996, defines non-formal education as follows: “*Non-formal Education involves all activities of education and training, structured and organized within a non-academic framework. It concerns every person who desires to receive special training in a non-academic context.*” (LO, 1996)

Non-formal basic education is provided in Non-formal Basic Education Centers, Training Centers for Young Agricultural Workers, and various other training and supervision structures for. Non-formal Basic Education includes basic literacy programs, including pre-professional training for children, young people, and adults; literacy and training activities aimed at improving the conditions of life, and the professional advancement/improvement of the population overall.

Policy, Strategies and Programs

► *Literacy and NFE as remedies for the formal system*

Aware of the weakness of its educational system with its lack of educational “supply” and high “demand,” the Burkina Faso government signed the World Declaration of Education for All that was adopted in Jomtien in March 1990 and ratified by the international community in Dakar in April 2000. NFE adheres to the Jomtien recommendations advocating universal access to education as a basic principle and the implementation of education programs to make adults literate. That is why, while making education a priority, Burkina Faso recognizes the importance of access for the population to knowledge and learning. The NFE with its alternative formulas

But how does one meet the challenge of Basic Education for All where 48% of the population is under 15 years old and a formal system that can only accommodate 57% of the educable population. How does one assure Basic Education for All when over 70% of the active population is illiterate and the country has enormous budgetary problems? How does one reduce gender and urban/rural enrollment disparities without experimenting with new educational approaches? Given this context, one can understand the importance given by the Ministry for Basic Education and Literacy to non-formal basic education, which contributes to improving the basic education offer.

appear to be an appropriate means to allow everyone to improve his/her quality-of-life and to contribute to the country's development.

In practice, NFE includes:

- Literacy programs for persons over 15.
- Post-literacy programs that serve as a framework for safeguarding acquired literacy skills.
- Alternative approaches for non-formal basic education comprising enriching innovations for the formal sector and pathways back and forth between formal to non-formal for previously uneducated or dropouts from nine to 15, by giving them access to a complete cycle of basic education of a practical and a professional nature, in national languages, with French studied for a period of up to four years.

In Burkina Faso, formal and NFE form an inseparable tandem both upstream and downstream. Upstream, education is used to eliminate illiteracy at its source. But how does one eliminate illiteracy at its source when downstream, mass illiteracy among adults exercises a negative influence on the education of children? Not only do illiterate parents not send their children to school, but mass illiteracy provokes a premature unraveling of education because when children leave school, they move back into an environment that does not favor ongoing intellectual achievement. This would be different if the rate of literacy were between 80 or 90%: literate parents produce educated

It is increasingly evident that NFE, through its alternative education programs, is potentially capable of meeting the shortcomings of the formal sub-system, if only it had the necessary resources.

children; or literate parent = survival of intellectual achievement. This is also due to the interaction between formal and NFE.

► *AENF Training Proposals*

As defined at the 1990 Jomtien Conference, strengthening human capacity is based on both formal and non-formal basic education in the widest sense of the word. The World Declaration on Education for All made in Jomtien proposed that “basic learning needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. This conception of basic education implies that literacy, the mastery of writing, remains an essential component. Because of this, there are two aspects to integrating literacy into basic education:

- Train autonomous individuals who speak their language fluently, are proud of their culture, confident of their identity and wish to continue their education during their entire lives (personal dimension).
- Train young people and adults capable of truly operating within their surroundings and participating in the overall development of society (economic, social and cultural dimension).

A reference document and policy orientation for literacy and non-formal education defines the areas and contents for a minimal education as follows:

Subjects	Sub-divisions
Language	Oral Expression (discussion) Reading Written Expression
Mathematics	Arithmetic Geometry Metric System Management
Life and Earth Sciences	Agriculture Animal Husbandry Artisan Crafts Environment Health-hygiene-nutrition
Social Sciences	History Geography Civic Education Gender Cooperative Education Sports, arts and hobbies

Permanent Literacy and Training Centers

Created by the National Literacy Institute in 1991, these centers target 16 to 50-year-olds and provide training organized into three levels: i) initial literacy; ii) complementary basic education, and iii) specific technical training.

Initial literacy provides learning tools (reading, writing, arithmetic) and raises awareness about problems related to the environment, health, collective or individual hygiene, etc.

Complementary basic education is aimed at consolidating skills acquired during initial literacy. These first two levels concentrate on learning and consolidating the tools of learning and providing a newly literate person with a level of knowledge and skills considered essential for daily life and likely to help understand environmental problems and to create greater awareness of responsibilities and rights and to participate in the social economic development of the community.

Specific technical training provides the knowledge or techniques needed to assume functions and responsibilities within their communities, for which literacy is an essential component, or to use them to improve productivity or living conditions. This technical competence requires literacy and aims at creating the conditions for transferring skills to literate persons.

Permanent literacy and training centers replaced the young agricultural workers' training programs and the mass literacy campaigns considered to be too costly and remain the front line against illiteracy and ignorance. The strategies allowed the development of human resources for the various agricultural organizations: including self-organization and self-management of socio-economic units (village seed banks, mills, pharmacies, etc.) now run by literates. Today, the acquisition of initial literacy and complementary basic education by these communities is a reality. Literacy trainers and supervisors now come from the basic community. This self-management has also made it possible to lower the per-new-literate-person cost and the total assumption of responsibility in some communities for training their members. At present, a new center opens by virtue of the sheer determination of the basic community; government neither opens nor manages a center. In many villages, the permanent literacy and training centers are considered to be the starting point for village groups and agricultural cooperatives that fully participate in the socioeconomic development of the rural environment.

Alternative formulas for Non-formal Basic Education

Given EFA ambitions and the Ten-year Plan for Developing Basic Education, innovations and educational alternatives appear to be opportunities to improve and increase educational opportunities.

Non-formal Basic Education Centers

Non-formal Basic Education Centers offer literacy training, instrumental apprenticeships in national languages and French, life skills and practical pre-professional training related to specific needs and the capacities of the environment to support the training. The centers are open to boys and girls (in equal numbers) aged 9 to 15 who are either out-of-school or are dropouts. Urban centers are planned in large urban centers for the same age group of young people who have never gone to school.

The first centers were opened in 1995 with the support of UNICEF and other development partners, following the 1990 Jomtien conference, which also manifested the determination of the government of Burkina Faso to promote EFA.

The centers came under the responsibility of the Minister of Basic Education whose General Administration for Literacy and Non-formal Education was responsible for coordinating the training program and the interventions of partners' technical services.

Basic French after Literacy in National Languages and TIN-TUA Methods

Learning basic French by building on the foundations of national language literacy, and articulating French and national languages in adult literacy programs program dates back to 1987 when the National Literacy Institute and the Comoé Sugar Co. designed this approach together. Literacy is first acquired in the national language, that is the language which the worker masters, and then learn basic oral and written French. The experience was conclusive: INA and researchers from the Burkina Pedagogical Institute with the technical and financial support of the Swiss Workers Support Organization fine-tuned the method in 1992. At the same time, the TIN-TUA association successfully experimented with another method for teaching French based on *gulumancema*.

Extending and generalizing the use of these methods will make it possible to create a bridge between native French speakers and national language

speakers and will better favor the interaction between formal education and NFE by reducing the gap between the literate people in these two language groups. The ALFAA and TIN-TUA methodology have also led to the opening of bilingual schools founded on the same approach where the primary program takes five years instead of six years. The first results (1998) at primary certificate level were conclusive: 57% pass rate compared to the national average pass rate of 42%; 94% pass rate in 2004 compared to the national average of 73.73%. Currently, 115 bilingual schools are operating in eight languages.

Operation Zanu

Operation *ZANU* — *learning* in Dagara — is a community action program aimed at local development, using functional literacy as a support. Launched in 1995 to recruit 8,103 young graduates at junior high school level so that each of the 8,103 villages has its CPAF and its community development agent, the *ZANU* operation is one of six national initiatives that were to contribute to the self-advancement of village communities. Financial difficulties led to their suspension unfortunately.

Community Schools

This innovative experiment, called “community schools” or “Kéogo” (initiation center) in *mooré* aims specifically at integrating the school with its surroundings by transferring technical skills and essential technologies to assure local and durable social, cultural and economic development for nine to 15 year olds in national languages and then French. The four-year curriculum is taught in the national languages for the first two years and in French for the next two years. Those students who obtained an average of 12/20, continue in classical schools in the CM1 stream (equivalent to Grade 5), while those with over a 13 average are enrolled in CM2 and eventually obtain the primary school certificate as do students in classical schools. Grades are neither repeated nor are students failed. The community school model drew its inspiration from Non-formal Basic Education Centers.

“Banmanuara” Centers

“Banmanuara” means “knowledge is good” in *gulmacema*. The centers offer four-year programs created by the TIN-TUA Association.

- For children between 9-15 year, French is introduced orally as early as first year at the same time as the national languages. The program culminates with the primary school leaving exam.

- Adult programs are open to newly literate adults who after have achieved an initial stage of literacy in the national language and would like to learn French (four years) to earn a primary school certificate.

Literacy in the Workplace

Many adults working in the non-formal sector have expressed the need for literacy; Literacy within the Workplace is the response to their demands. This innovative formula for teaching literacy was developed in 2003 as part of the “Partnership for Non-formal Education Project” financed through Canadian cooperation. It consists in developing literacy in local languages and articulating local language literacy with French.

Other alternative programs exist in the Literacy and Non-formal Education: the “Shepherd School” was an experiment of the Anndal & Pinnal Association; the Textual Pedagogy Approach the REFLECT Method were developed respectively by the Association for Promoting Non-formal Education and Aide et Action. These programs not yet been evaluated.

► *The new vision of literacy/adult training*

The National Forum on Literacy held in September 1999, adopted a new vision of literacy/adult training.

Literacy and Basic Education now includes two learning phases each of which is 300 hours long.

- The first level corresponds to the initiation phase for acquiring learning tools, to rediscover the learner’s own environment and, above all, to organize insight so as to create a positive attitude towards his/her surroundings. Instruction at this level does not lead to a certificate.
- The second level aims at consolidating these initial acquirements and completing basic education by introducing new content, judged to be appropriate to the status of literacy, which leads to a certificate.

Learning à la carte

Literate learners can have immediate access to one of three types of training, each corresponding to an option.

Option I: Basic and Functional French (A3F): 1,200 to 2,400 hours

This option enables literate persons to learn French on the basis of national language literacy and to master knowledge, skills and to gain self-confidence

thanks to the cultural, scientific and technical training and specific technical training.

Option II: Cultural, Scientific and Technical training estimated at 600 hours

The goal of this option is to inculcate students with a critical mind by eliminating all irrational behavior and attitudes. The teaching covers four areas: language, life and earth sciences, math and social science. In addition, there are five other modules: Andragogy, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Environment and Management.

Option III: Specific Technical Training: variable-length programs

The aims of this option are to transfer professional knowledge and to be the real “test bench” for new development technologies and the special framework for lifelong education.

► *Financing Literacy and NFE*

Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation Financing Sources

Technical and financial partners promoting literacy programs essentially include different cooperation agencies that are either bilateral (Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, etc.) or multilateral (UNESCO, ADB, UNDP, UNICEF, the European Union, etc.) and private organizations like projects as well as NGOs, and also private-sector producer organizations which mobilize important amounts to carry out their literacy programs.

However, it is important to note that local communities contribute materials, money and human resources to support literacy, albeit with serious difficulties where activities that can generate revenue do not exist. This leaves villages without the means to open literacy centers.

The “make-do” strategy and the Fund for Literacy and NFE

Before adopting the “make-do” strategy, the state spent less than 1% of the budget allocated to the Ministry of Basic Education to the literacy sub-sector. Today, the “make-do” strategy, sustained by literacy and non-formal education funding, has allowed the State and its partners to mobilize over 4 billion CFA francs in a three-year period to finance literacy programs. (FONAENF)

Senegal’s Department of Literacy and Basic Education created the “make-do” strategy. When the Ten-year Plan for the Development of Basic Education was being implemented, the strategy was adopted and adapted to Burkina Faso

in September 1999 during its National Forum on Literacy. It was presented as an innovative strategy to allow the State and civil society (largely represented by NGOs and associations considered to be literacy expert operators) to have a way to assign functional roles in carrying out literacy programs. The role of the government and its decentralized departments was to: guide, inspire, coordinate, control, supervise, and evaluate literacy programs and technical and financial support. And civil society, who is providing the literacy training, assumes responsibility for carrying out the programs. The “make-do” strategy was accompanied by the creation of a Fund for Literacy and Non-formal Education (FONAENF) to finance the programs put forward by literacy experts. Thus, based on a manual of procedures jointly drafted by the State and technical and financial partners contributing financing, the literacy operators get access to the public funds to carry out their programs of literacy and education.

The FONAENF was created by four types of actors: the State and local communities; ii) technical and financial partners; iii) literacy operators, and iv) the private sector.

The FONAENF organization includes the:

- General Assembly
- 11-member Board
- 5-member National Finance Committee (cf. art. 27 of the Statutes)
- 7-member Regional Finance Committees (cf. art. 30 of the Statutes)
- 7-member Provincial Finance Committees (cf. art. 33 of the Statutes)
- Honorary Members’ Committee
- FONAENF Administration.

The composition and operations of each of these committees are described in the basic texts: Internal Statutes and Regulations. The manual of administrative, financial and accounting procedures defines the operations and responsibilities of the Administration and a field manual defines the operations for literacy operators.

FONAENF eligibility criteria include the following:

- A legal “acknowledgement of receipt” confirming literacy and non-formal education operator status. A registered office and a fixed address.
- Resource personnel with accredited skills to undertake these activities or, failing that, to be able to draw on these resources elsewhere.

- At least three years experience in literacy training and/or NFE.
- Agree to open a bank account exclusively dedicated to receiving funds for the project.
- Accreditation concerning past performance or credibility from the Provincial Department for Basic Education and Literacy.
- Agree to cooperate with the Ministry for Basic Education and Literacy's decentralized technical services for supervision and evaluation.
- Documents promising to open centers countersigned by representatives of the beneficiary communities.

► *The gender dimension of literacy and non-formal education*

In Burkina Faso, gender is also taken into account when literacy policies are developed and implemented. For example, gender parity in student recruitment is stipulated in permanent centers for literacy and training . The education policy reform access indicators target enrolments of 60% women in initial literacy whereas the center for basic non-formal education recruits 15 girls for 15 boys.

Table 6.1. PDDEB indicators taking gender into account as an element of quality

Indicators	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Number of learners evaluated for Initial Literacy	131 045	153 667	172 023
% of women evaluated for AI	56%	56.09%	88.52%
Number of learners evaluated for AI in 20 Priority Provinces	66 492	76 184	79 251
Rate of success in AI exams	68.66%	74.54%	76.2%
Number of learners evaluated for Complementary Basic Education (FCB)	41 222	56 328	80 021
% of women evaluated for FCB	51.68%	52.89%	52.12%
Number of learners evaluated for FCB in 20 Priority Provinces	24 139	28 514	38 806
Success rate for FCB	80%	84.82%	84.32%
Numbers declared literate	33 802	47 780	67 472
% of women declared literate	47.57%	51.29%	83.61%
Number of learners achieving literacy in 20 Priority Provinces	19 810	24 258	32 422
Success rate for literacy	31.70%	30.93%	37.01%

Source: PDDEB Biannual report, 2005

Similarly, literacy trainers are asked to take women's activities into account when developing their program. Nurseries are even set up for babies so that women can attend literacy classes. When choosing operators eligible for financial support from the FONAENF, submissions by female operators are given special consideration. Moreover, learning materials are offered free of charge to women in literacy centers. Gender is also considered in the choice of literacy trainers.

Another attempt to correct gender inequalities resulted in the creation of a literacy program for "9,000 girls and women" jointly carried out by OXFAM-QUEBEC and TIN-TUA, financed by the Canadian International Development Agency, to assist three priority provinces in the eastern region. The operation was carried out between 2002 and 2004: 300 new AI centers were opened and 8,965 learners of the 9,000 targeted were enrolled, of whom 3,116 were declared literate (TIN-TUA Report, 2004). Finally, it should be noted that within the framework of the Ten-year Plan for the Development of Basic Education, adult literacy in twenty of the country's poorest provinces was considered a priority.

► *Monitoring, evaluation and certification*

Monitoring Measures

Supervision-support-evaluation affects the efficiency of literacy activities because it makes it possible to certify learning and resolve problems. There are several types of involvement:

Internal monitoring-evaluation by the operator.

Each operator establishes internal measures for monitoring-evaluation for each actor (whether trainer, supervisor, or coordinator) describing the tasks, tools, frequency, and means for collecting and analyzing information.

Internal monitoring by the community.

The community oversees the effectiveness of the management committee created to monitor operations, social awareness, student attendance, and the presence of personnel (trainer, supervisor) etc.

External supervision-evaluation by deconcentrated MEBA services.

The literacy services, with the participation of those responsible for basic education school districts, ensures that all educational regulations are respected: program principles and goals (application of guidelines and

recommendations; campaign launch; pedagogical, administrative and technical supervision based on random checks; attendance, and external evaluation).

External Evaluation and Certification

The Provincial Basic Education and Literacy Department's Literacy Service is responsible for evaluating the learning process (Initial Literacy; Complementary Basic Education; Cultural, Scientific and Technical Training; Learning Basic and Functional French). When necessary, the Literacy Service calls in resource people to do this work. It is also responsible for the preparation, organization and gathering of data; undertakes analyses and produces reports under the supervision of the provincial basic education department, or the head of the basic education division.

A recent study (NAPON, 2004) identifies the main difficulties for controlling activities:

a. State Services

- Lack or insufficiency of logistical means both at central level and on the ground to assure monitoring-support.
- Insufficient training of certain agents in the literacy services.
- Insufficient involvement of the Provincial Education Department and its literacy services division in monitoring certain operators.
- Unavailability of monitoring tools.
- Lack of expertise in collecting and processing statistical data.
- No resources for following the evolution of the subsector.

b. Literacy Service Providers

- At every level, the timetable for monitoring is not respected.
- Coordinators/evaluators are not adequately trained.

The inefficiency of the monitoring system hampers the ability of the Ministry to coordinate literacy activities. This explains why a significant number of operators do not assure Complementary Basic Education and are unable to organize specific technical training.

➤ *Measuring the Right to Basic Education: A Key Step toward Integrating Formal and Non-formal Evaluation Methods*

Education is a fundamental right for all citizens, including children and adults. Until now, this right has been recognized through laws and legislations (constitution, educational framework acts, etc.) concerning

the education system. Today, thanks to the Interdisciplinary Institute for Ethics and Human Rights at the University of Friburg in Switzerland, and the Association for Promoting Non-formal Education, Burkina Faso has a system for measuring the right to education that includes a certain number of indicators which consider various aspects of the educational system to measure the efficiency of the right to education. Using a set of evaluation criteria common to the entire education system that will henceforth provide an evaluation grid for measuring the real quality of our educational system.

► *A Reading Environment and Editorial Policies*

The lack of documents in the field (i.e. manuals and guides in initial literacy, complementary basic education and post-literacy) has led the authorities to formulate an editorial policy with the support of the “Partnership for Non-formal Education.” The editorial policy provides a reference point for defining the roles and rules of the State, and its partners and Literacy and Non-formal Education publishing operators. The National Commission for Publishing Educational Documents was created to implement the editorial policy.

► *Institutional Measures and Strengthening AENF Capacities*

The creation of centralized and decentralized departments by the Ministry for Basic Education and Literacy (MEBA) was vital for bringing together the two sub-sectors, which until then had been working in an isolated manner. Since the creation of the MEBAM (now the MEBA), the mission of the regional and provincial Departments for Basic Education and Literacy is to manage the entire basic education system. To achieve this, training modules based on literacy theories and practices were developed to train inspectors and the heads of basic education districts so that they could supervise literacy centers, non-formal education centers and other literacy and NFE structures. It's noteworthy that the designation “basic education districts” implies an integrated vision of the two subsystems. Moreover, a project has been drawn up to use educational infrastructures for literacy for night courses or on days when schools are normally closed.

The institutional organization created to strengthen the sub-sector include the following:

- The General Directorate for Literacy and Non-formal Education, which defines the prerogatives of the MEBA, is responsible for implementing State policy in matters of literacy and non-formal education. It includes

two technical departments: the Department for Literacy/Training for Development, and the Department for Non-formal Education.

- The General Directorate of the Center for Research on Educational Innovations and Training was created to reinforce this integrative vision of basic education by taking into account all of the basic education innovations relative. The DGCRIEF reflects the MEBA's commitment to making quality basic education widely available and aims above all at promoting and developing research in basic education, assuring continuous education for personnel at the formal and informal levels, improving the quality and the relevance of basic and non-formal education, and presenting outstanding initiatives and innovations. It includes the Department for Research and Pedagogical Development and the Department for Research, Innovation for Non-formal Education and Literacy.
- The 13 Regional Departments for Basic Education and Literacy and the 45 Provincial Departments for Basic Education and Literacy develop provincial action plans by integrating the two subsystems, thus contributing to the process of strengthening the sub-sector; since 2002, the Junior Minister for Literacy coordinates the program.

► *The partnership framework and the organization of literacy*

Literacy enjoys greater and greater visibility in Burkina Faso thanks to the energy of its partnerships. A cooperative framework for with the State and technical and financial partners on one hand, and on the other, between the State and civil society through literacy and NFE operators, encourages and organizes AENF activities expressed in its structure and the control of its programs. The framework of cooperation with NGOs and basic education associations, the Association for Promoting Non-formal Education, the Partnership for Non-formal Education, the alpha program of Swiss cooperation and the Swiss Workers' Aid Program, among others, have made it possible to monitor the field of literacy more effectively by undertaking serious studies on AENF, and by ongoing support in developing NFE. Through its operational groups, the FONAEF is a driving force around which partnership is organized.

A recent forum recommended more active partnerships with clearly defined and shared missions and roles among key players in a vision of complementarity.

4. Challenges and Perspectives

► *Challenges*

National languages and the Literate Environment

National languages have been effectively introduced into the education system but remain marginalized in administrative, socio-economic and national policy activities; and the basic law on national languages does not adequately favor promoting them in a real way. It is true that they are used for newscasts (seven languages in all), but this does not encourage the creation of a literate universe in national languages whose readers/writers can transparently interact with French speakers due to the lack of literature in national languages and the marginalization of those who have learned to write in the national language but have little scope to do so as well as the inability of French speakers and writers to communicate with them.

If the conditions for communication and transmitting information are not created between those literate in the national languages and those who speak and write French, no literate environment can exist for those who read and write the national languages. Nor can knowledge and technologies be transferred to them. This cannot be achieved without the efficient contribution of those literate in French who via translation can make scientific and technical documents accessible to their literate counterparts. (B. Seydou Sanou, 1996)

► *Insufficient means for Literacy*

Literacy activities are financed primarily by literacy operators and technical and financial partners of bilateral or multilateral cooperative efforts, who support agricultural organizations, associations, or village groups technically and financially.

Public support goes primarily to operating central and deconcentrated structures, to producing didactic material, outfitting the CPAF in collective material and logistical means. Given how little support literacy and NFE get from the State, means that any new providers without financial support are left out in the cold either because they have no access to literacy or cannot provide a complete literacy program. They are often limited to initial literacy whence a resurgence of early illiteracy. Most learners are therefore trained in thrown-together classrooms (hangars and under trees). This does not burnish the image of literacy and NFE in the eyes of the beneficiary populations.

► *The Quality of Training for Trainers*

Certain monitoring and evaluation providers have little mastery over the training programs and plans; this affects the quality of training in the centers.

► *Poor Statistical Data Collection*

Weak mechanisms for collecting statistical data in different structures make it difficult to build a reliable literacy and NFE information and management system.

Strengths and Potential

The identified strengths and potential are so many milestones, which promise better days for non-formal basic education and for all personnel within the sub-sector who have often been ignored hitherto. These strengths and potential are as follows:

► *Creating a Tri-annual National Forum for Literacy*

The national literacy fora offer a framework for cooperation where all literacy actors are encouraged to seek operational responses to the questions concerning the development of literacy and NFE. These considerations also concern the synergy in partners' actions and dynamics which that must encourage quality and the consolidation of literacy activities and their development.

Two forums were held: the first, in September 1999, made it possible to make considerable progress regarding literacy and in particular the creation of a National Secretariat responsible for literacy and NFE advancing literacy and NFE, now a Junior Minister. This made it possible to set the most important strategic options and the "make-do" strategy into motion by creating the Fund for Literacy and Non-Formal Education.

The second National Forum for Literacy was held in December 2004 on the theme of *the 'make-do' strategy for a synergy of activities aimed at reducing poverty*. The participants examined many problems, including dropouts, bridges between formal and NFE, strengthening the capacity of literacy and NFE operators and providing support for new operators. At the end of the sessions, participants at this second forum adopted the literacy and NFE policy statement and 16 recommendations for the sector.

► *The “make-do” strategy and the Creation of the Fund for Literacy and Non-Formal Education*

The “make-do” strategy is based on the principle of sharing roles between the various actors involved in literacy and NFE: the State, civil society, basic communities, and technical and financial partners. Since its adoption, the literacy and NFE has had an important place in the education system because it is better organized and structured. Literacy is ever-present in the major education decisions, such as the ten-year basic education policy (June 2001) and the first operating plan of the education reform, the Fast Track Initiative whose goal is universal education and a 60% literacy rate by 2015. Today, the Burkina Faso government is convinced that universal education can not be achieved in a context of mass illiteracy, and that adult literacy and education must support the efforts of universal education. On the institutional level, the creation of a government Literacy and Non-formal Education Department (2000), which became the Junior Minister’s Cabinet in June 2001, of a General Literacy and Non-formal Education Directorate, and a Research Center for Innovations in Education and Training allowed the State to assert its prerogatives concerning non-formal education.

► *The strategic framework for the Fight against Poverty and the Ten-year Plan for Developing Basic Education 2001-2010*

The strategic framework of the Fight against Poverty is the reference for all development partners. The government has made basic education a priority in its strategic framework for the Fight Against Poverty to ensure that disadvantaged people have access to a minimum level of education; it drew up a Ten-year Plan for the Development of Basic Education that aims to improve the quantity and quality of formal and non-formal basic education by raising the enrollment rates in literacy from 42.7% and 28% respectively in 2001 to 70% and 40% by 2010. To do this, the portion of the state budget earmarked for NFE must increase considerably. Along with the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries resources awarded to Burkina Faso in the strategic framework of the Fight against Poverty and the education reform resources, these objectives will be achieved.

► *The Importance of Creating Local Communities*

Becoming aware that this is important is reflected by the desire of people, and especially of women, to get an education. The female participation rate in literacy programs has risen from 36.97% in 1995–6 to 57.7% in 2004–5 (Permanent Secretariat/Ten Year Basic Education Development Plan).

The State must not let this motivation wane and should do everything possible to allow people eager to learn to achieve their full potential and realize their objectives.

Priorities

► *Capacity Building*

The literacy and non-formal education sector will not succeed unless they are accompanied by capacity building of everyone involved, particular civil society and local communities so that everyone can play his part as defined in the “make-do” strategy.

► *Social Mobilization*

Social mobilization is also quite important for achieving the aims of literacy on the basis of the effective involvement of all actors. The foundations for the success of literacy programs and the continuity of activities involve making local communities, the final beneficiaries, responsible, from the initial program design to the final evaluation.

► *Correcting Disparities Between Regions, Gender, And The Social-Economic Conditions of Basic Communities*

Literacy programs within the strategic framework of the fight against poverty must take into consideration the disparities that compromise the chances for success of EFA and equity. The following targets must be a priority: Women, especially in the poorest rural zones.

- Young children age nine to 15 whether enrolled or not.
- Poor populations in the provinces where literacy rates are below the national average (the 20 priority provinces as defined by the PDDEB).
- Children aged 0-6, women attending literacy centers to reduce the dropout rate and increase the rate of success.

► *Mobilizing financial and management resources*

For more educational “supply” better in keeping with “demand” and the specific needs of those targeted publics, financial resources must be mobilized to implement programs.

► *Creating an Action Plan for Women’s Literacy*

To correct these disparities, an action plan for women’s literacy could function according to five major principles.

1. Developing didactic resources using associated themes linked to reproductive health, hygiene, health, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, women's rights, gender and development and to the sale of local products, management of income-generating activities.
2. Literacy and Training women in these areas.
3. Support for completing literacy cycles by creating childcare centers and education and stimulation areas, and by financially supporting micro-projects for helping women becoming literate. Post-literacy training in or outside the centers. Micro-projects will provide models for learning and a means of combating poverty.
4. Accompany the new curricula offering lifelong learning for girls and women and create employment opportunities while helping to realize individual and collective projects.
5. Support/accompaniment in the process of creating a specific technique for monitoring and evaluation literacy and training activities for women.

NFE is designed to meet people's educational needs; it should help shape men and women for tomorrow's world.

5. Conclusion

Access for the greatest number of people to relevant, quality education raises not only the problem of means, but also and perhaps especially the problem of defining educational policies and strategies which are both coherent and effective. If, for various reasons (lack of educational "supply" or very weak internal systemic inefficiency), the formal system alone cannot meet EFA goals, it is necessary to diversify the alternative forms of education to increase the educational "supply" without losing sight of the fact that these alternative formulas must be not only efficient but also coherent enough to allow for their interaction with the formal system. As M.L. Hazoumê (2004) says, *non-formal education should be intrinsically linked to formal basic education and create a seamless whole that is always very productive*. It flexibility makes NFE potentially capable of responding to the inadequacies of the formal sub-system, if only it gets the necessary resources.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AENF	Literacy and non-formal education (<i>Alphabétisation et éducation non formelle</i>)
AFB	African Development Bank
AI	Initial Literacy (<i>Alphabétisation initiale</i>)
CAPEs	Center for the Analysis of Economic and Social Policies (<i>Centre d'analyse des politiques économiques et sociales</i>)
DGCRIF	General Administration for the Center for Educational Research, Innovation and Training (<i>Direction General du Centre de Recherche pour l'innovation et recherche en éducation</i>)
DPEBA	Provincial Administration for Basic Education and Literacy (<i>Direction provinciale de l'enseignement de base et de l'alphabétisation</i>)
DPEF	Administration to Promote Girls'Education (<i>Direction de la promotion de l'éducation des filles</i>)
DREBA	Direction régionale de l'enseignement de base et de l'alphabétisation
EFA	Education for All
FONAENF	Fund for Literacy and Non-formal Education (<i>Fonds pour l'alphabétisation et l'éducation non formelle</i>)
LO	Education Law/Loi d'orientation de l'éducation
MEBA	Ministry for Basic Education and Literacy (<i>Ministère de l'enseignement de base et de l'alphabétisation</i>)
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization

- PDDEB** Ten-year Plan to Develop Basic Education (*Plan décennal de développement de l'éducation de base*)
- SE-AENF** State Secretary for Literacy and Non-formal education (*Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'alphabétisation et de l'éducation non formelle*)
- SP/PDDEB** Permanent Secretariat for the Ten-year Plan to Develop Basic Education (*Secrétariat permanent du Plan décennal de développement de l'éducation de base*)

Chapter 7.

Fruitful Interactions between Formal and Non-Formal Education in Africa: Selected Examples

by Anne Ruhweza Katahoire

1. Introduction

Literacy is the foundation for learning and formal schooling is the principal route for acquiring reading, writing and numeracy skills. However, the focus on formal education for children ignores the high drop out rates and the fact that many pupils leave school without acquiring minimum literacy skills. One-fifth of the world's adult population lives without the basic learning tools to make informed decisions and to participate fully in the development of their societies. Women form the vast majority of illiterates; sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions with relatively low gender parity. In seven sub-Saharan African countries with particularly low overall literacy rates, the literacy gap between the poorest and wealthiest households is more than 40% and the gap is greater for women than for men.

Adult literacy rates have improved in all regions but remain low in sub-Saharan Africa. Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali are among the countries with adult literacy rates below 20%, the world's lowest.

Literacy rates in sub-Saharan Africa remain lower in rural than in urban areas and there are tremendous disparities in countries where overall literacy rates are comparatively low. For example, in Ethiopia the literacy rate is 24% in rural areas compared to 83% in urban areas (in the rural Afar

region the overall adult literacy rate was 25% in 1999, but the literacy rate in the pastoralist areas was only 8%). The disparities also exist in other pastoralist and nomadic populations across Africa. Complex social, cultural and political reasons, keep certain other populations such as Internally Displaced People and people with disabilities in Africa excluded from mainstream society with less access to formal education and literacy programs. Over 90% of children with disabilities in Africa have never attended school.

Meaningful basic education for all can only be assured through diversity in educational provision. The 'multiple and diverse learning needs' of children, youth and adults can only be met through multiple arrangements, diversified delivery systems and alternative modes of participation. The challenge therefore is to develop a comprehensive approach to educational reform, which requires political and social commitment, a strategic vision, a holistic approach and a focus on learning. This requires accepting the need for diverse educational and learning channels to ensure learning for all learners in their diverse circumstances, while ensuring quality and equity within a single strong, evolving unified and yet diversified education system. Overwhelmed national education systems will not meet all, the needs for achieving basic education for all by 2015.

2. A Systemic Approach: Linkages Between Formal and Non-Formal Education

When 164 governments adopted the six Education for All (EFA) goals in 2000, they espoused a holistic vision of education spanning learning from the first years of life through adulthood. In practice however achieving good quality universal primary education (UPE) and gender parity, two of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals have dominated attention.” (Education For All, Literacy for Life, Summary 2006:1)

Why a systemic approach?

The existing formal education system has failed to guarantee equal opportunities for all to learning. A more holistic conceptualization of education and learning systems could ensure learning and accommodate learners in their diverse circumstances, while ensuring quality and equity, and building a strong evolving, unified, diversified education system. A systemic approach to integrating formal and NFE with linkages between the two has been on the agenda

of several education meetings in sub-Saharan Africa for the past seven years or more; a more holistic system of education has been called for that acknowledges the diversity in educational provision, the 'multiple and diverse learning needs' of children, youth and adults which require multiple arrangements, diversified delivery systems and alternative modes of participation.

► *Changing realities*

Several changes are fueling the demand for different forms of literacies: the rapid expansion of the mass media (radio, television and newspapers) and the introduction of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which have opened up numerous possibilities for self-learning. At the same time the political, economic and social changes worldwide continue to have profound consequences on the education field, knowledge, teachers, students, families and communities. It is necessary to understand the linkages between formal and NFE in light of emerging global trends and frameworks of lifelong learning. In addition, many innovative and distinctive aspects of NFE such as flexibility, school community linkages, openness and responsiveness to the needs and possibilities of the learners and to specific contents and cultures have been integrated into education rhetoric worldwide and introduced in school systems (Torres, 2001). Expanding and improving the existing education structures *per se* is, therefore, not a solution.

► *Revisiting the linkages between formal, informal and NFE*

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines formal education as regular school and university education and NFE as out of school, continuing education, on the job training etc. Informal education comprises family and socially directed learning. Experiential learning was added to cover learning by doing, self-directed learning etc (UNESCO 1999:17-18 cited in Torres, 2001:2). Over the years, formal education and NFE have been interacting with each other in a number of ways and in some cases shared common features. There have been calls for 'deformalizing formal education' and for 'formalizing NFE'. This implies mainstreaming NFE by making it a regular policy issue, providing structure, continuity and stability and avoiding the traditional *ad hoc* and marginal status accorded to it nationally and internationally (ADEA/WGNFE 2000).

The pre-biennial 1999 Symposium and Exhibition on the Dynamics of Non-Formal Education in Johannesburg called for formal and NFE provision to be seen as integral parts of a holistic education system that can

deliver basic education and lifelong learning to all citizens. The same call was repeated at the 2001 ADEA Biennial meeting in Arusha, Tanzania (Torres, 2001). Torres suggested that the role of NFE is not to complement formal education but rather that formal, informal and non-formal education all complement each other throughout an individual's life and in a holistic education policy. NFE is a necessary, useful education and learning channel that is neither remedial nor compensatory (Torres, 2001).

► *A holistic conceptualization of education*

The main educational issues concern the essential skills and competencies that students of any age should acquire; the core characteristics of quality learning environments and a national frame of equitable and relevant education with individual and community demand for education adapted to needs and circumstances. An outcome-based approach is needed where outcomes are defined in terms of basic knowledge and a skills profile that allows for locally adapted teaching and learning content and strategies and enables core achievement to be assessed through standardized instruments leading to common certification (ADEA, 2000).

Within this holistic framework it would be possible to promote a differentiated set of provisions for learning where the conventional formal system is only one of a whole range. Hoppers (1999) suggests that this would require a support infrastructure for administrative and professional services accessible to all provisions within the system, and a funding framework that provides equitable access to state subsidies and an overall quality assurance system that enables diverse forms of provision to grow within a frame of strict criteria for access and quality.

3. Integration and Linkages in a Holistic System

According to Hoppers (1999) integration can be perceived as efforts made to bring formal and NFE together in a bid to promote inclusiveness and equity. The new relationships between formal and NFE have been expressed in terms of a 'broad systemic framework' for different delivery systems; ranging from '*interfacing*' which implies close interaction between two or more systems, '*integration*' which implies combining separate elements into a single system to '*linkages*' which are the manner in which forms of integration can take shape.

► *Forms of integration*

Integration could mean different things depending on the level at which it is promoted. Hoppers (1999) identified three forms of integration: systemic, institutional and programmatic integration: *Systemic integration* promotes structural linkages between sub-systems for example in equivalency of learning outcomes and certification and in making arrangements for ladders and bridges such as for re-entry into formal school; *Institutional integration* involves integrating conventional and non-conventional elements within the same learning organization, for example the introduction of open learning approaches into formal schools, distance education methods into non-formal schemes or arranging fast track options using multimedia provisions; *Programmatic integration* could mean bringing elements together within a single course or program of learning such as work experience or community projects into formal education or sharing laboratories between formal and non-formal classes.

► *Forms of linkages*

Linkages refer to the different forms of integration within a holistic system that can ensure similarities or explicate complementarities to enhance learning experiences. The latter are particularly important for methodologies, technologies and locations of learning. There is also a relationship between different types of linkages at institutional or programmatic level where they will strengthen the drive towards ensuring essential forms of systemic integration which in turn stimulate more collaborative work at lower levels; linkages between sub systems, programs or elements of provision can differ in terms of distance.

Linkages exist in curricular structure and content, teaching and learning methodologies, educational technologies, the organization of learning, learning outcomes, skills development and life orientation, learning styles and epistemological places and use of spaces/resources for learning, management and provisioning, ownerships and control of institutions and programs and mechanisms for funding or subsidization (Hoppers, 1999).

Systemic integration and linkages

Systemic integration in sub-Saharan Africa exists at the policy level where there is a growing recognition of the need for a more holistic education system within the framework of lifelong learning. Botswana, Namibia South

Africa and Cape Verde are currently implementing education policies that transcend the dichotomy between formal and NFE. Systemic integration also exists as structural linkages realized through certain forms of community schooling but also by the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and accreditation systems in some African countries. In these specific cases, linkages mean mechanisms that enable learners to move from one educational system to another.

► *Community schooling*

Community schooling in some African countries could be described as an alternative form of schooling within the formal education system. Several African governments use community schooling as a tool for decentralizing the formal education system and accept community school graduates into formal schools. Community schooling is characterized by adapting content to the learners' specific contexts. Some programs combine national languages, relevant curriculum, and productive work while others strive to ensure that more children have access to better quality education. Community schools use NFE strategies and do not always adhere strictly to the same curricula, testing, or systems as the formal schooling.

In Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal, community schools emerged in response to perceived failures of the formal school system as alternative or complementary schooling for individuals who have been traditionally excluded from the formal system. Today they are an important component of the national educational reform process. Community schooling increases access rates and provides a more relevant curriculum. It helps to decentralize the formal school system by encouraging local input (e.g. parent involvement). Alternative or community-based schooling has become, for the first time, a significant slice of the overall national system in several countries like Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso (Easton, Capacci & Kane, 2000: 2).

In francophone Africa, the experimental *enseignement de base à partir des acquis de l'alphabétisation dans les langues nationales au profit d'enfants non scolarisés* (EBAALAN) in Burkina Faso offers an examples of linkages established between the formal system and this alternative education system for out-of-school youth. This experimental basic education program using acquired knowledge in the native language for out-of-school youth is sponsored by the NGO, *Oeuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière* (OSEO) and the University of Ouagadougou. The program involves adopting and modifying

intensive literacy methods in the Mooré language developed in adult functional literacy programs to give out-of-school 9-14 year olds a basic education. Within a year, literacy in Mooré is attained and the following year transition to the French language begins with participants able to complete the equivalent of four years of primary schooling in two years.

The program uses Mooré as the language of instruction during the first half of the course so that students learn the traditional primary school curriculum, including math, science and history in addition to French, at a highly accelerated rate. The program covers the first four years of traditional primary school instruction in only two years, bringing students to the level of their age group and includes agriculture and culturally relevant activities to make basic education more reflective of the life and work in the local community. After two years of instruction, all subjects are taught in French using the same materials as those used in local primary schools. At the end of four years, the students are sufficiently prepared to pass the examination certifying their completion of the primary school curriculum.

Alternative models of schooling of this kind have informed national decentralization strategies for education reform in the countries where they exist. This is partly because they serve as alternative models of formal schooling system and can take on some characteristics of formal education systems.

► *National Qualifications Frameworks and Accreditation systems*

National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and common accreditation systems also provide other forms of linkages. South Africa and Namibia have developed NQFs and have also established authorities to further develop and implement them. NQFs embrace the ideal concept of lifelong learning, making it possible to change or move across and progress along different education, training and career paths to acquire national and other recognized qualifications through both formal and non-formal learning situations including full-time, open and distance learning. Work-based and life experiences are recognized and credits are located and registered on the NQF.

In South Africa, recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a key principles underpinning the objectives of the NQF. The SAQA publication *Criteria and Guidelines for Assessment of NQF registered Unit standards and Qualifications* (October 2001) describes the purpose of RPL: “Through assessment, to give credit to learning which has already been acquired in different ways”. In

the legislation, regulations, criteria and guidelines documents, RPL is put forward as a key strategy of the emerging education and training system to ensure equitable access and redress past unjust educational practices. In Namibia, most government sponsored programs aim to provide equivalency qualifications: for example the certificate earned on completion of literacy training provided through the National Literacy Program in Namibia (NLPN) is equal to lower primary (at Grade 4). From here learners can take upper primary courses to obtain an equivalent of primary school certificate.

South Africa is also in the process of perfecting an alternative system for accrediting education and training received outside the formal system. It has a two-tier system, with many variations. Literacy work is conceptualized as basic skills or generic skills training and is seen as the starting point of a program of Adult Basic Education and Training which is meant to have equivalence to the ten years of formal schooling to which learners are now entitled. Learners in these classes are encouraged to write national exams in accordance with the levels, standards and outcomes specified by the NQF. Learners' finishing school (Grade 12) can either get a Senior Certificate, which gives access to tertiary courses, or a Senior Certificate *with Matriculation Exemption*, which gives access to degree programs.

Institutional integration and linkages

Linkages in institutional integration have taken on the form of: curriculum innovations; open and distance learning; adoption of effective teaching/learning methodologies and the management, provision, ownership, control and financing of institutions.

► *Linkages in the form of curricular innovations*

In a bid to develop a flexible, relevant and culturally sensitive curriculum, curriculum innovations in sub-Saharan Africa have adapted content to specific contexts and/or combined them with national languages and productive work. Some community schools in Mali, for example, use an adapted government curriculum and others follow an independent curriculum that combines national curricular topics with local interests.

The Save the Children/US community schools program in the Kolondieba region of Mali began officially in 1992 to establish one school in each village to provide a more relevant education aimed at raising literacy, numeracy

and other skill levels to promote village self-development. The school year lasted for seven months (generally from November 1-May 31), with classes held six days a week for four hours at most (market day was planned as the one day off so that people could travel and shop). The program was initially conceived as a three-year endeavor providing instruction in Bambara, the local language of village children. As time went by, demand rose: growth was coupled with participants' lobbying for three more years so that children could complete a full primary cycle.

A new curriculum was developed for the fourth, fifth and sixth grades focusing on French, history, geography and science, and new teachers were recruited to deliver instruction in French. This required seeking teachers who had gone to public schools themselves. Local teachers who were often graduates of the local literacy program and therefore, new literates were used up to this stage. SC/US also developed teaching guides in reading, writing, math, history, geography, science, and French that conformed to the national curriculum. The School Management Committees recruited teachers and built classrooms. The increasing number of community schools and addition of French to the curriculum responded to parents' hopes that students could continue to the formal secondary schools after six years.

Adding grades 4-6 made the community school curriculum approximately equivalent to the formal schools. There were two assumptions of linkages: *Passerelles internes* or internal bridges meant that the schools were creating bridges for internal development in the community through a life-skills curriculum that ensured that students were more informed about health, natural resource management, animal breeding, micro-enterprise management, and able to make decisions affecting their civil and social lives. *Passerelles externes* meant external bridges created through the new curriculum to other educational opportunities. By the end of the program, literate and numerate students could be integrated in the public school system if they passed the national leaving examination.

The South African curriculum known as A Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults (ASECA) is an example of a flexible curriculum designed for adults at junior high school and senior high school equivalence levels and is accepted nationally for adult education. The Joint Matriculation Board approves all ASECA courses, which are modular, additive, outcomes-based and designed for learners in an integrated approach. Course outcomes are

verified through continuous and end-of-course assessment; placement tools ensure correct placement of learners and learning activities that are both formative and diagnostic. The ASECA curriculum can be combined with courses from the formal school sector (and one technical course) in the composite certificate and is now available to all non-school institutions. The challenge is that while school subjects can be combined with ASECA subjects in a composite certificate that is “obtained” in the non-formal/adult sector, there is a ban on combining ASECA subjects with the same school subjects if the composite certificate is “obtained” in a formal school.

Other countries have made deliberate attempts to develop culturally sensitive curricula, such as bilingual schools in Niger and Burkina Faso. This has been partly achieved through teaching in the children’s mother tongue. Chekaraou (2004) explained that

lessons in the bilingual schools were based on themes that reflected the immediate environment of the children. Discussing endogenous topics in the classroom contributed to maintenance of endogenous cultures. The discussion contributed to children seeing their culture as positive and increased the chances that they would pass the knowledge onto future generations. For example discussing games that children did at home as well as those played in town helped the children realize the importance of these games in the society. Likewise, the notion of goats and sheep used in math lessons to teach computation not only contributed to the children valuing their background knowledge but also to its maintenance. (Chekaraou, 2004:342)

The bilingual programs integrate indigenous knowledge into the formal school curricula. In both Niger and Burkina Faso, educators have made a considerable effort to develop a multicultural curriculum that includes knowledge about national cultures and how they relate to each other and regional cultures.

These programs also seek to promote respect for local, national and regional diversity and, a culture of peace and tolerance among young people. The bilingual education curriculum also emphasizes the importance of gender equity (Ilboudo, 2003). However, for those who wish to pursue their education, bilingual schools use ‘a late exit transitional bilingual program’ that lasts five years. It maintains the use of national languages even when

teachers switch to French in fourth and fifth grades, which helps the learners to become literate in both the local language and French.

Bilingual schools help young people develop a deeper understanding of their environment and cultures, as the majority of them are expected to remain in their community and contribute effectively to its socio-cultural and economic development.

In addressing HIV and AIDS in Ghana, a collaborative effort to address the potential impact of the epidemic in the education sector has resulted in a 2-year HIV and AIDS training curriculum for teachers entitled Window of Hope, developed in close collaboration with the Ghanaian Ministry of Education (MoE). It was integrated into Ghana's 41 teacher-training colleges in 2003. It is expected that Window of Hope will reach 14,000 future teachers each year. Curriculum developers have found that teacher trainers require adequate adjustment time to become comfortable with a new non-formal pedagogical style, and sensitive HIV and AIDS-related content.

Window of Hope uses NFE principles to address the fundamentals of HIV and AIDS (transmission, prevention and stigma) and issues of professional ethics and strategies for incorporating HIV and AIDS information into classroom lessons. The initiative demonstrates that when supported with strong commitment at the school and national levels, multi-sectoral responses to HIV and AIDS can result in true systemic change.

► *Linkages in the form of open and distance learning*

Open distance learning in many African countries offers opportunities for linkages in professional development in formal and non-formal systems. In South Africa, Sudan and Botswana, open distance learning has been used to train teachers who work in formal and non-formal systems.

The Sudan Open Learning Organization (SOLO) has operated since 1984 to provide several educational programs including basic education to adult refugees in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. At the basic level, it offers a literacy program, a primary health care program, income generating and small business skills for women, and a teacher assistance course aimed at training basic level teachers employed in refugee schools. In 1998, the SOLO undertook a comprehensive re-orientation of untrained teachers in the Republic of Sudan, assisting the government to improve the quality of education by

improving the quality of teachers. Fourteen Sudanese states increased their education sector workforce by training 50,000 teachers, many of whom had never previously taught in a formal four-walled classroom.

The Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) currently offers distance education courses for the Junior Certificate, which culminates the first ten years of formal basic education for the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE). BOCODOL has been given the go-ahead to continue offering school equivalence programs and additional vocational and non-formal courses for both adults and youth. It uses printed materials that are distributed in the post and regional offices at study centers for students to meet tutors. Some counseling and advisory services are available and a weekly 30-minute slot on Radio Botswana is dedicated to supporting its learners.

► *Linkages in the form of effective teaching /learning methodologies*

Linkages also take the form of sharing of effective teaching and learning methodologies. Formal schools have adopted methodologies and learning materials developed in the non-formal sector for use in their own context and vice-versa. This has been made even more viable through the different forms of linkages that have been established at curriculum level. In Benin, for example, a technique for functional reading was perfected by the *Conseil des Activités Éducatives du Bénin* (CAEB) and has been adopted in traditional schools. In Burkina Faso, the *Œuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière* (OSEO) carried out trials of the ALFAA method (learning French from the springboard of literacy skills) which is now an option in the formal school system. Some children have therefore achieved the same level of knowledge acquisition as their peers in two years less of schooling.

The ALFAA method was initially developed in response to a request from the community organization Manegdbzanga to OSEO to finance the development and expansion of adult literacy efforts in its area. Traditional methods of French language education involved instruction in oral and written French either separately or simultaneously to individuals with no fundamental understanding of the concepts of orthography, syntax or grammar in their own language. Teaching language this way lowers retention rates and minimizes the utility of the language as an effective tool for communication and learning. The ALFAA method uses the native language as the principal medium of instruction and teaches French using second language instruc-

tion methods; the materials and techniques take into account and discuss, the differences in the orthographic structure and grammar of French and Mooré. In the second phase, French is used to teach arithmetic, geography, and practical knowledge.

The success of the *Ecoles Bilingues* and the EBAALAN project in Burkina Faso have been attributed to this teaching method which helps participants develop academic and functional literacy and to make connections between “the act of studying and the act of producing;” the method also promotes positive cultural values. Bilingual schools seek parents’ active participation in their children’s education by using a common language and connecting school activities to socio-economic and cultural activities run in the village whenever possible (Ouédraogo and Nikiema, 1998). Through the use of languages familiar to teachers and children, teachers can appeal easily to pupils’ prior knowledge and guide them toward self-learning, cooperative learning, hands-on activities and especially the acquisition of new knowledge (Alidou and Jung, 2000).

► *Linkages in the form of management, provision, ownership and financing of institutions*

Several African governments have established NFE Departments and Directorates within their Ministries of Education. In Botswana and Namibia, this arrangement encourages close collaboration between the two systems.

In Kenya, an NFE Desk was established in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) and later upgraded it to a Unit with the appointment of a Deputy Director. Under the 1999-2003 UNICEF-Kenya Government Program of Cooperation, action on a policy for NFE was initiated and is now completed. An NFE curriculum, and curriculum support materials were developed and teacher training initiated. The MOEST also initiated action to assign Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) teachers to non-formal schools, some of which were recognized as examination centers for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) Examination. A government Handbook for Inspection of Educational Institutions included the inspection of non-formal and alternative approaches to basic education institutions by officials of the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education. Budgetary provisions to NFE were also considered (Thompson, 2001).

Community schools in Africa take different shapes and forms, but they specifically differ from government schools by being established and funded mainly by different stakeholders and by being locally managed (Hyde, 2003). In Zambia, the government has worked very closely with the community to accredit the community schools. In Uganda, community schools are alternatives within formal education and therefore housed under the Directorate of Non-formal Education in the Ministry of Education. They are run in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports. The community schools under the Ministry of Education in Uganda are a joint initiative between the government and UNICEF: the government provides classrooms and pays teacher salaries while UNICEF trains facilitators. Schooling is free and no uniforms are required. Adult Basic Education however is housed under the Ministry of Local Government, Gender and Social Development. The fragmentation and separation of adult literacy from mainstream education makes it difficult to conceptualization and implement a holistic system of education in Uganda.

In Mali, community schools supported by Save the Children/US involve community representatives and parents to some extent in the design, management, and financial support of the school, which is locally managed. Save the Children/US relies on local NGOs to carry out its program and to reach the large number of rural villages involved in the project. School Management Committees (SMCs) have also been established to oversee school activities and administration, managing the day-to-day affairs and planning. To promote a sustainable structure, SMC members are appointed by the village without SC/US involvement. SC/US provided training for the SMC members on their roles and responsibilities: targeting the goals of education and their importance for the community; understanding the importance of the role of the SMC and its overall function; administrative management; finding resources for the school and teacher salaries; explaining the role of partnerships; understanding the individual functions and responsibilities of its members; and gaining technical knowledge on how to contribute to the promotion of the school.

SMC members are also responsible for: discussing the importance of education in their village; for providing technical, financial, human and material support to the school; mobilizing internal resources (natural and financial) to create and maintain the school, raising money, recruiting students and teachers, surveying school activities (school attendance, teacher's work,

etc.), building and maintaining the school, buying and maintaining school furniture, buying and renewing teaching material; and contributing to the financing of teacher training. Other activities included finding financial support for teachers to attend trainings, getting a property title for the community school from the district chief, meeting with district education directors, and/or assisting in obtaining birth certificates for those children who did not have them so that they can enroll in the community school.

In Burkina Faso, the EBAALAN program is a joint project of the National Institute of Literacy, OSEO, and Manegdbzânga Association (MA), researchers from the University of Ouagadougou and the National Institute of Literacy (NIL). NIL designed an ALFAA methodology and trained teachers. The MA comprises 30 village associations, of which 15 are solely women's associations; its objective is local development using literacy in local languages. With funding from OSEO, MA has created literacy centers in 23 villages since 1996. Each centre is self-managed with three permanent full-time staff including a director and two supervisors. OSEO provides 60% of the budget and MA provides the other 40%. The government pays the director and donates material such as chalk.

Programmatic Integration and linkages

Linkages in programmatic integration are combinations of the development of production skills with literacy education for youths and adults using educational technologies and face-to-face teaching to enhance the quality of learning in basic education and evaluation of learning outcomes. They also include programs and projects linking ECD, Adult Basic Education and Family literacy.

► *Linkages through combined literacy and skills development initiatives*

Several programs and projects in sub-Saharan Africa have been designed to promote skills development for greater employability while providing literacy education to youth and adults. The Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA) in Uganda is an ongoing pilot project of a non-formal three-year basic education course for urban out-of school children and adolescents between the ages of 9-18. Activities have included, developing and piloting a non-formal, three-year course, with adapted versions of the main subjects taught in primary schools, prevocational skills training, capacity building for implementers and promoting and strengthening community participa-

tion. A syllabus and short modules have been developed in different trades together with artisans from the communities. Instructors and local artisans teach basic skills in various trades to prepare learners to earn a living and they try to organize apprenticeships or other training sessions for those who want experience.

The 4-year EBAALAN program in Burkina Faso follows the curriculum, textbooks (translated into Moore), holidays, and calendar of the formal school system. During the first two years (CE1 and CE2 in the formal school system), children (equal numbers of girls and boys) learn history, geography, math, science, civic education, moral education, and Mooré grammar using the ALFAA method during the first 7 weeks to quickly achieve literacy. EBAALAN seeks to educate citizens to be healthy, productive, patriotic, and fraternal; to protect the family as a basic unit of the social fabric of society; and to instill a strong belief in social justice as a foundation for peace. The practical and ideological curriculum is adapted to local life and involves parents and children. OSEO, the sponsoring NGO, gives each child a sheep and parents contribute a rooster and two hens but parents must decide how students get involved in production (agriculture, husbandry, weaving, gardening for market sales, etc.). Parents help to raise funds for the EBAALAN centers by integrating production and fundraising as a strategy for lifelong security while students acquire skills and capital.

► *Linkages through the combined use of classroom approaches and educational technologies*

Educational technology has been used to supplement literacy program for both adults and children to improve the quality of learning. Two programs have been working in Nigeria. The University Village Association Rural Literacy Program is supported by the British Council; it used taped learning materials to augment literacy programs delivered to adult learners over a period of 18 months. There were three 2-hour face-to-face sessions each week augmented by pre-recorded audio taped lessons distributed to the learners for additional learning at a time and place of their choosing. The tapes included information on current best practices and on how functional literacy (e.g., targeting farmers, governance, women, and health issues) helped to positively transform the lives of the rural learners. Face-to-face literacy lessons were used to provide interaction with facilitators to develop literacy and numeracy skills. An evaluation of this program concluded that the tapes were important auxiliary learning tool that greatly enhanced

the quality of teaching and learning processes. The Literacy Enhancement Assistance Program, funded by USAID and the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education, focuses on Kano, Nasarawa, and Lagos and seeks to improve reading, writing and basic arithmetic by the end of primary school. The program uses interactive radio instruction and has particularly improved students' oral, written English and arithmetic skills. Literacy and basic arithmetic skills are taught in the community classrooms. The primary students targeted by the program have shown a dramatic improvement in reading and arithmetic skills.

Other examples include the INADES-Formation program in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Cote d'Ivoire. The program develops reading materials in agriculture, health, and community civic education for adult learners and uses facilitators who lead discussions and disseminate information via radio. Government development policies in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mali have been broadcast to the grassroots to inform citizens who are now better informed (Siaciwena, 2000). Where the INADES-Formation Project of Jesuits Organization has taken root, many subsistence farmers, village women, community leaders, and adults have gained valuable education, expertise and knowledge that have been applied to transform their local communities.

► *Linkages in evaluating learning outcomes: bilingual education*

Linkages also exist in the form of evaluation of learning outcomes. Such assessments include cultural and socio-economic achievements and can indicate pupils' ability to demonstrate practical mastery of knowledge acquired in schools. The importance of passing the elementary school examination is acknowledge, but the concept of educational success also includes attaining grade-level functional literacy and a knowledge base that children and young adolescents can use to actively participate in all socio-cultural and economic activities.

The Minister of Basic Education, in Burkina Faso stated that

*Ecoles Bilingues have several goals. Four goals are specifically related to the promotion of culturally relevant education in schools and communities. **Gender equality** both as concerns access to school and course content and putting into practice the trades learnt in school. **Link between education and production:** Pupils' carry out manual activities such as farming, cattle rearing, handicraft,*

*carpentry, related to the local economy. These activities are part of the courses taught and also constitute practical fields for the lessons learnt. **Revaluating of culture:** Introduction into schools of such positive African cultural values as solidarity, honesty, tolerance, hard work, respect for the elderly, respect for life, as well as fairy tales and proverbs, songs and dances, indigenous music and traditional musical instruments. **Participation of parents:** Fathers and mothers take part in the drawing up of the school syllabus and in the definition of certain aspects of education in school such as production and culture.* (Ouédraogo, 2002:14)

Pupils were reported to benefit from the *Ecoles Bilingues* in many ways. Economic projects such as cattle breeding taught multiple subjects and integrated the indigenous knowledge system in formal basic education. In addition, pupils could also earn money. This activity has helped teachers teach subjects like social studies, biology (breeding) and mathematics in meaningful contexts. By buying, raising and selling goats, sheep and chickens, children learn how breeding is done in their culture and in a modern context. They learn new methods of modernizing some socio-economic activities and schooling becomes more relevant: children learn by doing and parents benefit from their contribution to all socio-economic and cultural activities (Ilboudo, 2003).

In Niger, parents were particularly in favor of bilingual schools for similar reasons: *these parents, especially fathers, find that teaching in African languages is better than the traditional system because children learn easily. They do not want experimental schools to cross over to the traditional system. The big majority of them want to keep the experimental schools for three major reasons: the development of its own culture, better comprehension of lessons and better learning of how to read and write in the two languages* (Bergman et al., 2002: 96).

► *Linkages between ECD, Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy*
Some projects and programs are experimenting with combining ECD, Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy. The Family Literacy Project (FLG), in Kwazulu South Africa was established following the realization that despite training of community-based pre-school teachers, there was little or no improvement in the literacy scores of their young children. A different approach was taken to strengthen parental skills to give young children a good start to their literacy development (Snoeks, 2004:35).

The project encourages young children and their parents/caretakers to see learning to read as a shared pleasure and valuable skill. The underlying belief is that it is easier to learn something when it is fun and one is actively involved. In a rural area with few social services or other amenities, FLP has managed to engage group members in developing books, creating a small library for every group as well as weekly book club meetings where members discuss the book they borrowed, communicate with pen-friends and maintain community notice boards and, publish newsletters. (Snoeks, 2004:38-40).

The Family Adult Basic Education (FABE) was designed to address the challenges raised by the UPE program and the National Functional Adult Literacy Program (FAL) in its attempt to break the cycle of poor school performance and consequent low adult literacy. It was designed to motivate parents to support their children's learning by ensuring that they helped their children. FABE also tries to stimulate community involvement by equipping parents with parenting, literacy and numerical skills and sensitizing them and the school PTAs about their roles and responsibilities in children's education. Although the initial approach was for parents to learn and use literacy materials with their children, a Rural Rapid Appraisal pointed towards broader adult basic education needs: to increase their awareness of the value of education and their roles in their children's education ranging from material and financial support to checking schoolbooks, visiting school teachers and helping children with homework. The evaluation also pointed out the need to create favorable educational practices that encourage a link between school learning and community indigenous knowledge and practices (Prichard, 2005).

A review of FABE revealed that children's gains are linked to parents' benefits from participating in FABE classes. Greater parental interest and understanding of children's learning affected children's achievements in class and at home. Observing joint parent-child sessions revealed, greater self-confidence in parents, increased communication between parents and children and better relations between schools and parents (Prichard, 2005).

4. Lessons and Challenges

Lessons

There is growing recognition in some African countries that a more holistic education system is needed within the framework of lifelong learning. Even

countries whose education policies do not recognize lifelong learning could benefit from these lessons. Given the current diversity of provisions and ways of studying, some forms of linkages are needed so that learners can move between different provisions. A framework within which they would be located is also needed, as is recognition, which is closely linked to certification. Processes of certification and recognition need to be developed to help locate NFE within a well-structured qualification framework as South Africa and Namibia have done.

In sub-Saharan Africa, alternative forms of schooling have developed within formal education. Governments, especially in francophone West Africa, are increasingly recognizing community and bilingual schools as alternative systems to the formal school system. There are lessons here for community schooling in East and Central Africa where they are not as well developed, as in Uganda where remedial or compensatory programs are meant to bridge programs to the formal education system. Several African governments now use community schooling as a tool for decentralizing the formal education system and accept their graduates in the formal schools. Community schools not only form a significant portion of the overall national system in countries like Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso, they also inform national decentralization strategies for education reform where they exist.

Community school programs use functional bilingualism, flexible schedules, staff, and infrastructure in addition to relevant and culturally sensitive curricula, which yield more positive learning outcomes. Learners from community schools in Mali are described as being better suited to integrate into the practical life of their villages and contribute to its development while gaining competencies that enable them to go on to higher levels of education if they so desire.

The EBAALAN program in Burkina Faso showed that learners in EBAALAN schools had higher mean scores in all subjects in which they were tested than their counterparts in the formal system. There was also a significant difference in the mean score of EBAALAN students versus the formal school students in all subjects. While it was difficult to explain why EBAALAN students were doing better than their counterparts, two hypotheses suggested that the use of mother tongue instruction has facilitated more effective learning and student achievement and that the innovative and experimental nature of the school made it easier for students to learn. Community schools have also gone a long

way in addressing the gender gap. By bringing the schools closer to home, more girls have been able to access schooling. There is also evidence in the EBAALAN program that girls in the EBAALAN schools had higher mean scores than boys and girls in the formal school system. These results are similar to those obtained in Mali once community schools offered a six-year curriculum.

Community schools offer a more relevant, flexible and culturally sensitive curricula; in some, the curriculum is condensed, allowing schooling for out-of-school youth in a shorter time. The EBAALAN program offers a complete four-year primary school cycle and gets better results from its students based on using the ALFAA methodology for mother tongue instruction. After five years of instruction, pupils from the *Ecoles Bilingues* project are ready to take the end of primary school examination. The results of the 2003 and 2004 achievement tests showed that pupils performed better than pupils attending monolingual French-language instruction schools (Ouédraogo, 2002).

Comparative studies of traditional schools using English, French, Spanish and Portuguese as first languages and bilingual schools using local languages show that in general bilingual students tend to perform academically better than their counterparts from traditional schools (Alidou, 1997; Ouédraogo, 2002; Bergman *et al.*, 2002; Mekonnen, 2005). The Burkina Faso Ministry of Basic Education conducted a comparative study of the *Ecoles Bilingues* and its regular schools and found the former significantly more effective than monolingual schools, which use French for six years. The first cohort of the *Ecoles Bilingues* took the end of primary school examination test in 1998 after only 5 years of instruction in local languages and French; they outperformed their counterparts who had six to seven years of instruction in French. In 2002, 85.02% of *Ecoles bilingues* pupils successfully passed the end of primary school examination (Ilboudo, 2003) where the national average is 61.81% with six to seven years of instruction in French.

The use of local languages in literacy instruction and in other basic education programs facilitates the implementation of learner-centered pedagogy and parental involvement. Bilingual teachers who have utilized active learning pedagogy develop community-based projects that encourage hands-on activities and parental involvement. Effective local language teaching can help convince disfranchised parents and students about the value of school (Ilboudo, 2003 and Ouédraogo, 2002). This is an important lesson for many government primary schools across Africa.

Open and distance learning in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa has been used to widen access to basic education and to maintain and improve quality in the conventional education system, particularly through in-service training of teachers. It also offers opportunities for linkages in professional development for formal and non-formal systems. In Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan and Botswana, open distance learning has been used to train teachers in formal and non-formal systems.

The Sudan Open Learning Organization (SOLO) trains polyvalent teachers for formal and non-formal educational programs. Its Certificate in Education is approved by Sudan's Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education. As a result this has enhanced the image of teachers. The teachers training curriculum prepares the teachers to work with children and adults. So when they graduate in addition to their role in Sudan's school system, teachers are also paid to engage in programs designed to respond to the educational needs of refugees and adult learners in vocational and life skills acquisition. These initiatives have contributed immensely to the education, social, and economic development of the Sudanese people particularly those living in the war free states (UNESCO, 2001). Educational technologies such as radios and audiotapes have been used successfully to enhance literacy acquisition in formal and non-formal systems for adults and children.

The community schools have generated a renewed energy toward education, and people cooperated to make this alternative education model work. Women have learned that they can play an important role in their children's education. The SMCs encourage women to become members. Women generally managed girls' activities in Mali; it is therefore considered important for them to be part of a decision-making mechanism to help manage school activities. As women gained more confidence in their role as leaders, they found opportunities to practice these new skills as members of the SMCs. People speak regularly of the importance of girls' education and how they will have a better future after years in school, learning how to read, write and calculate, and how to stay healthy or be better mothers. The question remains of the place of community schools in the larger education system, after external funding ends.

Challenges

Several African countries are trying to establish NQFs. Is this timely, especially where these efforts precede a more holistic education policy and where

formal and non-formal education fall under different government ministries? How will critical competencies be defined, and by whom? Will competencies be overarching or vary according to the path to learning? Processes of certification and recognition will need to be developed to help locate non-formal education within a well-structured qualifications framework.

Since the introduction of the NQF in South Africa very few learners have been able to exploit the linkages between the two sub systems to the full. There are some ongoing debates regarding the degree to which the NQF, and indeed the Guidelines for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) for example encourage an over-formalization of adult education. Some feel that standardizing ABET, particularly at literacy and post-literacy levels, has restricted its development.

Another critical issue is that there is also evidence both in South Africa and elsewhere that unschooled workers develop complex task related skills over time that allow them to operate efficiently, including in such literacy linked activities as making judgments in relation to volume, quantity and cost and in interpreting diagrams that include literacy. A focus on the conventional transmission of standard literacy in adult classrooms is bound to lag behind the complexity of social forms of communication as they develop within communities undergoing dramatic change. Alternatives to centrally designed programming will help to encourage diversity of meanings which adults create from texts and situations in a post-literacy environment (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996 in Wagner, 2000:30).

Community schools are often treated and viewed differently at the national level depending upon the country and the national education authorities' opinions of them. Their success depends on their legal recognition and integration into the national education system. The more the community school complements the government school model, the more likely it is to be sustained yet the more the community school follows the national education system, the less it can address the concerns of the village, especially when its ideas for school improvement do not fall under the umbrella of the national education system. What is the best way to integrate the adapted aspects of the community school while ensuring government support and recognition?

While open and distance learning offers tremendous opportunities, the cost of investing in infrastructural development maybe out of the reach of many

poor African countries. Considerable investment is also required in the training of those who use the system and those who operate it. Government ministries need to recognize the potential of ODL in enhancing access and quality of education together with its potential to enhance the quality of the teaching learning process.

Successful curricular innovations will require retraining many teachers and changing teacher-training curricula to ensure the integration of new methodologies and training teachers in some countries to use the mother tongue to teach literacy.

There is ample evidence to show that the use of local languages in literacy instruction is the way ahead. Unfortunately, even where there are policies to support this approach, implementation has been problematic. Countries with very many local languages-many unwritten-pose a challenge. Reading materials would have to start from scratch.

5. Recommendations

Several cases exist of fruitful forms of integration and linkages between formal and NFE. Most are at programmatic and institutional levels and are not yet fully integrated into the education system. In Francophone West Africa, the approach to creating a holistic system is bottom-up and pressure comes mainly from the communities. Anglophone countries have taken a more top-down approach starting with the development of policies and frameworks. Only a holistic and genuinely expanded vision of education and learning can cope with the major challenges facing sub-Saharan African countries to make Basic Education and Lifelong learning for all children, youth and adults a reality.

1. More governments should create policies and mechanisms that promote a more holistic system of education.
2. Differentiated sets of provisions should be promoted that include but are not limited to conventional schooling.
3. A supportive infrastructure offering administrative and professional services that is accessible to all educational and training provisions in the system should be developed.
4. A funding framework is needed to ensure acceptable equity in access to state subsidies and an overall quality assurance system that enables

diverse forms of provision to develop within a frame of strict criteria for access and quality.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ASECA	A Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults
BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
CAEB	Benin Educational Activities Council <i>Conseil des Activités Éducatives du Bénin</i>
COPE	Complementary Opportunities Program of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
FABE	Family Adult Basic Education
FLP	Family Literacy Project
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
INADES	African Institute for Economic and Social Development
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NALSIP	National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLPN	National Literacy Program in Namibia
NQFs	National Qualifications Frameworks
NTI	National Teachers' Institute
ODL	Open Distance Learning
OSEO	Œuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière
PTAs	Parent Teachers Associations
PRL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South Africa Qualifications Authority
SC/USA	Save the Children, United States of America
SMCs	School Management Committees
SOLO	The Sudan Open Learning Organization
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematical and Science Study
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Chapter 8.

Creating a Literate Environment: Hidden Dimensions and Implications for Policy

by Peter B. Easton

1. Introduction

This document examines the notion of a “literate environment” in the light of recent field experience, and how it can be established or materially strengthened, particularly in the resource-poor settings where much literacy programming takes place. Despite widespread concern with problems of “post literacy” and with the creation of literate environments for some years now, it seems safe to say that our analysis of the problem and our understanding of the means by which it might best be addressed have remained quite rudimentary. This document examines the anatomy of a literate environment, the most important differences and the close complementarity between its educational (reading material and continuing education possibilities) and socio-economic dimensions (opportunities for gainful use of new skills and the environmental conditions necessary to ensure them).

The Components of a Literate Environment

A “literate environment” comprises, arguably, four principal and interrelated types of opportunity for using new literate skills:

1. *Access to reading material of direct interest to the neo-literate.* Books, brochures, newspapers, magazines, messages, letters, and other practical

documents. This supposes publishing facilities and that relevant media use the language in question.

2. *The availability of formal or non-formal continuing education:*
 - Sequences of formal schooling to which the learner may accede thanks to equivalences established between the skills already acquired and a given level of that system and by virtue of open or age-neutral enrollment policies.
 - Varieties of organized non-formal training (such as organized trade apprenticeship) that confer other skills or elements of knowledge of interest on the learner.
3. *Opportunities to assume sustainable new functions in existing organizations or institutional structures* (e.g. local governments, agricultural cooperatives or extension systems) that require and exercise literate skills.
4. *Opportunities to start and help manage sustainable new business or non-profit endeavors* that likewise require and exercise literate skills.

It is the combination of all four, in forms and to degrees dictated by circumstances, human imagination and available resources, that constitutes a truly “literate environment” and creates the strongest and most durable demand for literacy training – “effective demand.”

The Origins and Requirements of Literacy

Writing was first invented some 4000 years ago on the irrigation schemes and in the farming communities of the Fertile Crescent when managing transactions for large-scale water allocation and surplus food exchange became too complex to handle by oral means alone (Tuman, 1987). Though it soon acquired important political, religious and cultural functions, literacy remained closely linked to resource management.

The lesson for “post-literacy” planning and for the creation of a literate environment is that “effective demand” and local resources for written communication are created by the assumption of new powers and resource management responsibilities, whether in commerce, local government, public service delivery, political development, organized religious ministry or a mix of these. And what is most likely to multiply the volume of written material that passes under the nose of new literates or must be prepared by them is communication among these nodes of new activity and the exchange with the outside world. But if one has few resources and no complex social

responsibilities, then the prime stimulus both for literacy and for the spread of written communication is lacking. Most low-literacy environments in Africa are in such low-power, low-resource situations.

The problem most frequently encountered in developing post-literacy and enhancing the literate environment is that educators are not used to addressing issues of commerce, power, governance and social organization even if they are concerned with local development. In fact, most of the important opportunities for post-literacy lie in other sectors of development like agriculture, natural resource management, health, governance, credit and banking, public works and even the local management of formal education. Literacy programs have sometimes tried to simulate socio-economic applications for former students, by starting small-scale credit schemes or agricultural cooperatives within the framework of the educational agency. Though worthwhile in themselves as experimental sites for new curricula, these efforts seldom attain the level of sophistication or the scope of real development projects, which are naturally more than literacy personnel, even those underwritten by generous outside aid, can sustain.

The Relevance of Local Capacity Building

This situation might seem bleak were it not for the fact that most of the other development sectors are presently in very sore need of reliable means to create local capacity for management. Due both to restricted budgets and the impetus to promote local assumption of development initiatives, decentralization and the transfer of responsibility into qualified local hands are increasingly on the agenda of technical ministries. The UN Millennium Project places “training large quantities of village workers in health, farming and infrastructure” sixth among seventeen priority investments; the World Bank speaks of “rural development from below”; USAID emphasizes “empowering local populations for community-based forest management”; and NEPAD stresses “broad and deep participation [in development governance] by all strata and sectors of society.”

In short, “local capacity building” is becoming a practical necessity in many sectors of development. The more democratically-oriented the strategies in these different sectors – that is, the more local participation in decision-making as well as technical execution is structurally provided for – the broader the training needs. Though a local top-down organiza-

tion can make do with a few of its own bureaucrats and technicians, one more democratically governed requires people to fill managerial and technical positions and to replace them when needed, plus a people sufficiently aware and knowledgeable about the organization's operations to monitor its performance and hold its leadership accountable.

The key notion to understanding and developing a literate environment lies in local capacity building. An immense literature and vast experience is devoted to imparting skills, knowledge and the benefits of experience at higher levels of society: national ministries, universities, regional institutes and governments, major new businesses and industries. These are very important, but discussion and intervention tend not to reach the local level. Similarly, local capacity development particularly in the framework of specific development projects or decentralization initiatives in governance, health, agriculture, natural resource management and so forth has likewise attracted increasing attention in recent years.

These efforts have largely taken place in other local development agencies with little transfer or coordination with literacy programming. There is talk about decentralization and capacity building within literacy services and agencies themselves, but it has to do with decentralization or outsourcing of literacy provision responsibilities and the transfer of certain duties from central to more regional or local hands rather than inter-sectoral collaboration

2. Three Fundamental Principles Linking Literacy and Local Capacity Building

Three principles seem fundamental to developing our understanding of the linkage between literacy and local capacity building (LCB): *pedagogical*, concerning the alternation between learning and doing; *political*, concerning the means for building democratic institutions at the local level and the role of literacy in this; and *financial*, or a resource-relevant principle about the interrelated accumulation that local institutions must undertake.

The Alternation Between Learning and Application

The first principle is pedagogical and has to do with the optimal alternation between learning and doing, and concerns the imperative of *building a healthy alternation between learning and real application into any program* like

a practical lesson plan that relates each level of learning to the assumption of a new level of responsibility in some solvent and sustainable enterprise or function. As the recent World Bank publication on literacy and livelihoods (Oxenham, 2002) notes, such integration is more easily accomplished when literacy programming is fitted into the development activity than the reverse.

This principle puts a premium on staff of the two partner sectors or agencies practicing and perfecting the ability to analyze any development activity or function, to prioritize or rearrange the component tasks or skills involved and to express them as a lesson plan. The alternation between learning and actually assuming new responsibilities is premised on the notion that they are composed of an interrelated set of tasks and understandings that, broken down and rearranged, in the right sequence, yields a strategy and lesson plan that will enable a group or community to master the various levels of proficiency required.¹

► *An example*

Administration and management of local agricultural markets in Africa provides an example. Table 8.1 illustrates the sort of analysis and lesson plan required. After careful consideration of the steps and tasks involved in crop market administration, it became evident that a number of the tasks involved required only the ability to read and write numbers and record transactions. People who acquired this skill could therefore already serve as recorders of market transactions, product weighers, payers of remittances and/or “controllers” of these operations.

This gave participants a real sense of accomplishment and helped resolve an enduring problem of local crop markets corruption by weighers and scribes who had no link to the local community and couldn’t be controlled by them.

The next level entailed learning addition and subtraction with retention or carryover. Equipped with this skill, learners could begin to understand simple materials accounting, like the forms that must be kept on intake and disbursement of products from a storeroom or warehouse. Those who went beyond to learn the manipulation of larger numbers, the meaning of decimals,

1. The competencies required may appear difficult or complex in part because those who presently exercise them have an interest in presenting them that way and maintaining the privileges associated with their own exercise.

the execution of operations in series and the basics, at least, of multiplication and division could begin handling cash accounting and materials inventory.

Table 8.1. Schematic presentation of alternation between learning and application

Design requirements for successful implementation						
	Job Analysis		Lesson Plan		Policy Adjustments	
Level	Technical or social function	Duties required	Particular KSA needed	Numeracy Level and Time	Staffing adjustment	Policy changes
I	Weigher, Recorder	Read scales, record sales	Numeracy: reading, writing numbers to 1000	Level 1 numeracy (3 weeks)	Train agency staff for monitoring	Develop salary scales
II	Inventory clerk	Keep stock accounting	+ Addition, subtraction	Level 2 numeracy (6 weeks)	Same	Same
III	Assistant secretary	Keep membership lists and records	Basic literacy: read, write words	Level 1 literacy (4 weeks)	Etc.	Complete legalization of association
IV	Assistant accountant	Help keep financial accounting	Complex addition-subtraction + simple multi/div.	Level 3 numeracy (12 weeks)	Etc.	Develop fund transfer mechanism
V	Executive staff	Level 3 reading-writing	Establish, read minutes and correspond.	Level 2-3 literacy (8-12 weeks)	Etc.	Same

There was a similar hierarchy in the mastery of reading and writing, though it entered into play further down the sequence. It stretched from the ability to draw up and decipher lists of coop members or material goods to the capacity to prepare and receive simple written communications and further forward to preparation and analysis of reports and complex correspondence. At each level, new responsibilities could be assumed.

Overall these steps constitute an example of the simple alternation between learning and application that can be built into local assumption of development responsibility in a particular sector of development and into

the realization of increasing autonomy or into higher degrees of *complementarity* between what local actors can do and the support required from outside institutions, and so potentially improved performance all around. This same basic process is applicable and has been applied *mutatis mutandis* to local assumption of responsibility in a whole range of development sectors and in each case, those responsible have had to start by analyzing the different component tasks involved in executing the functions in question and then organize them into a hierarchy of difficulty, reformulate them as a lesson plan, add the required instructional support methodology and personnel, implement the strategy and simultaneously ensure the parallel changes in policy required to make local assumption of responsibility possible.

The Role of Broader Literacy in Accountability

The second, democratic principle concerns the role of broadening literacy in stakeholder control and organizational accountability. The scenario above can become too exclusively technical and lend itself to takeover by elites or minorities who use the nascent enterprise to their own exclusive or preponderant benefit. To a considerable degree, democratic procedures provide the antidote that only begins to work as broader numbers of people gain literacy.

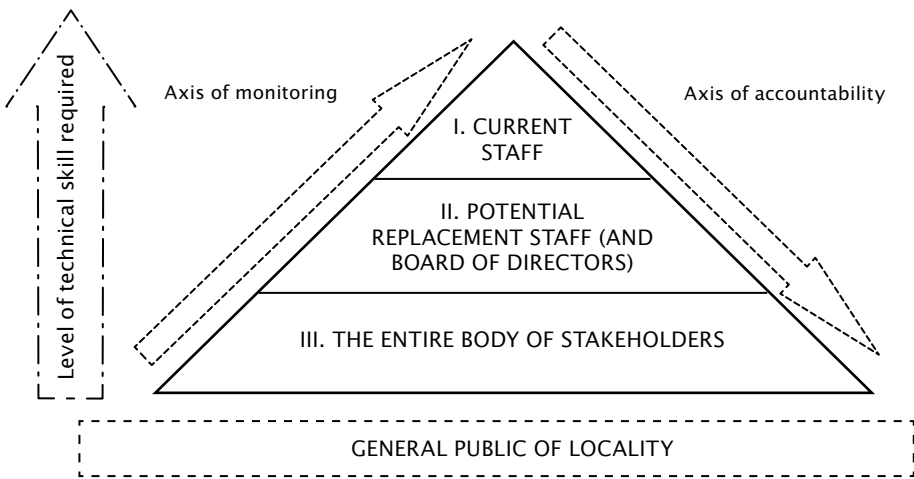
For a local enterprise or community venture to be democratically governed, it is not enough that the requisite number of people gain the competence necessary to assume its various functions. At least two other conditions are necessary: i) a set of people with nearly the same levels of competence who can take over functions in case of incapacitation of the existing staff or problems of conduct that might lead to their removal plus the members of the “board of directors” or governing council of the organization, who must arguably be at a similar level in order to exercise their functions; and ii) a body of stakeholders or members who are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to “audit” the work of staff and verify that it is on the up-and-up.

A basic level of “civic” competence in nascent local enterprises and services is essential in the mix and motivation for broader acquisition of literate skills within the community.

When the dynamic of progressive broadening participation and requisite knowledge is added to the scheme in Table 8.1, what is added are the different groups of organizational or community members who might attain levels of

competence so that they can replace given local staff or perform monitoring and accountability functions. The narrow technical mastery challenges of local assumption of responsibility can be translated into broader democratic ones that provide an impetus for increasingly widespread literacy and technical training. Add to this the possibility of multiple organizations taking form in any geographic area and the possibilities for widespread learning become even more evident.

Figure 8.1. Levels of technical capacity required in a democratic organization



The Importance of “Multiple Capitalizations”

The final principle is partly financial and concerns the importance of a variety of kinds of resource accumulation such that rising levels and the spread of new knowledge and skill in the community or organization that makes it possible for the group to assume new functions that should procure increased returns of various types to it. Part of these will serve to maintain the personnel that has exercised the functions and cover operating expenses but part should also be invested in increasing the underlying capital of the community or organization: accumulating “human capital” and financial capital progress in rough tandem.

The process of “capitalization” that these activities can and must trigger is not simple however. *Three other critical and related types of accumulation* could be named:

1. *Physical capitalization*, which signifies development and conservation of the built and natural environment.
2. *Social and institutional capitalization*, or the formation of networks of affiliation, reciprocal obligations and communication and their institutionalization in some cases into legally guaranteed form. These networks and relationships make it possible to mobilize energy and support when those are needed to develop new functions or to strengthen an organization's financial and political position and to insure the group against various mishaps or catastrophes by holding in reserve a set of allegiances that can serve to bail it out when necessary or restore its operations when those are compromised.
3. *Deep cultural capitalization*: Less recognized but no less important, the development of cultural meanings around the new activity, its modification to reflect them and its appropriation as a part of local culture.

All five of these forms of “accumulation” can be seen as closely interwoven and interdependent aspects of the same reality.

► *Examples*

The fourth part of a preparatory study carried out for the World Bank as the lead-in to what was anticipated to be a re-evaluation of Bank policy in adult education and of the potentials for its better articulation with local capacity building needs presents a literature review and consultation with partner agencies regarding the conditions and consequence of local capacity building across development sectors, conducted in 2002 and 2003.

The Executive Summary of the PADLOS-Education Study carried out between 1995 and 1997 under the aegis of the *Club du Sahel* (OECD) and the CILSS was devoted to determining how the leadership and membership of particularly successful local (and predominantly rural) organizations and enterprises in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal had acquired the skills and knowledge they needed to assume new development functions. It offered a rare opportunity for those interested in literacy programming to see how local communities and enterprising individuals managed to acquire key elements of literacy and technical knowledge in the absence of targeted projects with these objectives. The study was based on fieldwork by teams of African researchers and outside consultants at a time when decentralization and local assumption of development responsibility were relatively new ideas.

Neither of these two documents was endorsed by the sponsoring agencies, which hesitated to adopt the orientations proposed.

3. World Bank Local Capacity Building Study

The terms ‘capacity’, ‘capacity building’, ‘capacity development’, ‘capacity enhancement’, etc. came into vogue in the early 1990s in international development agencies (Schacter, 2000) in response to purported failures to create, at the national level of developing countries, the kind of capacity that could replace foreign technical assistance. The debate has some real relevance for the local capacity building challenge is one starting point for the literature review.

The upsurge in interest was a response to the acknowledged shortcomings of development assistance (Bolger, 2000; Schacter, 2000). Most of the successes in technical cooperation (TC) were at the micro level while the most important failures were at the macro level:

- *TC has yielded very mixed results. There have been numerous micro-successes. Millions throughout the developing world have benefited from better infrastructure, health care, education, housing and improved means of productive livelihoods in agriculture and industry, as a result of projects underwritten by aid....*
- *But the macro failure of aid has been the inability to render itself redundant. Half a century has witnessed over one million TC projects.... The most aided countries have generally remained so.*
- *... TC has over many years successfully purveyed training and expertise across the full range of lacking skills, there has been limited impact on the ability of countries to sustainably manage their own development processes, and thus enable them to become more independent of aid. (Browne, 2002: 1).*

In a sense, the concern was nothing new. From the 1960s on, technical assistance had been justified as a temporary expedient, pending replacement by competent technicians from the country in question and overseas scholarships and training programs for young people from developing areas were funded to transfer the technical expertise required to take over their economies, educational and health systems, and so forth (Anderson, 1965, 1967).

But the 1990s saw a series of 30-year reviews of the success of this venture and most concluded that technical assistance had failed to lead to or be

replaced by sustainable capacity for development in the majority of the developing countries (e.g. Berg *et al.*, 1993; OECD, 1996). The following years were thus marked by attempts to find out the causes of this failure and search for alternative ways of doing development assistance. Among the international development agencies, UNDP, in particular, has been at the forefront of these efforts. UNDP published one of the first comprehensive analyses of the function and dysfunction of TC (Berg and UNDP, 1993). Though focused on Africa, this study had general implications for development assistance. In May 2001, UNDP launched 'Rethinking Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development,' a multidimensional review of the role of TC in capacity development.

Three books were published as part of this initiative (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes *et al.*, 2002; Browne, 2002; and UNDP, 2003) and the *Development Policy Journal* was launched and three annual issues published (UNDP, 2000; UNDP, 2002; UNDP, 2003). Another catalyst in increasing understanding of the importance of capacity development in development cooperation has been OECD's publication (Lavergne, 2003) by the DAC in 1996 whose influence has been felt especially at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Some of the results to date of this inquiry are summarized more extensively in Annex A (Historical Development and Assessment of Technical Assistance).

These debates about capacity remain largely anchored at the national level. The focus on *local* capacity has resulted from the confluence of decentralization, the growth of civil society and NGOs, the requirements of poverty reduction, and increased emphasis on participatory planning and local knowledge.

► *Localizing Capacity: The Decentralization Agenda*

The current decentralization movement started in the 1980s and exploded in the 1990s. Today, over 80% of developing and transition countries claim to be transferring political or administrative powers to local government (Ayres; Ribot, 2002). Support for decentralization came from at least three different sources: neo-liberal promoters of government downsizing; critics of the 'over-centralized' state; and those seeking to strengthen local government following recognition that effective local government is critical to local development (Ribot, 2002). Decentralization takes many different forms. According to Turner, before the current movement was launched,

decentralization consisted of two territorially based choices: devolution (political decentralization) or deconcentration (administrative decentralization). Then privatization was added to the framework and decentralization began to assume a multiplicity of forms, with the World Bank, for instance, recognizing at least four types: political, administrative, fiscal and market. The dominant form being promoted around the world today is devolution (Turner, 2002; Smoke, 2003), which signifies actual transfer of at least some significant degree of decision authority over resources and policies to local collectivities or to other representative stakeholder bodies. Proponents of decentralization claim that it procures improved efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and good governance (Ayres; Smoke, 2003).

► *Local Government Capacity Development*

Decentralization reforms may prove to be a necessary condition of good local governance, but they are not a sufficient condition: local capacity constraints can lead to failure (Furtado, 2001; Romeo, 2002). “Increased attention should be given to local government capacity development in order to convert the promises of decentralization reforms into the reality of good governance”. It can be useful to distinguish between ‘internal’ and ‘interactive’ capacities of local governments:

Internal capacity is the capacity of local authorities to carry out efficiently their core functions of public sector resources mobilization and expenditure management. Interactive capacity is the capacity of the local authorities to align themselves with a ‘new model’ of the local public sector consistent with the changing role of the state... The internal capacity for administrative performance is essential to promote participation and partnership, as the capacity for interaction with multiple actors is essential to improve the performance of the local public sector. (Furtado, 2001)

Furtado’s discussion of local government capacity draws on the UNDP framework which distinguishes three levels: individual, institutional, and systemic (UNDP, 1998). The World Bank document on capacity building in Sub-Saharan Africa puts the focus on strengthening the capacity of institutions to enable them to set goals, evaluate courses of action and exercise leadership and lists the following lessons: i) Institutional development and capacity building should only be provided in the context of a longer range, viable strategic plan, ii) capacity building is as important a process as the product, and iii) the implementation success of the Municipal Development

Program can be attributed to several factors: the program is demand-driven; local governments in applying to the MDP have recognized that they have a problem; thus, there is commitment to initiate action to address the problem (World Bank). Decentralization is expected to contribute to good governance.

Governance embraces all of the methods... that societies use to distribute power and manage resources and problems. [Good governance occurs when] public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of society. Effective democratic forms of governance rely on public participation, accountability and transparency. (UNDP, 1997)

Governance thus involves not only the State, but also the private sector and civil society, which operate independently but according to rules established by the state. Decentralization may therefore refer to initiatives to modify the governance or these other institutions as much as to change the style of public administration - and the two should be mutually reinforcing. The purpose of governance policies and activities is to promote sustainable human development in which poverty alleviation plays a prominent role (UNDP, 1997).

► *Admitting New Players: Civil Society and NGOs*

Diamond and others define civil society as “the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, largely self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a set of shared rules. It consists of a vast array of organizations, both formal and informal” (cited in Krishna, 2000); civil society is constituted by people joining forces to achieve common goals. Its boundaries are not well delimited and change over time. As a ‘third sector’ of society, civil society operates independently of both the public and private sectors (Krishna, 2000; Siri, 2002). Two courses of action are available to civil society: i) autonomous development, on its own, through independent civic action: and ii) participatory development, by working in partnership with government and the private sector. CSOs’ involvement in social investment funds and community-driven development, for example, partakes of both lines of action (Siri, 2002). In either case, CSOs perform three sets of functions: i) articulating citizens’ interests and demands; ii) defending citizens’ rights, and iii) providing goods and services directly or indirectly (Krishna, 2000).

Civil society organizations thus play a central role in building up the local “tissue” of democracy. It can also be important for poverty reduction as well particularly if strategies call for local ownership:

To alleviate poverty... civil society organizations must work closely with governments and the private sector to prepare the poor to participate effectively in the society and the economy. This requires providing social services and increasing the access of the poor to basic education and health services: giving the rural poor a more equitable distribution of land and agricultural resources; opening access to credit for the poor by changing criteria of creditworthiness and decentralizing credit institutions; and expanding productive employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for those who are unemployed or underemployed... Institutions of civil society can also provide some aspects of the social safety net to protect those who are excluded temporarily or permanently from the market. Some organizations also help to increase people's capacity to use resources in a sustainable and environmentally beneficial way. (UNDP, 1997)

To this litany might, moreover, be added the argument that civil society organizations that pursue policies of decentralization and stakeholder empowerment in their own governance will be best equipped to accomplish such objectives.

► *The Requirements of Poverty Reduction*

Laderchi and colleagues observe that while there is universal agreement on the need for poverty reduction, there is little agreement on the definition of poverty. They identify at least four different definitions and measurements of poverty which they call monetary, capability, social exclusion, and participatory (Laderchi, Saith *et al.*, 2003). The different methods, of course, have different implications for policy and for targeting. Who is poor and why they are poor are key questions (Matin and Hulme, 2003). According to Sachs, the Millennium Development Goals and campaigns are attempting to reduce if not eradicate what he calls ‘absolute poverty,’ which he defines as ‘poverty that kills’. “Households in absolute poverty lack the basic access to nutrition, health services, safe water and sanitation, power and transport, needed to assure a high probability of survival and reasonable health and physical productivity” (Sachs, 2002).

Sachs identifies two broad reasons for the persistence of poverty around the world: i) failure of certain regions to achieve economic growth, and ii) social exclusion or discrimination practiced against certain segments of a

population on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, caste, or region. There are four main pathways out of poverty that are usually proposed: the basic needs strategy, the human rights strategy, the economic reform strategy, and the ecological strategy (Sachs, 2002).

► *Capacity Development Aspects of Poverty Reduction*

According to Sachs, a sound comprehensive strategy for global poverty alleviation requires diagnosis, implementation and research and development. And it must reckon with four types of ‘pathologies’ that block economic development: i) biophysical constraints; ii) poor governance and weak economic institutions; iii) human rights constraints, and iv) unsolved technological challenges (Sachs, 2002).

Matin and colleagues have identified the following points as lessons learned in the struggle against poverty:

- The poor are not a homogeneous group.
- “Effective poverty reduction requires both a promotional component (that increases the incomes, productivity or employment prospects of poor people) and a protective component (that reduces the vulnerability of the poor)”, i.e. it’s not a question of either or.
- The agency of poor people is crucial, and “programs that seek to decree exactly what poor people are to do are likely to fail” (Matin and Hulme, 2003:647).

Their analysis of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development Program which seeks to reach the country’s poorest people shows that it has successfully combined livelihood protection (food aid) with livelihood promotion (skills training and microfinance) to achieve impressive results.

► *Microfinance and Social Capital*

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) are characterized by their commitment to assisting poor households and small enterprises in gaining access to credit and other financial services. Their clientele faces severe barriers, including high operational costs and high risks, in accessing financial resources from conventional financial institutions. MFIs have to be innovative to overcome the barriers facing their clientele. The group-lending model is one of their most successful techniques. It relies on the peer guarantee mechanism, which is based on shared liability and social pressure, to serve as a

substitute for the collateral that the group members lack. MFIs, thus, build social capital. Most MFIs seem to be connected to NGOs (Carroll and Asian Development Bank Office of Environment and Social Development, 2000; Hardy and Prokopenko, 2002).

► *Empowerment, Participatory Planning and Local Knowledge*

These three related topics, which have become a virtual litany of local development in recent years, arguably constitute a good part of the “technique” of reinforcing civil society and admitting new players to decision-making roles in development. The key notions and applications are briefly described below.

Empowerment, explored in some detail in two recent World Bank publications has begun to mean all things to all people. The World Bank document (2002) introduces the topic with the following comments:

The term empowerment has different meanings in different socio-cultural and political contexts, and does not translate easily into all languages.... Empowerment is of intrinsic value; it also has instrumental value. Empowerment is relevant at the individual and collective level, and can be economic, social, or political. The term can be used to characterize relations within households or between poor people and other actors at the global level.... A review of definitions of empowerment reveals both diversity and commonality. Most definitions focus on issues of gaining power and control over decisions and resources that determine the quality of one's life. Most also take into account structural inequalities that affect entire social groups rather than focus only on individual characteristics.

The same document's approach to empowerment starts with the assumption that the common elements that underlie poor people's exclusion are lack of voice and power which render the poor “unable to influence or negotiate better terms for themselves with traders, financiers, governments, and civil society” (World Bank, 2002, p. 10). From this it derives the following definition of empowerment:

Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.

Successful empowerment strategies — whether initiated by the State, the private sector, civil society, or by the poor themselves have four elements in

common (World Bank 2002:14-18): i) access to information; ii) inclusion/participation; iii) accountability, and iv) local organizational capacity. Empowerment enhances development effectiveness through its impacts on good governance, pro-poor growth, and project-level outcomes (World Bank, 2002, pp. 1-7).

Participation is also a “ ‘portmanteau concept’ which different actors define according to their values, interests, and analytical frameworks” (Finger-Stich and Finger, 2003, xi). And consequently, “The lack of a common understanding or definition of the term ‘participation’ meant that a whole variety of practices could be carried out and legitimated under its label” (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001:3). Despite its recent prominence, the concept of participation is not new.

The following summary follows the outline of the INTRAC/UNDP (1997) document that indicates that in the 1950s and 1960s, participation went under the name of ‘community development’:

The style was quite generalized and the community development worker was often a government official working as the interface between the outside forces of modernization and the natural conservatism and suspicion of rural communities. Control was usually exercised externally and communities were seen as contributing to and supporting the national development agenda and not necessarily as being instrumental in determining its content or direction.

A shift occurred during the 1970s and 1980s when then notion of participatory development came into prominence. The term was influenced by Paulo Freire’s and others’ explanations of the causes of poverty that emphasized social exclusion and marginalization from broader societal involvement.

In the 1990s, interest in participation skyrocketed and participation moved from the margins to the mainstream of development practice and remained. Two main approaches to the promotion of participation have been identified in current practice by several authors (INTRAC/UNDP, 1997; Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001; Siri, 2002; Cornwall nda). The INTRAC/UNDP document identifies them as i) participation as a means/participation in development, and ii) participation as an end/participatory development. Cornwall calls them ‘beneficiary participation’ and ‘citizen participation’.

INTRAC/UNDP identifies the following as key principles of participatory development:

- The primacy of the people.
- People's knowledge and skills must be seen as a positive contribution to the project.
- The empowerment of women.
- Autonomy as opposed to control.
- Local actions as opposed to local responses.
- Flexibility in project development.

A number of participatory methods seeking to translate these principles into actual development practice have been developed. They include (INTRAC/UNDP 1997):

Stakeholder Analysis

- Gender Analysis

Local Level Information Gathering and Planning

- Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- Participatory Action Research

Project/Program Planning Tools

- ZOPP and Project Cycle Management (PCM)

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

- Roundtables
- National Selection Committees

Large Group Interventions

- Open Space
- Future Research
- Process Consultation
- Technology of Participation (TOP)

Finally, the outcome and effect of people's participation in the project needs to be monitored and evaluated through participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Local Knowledge. Recognition of the relevance and applicability of existing local knowledge in many arenas of development and governance is one of the principles of participatory development:

People's knowledge and skills must be seen as a positive contribution to the project: a project which does not seek to make use of local knowledge and skills may not only be less effective but will also be squandering a useful resource. A participatory project should seek every possibility to base its activities upon local resources, both to avoid situations of dependence on external ones

and also to help develop local capabilities, which will be important if the development is to be sustained. Participation has to do with developing people's capacities and this can best be achieved by building on and strengthening their existing knowledge, expertise and skills.

► *Impact on Capacity Building Strategies*

The confluence of these trends has given increased prominence to the *local* dimension of capacity building and, at the same time, has begun to bring into relief the learning requirements of that task. In fact, capacity building must be increasingly understood as a multi-level endeavor. Developing local capacity without ensuring a corresponding ability of personnel at regional and national levels to oversee, protect and respect the local sphere of activity is an iffy proposition, just as is reinforcement of national-level skills and competencies without increased capacity for initiative and accountability at the base.

As one consequence of the debate, the definitions of capacity and capacity development have changed and matured. One of the most widely-applied definitions of capacity is the UNDP definition of 1998 cited above in Anneli Milèn of the World Health Organization who adapted it

Capacity of a professional, a team, an organization or a system is an ability to perform the defined functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably and so that the functions contribute to the mission, policies and strategic objectives of the team, organization and the system. (Milèn, 2001)

Following from the above definition of capacity, capacity development is defined by both UNDP and the OECD's Development Assistance Committee as follows:

Capacity development is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to: Perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives and understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner. (Quoted in Milèn, 2001:5)

Whatever the definition adopted, three issues stand out across the debate:

1. *Capacity is organizational systemic as much as individual.* This means that we must think in terms of building lasting institutional and organizational capacities as well as in the more traditional ones of increasing individual mastery of certain skills and areas of knowledge. It also

means that for new learning to be fully applicable at a local level for anything like the full range of actors one hopes to assist, there must be capacity at regional and national levels to create conducive conditions, provide needed support, assess outcomes and design critical tools.

- II. *The notion of “building” capacity must be tempered with a recognition that important dimensions of competence already exist.* The movement to highlight local or “indigenous” knowledge has brought attention to a more general phenomenon: namely that no community or region is entirely bereft of human and even scientific resources and the inhabitants of each area generally know much about its potentials that outside agencies and experts do not. Developing capacity is therefore as much a case of *reinforcing and mobilizing what is already there* - of building on an existing “infrastructure” of knowledge and skill — as it is of creating something *ex nihilo*. In fact, researchers for the PADLOS-Education study (Easton *et al.*, 1997) discovered that capacity needs of new local enterprises in rural areas were typically met in good part by ex-migrants from the community prompted to move back from urban areas by these new opportunities, and literacy or training courses established to provide staff training functioned as much to “recycle” and “reorient” people with various existing sources of capacity, initiating them to the systems to be used, as they did to train utterly new recruits.
- III. *Developing it requires an alternation of learning and application.* The strongest reinforcement of capacity and the most effective “pedagogical” approach under these circumstances is structured training as a careful alternation and dovetailing of instruction and application, using problems and materials from the various community enterprises to be run.

Case Examples Across Sectors

Not surprisingly, in recent years local capacity building needs have arisen – or been increasingly recognized – across multiple sectors of development and governance. The following resources and summaries offer only a sampling of the situation in rural development, water and irrigation management, health, humanitarian aid, public administration and education.

► *Rural Development*

Capacity building for rural development is presented through a case study from Zimbabwe in (Cusworth, 1997). The approach to rural development has steadily been shifting away from projects based on predetermined ‘blueprints’ requiring predetermined quantities of resources and accounting for

them systematically, and towards a more process-based approach to project planning and implementation which precludes predetermination of levels of resource allocation within specific time periods and against specific project outputs. The paper presents the process approach to promoting rural development as it has been tried on a pilot basis in Zimbabwe between 1989 and 1994.

Agricultural marketing and credit cooperatives have long been an arena where local assumption of management responsibility was encouraged and serious effort devoted to developing new competencies to meet this challenge. The Cooperative League of the United States of America continues to support a host of such projects across Africa through the intermediary of national organizations. Major accomplishments in this domain transformed the face of southern Mali (Easton, 2000).

Farmer participation in **agricultural research** has assumed new impetus with the support of CIGAR, PRGA and the IDRC (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2001). This is an arena that has offered multiple means for identifying, articulating and respecting local knowledge (IK Notes).

Natural resource management has in recent years become one of the prime foci for local capacity development, given proponents' awareness that projects and ecological improvements are not sustainable unless responsibility is assumed by beneficiaries and they acquire the skills necessary to manage enterprises that are both economically and ecologically feasible. USAID is presently devoting a good deal of effort to participatory and community-governed forestry management in several African countries.

Community-Driven Development is a new emphasis within - and outside - the rural development sector per se that has its roots in the long tradition of "community development" but has given major emphasis to the importance of relocating resources and decision authorities in local institutions to ensure sustainability and improved coordination of the many actors and organizations that come into play. It has received major support at the Bank in recent years and is discussed further on in this report. CDD proponents are particularly insistent and articulate in pointing out the conditions under which true capacity building can transpire (World Bank, nda, p. 5):

Agencies should not attempt to create skills in a vacuum, or as a pre-condition for empowering local governments. Local capacity cannot be created unless local governments are given resources that enable local people to experiment. If resources are provided first, capacity creation is likely to follow. The gaps in skills can be plugged as they appear...

Considerable institutional capacity already exists in local governments or communities. This capacity has been cloaked by a lack of local empowerment to use it. Any definition of capacity that focuses only on technical capacity will miss the huge potential that exists. Existing capacity is best defined as the ability to solve problems. People who have survived by trying to solve problems in difficult economic and political conditions have considerable capacity to put their experience and skills to work, once they are empowered.

They refer to this kind of capacity building as the critical “software of development” (p. 9) and remark, “untied matching grants to communities will help develop their inherent capacity for problem-solving through learning by doing. As they take on more responsibilities, *they will find that they need to upgrade their skills*” (p. 13, emphasis added) – a clear indication of the critical adult education connection.

► *Water and Irrigation Management*

Capacity building experience in the water sector, which encompasses the supply of water for drinking and food production through irrigation and the protection of life and infrastructure from flooding, has traditionally been dominated by engineering concerns:

The emphasis has been on the construction of physical facilities ... and in the past there has been little attention given to those concerned with operating and using the facilities. Irrigation systems, for example, were often constructed and handed over without even an operations' manual being prepared, much less any training for the operatives who then assumed responsibility for it. The failure of such projects to deliver the level of benefits expected of them has prompted much greater attention to the people who manage and operate the systems. It is now realized that it is necessary to increase human capacity at the same time as projects are implemented.... Indeed, there are many Programs in the water sector, which are now primarily focused on developing human resources rather than physical infrastructure. (Franks, 1999:51-52, emphasis added)

With the accent now on capacity building, development professionals working in the water sector held conferences in 1991 and 1996 to develop their understanding of the concept. They came to the conclusion that capacity building is comprised of three elements: i) creation of an enabling environment, ii) human resource (or individual capability) development, and iii) institutional development, the same as UNDP's levels. Enhancing the capability of individuals depends on effective education and training, lifelong learning and continuing professional development, using a delivery system that includes networking and twinning arrangements. The creation of an enabling policy and legislative framework is essential because no matter how competent and committed the individuals are, they need incentives and a supportive environment to carry initiatives through to completion. Finally, because these are times of rapid changes the world over, flexible, responsive, "learning organizations" are evidently those in greatest demand.

Interestingly, as Tumans (1989) points out, the challenges of managing water distribution and the resources it entailed and generated were arguably the stimulus for the creation of the first systems of writing in the Fertile Crescent 5000 years ago. Caldwell and others report results of a farmer participatory approach to identification and planning of water management priorities in Thailand (Caldwell, Sukchan *et al.*).

► *Public Health*

LaFond, Brown *et al.* (2002) review experience in the health sector that has also come to the realization that improved health outcomes depend on adequate local capacity to use resources effectively. And capacity building has come to be increasingly relied upon. Especially noteworthy is the attempt to develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of capacity building interventions.

Local capacity building has become a particularly strong theme in the campaign against HIV/AIDS in Africa and elsewhere (Africa-America Institute 2001). Kyaw (1999) profiles the approach and its results, for example, for villages along the Myanmar-Thailand border. Naur (2001) describes the effect of recruiting traditional healers to assist in AIDS diagnosis and treatment in Ghana and Zambia. Village paramedic training and service has formed a critical backbone of China's vast rural welfare system for years (Selden, 1997).

► *Humanitarian Aid*

Lessons from the sector of humanitarian assistance, where local capacity building has become an imperative, are outlined in the recent work edited by Smillie (2001), *Patronage or Partnership: Local Capacity Building in Humanitarian Crises*. The War-Torn Societies Project has developed an entire methodology of participatory action research with post-conflict populations to assist them in taking control of their own circumstances, used notably in Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia (Johannsen, 2003). Local capacity development is in fact an article of commitment and regular practice now for Catholic Relief Services, which runs workshops on the topic wherever it lends assistance (CRS, 1999).

The Food Aid Management consortium of NGOs involved in administering food aid in developing countries has developed a variety of capacity development approaches at the local level and gone beyond these initial efforts to work out systems of indicators to assess the resulting capacity of local institutions (Brown, Lafond and Macintyre, 2001).

This brief review of reports and literature from humanitarian aid organizations leaves the impression that this is one of the sectors most attuned to the critical importance of local capacity building, probably because veterans of the field know all too well that without that kind of follow-on capacity the beneficiaries of aid are likely to find themselves once again in as dire straits as they were.

► *Public Administration*

The public sector experience is discussed at length by Hilderbrand and Grindle (1994) and a case of twinning is presented by Olowu (1994). Hilderbrand and Grindle emphasize the importance of public sector or government capacity for the overall development of a given country. It develops “an analytic framework for assessing capacity and discusses how this framework can be used as both a diagnostic and a strategic tool for planning interventions to strengthen existing capacity”. The framework is then applied in six country case studies in Bolivia, Central African Republic, Ghana, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. Olowu takes a critical look at the potential of a twinning project involving the government of Namibia and a Dutch development institution in terms of its dual aim in capacity building which was to produce high quality government managers and to increase the capacity for policy management training at Namibia’s national university.

► *Civil Society and NGOs as Capacity Builders*

Capacity building for civil society development is the topic in Siri (2002), who argues that civil society can make a significant contribution to the development both autonomously as the third sector of society and by working in partnership with government. This underscores the importance of an enabling environment for overall national development.

Carroll and the Asian Development Bank Office of Environment and Social Development (2000) discuss NGOs as capacity builders using three cases where NGOs have successfully acted as capacity builders: the ADB Forestry Program in the Philippines, the People's Rural Education Movement in Orissa, India, and PRADAN, a national NGO in India using an enabling strategy in support of smaller organizations. According to Carroll, NGOs offer a great potential through which donors can implement local capacity building. However, most service delivery NGOs have neither the interest nor the skills to become capacity builders. He therefore felt the need to develop indicators for identifying NGOs likely to have local capacity-building abilities (Carroll/ADB, 2001:106).

► *Education*

Last but not least the education sector, a double-edged sword because education is concerned with “both the supply and the demand sides of the equation”, i.e., both as a provider of the kind of skills and knowledge required for assuming new responsibilities by local actors and as a system which is being increasingly decentralized and therefore needs ways to train its own stakeholders - notably teachers and parents - to play new and enhanced roles.

Educational decentralization is the order of business to greater or lesser degrees across the developing world and NGOs are often called upon to assist local communities in managing their own schools. World Education has run a project in Guinea for several years devoted to training NGOs in the skills they need to play this support role and undertake local capacity development at the community school level (World Education, 2003). In its *World Development Report 2000/2001*, Chapter 5, “Expanding Poor People's Assets and Tackling Inequalities”, the World Bank itself stressed the potential and local capacity building requirements of community management of education:

Other evidence suggests that community management of education can increase efficiency... [I]t may, however, be hard to achieve. Finding qualified

people can be difficult and results are uneven... Overall, experience suggests that a strong regulatory framework is needed and that training parents is vital to make local monitoring of schools effective. (p. 89)

The Community-Owned Primary Education Project in Nepal has set up over 100 community-managed primary schools with UNDP funding over the last three years. And in Thailand, the Thai Education Foundation, founded in the 1970s through collaboration between the Ministry of Education and World Education, has made a specialty of helping local schools with reform, site-based managed and necessary capacity building (TEF, 2003).

Non-formal and adult education programs are also increasingly managed at the local level. The historic tendency of NFE and literacy programs to train people who then become the teachers and organizers of further courses, was mentioned above. In both Burkina Faso and Senegal where out-sourcing strategies have been adopted for the delivery of NFE services, a growing number of the NGOs and contractors engaged in the effort are associations formed by local literacy graduates themselves.

The Cooperative League of the United States, which specializes in support for local agricultural marketing and production cooperatives and other varieties of rural development enterprises, has adopted a pattern of helping its staff in the countries where it works, to create their own local training firms after the projects end and many of these continue to provide instructional design and training management services for other projects and economic development activities on an ongoing basis.

Consultation with Development Partners

The Community-Driven Development program within the World Bank, the Cooperative League of the United States of America, which has a long history of supporting development of locally managed cooperatives and enterprises in Africa, and Africare, an American NGO that has become increasingly involved in food aid supervision are discussed below.

► *Community-Driven Development*

Within the Bank, the most productive and interesting encounters were with staff of the Community-Driven Development (<http://www.worldbank.org/participation/CDD.htm>) program, which is devoted to promoting programs

that “treat poor people and their institutions as assets and partners in the development process.” The website continues:

Experience has shown that, given clear rules of the game, access to information and appropriate support, poor men and women can effectively organize to provide goods and services that meet their immediate priorities. Not only do poor communities have greater capacity than generally recognized, they also have the most to gain from making good use of resources targeted at poverty reduction.

The language and the programmatic efforts of CDD, a cross-cutting multi-sectoral special emphasis with correspondents in several regions of the Bank and programs are very consistent with the positions taken in this paper and seem entirely congenial. Contacts with their staff were likewise extremely positive and we see opportunities for much fruitful collaboration. The one interesting divergent and perhaps highly significant note in these initial exchanges was that most CDD material, while very strong on principles we share, made remarkably little mention of the capacity reinforcement requirements of genuine local empowerment and community-driven development.

Asked about this fact, staff responded that in fact program policy stipulates that 20% of resources be set aside for capacity development and much is done in this regard. But the required services are generally furnished by local consultants and trainers directly hired by the programs or services concerned. There seems to be considerable hesitation to involve resource people from ANFE programs or Ministries of Education for fear that they will attempt to take over and provide little of worth, given their lack of experience with the kind of concrete (and non-educational) local development problems that are of primary concern.²

► CLUSA

The most fruitful contacts made outside the Bank during the abbreviated first phase of the project involved Africare, which is deeply engaged in local capacity building for food security reasons, and the Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA), which has supported and staffed programs to develop local cooperatives and enable them to survive on their own for years.

2. A parallel phenomenon seems evident in respect to the decentralization literature of the Bank. Though both the analysis and the practice of decentralization are increasingly well developed, the principal online resource from the Bank – the “Online Sourcebook on Decentralization and Local Development” at http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization/Entryway/english_contents.html makes no prominent mention of the capacity building and training requirements of decentralization.

CLUSA has branched out from its original work with farm cooperatives to develop an allied vocation for supporting community-based natural resource management and health systems as well as improved governance of local associations. Training and capacity building are central tenets of its approach, and CLUSA has been particularly successful in helping its own in-country staff to create training and instructional design firms to serve the related needs of development projects on an ongoing basis.

► *Africare*

Africare currently supports a variety of agricultural and health development projects in 25 African countries and has been an active member of the Food Aid Management consortium of NGOs responsible for delivering USAID food assistance and using it as an occasion to strengthen local agricultural productive capacity. In this regard, Africare has been heavily involved in developing local capacity for agricultural marketing and improvement and in exchanging best practice in this regard within the FAM Local Capacity Building Working Group. The cutting edge in its own practice presently lies in finding ways to assess and promote self-assessment of the institutional capacities of local organizations so that stakeholders can identify priority training needs and devise ways to meet them. Discussions with representatives of these two organizations provided good examples of what NGOs are doing and can do to pilot local capacity development methods and suggest optimal directions for related policy.

What the Results Tell Us: Roles for Adult and Non-formal Education

This brief review of the literature and contacts with units actively involved in local development support confirm that decentralization and the local assumption of development responsibilities are central concerns nearly everywhere and that these movements do indeed create a variety of needs for mobilizing, strengthening and/or building local capacity. They constitute therefore a real source of “effective demand” for adult education and training at the local level in the sense of creating fields of immediate application for new knowledge and of linking learning to economic and social activities with a resource base that can help, at least, to meet the recurring costs of continuing education.

Several pertinent questions remain about the relevance of this demand to Adult and NFE programs and the role that ANFE agencies can and should play in meeting local capacity building needs. Some of the principal objections to a closer affiliation include the following:

- *Technical specificity.* Local capacity development needs are generally focused on particular technical skills of concern in a given sector at a given point in time and do not necessarily give much opportunity for the broader pursuit of literacy, continuing education and life skills development that is the principal focus of ANFE programs.
- *Lack of experience.* ANFE personnel are usually little versed in the technical needs of development and governance programs that form the kernel of the local capacity building agenda.
- *Getting too complex.* Attention to the very diverse kinds of training required for technical capacity reasons across multiple sectors of development would entail dispersing the scarce resources of ANFE agencies both physically and psychically.
- *Elitism.* Local capacity needs are most often focused on a few officers or staff of associations and do not provide much motivation or training substance for broader population groups. This kind of training can therefore be inherently elitist and largely incompatible with Education For All objectives.
- *Buying into the bailout.* And one broader, even “political economic,” concern, decentralization is sometimes a case of shifting costs to local groups without giving them either the resources or the authorizations to validly exercise new functions. It can amount to little more than a bailout by central government. Local capacity building may be largely a charade under these circumstances, a support for policies of further impoverishment.

These criticisms are not entirely valid let alone fatal to the cause of better connection between ANFE offerings and local capacity building needs, but each has important elements of truth. Addressing them briefly will provide one way of beginning to reflect on the kind of initiatives that might support better valid linkage of supply and demand.

► *Technical specificity*

The first remark goes to the heart of a real and important question. It is true that local capacity building needs in different sectors like agriculture, health or municipal governance typically are born from very specific gaps in technical know-how and that the training efforts conceived by the imme-

diately responsible agencies often remain quite focused and minimal. This is not always the case: organizations like CLUSA have for years sponsored broader-gauged training for participants in their programs and there have been periods when rural development operations routinely funded and organized literacy programs. But the natural tendency and majority practice in technical development agencies has heretofore been to circumscribe training to their most immediate functional needs.

Two important facts are currently modifying this picture, however, and both are prompted to some extent by the requirements of decentralization. First, to the extent that local actors and their associations are expected henceforth to assume direct responsibility for operating and sustaining a broad range of development and service delivery programs, they must acquire managerial and policy competence as well as the more strictly technical skills involved in field-level operations. Managerial and policy responsibility may create broader needs for training, for information retrieval and for communication than does a subaltern technical role. In fact, we are now talking about building local organizational and institutional capacity as much as individual capacity. In addition, the more a group or an individual is expected to progress in competence and operational capacity - e.g. several successive levels rather than one slight notch upward - the more important general training becomes, because it provides the surest basis for learning substantially new skills.

Second, the confluence of decentralization and capacity building initiatives in several different and often overlapping sectors of development tends to underscore the common denominator elements in training, which are typically the broader and more general dimensions of knowledge and skill. Most communities where these issues arise are, at least to some degree, dealing with parallel challenges and opportunities in agriculture, in health, in natural resource management, in education and in local governance to name a few. At some point, it makes manifestly more sense, from a cost-effectiveness point of view, to reconfigure the capacity building function as a community-located and community-governed facility meeting multiple training needs, than as a series of separate and partial programs controlled by different technical agencies or outside support groups. The point here is analogous to the one made by community-driven development advocates: in the mid-term future, at least, we should think of the collectivity as the client and coordinator of development services. And this configuration lends itself to better complementarity between broad-based adult education and specific training packages.

► *Lack of experience*

It is unfortunately true that most staff in public ANFE agencies and Ministries of Education are not very familiar with the mechanisms and needs of economic and social development at the local level and so are scarcely qualified to diagnose or analyze these needs. This may be less true of NGO staff, who are typically involved in a greater breadth of programs in their attempts to meet local needs and even less true of the communities that we are attempting to serve, since all development programs are at least unofficially integrated into the same set of realities at the ground level.

But two facts help once again to overcome this obstacle. First, the role of instructional designer and facilitator does not necessarily presuppose long experience or deep familiarity with the domain of instruction but only a willingness to collaborate, a commitment to some shared underlying principles, and a voracious capacity for learning. In the instructional design tradition in industrialized nations, training programs are most often put together by a team composed of instructional designers and “subject matter experts” who are responsible for communicating to their teammates the essential technical knowledge and performance requirements of the domain in question, and the former for shaping this iteratively and interactively into a viable curriculum and instructional strategy. Undertaking such collaboration will require that ANFE staff get better and more supple at instructional design, and that they learn to be “quick studies” in the various technical domains where assistance is sought but not that they have extensive advance experience or knowledge in that realm.

Second, insofar as the trends outlined above begin tipping the balance of needed training a bit more toward more general and generalizable educational components, this itself will add more weight to the ANFE personnel’s contribution to the collaboration.

► *Getting too complex*

The danger of excessive dispersion, while real, is palliated by the trends and perspectives discussed above. Insofar as ANFE staff and programs serve as the “instructional design and facilitation” member of cross-sectoral teams who are exercising an essentially similar function across different domains, the risk of feeling scattered diminishes.

And insofar as training activities begin to be concentrated in dedicated facilities, or at least programs, within each community, the locus of intervention may be single rather than plural. Moreover, there is no need to start everywhere at once. Even if local capacity building were adopted as the principal mission by an ANFE agency, it would and should attack the work of developing this vocation one sector at a time, by some locally defined set of criteria.

► *Elitism*

The new technical and even managerial functions at the local level concern a limited number of people: three paramedical staff per community, two or three accountants for local enterprises, a few managers but not 300 of each. At first blush, they scarcely seem like an effective stimulus for EFA. Furthermore, when positions are limited and endowed with some power or access to resources, they are allocated not only (if at least) by technical criteria but also along existing status lines. Other things being equal (a leap of faith here) these spoils go to men and to members of dominant groups. As a consequence, the effect of truly “functional” training or literacy programs can be quite elitist.

But the nature of risks and opportunities in this area may change as well with currents of decentralization and democratization. First, as the PADLOS-Education study demonstrated (Easton, 1998), skill and knowledge needs in local associations – and especially in those with some form of democratic process – typically exceed the bare minimum dictated by current execution of technical functions. Most of these associations or their members have found that confiding responsibility for collective resources in people who are the only ones with the requisite knowledge to understand such affairs is an invitation to abuse and corruption. A healthy organization must tend to the “lateral” as well as the “vertical” dimension of training that is, ensuring that there are sufficient people with at least a functional minimum of knowledge in the different technical and administrative areas of concern to their organization, to ensure the accountability of those in power and to make it possible to replace them should they abuse their functions. The more the membership of the organization wishes to participate in policy decisions concerning its practices, the more substantial this demand for broader training becomes.

Second, as the number, the membership, the gender equity and the volume of “business” of such local organizations increases, so does the “background” level of educational demand in the community. People in all walks of life

begin to see that a certain and rising level of literacy, numeracy, communication skills and/or educational attainment is becoming the common currency for social and economic advancement throughout the community, and the motivation and demand for learning spreads well beyond the current incumbents in official positions. How and how quickly these factors come into play depends, of course, on the particular dynamics of development in each locale, but ANFE can play a role of stimulant in that process.

► *Buying into the bailout*

Decentralization is not always or necessarily an unmixed blessing. Governments or organizations strapped for funds but responsible for service services can opt to “devolve” certain functions to lower levels without granting at the same time the resources and powers necessary to exercise them. So in many areas of rural Africa, for example, structural adjustment and budgetary austerity along with civil conflict have resulted in an absolute decrease in the already low level of public services and government agency ministrations available on the ground. Tending to local capacity development in such cases, unless it were genuine capacity to replace government, locate new resources or thrive on autarky, might be simply a way of socializing people to an untenable situation.

A few “truths” help to restore perspective and clarity in this regard. First, decentralization is never a question of total eclipse of central State functions, but rather a new and hopefully more productive distribution of functions among central, regional and local levels. As Etienne Le Roy pointed out in the special issue of *Politique Africaine* on the “need for a State” (1996), central functions cannot be evacuated so summarily and provide in fact the necessary guarantees for the development of local ones.

Next, there are no bricks without straw, so functions cannot be transferred from one level to another or assumed *de novo* on the ground without simultaneously conferring or assuming resources and authorities necessary to exercise them. Those resources may be provided for a time by exceptional sources of external support, but a new stable equilibrium between what higher levels of national society can furnish, and what local authorities can generate or allocate must be found for the new arrangement to be sustainable.

It follows that certain criteria must be applied to any instance of local capacity building, and they have to do with the availability of resource flows required to exercise the new functions and the establishment of the institutional

arrangements, authorizations and regulations that “empower” and protect their performance. Assessment of these conditions must be part of the ABCs of program design in Adult and NFE. Despite the necessary precautions, local capacity building does offer a critical terrain for the development of Adult and NFE, though one that will demand changes in approach and the acquisition of new skills in many cases. Very much resides, however, in the way in which strategies and program designs are developed and on new means for cross-sectoral collaboration.

4. PADLOS-Education Study: Bottom-up Local Capacity Building

The *Projet d'appui au développement local au Sahel* or Support Project for Local Development in the Sahel (PADLOS) study is the second document excerpted for this paper on the dimensions of a literacy environment. The study was commissioned by the Club du Sahel, a division of OECD uniting donor organizations concerned with Sahelian development and its West African counterpart organization, the *Comité inter-état de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel* or Interstate Committee for Combating Drought in the Sahel (CILSS). The CILSS and the Club du Sahel were struggling at the time with the issue of making possible greater local management of natural resource management projects, having observed that the infrastructures already put in place tended to deteriorate because the activity had not really been understood or taken over by local communities. As is often the case in organizations, the period of the study coincided with a time of new openings and broader perspectives within the two organizations, but was succeeded by a period of retrenchment and more conservative administration during which no further follow-up was given to these initiatives. They nonetheless provide some valuable insights into the topics that interest us here. What follows is largely devoted to conclusions of the field study, marked by text boxes and below each, the elaboration.

Introduction

Decentralization movements in West Africa have created major new training needs at the local level — needs which the existing school system cannot meet on its own. How do the leaders and members of new civil society organizations acquire the skills and knowledge they need to play a growing role

in the management of economic development programs or to take over the local provision of social services?

Many elements of a lasting solution to this problem already exist “on the ground,” in the form of experiments in self-management and training initiated over the past twenty years by various state services, NGOs and community associations.

The main objective of the PADLOS-Education Study was to shed light on the lessons which might be drawn from such initiatives. Its results are presented in four sections:

1. a brief summary of *methodology*;
2. an analysis of the actual *level of assumption of new responsibilities* in the field;
3. an analysis of the *strategies for training and new skill acquisition* actually used by local actors, and
4. *practical implications* of these results for efforts to build new local capacity and for reform of the related programs and policies of external actors: governments, NGOs and donors.

Methodology

On what scale and according to what criteria can the degree of real takeover in the field be evaluated? This is one domain in which all that glitters is certainly not gold. Five criteria were tentatively adopted by the research team at the outset: i) the level of technical skill attained; ii) the degree of lateral spread of knowledge; iii) the degree of financial self-sufficiency; iv) the level of institutionalization of the activity, and v) the degree of cultural adaptation of the activity.

The research was conducted by means of a series of case studies in five West African countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Data were collected in more than 100 communities, associations and local businesses, forty of which were chosen for field visits and intensive studies on criteria of exemplary success. The instances of local empowerment and self-governance investigated cover the primary sector (rural production, natural resource management), the secondary sector (processing and marketing of products, small industry) and the tertiary sector (credit, health services, education, administration) of the local economy. The actual sites are detailed in Table 8.3 hereafter.

Table 8.3. Characteristics of sample for PADLOS-Education Study

No.	Ctry	Site	Region	Sector	Gender	Scale	Context	Pop.	Religion
1	BURKINAFASO	Ghana	S. central	Health	mixed	Network	semi-rural	1,200	mixed
2		Ménengou	N. central	cred-svgs	Men	Local	rural	2,400	Islam
3		Nomgana	central	natl res	Mixed	Network	semi-rural	2,200	Christian
4		Noungess	Boulg	Rur prod	Women	Network	rural	3,600	mixed
5		Songtaaba	capital	Art/ind	Women	Local	urban	>100,000	mixed
6		Tin Tua	East	information	Mixed	Regional	rural	[<1,000]	Chr.-anim.
7	GHANA	NFLP	North	training	mixed	regional	N/A	N/A	mixed
8		Forikrom	W. central	natl res	men	local	small city	6,000	Chr.-anim.
9		Kambguni	Southwest	govt	men	local	rural	2,000	Islam
10		Mafe-Kum	Southeast	water	mixed	network	rural	800	Christian
11		Nwodua	North	govt	mixed	local	rural	700	Christian
12	MALI	AFRCED	E. central	cred-svgs	women	network	mixed	mixed	mixed
13		Bamako	capital	Art/ind	mixed	network	urban	>100,000	mixed
14		Bangoro	Southeast	training	mixed	network	rural	3,400	Islam
15		Centr Gest	South	trade	men	regional	small city	N/A	Islam
16		Dugnink	South	natl res	men	local	rural	650	Islam
17		Ntongoros	South	Art/ind	men	local	rural	2,900	Islam
18		Kafara	South	trade	mixed	local	rural	700	Islam
19		Kaniko	South	cred-svgs	women	local	semi-rural	2,350	Islam
20		Niono Col	central	processing	mixed	local	semi-rural	2,950	Islam
21		Seriwala	central	cred-svgs	men	local	semi-rural	3,100	Islam
22		Sougoula	South	trade	men	local	rural	650	Islam
23	NIGER	Damana	S. central	processing	women	local	rural	1,550	Islam
24		Gaya	Southwest	Rur prod	men	local	small city	15,000	mixed
25		Iyo		education	mixed	local	rural	750	Islam
26		Kouré	West	Rur prod	men	local	semi-rural	1,400	Islam
27		Makalondi	West	Rur prod	men	local	rural	2,100	Islam
28		Sayé Sab	S. central	supply	men	network	rural	3,600	Islam
29		Sona	Northwest	Rur prod	mixed	network	semi-rural	3,200	Islam
30	SENEGAL	Fandene	W. central	cred-svgs	mixed	network	semi-rural	1,500	mixed
31		GrandYoff	capital	Art/ind	women	local	peri-urban	>1 million	mixed
32		GY Bocar	South	Rur prod	mixed	local	rural	1,550	Islam
33		Kër Simb	W. central	processing	women	local	rural	450	Islam
34		Kër Madialé	N. central	supply	women	local	rural	900	Islam
35		Koumptent	central	Rur prod	Mixed	network	semi-rural	N/A	Islam
36		Ndiayene	Northwest	Rur prod	Men	local	rural	1,600	Islam
37		Pendaw	Northwest	cred-svgs	Mixed	local	rural	1,350	Islam
38		Saam Njay	W. central	health	Women	local	rural	450	Islam
39		S M Kolda	South	Rur prod	Women	local	small city	8,500	mixed
40	URCAD	N. central	trade	Men	network	rural	N/A	Islam	

► *Description: Degree of effective takeover*

In all sectors of local development, there exist — in increasing number — remarkable examples of the assumption of new functions and responsibilities by grassroots actors.

The results of the study show that local actors and associations in all five countries have succeeded — sometimes starting from levels of total illiteracy — in acquiring the necessary knowledge to take charge of a wide variety of operations in each of the development sectors considered. The common denominator among successful experiments in local-level assumption of development

responsibility seems to lie in the close interweaving of training and the application of knowledge — and thus in the development of practical opportunities for individuals, collectivities and associations to deploy and gain tangible benefits from their newly acquired skills.

The majority of successful cases are actually multi-sectoral and follow an itinerary which begins with the management of a viable income-generating activity. Successful local groups seem to recognize, of their own accord, the need to associate income-generating projects with activities to improve supply of public goods and services. They attempt, in effect, to “box the compass”, developing strategies that incorporate activities in all three sectors of the local economy. If one element could be identified as “triggering” the need for new training and the upward spiral of self-governance, however, it would be local management of viable economic activities.

Yet evidence from the sites demonstrates that the self-governance effort can also begin with cultural or institutional initiatives, on the sole condition that it incorporate or soon generate possibilities of local self-financing and permit its initiators to combine primary, secondary and tertiary sector activities in a comprehensive strategy.

The movement remains sparsely and unevenly developed, and it is subject to a number of constraints that demand attention.

In spite of the dynamism of this movement for local assumption of development responsibility, such initiatives are still in their infancy and face numerous obstacles. Only half of the sites selected for the intensive phase of the survey proved actually to have made major progress in the direction of overall self-governance at the time of the study. Even in these sites, the “lateral” distribution of knowledge and functions to new strata of local society continues to pose a problem.

Moreover, in places where the development of training was not accompanied by new investments requiring technical and managerial capabilities, a paradoxical problem of “over-literacy” or “over-training” frequently arose. The geographical spread of the movement also remains limited, despite centers of intensive activity. And although they are often part of broader networks, local.

Associations — with the exception of a few leading cases — have not secured full representation in decision-making at higher levels.

External support was instrumental in launching the majority of these experiments, but it only proved effective to the degree that ownership of the initiatives was later claimed and assumed by local institutions.

Of the forty sites visited across the five countries surveyed, twenty were launched by external parties, eleven were principally the work of the local actors themselves, and nine were mixed, i.e., generated by the interaction of internal and external initiatives. The dominant influence of external intervention on the development of these initiatives seems to be due as much to a lack of local seed capital as to any lack of motivation for local self-governance.

► *Analysis: conditions and consequences of take-over*

*The emergence of genuinely empowering local initiatives and the further development of this local governance movement hinge on a process of local capitalization along **five convergent dimensions** — ecological, financial, institutional, intellectual and cultural that are risky to dissociate.*

How does one move beyond the vague feeling that there are remarkable achievements in some places and sparse success in others? How do we evaluate the precise *degree* of assumption of responsibility in the different sites visited? And how can one accurately *diagnose* the situation — that is, identify the obstacles and influences of local initiative.

Many factors come into play in the local assumption of new development responsibilities. The research team decided to aggregate those observed most frequently in the course of the surveys into five categories representing five interdependent dimensions of the accumulation, reinvestment and husbanding of resources necessary to ensure the sustainability of local initiative.

- I. **Physical capitalization**, an enhancement of *ecological capital* and development of a *material infrastructure* to serve as a lasting basis for human activity.
- II. **Financial capitalization** is the accumulation of collective savings and other forms of monetizable investment.
- III. **Institutional capitalization** is the constitution of a social framework to define and regulate the division of labor, guarantee agreements and

contracts, and create avenues for broad social amendment and ratification of these norms.

- IV. **“Intellectual” and technical capitalization** is the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, and their application to tasks that they judge significant, by a growing proportion of the community.
- V. **Deep cultural capitalization** around the activity in question, ensuring that it is imbued with existing cultural values while serving to renew or transform them.

The interdependence of these dimensions of accumulation and local self-sufficiency was confirmed many times in the course of the survey. The same principles are unfortunately demonstrated in the reverse by the failures of numerous projects that have emphasized one or another of these factors without to some extent associating them or at least consolidating links to the related functions in local society.

The element most often missing from development initiatives is adequate training and/or literacy instruction of participants, This is closely linked to their progressive assumption of responsibility. Its absence imposes a very low ceiling on financial and technical self-sufficiency.

Without introducing the technology of writing and effective literacy, in whatever language or script it may be, and acquired by any available type of education, training and assumption of new development functions both tend to *remain stuck at the most rudimentary level of technical skill and the most incomplete forms of participation.*

Each type of “capitalization” defined above requires its own training style and content; the need for the technology of writing arises at different stages in each domain. In the foundational area of accounting and management of collective resources, however, the upper limits on the effectiveness of oral communication appear very low among the nascent enterprises visited during the survey.

Though African culture is of the realm of orality *par excellence* with an unequalled tradition of wisdom, palaver and recitation, all of the countries participating in the survey are also parishes of the “religions of the Book”, cultural institutions which place special emphasis on writing and societies in which education has a high intrinsic value.

The development of these new institutions of civil society and the local assumption of functions previously reserved for central administration very rapidly pose a democratic challenge that can only be met by progressive broadening of the supply of training.

Local associations and communities that seem to be winning the wager of decentralization find themselves obliged early on to adopt training and literacy strategies *along two critical axes*. First, they must provide increasingly sophisticated professional training for the people who will perform managerial and operational functions within the organization. Second, literacy instruction and basic technical initiation must be offered to a growing proportion of the organization's members.

Only expanded training guarantees that the participants will be able to exercise democratic control over association activities and replace leaders whose services are not deemed satisfactory, as needed.

This requirement of their internal organization makes such associations an important initial testing ground for African modes of democracy and a source for lessons of experience that may subsequently be reproduced on a larger scale or gradually penetrate the social fabric.

To succeed, local governance initiatives often seem to require and to provoke the development of new relationships among social groups defined by age, gender, religion and ethnicity.

In both urban and rural contexts that were visited, the associations and collectivities that have best succeeded in undertaking this five-fold capitalization appear to have grafted themselves onto or been born from existing social structures. This most frequently happens, however, in circumstances where a fundamental social challenge is widely recognized and provides an impetus and a blessing for a certain degree of cultural and social innovation. Such phenomena provide a fine example of the sort of "cultural capitalization" that must be an integral part of self-sufficiency strategies.

Among the most significant cultural transformations spurred by genuine local capitalization is the redefinition of the roles of different groups of actors within local society — strata of age, gender, ethnicity, profession, religion etc. The need to mobilize all the skills required by a new development

activity often pushes local associations to transcend barriers of age, gender and social status, which previously appeared impermeable.

Women currently represent the most dynamic element in the local governance and self-sufficiency equation, but they continue to lack the means to capitalize on their energies.

Women are a latent human resource with the greatest potential to spark the self-sufficiency of new local institutions and they have now decidedly entered the picture. When they can benefit from the requisite training, women generally show themselves to be better managers, more trustworthy debtors, and thus more “bankable” borrowers than men. However, there is only minimal participation of women in positions of responsibility in the majority of the sites visited during the study, clearly due to a lack of the training opportunities, investment resources, and institutional frameworks that would permit them to “earn their stripes” in women’s associations with enough resources and a sufficient margin of maneuver to capitalize their efforts and win real powers of negotiation.

Ten women’s associations or enterprises and seventeen mixed groups were included among the forty sites of our “intensive” study, though the terms “women’s” and “mixed” only have relative value in most cases. Nevertheless, the restricted — but growing — number of activities organized and managed by women demonstrates their aptitude for these new responsibilities.

External support is most effective when it concentrates on creating and sustaining an environment favorable to local initiative.

In this domain, it appears to be more a question of removing the obstacles (economic, political, technical) up- and downstream from local capitalization efforts — obstacles to which the actors themselves rarely have access — than of directly intervening in the field. From the outset, it is essential to lay the groundwork for the financial autonomy of the activity and to respect the dignity of the beneficiary, by providing support only upon request and against payment, even if payment is only partial in the beginning.

Conclusion

The local governance experiences — successful, in progress, fictional and/or stillborn — examined in this part of the study show that local communities

have the obvious potential to assume far more responsibility and initiative. This potential is only realized, however, under certain conditions — “fivefold capitalization” — which depend as much or more on policy makers and sources of funding as on the population itself.

Strategies for Mobilizing and Developing Local Capacity

The second series of observations in the PADLOS-Education Study concerns the strategies used by local associations, enterprises and communities to acquire or mobilize the skills required by new local governance opportunities. The observations are described and the dynamics of local skill mobilization and capacity construction analyzed at the local level along with the role of the different sources of training presently available “on the ground.”

► *Description: Where they learned their skills*

There is a surprising variety of local knowledge and skill upon which the communities and associations can call. The most successful organizations have learned to use all means at their disposal in very eclectic fashion.

Associations on the road to self-sufficiency tend to develop and make use of the whole range of competencies available at the local level. There is quite a mix of types of instruction and varieties of knowledge — both imported and indigenous — in most of these sites even those with little in the way of formal schooling. This latent pool of “human resources” includes graduates of NFE and literacy programs, school leavers and dropouts, Koranic or Bible school students, returned out-migrants, trade apprentices, extension program participants, initiates of traditional African education, and the self-taught.

The varied types of training are not well inter-linked. Episodic relationships and exchange mask a general lack of communication. But the constituent material needed to build new competencies manifestly exists and associations or businesses in sites where real progress has been made in local assumption of development responsibility have found ways to draw on it.

It is most often literacy and NEP programs that serve to bring out this diverse and still latent human resource and to prepare it for its new responsibilities.

Given the diversity of human resources available at the local level, associations seeking self-sufficiency are confronted with a considerable problem of

retraining, harmonizing, and integrating the available “labor pool”. The solution most frequently adopted has been to use adult literacy or NFE programs as a “mainstreaming” or “recycling” mechanism. In a good number of associations, literacy in the national language of the area is now a condition of candidacy for official positions, and numerous Koranic students or school dropouts attend the literacy courses to brush up on their skills and qualify for new responsibilities. At the same time, as these training activities expand, enrollees are getting younger. Many communities are beginning to transform literacy training into a form of self-schooling for children.

Mastery of the tool of writing appears to constitute a threshold of institutional development at the local level.

All broadly used Sahelian languages have been transcribed and have a growing literature. Their usefulness as a means of communication and self-management in decentralization strategies must be acknowledged increasingly. The transition between African and international languages of communication (e.g. French and English) is now much better understood and instructionally developed, opening the way to new modes of transition from one to the other.

African multilingualism is as much a resource as a constraint. Achieving literacy in these languages poses few technical problems, but having the media and administration use them in written communication has proved much more problematic.

Supporters of effective decentralization and local self-governance have every reason therefore to help surmount these problems and the underlying political reticence. The mastery of some written system appears to constitute an essential condition for progress in the self-sufficiency of local associations.

The most convincing experiments in self-sufficiency and community governance result from synergy among the different elements of local capitalization and close collaboration between trainers and developers

The key element of a successful local self-governance strategy lies in the close and careful coupling of training and productive investment as demonstrated by the numerous sites where unilateral interventions floundered until these two forms of capitalization were joined. Furthermore, it is most

often training which serves to weld financial capital to an institutional base broad enough to ensure the perpetuation of the enterprise and which provides a vehicle for a cultural adaptation of the intervention model.

► *Analysis: Reinforcement and mobilization of local capacities*

What can we learn about the dynamics of local capacity creation and the prognosis for self-sufficiency efforts from this appraisal of efforts of the performance and results of the various parallel training “systems” in place at the local level?

The majority of male and female local actors concerned with the local self-governance movement succeed in becoming literate and/or gaining the required technical knowledge without great difficulty.

Observations at the forty sites strongly suggest that teaching literacy and becoming literate in one’s own language or a familiar tongue, and acquiring new knowledge on this basis, are not terribly difficult provided the application of the new knowledge is clear, and the pedagogy progressive and participatory.

Several factors seem to explain this fact: The powerful motivation created by real opportunities for local assumption of responsibility; the phonetic character of the transcription of African languages; the great success of strategies for using new literates to staff subsequent training; the relatively low unit cost of the programs and the possible multi-functionality of literacy instruction, and the existing knowledge of the public and the natural phenomena of “creaming” which enter into the selection of local leaders.

The necessary training to support self-governance initiatives is hardly limited to literacy instruction but if the “tool of writing” constitutes a threshold of effectiveness in the management of local institutions, its mastery is equally important for magnifying the scope and impact of training.

Keys to the success of training programs at the local level can be summarized by three conditions: i) careful dovetailing of training and application; ii) real employment or self-employment possibilities in prospect, and iii) a “conscientizing” but easily reproducible instructional approach.

The surveys were focused on the ins and outs of local self-governance efforts but they also provide some insight into the conditions for success of related training efforts.

- *Real employments.* Training initiatives that are not at least partially linked with real outlets and possibilities for increased capitalization have little chance of success. The challenges of generating and managing new collective resources most often trigger the need for training, constitute its most solid starting point, and furnish its most immediate field of practical application.
- *Alternation between learning and application.* A good alternation between learning and application seems to be the second key to success for this type of training. “Application” can, of course, signify many things besides the management of income-generating activities. The criterion is obviously the use or uses valued by the beneficiary group.
- The big challenge, however, lies in adapting the program of instruction to the contours and requirements of the new powers or functions to be exercised, and in modeling those functions themselves into a gentle pyramid of competencies and tasks which the trainee can scale over time as he or she masters the related lessons.
- *A conscientizing and reproducible pedagogy.* The element of “conscientization”, or culturally innovative and critical learning is a key ingredient in the formula. In several sites that were visited, this was the element that transformed] training to varying degrees into a movement that revitalized and awakened the surrounding culture. It is difficult to reproduce such approaches in any large-scale manner without a good methodology to associate beneficiaries in their conception and development.

Coupling training and literacy to local “capitalization” efforts also ensures a higher degree of self-financing of the endeavors, and thus greater reproducibility.

Successful efforts at “fivefold capitalization” seem to offer the best basis for the self-financing of training. The most striking example of this phenomenon is probably found in Chad, where despite a prolonged civil war and near-total incapacity of the state, communities forced to assume responsibility for their own affairs created schools and provided *28 times as many* classroom places as the government did over the ensuing decade.

Similar approaches appeared in our sample wherever a collectivity or association took over training because it was considered an essential instrument for the organization’s growth and self-governance.

The gap between educational systems and development services or programs is still wide and deep. It represents one of the greatest obstacles to promoting “fivefold capitalization” in the field.

A wide gulf continues to separate the two groups of actors who hold the key to capitalization at the local level. Development agencies and the divisions of the aid organizations which support them recognize all too rarely their “pedagogical” vocation as a possibility of breaking down their technical messages and managerial functions into “learnable” skills and ceding responsibility and resource entitlements to local actors who master them, phase by phase. Educators, on the other hand, tend still to have little or no understanding of the stakes of socio-economic development in the zones where they work. They do not know how-or at least rarely try- to adapt their programs to the “pedagogy” inherent in the assumption of new responsibilities by their learners.

Conclusion

It is impossible to train, educate or make literate a community or social group. One can only create the conditions under which that group becomes literate, trains, or educates itself-and then accompany the nascent initiatives by furnishing relevant support and helping address blockages downstream. But that role of facilitator and guarantor is a highly demanding one.

5. Practical Implications

What are the implications of the results of the PADLOS-Education study for the intervention or partnership strategies of government services, NGOs and aid agencies in the West African context?

For local development

To promote the success of local governance and self-sufficiency initiatives: encourage multiple capitalization; firmly insert training into this context; and conceive all planning, investment and technical diffusion programs as opportunities for learning, assumption of responsibility by beneficiaries, and staged transfer of decision-making responsibilities.

Launching and managing resource-generating activities constitute the driving force of this strategy, but are not necessarily its first and never its only element. Capitalization can also begin with cultural renewal or with the confrontation of ecological or demographic challenges. The secret obvi-

ously lies in closely interweaving the five kinds of resource required by local actors themselves and thus a form of outside support sensitive to these needs.

Whatever the order of intervention, the image of fivefold capitalization recalls the necessary strategic “ingredients” and emphasizes the importance of reciprocal *linkages*. It seems fair to say that no external investment or intervention program in local development should henceforth be conceived without incorporating a strategy of capacity building that enables the beneficiaries to take charge of the activity in appropriate and mutually-negotiated phases. Learning how to develop such a joint strategy of development, training and actual assumption of responsibility constitutes the real challenge for agency and aid personnel.

Achieve a better semblance of inter-service coordination by transferring control of resource deployment to the local consumers or “clients.”

Better coordination among development actors is an oft-repeated refrain, but an objective achieved only very partially and occasionally. The movement considered here presents real possibilities for better coordination “from the grassroots,” a situation in which the beneficiaries or clients of the activity themselves demand a minimum of harmony among the interventions of external agents.

Develop the critical “missing link” between top-down decentralization and local self-management — by making local municipalities the turntable and the rendez-vous between the two movements.

It is critically important to ensure that the top-down and bottom-up movements underway are not at loggerheads. Local municipalities seem to constitute the critical junction between the two phenomena. On one hand, we observe an increasingly powerful “federative” reflex among grassroots communities and associations, which seek to form networks of service provision and savings that reach beyond the local level. On the other, the newly decentralized authorities of government administration, enterprises and NGOs sorely need to assemble a constituency that connects them with the local population. Local municipalities are a point of confluence for these currents; training and literacy offer a potent means of communication and collaboration among them.

Systematically promote in development projects and administrative operations the mastery and especially the use of the written code most accessible to local actors.

This generally means African languages transcribed in Roman characters, though other alternatives exist and still others will emerge. In the present situation, it seems essential to develop training and intervention methods that will help people gradually move to functional bilingualism or trilingualism; and to encourage an intensification of written communication in African languages, an expansion of small local media, and a greater attention to cultural production grafted onto local governance initiatives, which allow stakeholders to “have their say” in the design of these efforts.

The future seems sure to be multilingual, the natural state of a good proportion of humankind and a particular asset of African peoples. We must begin to think in terms of a functional trilingualism (bilingual in major centers, where much of the population will wish to master a third language): local language, African *lingua franca* and international language, each having its own uses as well as shared areas of deployment.

It isn't enough to “remember gender” in strategizing for local self-governance. Successful strategies do best to start with women and must meet their needs for seed capital and training.

To judge by the numerous women's or “mixed” associations visited during the study, initiatives on their behalf need to ensure the opportunity to come together to evaluate their situation, adequate credit, and access to training-on-demand in literacy, administration and management. Women are increasingly responsible for maintaining social stability and managing households. There can thus be no strategy to stimulate the local economy that does not involve them.

► *For training strategies and programs*

Focus training on the mastery of management, the challenge of productive reinvestment of income, and the development of a process that enables the entire stakeholder population to participate in decision-making in an appropriate manner.

The challenges posed by the management of collective resources remain one of the great stimuli of the desire to learn and one of the principal instruments of effective self-governance. Promoting strategies of local investment “left, right and center” is therefore the basic vocation of external sources of support, a vocation that will not be soon exhausted. But *technical* instruction alone is far from a sufficient strategy for pulling it off.

The *democratic* challenge of institutional development consists of ensuring that the competency — and the resources — needed to manage the capitalization effort do not remain the exclusive right of an elite. The results of our surveys and discussions suggests two imperatives:

1. *Attending to the horizontal and vertical axes in the acquisition of new skills and the distribution of functions* within the organization, taking care to provide a good number of people outside the initial core of leaders with a set of skills and competencies that will at least enable them to monitor group activities and decision-making.
2. Allowing the necessary time and energy to develop with the interested parties, on the basis of an updating of underlying values and traditions, *institutional forms and decision-making processes likely to guarantee the representation and encourage the expression of everyone in an appropriate manner.*

Finally, the effort required to give meaning to the innovations and to adapt them to the basic values of the surrounding culture or improve them by this crossbreeding is an indispensable function of any attempt at the promotion of local self-governance; and training can constitute one effective means to this end.

Adopt empowering training methodologies that put a premium on learner responsibility for design, promote the development of increased self-confidence and offer opportunities for forging a reinforced and broadened cultural identity.

There is a harmony to be respected or created between the objectives of greater assumption of responsibility and fuller participation of these training programs and the methods used in developing and conducting them. Participation in the design and evaluation of training and nurturance of responsibility for learning decisions, are critical approaches though sometimes difficult to follow on a widespread, durable basis. The time

of patented and standardized instructional methods seems largely past. Experience shows how important it is to plan for the participation of the users themselves in developing materials and instructional strategy.

Encourage communities to develop their own systems of training and schooling in African and (as feasible) international languages. Such educational initiatives should be based on, and closely coordinated with, prior successful activities in self-management and local capitalization.

Our observations and analyses bring up some fundamental questions:

1. Why not try forging a better connection between the self-management initiatives increasingly underway at the local level and the strategy of “education for all” confided in primary schooling?
2. Why not consider — at least in the growing number of communities affected by the sort of “capitalized” activities discussed here — entrusting to the community itself the responsibility of organizing a program of primary instruction, schooling which would begin in an African language on the basis of prior literacy experience?
3. Why not consider schooling as an integral part of the local “human resource development system” that all communities and associations striving for self-sufficiency inevitably need and as an enterprise that is as manageable at the local level as those in other sectors that are being increasingly taken over?

Such an educational reform “by the grassroots” should of course be accompanied by a certain number of checks and guarantees to ensure the quality of work and the usefulness and convertibility of the results. But is not the first step to breach the conceptual isolation surrounding the educational system and rethink it in the same framework as the new development activities in progress?

The real challenge is working for long-term educational reforms that will lead to a better coupling of schooling with the obstacles and opportunities of socioeconomic decentralization.

Such an ambition entails gradually accomplishing two important changes.

1. The first is achieving a much better *horizontal and vertical integration of the educational system*. A fluid passage between a broad primary education rooted in African language literacy and a selective secondary

and higher system using international languages; and institution of exchanges, equivalencies and transitional mechanisms between the formal and non-formal segments of the system.

2. The second change involves crafting a host of *new linkages between education and local development*. The most important — in a better connection of training and education to local employments; fuller enlistment of economic and social development services, credit and savings networks, and small and medium enterprise in developing — locality by locality — the job market and possibilities for entrepreneurial initiative which will be open to graduates of different training courses, and greater recognition of these practical destinations and itineraries in programs of instruction.

► *For External support agencies*

Budgetary decentralization and supported transfer of financial responsibility should be practiced at all levels, using approaches like “performance contracting” and “management by objectives”.

External actors can only effectively support a more decentralized style of development by decentralizing their own operations. Several tools open new avenues for decentralization by promoting the emergence of new local intermediaries who can greatly amplify the impact of initiatives.

- *Management by objectives* to give staff and field offices increased responsibility for development and implementation of strategies.
- *Performance contracting* to enlist the energies of a variety of local actors in a fully accountable manner.
- *Innovative ‘request-for-proposal’ procedures* to open learning and service opportunities up to new groups while at the same time providing a means to identify those most able to meet each type of need.
- *Highly-developed negotiation skills* to create the basis for new alliances between government agencies and civil society and turn the page on more outmoded and autocratic administrative behaviors.

Reinforce the capacity of state services to play the new role of facilitator, trainer, regulator and catalyst of local investment that falls to them in a more decentralized system.

This role demands both more competence and more “restraint” than the hierarchical behavior of traditional administration, an observation, which

confirms a general rule: successful decentralization requires a state which is both technically strong and administratively circumspect.

At the same time, measures must be taken to *unfetter and promote* the kind of *closer collaboration between ministries and services* (and therefore among the corresponding divisions of the aid agencies as well) needed to ensure effective support of local initiatives that are always and inevitably “multidisciplinary”. And the coordination of this new style of integrated development should be carried out in large part *from the bottom up* and under the direction of beneficiaries.

Finally, strengthen the ability of aid agencies and donor organizations to play the new roles which will be theirs in the next generation of relations between West African and Northern countries: roles of facilitation, training, and support of initiatives conceived and managed at different levels of the host society.

Faced with such imperatives, the question of the proper *instruments* of aid and the search for effective *strategies* begin to blend. Only by working with African partners so that they master the instrument itself and better understand the global context surrounding aid will donor agencies be able to ensure truly cost-effective operations in the next phase of development assistance.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AL	Adult Literacy
ANFE	Adult and Non-Formal Education
CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDD	Community-Driven Development (World Bank)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency

CILSS	Inter-State Committee to Combat Drought in the Sahel (<i>Comité inter-état de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel</i>)
CLUSA	Cooperative League of the United States of America
CSO	Community Service Organization
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EFA	Education for All
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
ILO	International Labor Organization (UN)
LCB	Local capacity building
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals (UN)
MFI	Microfinance Institution
NFE	Non Formal Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PADLOS	Support Project for Sahelian Local Development (<i>Projet d'appui au développement local au Sahel</i> , CILSS/Club du Sahel-OECD)
PRGA	Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (CIGAR/Colombia)
TC	Technical Cooperation
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Chapter 9.

The Use of African Languages and Literacy: Conditions, Factors and Processes in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Tanzania and Zambia

by Hassana Alidou

1. Introduction

The Context: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Tanzania and Zambia

The study seeks to provide an overview of the conditions, factors and processes that affect the use of African languages and literacy in these countries. It addresses the types of policies that are implemented (conditions, factors and processes); funding of literacy programs; the problems arising from implementing the policies and how policymakers facilitate the development of a literate culture in Africa. It relies mainly on studies related to language policy and the use of national languages in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Tanzania and Zambia, all of which are multilingual and multicultural and where local languages are the main means of communication. The six countries are divided into three groups based on their colonial and post-independence language policies. In the Francophone countries (Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali), French is the exclusive official language of administration and education. Cameroon is an officially bilingual country that uses French and English as its official languages; Tanzania is an officially bilingual country that uses Kiswahili and English as official languages

in administration and education. Zambia is an Anglophone country where English is its official language.

2. Language Policies and Literacy During the Colonial Period

The colonial legacy continues to affect language and educational policies and practices in Africa. Anglophone and Francophone colonial administrators sought to educate a few civil servants who could work as liaisons with the indigenous people, and therefore educated them in their own languages.

Missionaries promoted the use of local languages for education and literacy to convert Africans to Christianity (Brock-Utne, 2005; Chiatoh, 2005; Manchisi, 2004; and Ohannessian, 1978). The missionaries used African languages to evangelize and consequently worked extensively to transcribe African languages; each mission produced its own orthography for the local language used in the church. In British and German colonies such as Cameroon, Tanganyika (now Tanzania), and Zambia, missionaries were also very instrumental in promoting the use of African languages in formal education. Manchisi summarizes the impact of missionaries in promoting African languages during the colonial era:

*During the colonial period, missionaries came and settled in various parts of the country. They opened churches, hospitals and schools. What one can state without any fear of contradiction is that the drive for evangelization proved extremely successful because the missionaries used local languages. The Bible and other Christian literature were translated into the local languages. People chanted hymns in the language they understood best i.e. their own local languages, and even in the schools the medium of instruction was in their own local language at least up to the 4th grade. Because of this, there was a wealth of literature in the local languages.*¹

British colonial governments were most tolerant towards African languages and allowed them to be used in the first three years of elementary school. English was used as a subject in the lower grades and became the language of instruction from the fourth grade onwards. Such policy positively influ-

1. Manchisi, P.C. (2004) the status of indigenous languages in institutions of learning in Zambia: past, present and future, in *The African Symposium* vol. 4, No. 1 March.

enced the use of local languages for literacy and basic education. By contrast, the French colonial administration was less tolerant of the use of African languages for educational and administrative purposes. In former French colonies such as Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali, instruction was done exclusively in French and the use of local languages was strictly forbidden. In Muslim communities, teaching the Koran was tolerated but Arabic was not accepted as a language of instruction in any type of formal school. The introduction of Western forms of education undermined the spread of other literacy practices such as Arabic script (Ajami) to write African languages (Hausa, Fulfulde, Mande and Wolof). The only literacy validated by the colonial administration was that acquired through Western education, literacy in French and English. Literacy in these languages became the main tool for upward mobility and economic gain during the colonial era. Kwesi Prah (1995:1) rightly stated that

the acquisition of literacy and numeracy facilitates social mobility. It provides a competitive edge to people anxious to escape socio-economic limitations of the lower rungs of the social ladder.

The colonial educational policies had negative social and cultural consequences in Africa (Alidou, 2004; and Wolff, 2006). The tiny minority of Africans who were able to attend the colonial educational system gained access to European languages and as a result were better positioned in their own societies. Literacy in the official languages of the colonial administration triggered a different social reorganization and created sharp divisions within the African communities. Gender disparity in accessing literacy developed during the colonial period as the colonial administrators recruited more men than women as civil servants. More boys had access to formal education than girls.

The use of European languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Spanish as the official languages of the colonial administration and education prevented the development of mass literacy and a literate culture in both official and national languages. With political independence, very limited printed materials were available in the local languages even in Anglophone countries where local languages were used in the first three years of education. Those that did exist were of very poor quality and written in non-standardized dialects.

Two types of reading materials were produced during that period: primary school primers and reading materials for evangelization, particularly

translated Bibles. The existing materials were not written in standardized dialects since each missionary school used its own orthography in reading materials. It became very difficult for children to acquire adequate literacy skills by reading multiple orthographies.

Lack of standardized languages and quality reading materials in African languages led UNESCO experts to recommend, in the early 1960s, the promotion of French or English-only instruction in some African countries despite their own policy of mother tongue education.

In Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), for example, UNESCO experts argued that in the absence of standardized local languages, teachers ineffectively used several orthographies to teach the same language. To remedy this situation, UNESCO experts recommended the promotion of English-only as the medium of instruction in the schools, believing that *the use of English will influence the improvement of the quality of spoken and written languages* (Ohanessian and Kashoki, 1978).

However, Manchisi (2004:5) reported that *it is worthy noting here that when the Nationalist Government accepted and implemented the Radford recommendation, it did not however, abandon the teaching of local languages. They were merely, to be taught as subjects.*

3. Post-independence and Literacy Policies

International and national legal frameworks or political decisions have influenced the use of national languages for education in African countries since the early 1960s. These legal and political frameworks are presented below. The discussion needs to be further substantiated given that not all relevant documents were available and/or accessible.

International frameworks

An extensive critical review of literature on language policies in Africa by Ekkehart Wolff was published for the ADEA biennial meeting in Gabon in March 2006. Wolff noted that the majority of African countries have not drastically changed their inherited language policies and as a result, languages such as French, English, Portuguese and Spanish continue to be the official languages of administration and education to the detriment of national languages.

Africanists argue that these policies prevent mass education, literacy and national integration and have had a negative impact on the development of education in general and literacy in official and national languages alike.

Tai Afrik (1995) states that since 1960, three major international conferences on adult education, held in Montreal in 1960, in Tokyo in 1972 and in Paris in 1985, specifically addressed the issues of literacy, peace and international cooperation, democracy and the creation of learning opportunities for all age groups including women. More recently, he added, that the United Nations declared 1990 the “International Literacy Year” and the period 1990-2000 the “International Literacy Decade”. The Education for All conference held in Jomtien in 1990 and the Women’s Conference held in Beijing in 1995 specifically advocated the promotion of literacy, women’s education and the linking of formal and non-formal education in the broad context of lifelong learning.

In Africa, several high level governmental meetings, declarations and plans of action have emphasized the need to promote national African languages in education and other socio-economic domains: the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Cultural Charter for Africa (1976), the OAU Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Declaration on the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action (1985), the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986), the draft charter for the promotion of African languages in education developed during the Pan-African Seminar on “The Problems and Prospects of the Use of African National Languages in Education” organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in 1996 in Accra, Ghana, and the Harare Declaration (1997) which evolved from the intergovernmental conference on language policies in Africa organized by ADEA. In Harare, Ministers, experts and representatives of intergovernmental agencies worked together and developed a very detailed plan for actions at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, stating the nature of the objectives, targeted results, timeframe, and implementing bodies for each action.

As a result of these international and regional conferences and declarations and political frameworks, the ministries of education and the ministries of social development have included plans of action in their various policies that comprise a component on adult education and strategies to eradicate illiteracy among children and adults. The Conference organized by ADEA in Cape Town (2000) reemphasized the need to move from political declarations

to more concrete actions promoting the use of African languages in both formal and non-formal education.

It is worth noting that the States have largely played a political role by adopting laws aligned with the international policy frameworks (Hazoumê, 2005:23). Tanzania is the only country in Africa that has effectively promoted a language policy using a national language as an official language in administration and education along with English. In almost all other African countries, the use of national languages in formal domains is limited either to the first three years of primary education (Zambia) or long-term experimental bilingual programs (Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cameroon) while national languages are promoted for literacy and adult education and other NFE activities.

National Legal Frameworks and Recent Developments

► *Benin*

In 1985, the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa conducted a survey on African Community languages and their use in literacy and Education. The report indicated (page 54) that Benin and Togo were the only two African countries with national policies for the use of African languages in pre-school education. According to Jérémie Akplogan (2005), the government of Benin has affirmed its commitment to promote national languages by introducing the teaching of these languages in the teacher training program curriculum, and by creating the National Directorate for Literacy and Rural Media. It also enacted the 1977 law whose Article 3 specifically stipulates that all citizens have the right to use national languages for free expression.

In 1980, Benin created a Ministry for Alphabetization and Popular Culture and in 2003 adopted a National Literacy and Adult Education Policy to allow all citizens to use national languages for the development of their cultures and so that they could participate actively in the democratic process. A ten-year plan (2006-2015) was developed to implement the new policy.

► *Burkina Faso*

Since independence, Burkina Faso has adopted six laws whose main purpose is to legally promote the use of national languages for literacy and education. According to Napon (2001), in 1969, the government enacted the first post-independence law that led to the creation of the national commission

of Voltaic languages comprising 15 sub-commissions. Its mission was to conduct corpus planning work and to promote national languages. In 1970, Upper-Volta and UNESCO launched the first literacy campaign and in 1974 the government created the Department for the Promotion of Literacy, ONEPAFS. In 1978, local languages were given the status of national languages such that all the languages spoken by the different ethnic groups in Burkina Faso became national languages. In the same year, the government implemented its first experimental school. In 1997, the government elevated the national languages to the status of languages of instruction for both formal and non-formal education.

The use of Burkina languages was highly promoted during the Revolution led by President Thomas Sankara. According to Paul Taryam Ilboudo (2003) a mass literacy campaign similar to the Cuban “commando” literacy program was launched and, since 1990, several educational innovations have been tried to achieve the Education for All goals. The use of national languages in formal (*Ecoles Satellites; Ecoles Bilingues*) and NFE (*Centres d'éducation de base non-formelle; opération ZANU*, the REFLECT and text pedagogy approaches) is a central element of this reform.

► *Cameroon*

If language promotion were strictly a matter of legislation or constitutional reforms, then Cameroon would be among the champions of local language promotion in literacy on the African continent. There are many, varied national legal and constitutional reforms in favor of the development of the many local languages and cultures. Yet, Cameroon has made very little concrete progress in fostering the effective use of these languages in literacy. However, certain actions have been undertaken that point to the government's awareness of the vital importance of this process:

- The creation of Ministries responsible for language research, development and promotion: Ministry of Scientific Research (MINREST), the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MINJEUN) responsible for the promotion of literacy, the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDEB), the Ministry of Culture (MINCULT) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MINCOF).
- Law No. 96/04 of 18 January 1996 revising the constitution of 02 January 1972.
- Constitutional provision to develop and promote national languages contained in the revised constitution of 1996 calling for the promotion of national languages as part of national cultures.

- Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 pertaining to the general orientation for education that provides for, among other things, training citizens rooted in their cultures and promoting national languages.
- Decree No. 2002/004 of 4 January 2002 reorganizing the Ministry of National Education that creates pedagogic inspectorates for mother tongues.
- Law No 2004/018 of July 2004 on transferring powers to local councils to implement programs to eradicate illiteracy and manage educational infrastructures. Section III of the law provides for the promotion of national languages.
- Law No 2004/019 of July 2004 empowering regions to undertake education and literacy; to support the elaboration and implementation of regional literacy programs, training of trainers, producing materials, making a linguistic map of the region, promoting national languages, participating in editing national languages, promoting written and audio-visual press in national languages and establishing infrastructure and equipment.
- Law No. 98/003 of 8 January 1998 reorganizing the Ministry of Culture and thus formally created a department for mother tongues.

These reforms establish national languages and cultures as an integral part of a national linguistic heritage. Though laudable as they appear to be, they have fallen very short in producing any concrete results. They have, nonetheless, provided the frameworks for reinforced research, language development and sensitization in favor of national languages in education and literacy in Cameroon.

► *Mali*

Ngolo Coulibaly (2003) suggests that literacy issues were addressed during several major seminars organized by the government: the National Seminar on Education in 1964, the General State of Education Seminar in 1978, and the Debate on National Education conducted in 1991 (*Etats Généraux de l'Education*). To respond to the medium of instruction problem in formal basic education and to promote literacy and adult education among its youths and adult population, the government revised its language policy twice. According to Coulibaly (2003) the decree No 96-049 of August 20, 1996 defines the modalities for promoting national languages. Thirteen languages are recognized as national languages; Article 2 states that the use of these languages in cultural, scientific, and technological development is encouraged.

The State recognizes the right of communities and citizens to initiate or participate in any actions geared toward promoting the 13 national languages. Article 10 of the Educational Law No. 046) signed on December 28th 1999 states that instruction can be offered in the official language and in the national languages.

► *Zambia*

In 1996, the Zambian government presented its current education policy in a document it entitled *Educating Our Future*. The policy includes a dual strategy for addressing literacy among children and adults. The education language policy contained in this document suggests that in formal education, initial literacy and numeracy would be developed through a language familiar to children. The use of Zambian languages as languages of instruction for basic literacy is viewed as a necessary strategy to promote both literacy and learning in students' first languages and English. According to Linehan (2005)², the government obtained technical and financial support of £10.2 million from the British government to design the Primary Reading Program, a seven-year program designed in collaboration with DFID. Sampa (2005) argues that the program has been effective in achieving its main goal of helping children acquire adequate literacy skills and become successful in school.

Since independence, governments have invested heavily in education but have not been able to meet the rising costs of the formal system and the demand for education resulting from growing populations and increasing expectations of the potency of literacy (Elizabeth Mumba, 2002)³. In 1966, Zambia received support from UNESCO to develop its first basic literacy program. UNESCO trained literacy experts, teachers and produced the primers used in the literacy classes. The program curriculum focused on teaching basic literacy skills (reading, writing and numeracy). Its evaluation indicated that the program was not effective; the curriculum did not take into consideration the socio-economic background of the participants, teaching and learning materials were inadequate and the neo-literate quickly fell back into illiteracy.

In reaction to the evaluation of the Basic Literacy Program (BLP), the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services implemented a new literacy

2. Linehan, Shay (2005). *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (2005). Box 4.8 Initial literacy and the medium of instruction in Zambia.

3. Non-formal education in Zambia: Experiences of the ADEA Working Group on non-formal education in Zambia. Paper presented at the national symposium on non-formal education in Mozambique, Maputo, 12-14 June 2002.

program oriented toward functional literacy targeting producers of cash crops such as maize and groundnuts. It created centers where literacy courses were offered and also used radio to broadcast pertinent curricular information. The functional literacy campaign lasted from 1971-1990. It also faced serious problems: it lacked adequate teaching and learning materials, sufficient funding, and human resources such as teachers.

After the Jomtien conference, the government invited various stakeholders to address the issue of literacy in Zambia. The Zambian Alliance for Literacy (ZAL) was formed and launched the National Literacy Campaign 1991-1994. Its main objectives were presented in the section of the EFA 2000 assessment document. The Ministry of Education Representative stated:

- To establish the levels of literacy, funds should be made available to the Central Statistical Office to carry out a comprehensive national literacy survey among those 15 and above.
- The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should prepare a directory of NGOs involved in promoting literacy activities in the country.
- The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should initiate the establishment of a central coordinating body for literacy activities comprising key stakeholders (Ministry and NGOs). The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should promote integration of literacy instruction in government programs related to agriculture, health and education for a better living.
- The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in collaboration with the Department of Adult Education at the University of Zambia, should establish nine literacy centers (1 in every province) to produce materials, train instructors and provide short courses aimed at sustaining literacy skills among neo-literates and promoting income generating activities among women.
- The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should identify and focus on reducing illiteracy among districts with lower than 50% literacy rates to 25% by concentrating primarily on female literacy programs. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should set up rural libraries alongside literacy centers aimed at promoting a reading culture.

The government is currently implementing this policy in Zambia.

► *Tanzania*

Among all the African countries Tanzania is the only country which has been able to go beyond political declarations, unimplemented language policies and experimentation. In 1967, President Nyerere proposed in the Arusha Declaration that socialism become the political and economic system for Tanzania and he conceptualized “Education for self-reliance”. According to Mpogolo (1986:131), Nyerere provided a clear vision of an authentic education, which, he argued, must take into consideration rural people’s socio-economic, cultural, and political aspirations and needs. As a result, the curricular content of the schools (whatever the level and type i.e., formal or non-formal) must take into consideration “what people must know and do in order to build a socialist nation”. He suggested that teachers should promote democratic practices in the classrooms by engaging their students in planning and decision-making processes. He also stressed that teachers and students should develop productive activities related to agriculture and other socio-economic and cultural activities practiced in students’ environments (Yussuf Kassim, 1995; Mark Smith, 1998; and Budd L. Hall and J. Roby Kidd, 1978).

Adult education was integrated into Nyerere’s education vision. He believed that development goals could not be achieved without the effective involvement of Tanzania’s adult population. He argued that it takes longer for children to complete their education and that the government could not wait for their graduation to develop the country. In 1964, he said: *First we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten, or even twenty years. Adults can make immediate use of education* (Nyerere, cited in Mpogolo, 1986:32).

Consequently, he explicitly called for the promotion of adult education in the Dar es Salaam Declaration (1969), stating that adult education must serve two main goals: *inspire both a desire for change, and an understanding that change is possible, and help people to make their own decisions, and to implement those decisions for themselves.* (Nyerere, 1978:30).

Contrary to the majority of his peers who believed that national unity could only be achieved by retaining colonial languages as official languages, Nyerere believed that national unity could and must be built by using national languages. He defined a national language policy that systematically promoted Kiswahili as Tanzania’s official language of administration and

education. English is also maintained as an official language. Consequently, Kiswahili has been used as the language of communication in all socio-economic, cultural and political domains in Tanzania and has also gained national, regional and international status as the language of radio broadcasting and television and print media in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

Nyerere promoted a bilingual policy for formal education. Kiswahili is the medium of instruction at the primary level and English is used at the secondary and tertiary levels. Kiswahili is taught as a subject in secondary schools and becomes optional at the tertiary level (Brok-Utne, 2005; Roy-Campbell and Qorro, 1997).

4. Post-independence Language Policies and the Use of African Languages and Literacy

The international and national language policy frameworks discussed in this paper have affected the use of national languages and education in several different ways, varying from country to country and region to region. Historical factors also account for the disparity. From the institutional perspective, all African countries have created, within the Ministries of Education (Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali) and/or Social and Community Development, a department of literacy and adult education (Tai Afrik, 1995).

Some, like Benin and Senegal, have even created a Ministry of Non-formal Education and Literacy. Since the late 1970s, UNESCO has supported technically and financially the promotion of functional literacy and post-literacy campaigns in Africa. Mali, Tanzania and Zambia were among the participating countries of the World Literacy Program UNESCO launched in 1968.

In Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali, the Departments of Literacy and Adult Education and the National Language Commissions and the Departments of Linguistics and National Languages were responsible for promoting and developing national languages. Several functional literacy campaigns have been launched since the early 1970s in Francophone countries with the help of UNESCO. Adult literacy rates almost tripled over a period of thirty years in West Africa. However, there is a significant disparity between countries

in terms of how many literate individuals they have, which depends on the state of literacy and education in each country at the time of its political independence. At the end of colonization in the early 1960s, less than 5% of the population of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso had access to education so adult illiteracy rates for these countries were above 90%. Mali made significant progress in this area, increasing the number of adult literates seven-fold over a period of thirty years (6% in 1970 to 41% in 2000). The rate of adult literacy in Benin and in Burkina Faso tripled in the same period, going respectively from 11% in 1970 to 37% in 2000 and from 7% to 24%. It could be argued that countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Mali have made significant progress since independence but they have not reached a level of national literacy that can impact significantly their development; they remain among countries with the highest illiteracy rates and are also classified as the least developed countries in the world (*World Development Report*, 2004).

Highlighted below are significant effects of the literacy policies adopted by each country.

Mali

According to Disarray (2005), EFA has a positive impact on the use of national languages for literacy and education in Mali. Since 1990, new projects have emerged: the creation of the education centers for development, women's learning centers, and vocational training centers for neo-literates. However, Coulibaly highlighted that since 1986, the government has initiated but did not fully fund several projects. When Mali launched its third education project, it included a literacy component aimed at reducing regional disparities by 1) producing enough printed materials, 2) introducing new innovative literacy methods, 3) decentralizing the financing of literacy projects, 4) recruiting formal education teachers as trainers, and 5) giving bicycles to literacy teachers.

Altogether, 350,000,000 FCFA were needed to carry out the activities related to the third project, but the Ministry of Basic Education could only mobilize 150,000,000 FCFA. Despite such limitations the project managed to open 786 centers and produced literacy brochures that cost three million FCFA to print. Despite the financial constraints, the government organizes literacy and post-literacy courses. The objectives of the current post-literacy campaigns are to help neo-literates maintain and enhance their literacy skills through

an authentic use of the language in all socio-economic activities. For women, the government wants to meet their learning needs and involve them more actively in post-literacy activities to consolidate their skills.

Promoting a literate environment is an integral part of the current literacy program. The DNAFLA continues to publish newspapers in national languages and technical booklets related to various subject matters included in the post-literacy curricula. Rural libraries have been opened in a few villages and the literacy caravan sells reading materials in the villages. The materials are distributed on market days when DNAFLA can reach many people. The Literacy Caravan was initiated as a pilot in 1994. Since 1993, intensive writing workshops have been organized to train neo-literates. Village writers are recruited and DNAFLA organizes intensive writing sessions that help neo-literate writers learn techniques such as editing newspapers and monographs, writing technical texts, poems, novels, and correspondence.

Mali has not been able to provide formal education to all its school-aged children. Consequently, more than 50% of adolescents have no access to education. The Ministry of Basic Education developed a partnership with UNICEF right after Jomtien and implemented the NFE project for out-of school children and women that led to the creation of a three-year NFE curriculum taught in national languages. Twenty-three centers for children and twenty-three centers for women were opened.

Plan International funded another non-formal education project for out-of school youths that led to the creation of the Education Centers for Development (ECD). Coulibaly reported that in 2000 an evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Basic Education and Plan International indicated that the project had achieved very significant outcomes: it created 202 ECDs that enrolled more than 6,907 children and 413 learners in professional training. At the local level, 202 committees were created to manage the project. At the national level, a forum was organized to review the ECD curricula. Finally, the background work presented above led to the integration of the ECDs into Mali's Educational Law 046, signed on December 28, 1999. This law defines the main components of basic education in Mali: early childhood education, fundamental instruction, and non-formal education (which includes the ECDs and the centers for functional literacy) (Coulibaly, 2005:18). One of the main objectives of the current ten-year reform (PRODEC) is to create a formal school and an ECD in each Malian village.

Mali is also promoting the use of national languages in formal education with its new education reform program *La Nouvelle Ecole Fondamentale* that includes the promotion of bilingual schools called *Ecoles de la Pédagogie Convergente*. This bilingual model has produced tangible evidence showing the positive effects of familiar languages on pupils' ability to learn. Different evaluations conducted by the Ministry of Basic Education and donor agencies show that using national languages as languages of instruction is very critical in promoting effective learning these languages and in French.

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, civil society is remarkably involved in providing literacy and non-formal education programs. At the national level, for example, the Association TIN TUA ('Let's Develop Ourselves by Ourselves' in Gulmancema) created a program in the Gurma region (eastern Burkina Faso). According to Tiego Tientore (2005), the program targets various age groups. And, according to its founder Benoit Ouoba (2000)⁴, the founder, almost a third of the adult population in Gulmu has passed through the program's literacy centers in equal numbers of men and women. The centers called 'Banma Nuara' (Gulmancema for "Wake Up"), promote a progressive bilingual teaching method that requires a student to become literate in Gulmancema before learning French and, at the same time, an attempt to deepen students' cultural awareness by giving them access to a collection of traditional, local tales. The effectiveness of the TIN TUA approach can be seen in the high pass rates of its students who sit Burkina Faso's national primary school examination. A number of people have also gone on to acquire secondary school qualifications. TIN TUA opened a vocational institute for participants who are too old or too poor to pursue a secondary education where they are taught advanced mathematics, mathematics and basic economics and other subjects such as health, hygiene, and the environment.

To help neo-literates remain literate, TIN TUA created a newspaper *Labaali* ('the news') that is read in Burkina Faso and in Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin by speakers of Gulmancema. Due to its success, TIN TUA has obtained the financial support of several organizations including UNICEF, SNV, OXFAM Canada, and the World Bank and it has also been recognized as the Ministry of Basic Education's main partner for literacy in the Gurma region.

4. Discussion held with Dr. Ouoba, B. in Ouagadougou in 2000.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) is also a very important player in the promotion of national languages in Burkina Faso. Its main goal is to translate the Bible. In recent years, the SIL has provided literacy and basic education classes and developed the alphabet of all the national languages used for literacy in Burkina Faso. The Swiss Development Organization (OSEO) is also actively involved in promoting NFE in Burkina Faso. OSEO, *Elan et Développement* (a local NGO run by linguists from the University of Ouagadougou) have initiated the “Ecoles Bilingues” in collaboration with *Elan et Développement* and the Ministry of Basic Education. Save the Children and USAID have also sponsored a few NFE centers in Burkina Faso to prevent child trafficking.

With regard to the promotion of quality materials in national languages, UNICEF, the German Foundation for International Development (INWENT) and the MEBA developed a professional development training program for national language textbook authors that trained 37 authors and produced first, second, and third grades’ first language teaching and learning materials for the *Ecoles Satellites*. INWENT also trained a few editors in the production of materials in the national languages. TIN TUA and *Elan et Développement* participated in the training offered for publishers.

To promote the development of a literate culture in Burkinabè languages, the government created the *Grand Prix National des Arts et des Lettres* (GPNAL). Authors who produced written literature (novels, short stories, drama, poetry, collection of tales, etc.) in the national languages were awarded national literature prizes. Poetry is the best category with 59 collections, followed by 24 collections of tales, 20 dramatic texts, 3 short story collections and 1 novel (Sanou, 1994). This was an enticing policy that contributed to the promotion of literate environment in national languages.

INA and OSEO organized a seminar on ‘How to promote newspapers in national languages’ in Burkina Faso from October 1-3, 1994. This seminar came about after a study published by Professor Norbert Nikiema from the University of Ouagadougou showed that of the sixty newspapers in national languages only about fifteen continue to be published. A 1998 study by ESOP/ED showed that 19 papers representing eight national languages were published under the auspices of the Association of Editors and Publishers in National Languages (AEPJLN) including three bimonthlies (two in Mooré and one in Nuni), four monthlies (three in Mooré and one in Glance), twelve

quarterlies (six in Mooré; two in Jula; one in Nuni; one in Pulaar; one in Lyélé and one in Sissala).

To improve its literacy program, Burkina Faso has adopted the *Faire Faire* Strategy, which seeks to involve all stakeholders (governments, private and NGO operators, and communities) in designing policies, developing and implementing demand-driven programs. It is also a strategy that seeks to facilitate the decentralization of literacy services and to promote educational capacity building at the local and regional levels. Several problems have arisen in the initial stage of implementation; no official document specifies the criteria for creating literacy programs. The government has, however, created the Fund for Literacy and Non-formal Education (FONAEF) and has also stated the four conditions for financing operators of literacy programs: i) at least three years of experience in operating literacy programs; ii) a demonstrated high success rate; iii) the necessary infrastructure, equipment and didactic materials, and iv) the necessary human resources (animators, supervisors and coordinators) in literacy work.

It has been difficult to apply the criteria, however, because very few local associations can fulfill them. Most lack the required experience for delivering literacy programs. Moreover, the criteria exclude young operators from competing even if the language in question has no operator on the ground. The selection criteria must be reviewed to allow all literacy operators and all languages to be considered by the new strategy. If this does not happen, Mooré and Gulmancema will be the only languages to be promoted as the operators meet the selection criteria.

Benin

In Benin, the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy Report (2005) indicated that several literacy campaigns were undertaken until the mid-1980s but the country still has a high illiteracy rate: 67.4% of people are illiterate of which 78.1% are women. The ineffectiveness of the literacy programs is due to high dropout rates (more than 11,000 participants drop out of the literacy classes each year) and the loss of literacy skills among former participants. Only 1.71% of women are literate in the national languages.

To promote the use of national languages and literacy among youth and adults, Benin adopted a new national literacy and adult education policy

in 2003 designed to allow all citizens to use national languages for the development of their cultures and active participation in the democratic process, and to eliminate illiteracy among children and adults by making sure that school-aged children have access to formal basic education and that 15-year olds and older have access to quality literacy and adult education programs. The program targets adolescents and young adults who did not have access to formal education. Finally, Benin has adopted the *Faire Faire Stratégie* or “Making it Happen” to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders (government services, NGOs, local communities, funding agencies), the delivery of literacy services and the decentralization process.

One of the major problems in Benin in promoting literacy is the lack of adequate funding to run the literacy programs on a larger scale.

Cameroon

In Cameroon the government has played a legislative and facilitative role: constitutional and legal reforms have established national languages and cultures as an integral part of national linguistic heritage. However laudable, these reforms have fallen far short of producing any concrete results but they have provided the framework for reinforced research, language development and sensitization about national languages in education and literacy in the country. The government has also facilitated the contribution of international bodies to the process of enhancing the use of local languages in learning. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), the Bible Society and UNESCO are all examples. With their help, the government created the Institute for Social Sciences within the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research in 1980. The Institute’s Center for Anthropological Research was to promote research about the development and use of national languages in education. This was the context for launching the Operational Research Project, now Program for Language Education in Cameroon (PROPELCA), a product of the then University of Yaoundé, as a pilot project in 1981 to facilitate the introduction of national languages alongside the official languages into the educational system. PROPELCA paved the way for local language research and literacy in the country. Today, at least with respect to research, national languages clearly constitute the cornerstone of learning and development in the country. The different constitutional and legal reforms attest to the awareness of the role of local languages in development. Though crucial in setting the pace for social change, such awareness needs to be

accompanied by real commitment to make things happen. This is where the failure has been most palpable.

A major stride in State involvement in the process of promoting local languages in literacy came in October 2005 when the National Literacy Program (NLP) was launched, funded by the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). The program recognizes the role of private institutions in promoting literacy in Cameroon and has recognized institutions such as NACALCO and SIL as potential field partners and also envisages close collaboration with language committees in local communities. A leading aspect of this working relationship is the use of national languages in the literacy program. Notwithstanding the program, the partnership characteristically fails to explicitly spell out the role of national languages as the media of literacy learning.

Recent legislation makes local councils and regions free to organize and promote national languages in education and literacy but before these reforms came into effect, councils, particularly in the west and north-west regions of the country, were already engaged in literacy promotion in national languages. These efforts were never systematic or permanent as they depended very much on the dynamism, personal discretion and motivation of individual council leaderships. In some places like the Ndu area (northwest region), literacy has been recognized and integrated into the council's priority projects and the language committee, the Wimbun Literacy Association (WILA), was offered a place on the management board. Quite often, the leadership that favors literacy is also on the language committee or has occupied such a position in the past. It is vital to note, however, that a majority of councils have not shown much interest in this process. Council support for literacy often takes the form of infrastructure and annual budgetary allocations. The reluctance of a majority of councils to get involved in literacy is due partly to the general lukewarm attitude of government in this matter. With the reforms on decentralization making provision for councils and regions to support literacy, it is hoped that literacy in Cameroon will get a tremendous boost in the years ahead.

The churches have also played a major role in promoting the use of local languages in education and literacy. In the Catholic Church, many dioceses have developed local language literacy and education programs through their Education Secretariats. In fact, the church, and particularly the Catholic Church, provided the foundation for experimenting with mother

tongue teaching in schools (PROPELCA) in the early 1980s. The Bamenda and Kumbo (in the Northwest Province), the Nkongsamba (in the Littoral Province) and the Garoua-Mokolo (in the North and Far North Provinces) dioceses have played a leading role in this process. Up to now, they train literacy personnel, run schools and literacy centers and produce didactic materials. In some cases they support the establishment of local development committees that plan and manage literacy activities. In the Garoua-Mokolo Diocese, for instance, the *Comité Diocésain de Développement* (CDD) promotes local development in priority areas such as health and education. Through it, the diocese supports training and material production for literacy.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church has been involved in national language development and literacy since the 18th century, targeting women and girls especially. This is discernible from the fact that the provinces where it intervenes have the highest illiteracy rates in the country, and the most vulnerable groups, women and girl children, constitute the majority of the illiterate. To strengthen its activities, the Church has specialized technical structures. It runs a department of literacy and translation, a print shop and a radio station.

The Baptist Church and the Presbyterian Church (mainly in the northwestern part of the country) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (in the East, Adamawa and North Provinces) have also been concerned with literacy.

Specialized NGOs have also proven to be extremely active in the literacy promotion process. At the forefront of this category, the National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO), created in 1989, has a mission to promote national language development and promotion in education and literacy. Its creation followed the need to establish a common platform for planning and managing the activities of language committees. Until its creation, the committees operated in isolation, which made it extremely difficult to coordinate, monitor and evaluate their activities. As a federation of language committees, NACALCO ensures that programs are harmonized by follow-ups and evaluations, and financial support to members. Its activities are built around the Operational Research Program for Language Education in Cameroon and the adult literacy program. Its involvement in PROPELCA came into effect in 1991 after the Institute for Social Sciences was dissolved. Having been involved in promoting PROPELCA and convinced that its programs should continue, the NACALCO proponents transferred PROPELCA's activities to themselves. PROPELCA remains a university

program within which NACALCO works with public and private educational authorities to promote mother tongue education in schools.

PROPELCA follows an extensive trilingual approach that enables learners to learn first in their mother tongues and then in the first official language (English for English-speaking and French for French-speaking) at the primary school level. At the secondary school level, it proposes learning the second official language (French for English-speaking and English for French-speaking) and one other Cameroonian language. It has three application models, the formal model that uses the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the informal model uses the mother tongue as a discipline, and the oral model makes use of oral mother tongues in transmitting cultural knowledge through songs, poetry, story telling and rhymes.

Initially, only mission schools accepted the program but today a good number of public schools have become partners in promoting PROPELCA. Between 1998 and 2003, the number of public schools in the program rose from 34 to 131. NACALCO's involvement in language research and development has made it the leading local institution for language planning and policy orientation in Cameroon. To date, it has 77 language committees for the 77 languages with an alphabet and orthography.

Zambia

According to Sampa (2005:73) "the Primary Reading Program (PRP) implemented in Zambia is one of the few programs that have succeeded on a large scale". Between 1999-2002, the Ministry of Education conducted two evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the PRP. Both showed that children's performances in reading in Zambian languages and English had improved. According to Sampa (2003:45), six main factors that account for the success of the PRP.

1. An appropriate language policy that uses local languages familiar to children to teach reading and writing.
2. Allocating appropriate time for teaching literacy in elementary schools. Literacy and numeracy are central elements of the curriculum.
3. The implementation of an effective teacher training program that includes pre-service and in-service training .
4. Sensitization of all stakeholders (parents, teachers, children, policymakers).

5. Creation of attractive classrooms to motivate children.
6. Promotion of teamwork among teachers and ministry of education officials.

From 1990-1999, the Ministry of Education opened learning centers and distance education courses. Dickson Mwansa (1993) conducted a needs assessment study to determine what the potential learners (200 respondents) would want to learn and found that they wanted to learn farming techniques, health education, business management, local languages, home management, wild life, gender issues and English. After this assessment the government launched a new literacy program. According to the EFA (2003) report, 46,000 youth and adults benefited from this program. In addition, 95,000 primers (reading materials for literacy) were printed, 1,926 teachers received training and 98,701 people received literacy instruction in the national languages. Seventy-three percent of the participants were women (see Table 5 and Figure 1). In 1990, 41.3% of women were illiterate. In 2003, 25.2% were classified as such: the illiteracy rate dropped by 16.1% between 1990 and 2003.

A survey of the SADC countries indicated that Zambia may achieve a 94.2% literacy rate by 2015 (Aitchison and Rule, 2005) but disparities still exist between urban and rural areas, and between men and women. It is estimated that by 2015 the gender illiteracy rate gap will have narrowed to 5.1% for men versus 6.5% for women, a positive trend that can be attributed to the recent educational and language policies: the Primary Reading Program in formal education and the National Literacy Policy aimed to reduce poverty in the country.

To prevent social issues, Zambia must continue to address the illiteracy issue among young adults (14 to 20 years old) who are more illiterate than adults 21-45 years old (Mumba, 2002). This has negative social and economic consequences because Zambia's population is relatively young and the country relies on the active involvement of this particular population in socio-economic activities. It is also a challenge to effectively address the HIV/AIDS problem when the most vulnerable people are illiterate.

Tanzania

Among all the Sub-Saharan African countries, Tanzania has made the most significant progress in the use of Kiswahili and the promotion of literacy among children and adults since the 1970s. President Julius Nyerere imple-

mented major literacy initiatives over a nine-year period (1964-1975) that include: the Five-Year Plan (1964-1969), and the UNESCO Experimental World Literacy Project launched in 1968; a second Five-Year Development Plan (1969-1974) launched under the slogan 'To Plan is to Choose' (*Kupanga ni Kuchagua*), and the new mass education campaign entitled 'Time to Rejoice' (*Wakati wa Furaha*) launched in 1973. In 1973 and 1974 the government developed relevant policy and established a Division of Workers' Education to promote education in the workplace (Aitchison and Rule, 2005)

According to Mulukozi (2004:2), the success of Kiswahili in Tanzania is based on the fact that as early as 1962, President Nyerere realized that a policy statement needed to be backed with an effectively implemented language policy and program. The two main factors that accounted for the success of the promotion of the Kiswahili language were a sound education language policy and the creation of governmental facilities to implement it. Six major initiatives were created to implement the language policy and promote literacy in Kiswahili (Mulukozi, 2004:2): Kiswahili was adopted as a national language in 1962; in 1967, Ujamaa and Self-Reliance became official policy; Kiswahili became the official language of the administration in 1967; in 1968, the policy of education for self-reliance and the promotion of Kiswahili as the sole medium of instruction in primary schools were adopted; the Cambridge School Certificate Examination was abandoned in the early 1970s, and in 1997 the cultural policy (*Sera ya Utamaduni*) was adopted.

The government also created several institutions that provided training, research and publications.

1. Ministry of Culture, 1962
2. Institute for Kiswahili Research (IKR), 1964
3. Tanzania Publishing House, 1966
4. National Kiswahili Council (BAKITA), 1967
5. University of Dar es Salaam Department of Kiswahili, 1970
6. EACROTANAL, 1976
7. Institute of Kiswahili and Foreign Languages, Zanzibar-TAKILUKI 1978
8. Tanzania culture fund (Mfuko wa Utamaduni Tanzania), 1998.

Two five-year development plans (1964-1969 and 1969-1974) were launched to address development and educational problems. Through the World Literacy Program (WLP), UNESCO and the Norwegian government (represented by NORAD) provided, from 1969 to 1976, technical and financial support to

implement adult education programs. Zakayo Mpogolo (1986) evaluated the post-literacy and adult education in Tanzania and suggested that in 1977 Tanzania could reduce significantly the illiteracy rate among adults and it dropped by 12% from 1975 to 1977 for the following reasons.

1. Financial and technical support from UNESCO and NORAD.
2. The effective implementation and coordination efforts of the Directorate of Adult Education whose work included the preparation, supervision, and coordination of literacy and post-literacy programs, the development of curricula for literacy and post-literacy programs (literature, agriculture, health, home economics, Kiswahili, culture, defense, typing, political education, vocational training, etc.) and the coordination and supervision of literacy supporting programs.
3. The involvement of local authorities and adult learners in planning and implementing the literacy campaigns.
4. Training programs for literacy workers, teachers, and educational planners.
5. Five main actions were taken. They included i) the implementation of the Mwanza Project (1969-1973) to train all types of literacy agents; ii) the organization of workshops and seminars; iii) the creation of the Folk colleges of education, and iv) the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) and v) the University of Dar es Salaam. The IAE and the University of Dar es Salaam are particularly involved in research related to advancing literacy and education in Kiswahili.
6. The government also developed structures that facilitated the development of a literate environment and reading culture in Kiswahili:
 - It created the *Elimu Haina Mwishu* newspaper with the support of UNESCO and NORAD and printed 100,000 copies monthly. The newspaper was distributed in the rural libraries. A 1975 evaluation indicated that 2781 libraries were created, and 97% of the adult literate population read *Elimu Haina Mwishu*. It is important to point out that the lack of printed materials is often cited as one of the barriers to the promotion of African languages as official languages in education and other socio-economic domains. Tanzania has managed to overcome this problem by creating its own printing house, and by promoting Kiswahili in government, education and other socio-cultural spaces. Literacy in Kiswahili has also been promoted through print media, radio and television.
 - Rural libraries were created primarily to prevent relapse into illiteracy among new literates, but they also served the entire community.

- To produce reading and educational materials, the Mwanza Project organized intensive authors' workshops in the different regions.

The use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction during the entire primary school curriculum significantly influenced the development of formal basic education and literacy in Tanzania. In 1974 only 50% of school-aged children were enrolled in school while in 1978 93% were enrolled, a significant achievement when one considers African countries' performance in both formal and NFE.

The economic recession of the 1980s hit Tanzania. According to Wedding (2004:72) during the "1980s and 1990s Tanzania was the scene of three major structural (i.e. political) and economic changes: globalization on an international level; and, on a national level, deregulation of the economy (the "structural adjustment plans" imposed on Tanzania by the IMF and the World Bank). During this period, Tanzania's literacy rate declined. Aitchison and Rule (2005) identify several factors:

...a decline in enrolment and a high drop-out rate in primary schools; administrative problems in the education system; a lack of political will to support adult literacy since the stirring days of Nyerere and Ujamaa; and severe financial constraints in a poor country with multiple priorities.

Since Jomtien, the government has implemented two major adult education programs: the Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) Program and the Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) Program. The ICBAE is based on the Freirian philosophy of adult education and literacy. It integrates a community-based and learner-centered approach to address gender equity and sustainable development. The program also seeks to empower learners through the curriculum and through the income generating activities, which lead to ownership. The COBET program is designed for pupils (11-18 years) who dropped out of primary schools and those who never attended school. Both programs are effective but it is difficult to find funding to upscale. Aitchison and Rule (2005) argue that the programs will face serious problems when donor funding is withdrawn.

Tanzania shows that an effective literacy policy that stimulates the development of a literate culture and environment requires a clear vision, effective multilingual policies and the political will to implement them. For Mulukozi,

the success of Kiswahili in Tanzania is based on the fact that President Nyerere realized that an ideology would not suffice to promote Kiswahili and needed a language policy and an effective implementation program. A sound education language policy and the creation of governmental structures to carry out its implementation led to success. Birgit Brock-Utne (2005:51) points out that Kiswahili has become a uniting language as it serves as a *lingua franca* for ninety nine percent (99%) of the population in Tanzania and in Eastern and Central Africa, and in a few Southern African countries. It also serves as an international language that is taught in several African, European and American universities. An extensive body of literature and scientific work has been produced in Kiswahili. This language is also used for radio broadcasting not only in Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, but also in Rwanda, the United States of America (Voice of America), in the United Kingdom (BBC radio) and in China (Radio China) and in Germany (*Deutch Welle*).

Brock-Utne also highlights that the use of Kiswahili in all socio-economic, educational, cultural (the majority of newspapers in Tanzania are published in Kiswahili), legal and political domains since 1967 has enabled it to become a highly sophisticated language adapted to modern realities including science and technology. Brock-Utne (2005:51) argues that Kiswahili demonstrates that an African language can be used in areas often reserved for European languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

This language [Kiswahili] is used as a language of instruction through all the seven years of primary school and in some teacher training colleges. The Department of Kiswahili and the Institute for Kiswahili Research at the University of Dar es Salaam use Kiswahili as the language of instruction in all its courses and meetings. They show by their example that an African language may well be used for the most sophisticated discussions and for research.

How can other African countries achieve the type of success that Tanzania has achieved with its national language policy? Can and should African leaders reproduce the type of language policy that Nyerere implemented in Tanzania? In the era of democracy and globalization, what would be the role of the state, the community and the regional and international organizations in promoting national languages and creating literate environments in African societies?

One may argue that President Nyerere was successful because he was able to impose Kiswahili in a multilingual country during a one-party regime. This

imposition may not be possible today since African countries have adopted democracy. The adoption of a language policy that drastically changes the status quo must be democratically negotiated. Governments must welcome this change as it provides a political and legal framework for involving all stakeholders and careful evaluations of various language policy options before a particular one is adopted. Ekkehart Wolff (2006:19) argues that the strategies that governments use to convince stakeholders of the relevance of the policy to their lives or interests are problematic. With regard to the promotion of multilingual and multicultural education in Africa, Wolff suggested that a democratic government must be able to develop strategies for:

Communicating the benefits of reformed quality primary education (involving mother-tongue and lingua franca as medium of instruction, and culturally adequate educational contents) to the non-traditionalist sectors of the general public, i.e. largely those who have profited themselves in some way from formal education of the old system, aims at considerable attitudinal changes which can only be effected if and when the new educational policy creates notable if not drastic educational successes with ensuing increased job opportunities, even for members of the present "elite" (p. 19)

5. Drawing Conclusions

The current language policies promoted in most African countries undermine the use of national languages for the development of education and societal literacy. The implemented policies do not allow the citizens to be active actors of sustained development and fulfill their civic duties and responsibilities within the community. The language policies promoted in Africa negatively impact the promotion of democracy and the decentralization of governmental institutions. The use of languages that people speak, understand, read and write, is crucial for promoting democracy and decentralization at local, regional and national levels.

Many high level meetings in Africa resulting in many declarations and detailed plans of action and institutional infrastructure (departments of literacy and adult education, ministries of non-formal education, literacy and adult education centers) have been created. Local and international NGOs have also contributed tremendously to this endeavor, suggesting defined visions and philosophies. However, no Sub-Saharan African countries, except Tanzania have clearly realized them. Lack of political will and

extreme poverty are the two main factors that prevent African governments from adopting and implementing national languages in formal domains.

Since Jomtien, a few African governments have promoted at a smaller scale new models of basic education in both formal and non-formal domains that have produced very encouraging results. In francophone Africa, the *Ecoles de Pédagogie Convergente* in Mali, the *Ecoles Bilingues* in Burkina Faso, and PROPELCA and NACALCO's bilingual schools in Cameroon, experimental schools that use national languages and official languages (transitional bilingual model) and a culturally-adapted curriculum to promote quality basic education in areas where governments have not been able to open formal primary schools. These experimental schools succeed because they can promote dual literacy among children, adolescent and adults, and an education that helps learners to be more integrated and productive in their social and cultural milieu.

With regard to cost-effectiveness, "the arguments that cost prevents mother tongue education (MTE) are in fact based on flimsy perceptions rather than empirical evidence" (Kathleen Heugh, 2006:23). Indeed, in Burkina Faso, reducing the number of years of primary education make the OSEO *Ecoles Bilingues* more cost-effective than the government-run primary schools (Ilboudo, 2003).

In Anglophone Africa, REFLECT Projects in Uganda and Tanzania offer a new approach to literacy that integrates the acquisition of literacy skills and adds an empowerment dimension that helps learners reflect on their lives and circumstances and learn how to learn and be able to make informed decisions. These models must be considered for up scaling at the national levels and African countries should learn from each other instead of adopting only models of education coming from Western societies.

The Jomtien (1990), Beijing (1995), and Dakar Conferences stated the need to promote girls' and women's education. The studies reviewed indicate that very little progress in that regard. Campaigns have been organized to sensitize policymakers, communities and parents, but research indicates that girls and women continue to lag behind boys and men in access to basic education.

Lack of financial means to execute programs has undermined governments' efforts to promote literacy. The extreme poverty of African governments makes them subject to international changes that affect how they plan and

execute literacy and NFE programs. Dependence on international aid often limits governments' ability to promote the type of policies adopted in their political declarations and plans of action. Tai Afrik (1995) points out that "since Jomtien there have been new waves of funding sources from four main partners of African education: UNDP, the World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF". Multilateral and bilateral agencies have also helped to promote basic education, including literacy and adult education: IFOMA, DANIDA, CORD, CIDA, SIDA, IIZ/DVV, BMZ, the Islamic Call Bank, the African Development Bank, and ISESCO. Overall, however, governments and international development agencies do not consider literacy and non-formal education a main educational priority. Formal education has always been the focus and object of investment that has disadvantaged literacy and NFE in Africa. Unfortunately, the huge investments in formal education have not produced desirable results. Most formal basic education in most African countries is ineffective and inefficient due largely to an inadequate language policy.

Fortunately, in recent years the World Bank has recognized the pertinence of bilingual education in Africa. An example of this change of perspective is evident in its support for the promotion of *Ecoles de Pédagogie Convergente* in Mali and its review of literature on bilingual education in Africa (2005). The conference of the Ministers of Education of Francophone Africa (CONFEMEN) issued several policy papers calling for the promotion of *langues partenaires* (i.e. African languages) for basic education. Governments must seize this momentum to promote literacy and the use of African languages in education and development.

There is a serious shortage of literacy specialists in Africa, particularly in francophone countries making it very difficult to promote literacy and NFE. The implementation of the *Faire Faire* Strategy is difficult in countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali because it relies on the availability of human resources who can develop, implement, and evaluate programs. The decentralization of the basic education sector largely depends on the availability of qualified human resources such as literacy teachers and supervisors. Up scaling best practices and policies depends not only on the availability of funds but also on the availability of relevant expertise to carry out the activities.

Anglophone countries have made a significant progress in building capacity in literacy and NFE and could serve Francophone countries. Tanzania offers

the best practice with regard to human resource development for literacy and adult education. It promoted literacy in Kiswahili in all socio-economic and educational domains because it created three key institutions—the Folk Development Colleges, the University of Dar es Salaam and the Institute of Kiswahili—that train literacy teachers and professionals.

All studies (except those related to Tanzania) highlighted the lack of an adequate literate environment in national languages as a major problem. People are initially very enthusiastic to learn how to read and write in their languages but quickly realize that they have nothing to read in the national languages besides the class literacy brochures and cannot use their skills to conduct transactions with civil servants. Neo-literates are not encouraged to use their competencies in the courts or health services because the civil servants cannot read and write in the national languages.

Promoting national languages at the local and regional levels and in public services such as health facilities, the courts, schools and the local, regional and national assemblies creates an enticing environment for their use in oral and written communication and helps to create a literate environment. Publishing in national languages is therefore important. Governments and international organizations should encourage the publishing sector by promoting a language policy promoting national languages in formal and NFE, support private publishers by eliminating customs and excise duty on paper imported to produce printed materials for literacy, education and culture. Governments can encourage trans-national book production for the trans-border languages by minimizing taxes and tariffs on books and raw materials used to produce them. Bookaid experts suggest that intra-African trade needs to be promoted to develop and sustain an African book chain (Bookaid).

Finally, African governments and international organizations such as the World Bank should revise the current binding procedures to eliminate unfair competition among national and international publishing companies as pointed out by Jung and Ouane (2001:334) and members of APNET (Aliou Sow, 2004).

6. Perspectives

Joseph Akoha (2001:147) argued no country in the world has achieved national integration (nation-building) by repressing its cultures and languages. It is, therefore, inconceivable that African countries could escape this basic rule:

Nation building...cannot be successfully achieved in such societies by repressing the cultures and languages of some groups in favor of foreign languages or cultures, nor even in favor of a locally dominant group. On the contrary it is in the free interplay of the juxtaposed cultures mediated by literacy and literature in local languages that a nation may emerge, where every component feels involved and concerned. This leads to issues of democracy and literacy.

Language, culture and literacy define individuals and their sense of belonging to a group or a nation. African governments must recognize the true value of the national languages for the development of national identity and the promotion of democracy and muster the political will to implement the vision and action plans elaborated in their educational policy documents and regional political declarations. The use of national languages is critical for promoting democracy, good citizenship, effective decentralization and training local officers and elected representatives.

Africans need to become technologically literate to participate actively in the production and use of global knowledge. African countries must integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) in their educational systems and curricula to mobilize people for literacy and basic education and to acquire and disseminate information and knowledge. Local radio stations have been the most effective tools for mobilizing the masses and also for basic education and literacy. They use national languages and are the most widely-used source of information in Africa. Simili Radio operating in Northern Ghana actively promotes community involvement in its program content and develops its schedule according to the priorities established through a close relationship with its listeners (Amina Osman, December 2005, comment to the author). The program consists of basic education, health and agriculture and the producers use a range of resources for the agricultural program, such as the local University Department and the Animal Research Institute, extension officers and NGOs. The proliferation of private radios that promote very interactive and participatory attests to their popularity; they encourage callers to share their opinions about political leaders, cultural and economic matters. Cellular phones even in the most remote areas have also facilitated the participation of rural and urban people in radio programs. The Internet has also facilitated communication among people particularly in urban areas where private communication centers use both telephone and computers. It is, therefore, important that literacy and non-formal education programs recognize the availability of

these ICTs in Africa and the fact that people are already using them. Their integration in literacy programs can help to recruit learners. The COLLIT model implemented in Tanzania is an excellent model for the integration of ICT in literacy and non-formal education programs. According to Tai Afrik (1995) the distance education programs implemented in South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana and Swaziland have given adult learners the opportunity to avail literacy and continuing education courses through radio, television, computers and correspondence. In West Africa (Mali, Gambia and Burkina Faso), radio and newspapers are the main technologies used for distance education.

The demand for literacy and basic education should be tied to relevance and effectiveness. Literacy programs must be contextualized to be effective. Consequently, a needs assessment of the demand for literacy programs must precede the program. Learners must be included in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the literacy and adult education courses to foster their ownership and leadership. With regard to girls and women's education, a demand-driven approach includes the concern of women and the context within which women and girls use literacy. Ousseina Alidou (2005) and Uta Papan (2005:212) worked on women's literacy in Niger and Namibia, respectively, and clearly indicate that quantitative analysis alone cannot define the literacy needs of the learners. They argue for the integration of qualitative analysis based on ethnographic research to define "the learners' everyday-life uses of literacy (and) their conception of literacy and their literacy-related aspiration." Papan rightly suggests that these three elements must be understood within the social, political, cultural and historical context of the learners' community which means understanding the impact of colonization, traditions and cultures, and economics on the lives of girls and women in Africa. Finally, ethnographic research can significantly help literacy curriculum developers and educational program planners understand the meaning of literacy and how to develop more responsive literacy programs.

7. Recommendations

Excellent technical and political recommendations were formulated in notable fora including the OAU Cultural Charter for Africa (1976), the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Declaration on the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action (1985), the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986), the draft charter for

the promotion of African languages in education produced in 1996 in Accra, Ghana, and the Harare Declaration (1997), which evolved from the intergovernmental conference on language policies in Africa organized by ADEA.

1. Therefore, this study seriously **urges African governments to actualize the language policy plan of action formulated in Harare in 1997 during the intergovernmental conference. This plan includes actions at the national , regional and continental levels to promote adequate language policies and literacy in Africa.** This plan also considers the development of cross-border languages and the need to promote them as viable means of communication in formal and non-formal areas in Africa. (See Table 9.1).
2. **NFE must be viewed as a critical sub-sector of education and development** and receive adequate funding nationally and internationally for effective implementation. Models of bilingual education promoted in West Africa demonstrate the possibility for cross-fertilization of formal and NFE (Aliou Boly, 2006).
3. **The partnership between governmental institutions and civil society (local, national and international NGOs) must be strengthened to integrate literacy and basic education into all development programs.** The NGOs must be given opportunities through training to enhance their operational capacities. Their role is critical in promoting literacy for democracy, peace and development in African countries. In the past, NGOs have been neglected but in recent years they have replaced governments in many communities in providing basic education and health care, and have also mobilized the population to promote democracy and good governance at national and local levels.
4. Effective language policy is the *sine que non* of literate environments in schools and communities. Adopting multilingual and multicultural education policies can influence the involvement of the publishing sector in producing print materials in national languages. Namibia and Tanzania have eloquently shown that language policy is the most critical enticing factor for developing a culture of reading and writing in national languages.
5. **A demand-driven approach that considers the literacy and educational needs of children and adults** must be adopted. Literacy and basic education programs must consider what people do with literacy and how they relate to it, and recognize that learners are knowledgeable individuals who acquire new knowledge; the programs must use what people already know. The relevance of literacy programs depends on their ability to

implement relevant curricula that stimulate learning and produce better, relevant outcomes for learners.

6. Curricular relevance implies recognizing that learners are different and so are their educational needs. This attitude is crucial if literacy programs want to address the concerns of girls and women.
7. Lack of educational materials is often proffered as one of the main obstacles to quality instruction in literacy programs. But we should move away from a primer-only reading approach to literacy and influence the production of texts in the schools and communities. In Mali, for example, students are encouraged to become writers by, for example, writing of *la mémoire de classe*, or short stories that first to six graders produce about themselves, their families, their dreams and hopes, their communities, and what they know about the outside world. Writing these stories is a process that teaches children all the steps required for composing a text. This approach integrates holistically oral language development (story-telling, thinking before writing), and the development of writing and reading competence. Moreover speaking, writing and reading are language activities done in social contexts so children learn their real purposes. REFLECT, an adult literacy program promoted in Uganda and Tanzania uses a similar approach, based on Paolo Freire's philosophy, relating the development of literacy skills to the development of empowering strategies in adult education. It also includes a writing component that encourages adult learners to write their own stories. Therefore, learner-centered participatory approaches are fundamental pedagogical approaches that must be promoted in formal and NFE literacy programs.
8. **It is crucial to integrate ICT into school and community literacy programs.** Children and adults in Africa are already using computers, cellular phones and radio to communicate locally, nationally and internationally. Even non-literate individuals use these devices. It is inconceivable that educational programs ignore this development. South Africa is promoting ICTs in its literacy programs. Other African countries should learn from South Africa and find ways of integrating technologies and information management systems into their literacy programs.
9. **Large-scale financing is needed to adequately pay literacy teachers, curriculum specialists and literacy and adult education program developers, to develop professional development programs to build capacity for literacy and adult education in Africa. Funding is also needed to implement plans of action.** Here, the role of the international development agencies such as the World Bank and other multilateral

and bilateral agencies is crucial. Investing in literacy must be viewed as a multi-pronged strategy for promoting basic education, for alleviating poverty, for combating HIV/AIDS, for promoting equality and social justice in African societies and for promoting human development. No country has been able to achieve a decent level of development without reaching a decent level of individual, communal and societal literacy. It is very difficult for African countries to achieve an adequate level of development with the current levels and state of literacy.

Table 9.1. Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, Harare, 1997

► *Plan of action*

The Plan proposes actions at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. It states the nature of each action as well as its objectives, targeted results, timeframe, and implementing bodies.

No	Activity	Objective	Result targeted	Time-frame	Implementing bodies
1	Defining Language Policies	Rehabilitating National languages	A precise, consistent language policy for each country (status – function)	Short term (1998-1999)	Each state
2	Language Management Plan	Implementation of the language policy	Typology and use of national languages in the various spheres of activities (politics, administration, literacy)	Short and medium term (1998-2000)	Each country
3	Setting up national structures	Creation and revitalization of operational policy and technical structures for the implementation and direction of the Action Plan	The existence of functional structures (political, technical, pedagogical)	Short and medium term (1998-2000)	All countries
4	Language Atlas of Africa	Typology of African languages	An exhaustive inventory of all African languages and language areas	Medium term (2000-2002)	UNESCO, OAU, ACCT, other partners
5	Revitalizing regional and sub-regional structures (CICIBA, EACROTANAL, CELTHO, etc.)	Effective involvement in the promotion of African languages	Rehabilitation of national and transnational languages	Medium and long term (1999-2010)	Regional and sub-regional institutions and partners

No	Activity	Objective	Result targeted	Time-frame	Implementing bodies
6	Producing linguistic and didactic tools	Intensive production of linguistic tools and didactic material	The promotion of a reading environment in local, sub-regional and regional languages	Short, medium and long term	Countries, regional and sub-regional organizations, UNESCO and partners
7	Teaching of local, sub-regional and regional languages	Using these languages as media of instruction and teaching them	The mastery of knowledge and know-how, and the development of skills and identity by actors involved in language reform and the target groups through these languages	Medium and long term	IDEM
8	Literacy	The conduct of extensive literacy campaigns	Populations educated (in reading, writing, arithmetic) in the various African languages	Medium and long term	Countries, sub-regional and regional organizations, UNESCO, OAU and other partners
9	Regional and sub-regional cooperation Congress of the Pan-African Association of Linguistics	The promotion of national and transnational languages as tools for inter-African cooperation Create a pan-African association	The promotion of dynamic networks for multi-sectoral cooperation through transnational languages Contribute individually and collectively to the promotion of African languages	Medium and long term Short term	Countries, sub-regional and regional organizations OAU, UNESCO and ACCT
10	Follow-up and evaluation	Ensuring proper coordination of the activities and measuring their impact	Implementation of the language management plan and the Action Plan	Biennial	Countries, sub-regional and regional organizations, UNESCO, OAU and other partners

Source: Appendix to the Final Report (revised 2002) of the 1997 Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, Harare at <http://www.imo.hr/ocpa/resources/docs/hararedoc.pdf>

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AEPJLN	Association of Editors and Publishers in National Languages, Burkina Faso
APNET	African Network of Publishers
BLP	Basic Literacy Program
CDD	Diocese Development Committee, Cameroon
COBET	Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania Program
CONFEMEN	Conference of the Ministers of Education of Francophone Africa
DFID	Department for International Development
DNAFLA	National Directorate for Adult Literacy Program in National Languages, Mali
ECD	Education Centers for Development, Mali
FONAEF	Non Formal Education and Literacy Fund, Burkina Faso
GPNAL	Grand Prize for Arts and Letters, Burkina Faso
HIPCI	Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
IAE	Institute of Adult Education, Tanzania
ICBAE	Integrated Community Based Adult Education
ICT	Information and communication technologies
INWENT	German Foundation for International Development
MINEDB	Ministry for Basic Education, Burkina Faso
MINCOF	Ministry of Women's Affairs, Burkina Faso
MINCULT	Ministry of Culture, Burkina Faso
MINJEUN	Ministry of Youth Affairs responsible for the promotion of literacy, Burkina Faso
MTE	Mother Tongue Education
NACALCO	National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees, Cameroon

NLP	National Literacy Program, Cameroon
NORAD	Norwegian Aid Agency
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OSEO	Swiss Development Organization
PRODEC	Malian Ten-Year Education Reform Program
PROPELCA	Program for Language Education, Cameroon
PRP	Primary Reading Program
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
WILA	Wimbum Literacy Association
WLP	World Literacy Program
ZAL	Zambian Alliance for Literacy
ZANU	Zambian National Unity Party

Mobilizing Resources and Enhancing Capacities

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Chapter 10.

Capacity Building for Educators of Adults in Three Southern African Countries: South Africa, Botswana and Namibia

by Veronica McKay¹ and Norma Romm, with Herman Kotze

1. Introduction

The provision of competent educators to teach, motivate, support and assess adult learning is an indispensable condition for the successful implementation of adult education programs (Youngman 2003:1). However, our deliberations on the potential role of adult education in addressing major problems such as poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, social conflict and environmental degradation, civic awareness, democracy, social inclusion, human rights and peace, typically overlook the training of personnel who are sufficiently competent to teach and organize basic nonformal learning/literacy/skills for adults and out-of-school youth and groups in difficult circumstances.

This chapter examines adult educator development in terms of initial and in-service training and conditions of work in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. It considers existing modes for building the capacity of adult educators and, in each case, attempts to answer the following questions:

- What policies guide literacy educator training?
- Are there examples of education system reforms that facilitate new pedagogies and create incentives for literacy/basic educators?

1. Professor of Adult Education at the University of South Africa.

- Is there a gap between policies and practices?
- Who is involved in educating adults at the basic level?
- What is the gender breakdown of educators of adults?
- How are they trained and in terms of what outcomes?
- To what extent is training formal/nonformal?
- What are the roles and functions of these educators?
- What, if any, are the conditions of employment?
- What career opportunities are there for literacy/adult educators?
- To what extent can adult education programs be seen as inter-sectoral?

2. Adult Educator Capacity Building in South Africa

Adult Education Policies and Practice

Prior to 1994, adult educators in South Africa received no formal training and could be trained for anything from a few days to months. With democracy came the recognition that the delivery of quality adult education depended on well-trained adult practitioners who played a pivotal role in addressing critical economic, political and social problems specific to learners across a variety of contexts such as health and HIV/AIDS, the environment, labor, etc and across a variety of settlements – urban, rural, informal, and so on. Since 1994, the Department of Education (DoE) has developed a number of policy documents guiding the implementation of ABET.

The interim guidelines (DoE, 1995) for the implementation of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) stated that, as a result of the high attrition rates in schools and the high numbers of adults who never attended school, millions of adult South Africans were functionally illiterate. It was clearly important to accelerate the development of an ABET system. The interim guidelines emphasized that the provision of ABET was linked to the development of human resources within the broader strategy for national development, and that ABET was aimed at restructuring the economy, addressing past inequalities and contributing to the creation of a democratic society. ABET had to provide people with the basic foundation for lifelong learning and equip them with the skills and critical capacity to participate fully in society. Clearly the well-trained ABET practitioner is at the heart of these guidelines.

While these guidelines refer to all adults who “would like to participate” in ABET programs, women (and in particular, rural inhabitants), out-of-school youth, the unemployed, prisoners and ex-prisoners, and adults with disabilities were singled out as needing special attention and special motivation.

► *1995 South African Qualifications Act*

In 1995, the government established the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). One of SAQA’s key functions was to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which created a national framework for learning achievements; facilitated access to education, training, and career paths; enhanced the quality of education and training; accelerated the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training, and employment opportunities; and contributed to the full personal development of each learner and to the social development of the nation at large. The central NQF function of accrediting unit standards that culminate in qualifications (even basic level learners) was intended to permit portability, accessibility and transferability of skills, knowledge and abilities across qualification levels and across the education and training divide.

SAQA also asserted that the NQF standards and qualifications had to be internationally comparable. Since the global trend is moving towards describing qualifications in terms of achieved learning outcomes and their associated assessment criteria, the articulation of South African qualifications with their international counterparts was facilitated by describing qualifications in terms of required achievement standards. South Africa chose the NQF with its commitment to outcomes-based education and training to bring about systemic change in the nature of the education and training system.

Problem of Race-based Resource Allocation

SAQA also sought to redress past wrongs. One of the criticisms of the past system of education in South Africa was that certain institutions were privileged above others because of the policy of unequal allocation of resources to learning institutions based on race (SAQA position paper, 2005). In addition, as a result of this financial discrimination, the perception grew that the standard of provision at these institutions was superior to that of other institutions. Consequently, students from these institutions were granted preferential treatment in access to further education opportunities and in the labor market. In other words, *where* the qualification was obtained was

more important than what qualifying students actually knew and could do (SAQA position paper, 2005).

Problem of Portability

In addition to problems of access, there was the problem of portability in that institutions arbitrarily chose to recognize or not to recognize qualifications achieved at other institutions; employers actively sought graduates from certain institutions and ignored graduates from other institutions. The impact of such practices on the economic and social fabric of South African society is self-evident (SAQA position paper, 2005).

It was imperative to correct injustice by focusing on what learners know and trying to be less exclusionary: *There is hence an historical imperative in the fragmentation of our [SA] society, to focus on what it is that a learner knows and can do as described in standards, rather than where the learner did his or her studying. It is necessary to address this problematic aspect of our [SA] history [that was associated with exclusionary practices]* (SAQA:2005).

Since 1995, South Africa has provided various leveled qualifications for educators of adults. The most popular form of training has been a one-year entry-level training program for grassroots facilitators who work “on the ground”. Training large numbers of these educators has made it possible to ensure capacity where it is needed. Notwithstanding the supply of capacity, “untrained” teachers are still contracted to teach, and adult learning centers still employ school teachers who have not obtained the basic certificate required to teach in an adult learning center and who lack the rudiments for working with adults whom they tend to treat like children.

► *The National Skills Development Act of 1998*

The National Skills Development Act underscored the government’s commitment to overall human resource development, which included education reform. The Act stipulated that in order for South Africans to participate meaningfully in the country’s economic and social development, as well as in their own advancement, they must have basic competencies including the ability to read, write, communicate effectively, and solve problems in their homes, communities, and workplaces. The Skills Development Act of 1998 and Skills Development Levy Act of 1999, introduced by the Department of Labor, reflected the government’s commitment to promoting active labor market policies. These Acts provided new institutions, programs,

and funding policies for skills development. Under the auspices of the Acts, the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were charged with the responsibility of transforming the skills base in their respective sectors through the implementation of targeted training at all levels of the workforce.

► *Standards Generating Body of 1999*

In 1999, the SAQA established the Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) that produced unit standards for four ABET qualifications necessary for ensuring the competence and quality of ABET practitioners in 2000. This was a breakthrough in establishing a qualification framework and a career path for ABET practitioners. The State recognized practitioner qualification and introduced a salary system. At the time of conducting this research, teachers with a one-year certificate were paid R60 (\$8) per hour and about R90 (\$11) if they had a three-year qualification. However, unlike school-teachers, they have no contracts or benefits and are often disposable when budgets shrink.

The adult educator fraternity regards the development of a qualification framework for Adult Practitioners by the SGB (Adult Learning National Standards Body 05) as one of the most significant areas of development in training practitioners for the ABET field. It led the DoE to recognize adult educators for salary purposes, and for the first time, they were included in the Educators' Act as a specific category of personnel. Notwithstanding this progress, however, adult educators lack proper conditions of service and support. They may belong to any union, such as SADTU or NAPTOSA, but they are not specifically organized and their "sectoral substantive needs" are therefore not catered for. For adult educators to attain some voice, they would need to be more visible and vocal in the statutory trade unions.

► *The South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) of 1999*

In 1999, the Minister of Education announced the launch of the SANLI campaign, located within the DoE (ABET Reference Guide 2004:202) so that that learners who were assessed to be at a pre-ABET level or at ABET level 1 might achieve specific outcomes which would enable them to, for example, write with meaning, read notes from teachers about their children, read where required in the context of their "daily life", develop basic numeracy skills, and fill in the necessary administrative forms when accessing civic services and in other official situations. The envisaged curriculum would

enable learners to read in their primary (mother tongue) language and in an additional language of wider communication (English), as as to have an awareness of issues of relevance to adults such as HIV/AIDS, entrepreneurship, human rights education and voter education.

However, by 2001 there was a concern that SANLI might miss the opportunity to forward its aims. To activate the campaign, the University of South Africa's (UNISA's) ABET Institute committed itself, with the UK Department for International Development (DFID), to establish a partnership² with SANLI to bring its mission to fruition. In February 2002, with a £2 million grant from DFID, UNISA ABET entered into partnership with SANLI and began to deliver literacy classes at sites across South Africa. UNISA ABET brought its database of 25,000³ adult educator graduates trained by the ABET Institute over the previous six years. Volunteer educators were recruited from among the adult education graduates, and UNISA ABET had a national team of 250 tutors and provincial coordinators equipped to assist with recruiting, orienting, monitoring and supporting the campaign volunteers. A database and a system for remunerating the volunteer cadre were developed as was a system for assessing learner competencies on a national scale.

Over a two-year period, 342,000 learners participated in the program, more than double the original target. The statistical data on attendance and assessment indicated a successful program confirmed by site visits and monitoring records. Because of the emphasis on community development in the program, a large majority of the classes, especially in rural areas and informal settlements, went beyond literacy into income-generating projects. While the UNISA SANLI project aimed to teach learners for six months, most classes continued for nine months: learners were reluctant to stop attending and new learners joined along the way. The success of the program (as cited by the ABET Reference Guide 2004) was due to the following: (i) classes were held where it was convenient to attend; (ii) because the volunteer educators were drawn from the student database, most had been trained for at least a year, many had three years of training and some were postgraduates; (iii) educators lived in the communities where they taught; (iv) the bottom-up approach gave ownership of the program to the communities; (v) learners

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2. The University was one of a range of service providers to offer support. However, the University was responsible for raising its own funding for its delivery.
 3. The University's records reflect that by the end of 2005, more than 50,000 adult educators had been trained on the various ABET courses.

were encouraged to go beyond literacy and to initiate income-generating or self-help projects, and (vi) learners were asked to commit to attending for the duration of the program.

This example suggests that mechanisms for creating a “mass” cadre of trained personnel for mass adult education programs (to address backlogs in adult education) is feasible and can be an option for other countries too. The UNISA ABET Institute, in cooperation with the Namibian College for Open Learning, is currently training educators in Namibia using the same methods of distance education combined with monthly tutorials. While the same courseware is used, local tutors are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to local circumstances.

The notion of accredited providers for educator training means that educators are no longer trained on an informal basis. Any institution offering training for adult educators would need to comply with various logistical and academic/unit standard requirements with the Education and Training and Development Practitioner (ETDP) Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) even expected universities to acquire its accreditation. When the universities rejected having the ETDP SETA rather than the Council for Higher Education determine “their” accreditation, a long and heated discussion ensued. Universities are willing to comply with all SAQA requirements for registering qualifications, which has implications for the portability of qualifications. Being accredited by SETA is unlikely.

► *Norms and Conditions for Adult Education Centers*

Despite legislation since 1994 intended to improve practice and delivery, change has been slow. However, recent developments in the field indicate that the DoE⁴ recognizes the importance of funding adult education centers and ensuring better conditions of service for adult educators, although it appears that none of the recognized teacher unions have made any impact on improving the conditions of adult educators. It is also important to ensure the commitment of the Ministry and that policies are accompanied by funding commitments at national level. Although the DoE has national leadership authority, the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) are the primary fund holders of the minimal ABET funding allocations as provincial priorities determine the sectoral distribution of funds. Efforts are being

4. Discussion with V. Jacobs, Acting Director, ABET (DoE).

made via the draft policy to set targets for the funding of adult learning centers (ALCs). At the moment, PED resourcing of ALCs is unpredictable.

The new draft document setting norms and standards for funding adult learning centers is now being re-discussed after various rounds of stakeholder consultation. It seeks to support the national prioritization of ABET by establishing a funding framework for public and private ALCs to facilitate and guide the provincial distribution of funds allocated to ABET in the national budget programs⁵.

The ABET Act (2000) obliges the Member of the Executive Council to provide sufficient information to ALCs regarding funding. The implementation of the section within the framework of the norms and standards for funding ALCs should enable predictability and stability in the funding of centers. This would ensure that ALCs are able to plan properly within the funding framework. The document includes a commitment to funding program-based ABET – including personnel and non-personnel costs. This is specified as follows: Personnel: Public adult learning centers will be allocated posts according to a post distribution model. The model will take into account various factors such as number of learners, programs offered at the center, time frames for the duration of programs and skills programs to be offered. Personnel costs will be reflected in the budget allocation of public adult learning centers, but the centers will not receive the funds. Non-Personnel: “Funding of program-based ABET” involves the actual transfer of funds or spending rights to public centers on a predictable, uniform, enrolment-driven formula basis, in exchange for the accomplishment of certain curriculum programs for educating adults. The funding is to consist of non-personnel costs such as: curriculum offerings in line with credits; costs for accessing physical facilities; learning support materials, and learning and teaching aids including equipment for skills programs.

Priority programs include: basic literacy programs; skills programs; fundamentals (communication and numeracy) and other priority programs as determined by the DoE. The proposed funding framework is to incorporate

5. This refers to the time of this study i.e. 2006.

a phased approach to proceed via a process of certification⁶ of centers that will receive funding on a program basis, which is intended to increase their number and readiness to receive funding for programs; certified centers will move onto the program-based approach and uncertified centers will receive capacity-building to enable them to be certified as soon as possible. It is recommended that district and provincial officials be trained to assist non-certified centers. (Private centers will be funded in accordance with the same formula-based approach as public centers but will not be certified.)

For planning purposes, PEDs must schedule a process to certify all public centers by 1 January 2010 or three years after the gazetting of the norms, whichever ever comes first. At the end of the phasing-in period, the funding norms and the systems needed to implement them will apply to all public adult learning centers. Each PED would be required to develop a plan and file it with the DoE to ensure that all PALCs are certified by 1 January 2010.

PEDs would need to provide an account of the costing and human resource implications of ensuring that the provision of ABET services to all adults who wish to enroll in ABET centers to pursue studies up to ABET level 4; to ensure that all PALCs achieve certification by providing capacity-building and that the PALCs be funded as per these norms. Assurance would also be required that ABET staff at PED and district level have sufficient capacity and have been trained to implement these norms.

► *ABET, the SETAs, the Department of Labor and the Public Works Programs*

The SETAs consider ABET to be a crosscutting issue for which they allocate a budget. This makes lifelong education a real possibility, as the various programs must target specific sectoral groups: health workers; construction, service industry, or manufacturing workers; workers in local government, water, or environment, and so on. SETAs open windows of possibility for ABET to reach a broad spectrum of stakeholders including traditional healers, taxi drivers and informal sector workers.

6. Certifying centers means that a center deemed capable of managing and accounting for public funds in line with the ABET Act and the Public Financial Management Act will be certified by the provinces – a tall order given that many of the schools have not been able to implement this. Thus, while certification presupposes better quality teaching and learning, many more rural centers have no infrastructural means to qualify for certification or to apply, which will indirectly disadvantage the learners. Systems will need to be put in place to ensure that especially government centers are assisted and supported to obtain this certification.

The SETA programs disburse funding employed workers but unemployed workers falling outside of the net of the SETAs are catered for by a National Skills Fund or the extended public works programs (EPWPs) that form part of the South African government's strategy to address poverty and unemployment, and to provide for skills transfer while opening access to education and work. The EPWP makes it possible for adult basic education to reach learners who have been missed by the schooling system and other literacy interventions. However, a real challenge for the EPWP is to achieve tangible results.

DoE has attempted to collaborate with the various SETAs. A 2004 project successfully integrated education and highlights the successful collaboration between various SETAs: CETA (construction); ESETA (energy), PAETA (primary agriculture), and THERA (tourism and hospitality). Service providers were recommended by the respective bodies, and the DoE organized training in certain trades (e.g. carpentry, painting, plumbing, glazing, electrical work, agricultural activities broiler making, hospitality and tourism). The service providers were required to train the 104 unemployed learners (64 construction learners, 40 from primary agriculture and the rest from the other training associations of which two-thirds were men and one-third were women) who had enlisted for ABET training. About 60 adult learning centers were reached in the various provinces - mainly in rural and peri-urban areas- that they chose, and which continued to receive ABET training in literacy during skills training.⁷ The extent to which these kinds of programs might go to scale remains problematic.

► *The Impact of the NQF on Educators*

The shift towards an outcomes based approach to education has implications across the educational system. A SAQA position paper (2005) paper entitled "What is the relationship between the National Qualifications Framework, Outcomes-based Education and Curriculum 2005?" follows Spady (2004) in defining the notion of outcomes-based education:

Outcomes-based education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting

7. While the program is minute considering it was a government program, it is a successful model for more widespread implementation.

with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens. (Spady, 1994:1)

It is imperative to avoid having teachers fall into the “backwash effect”, which results in the teacher requiring learners to rote learn the specific outcomes, thus defeating the purpose of OBE.

The SAQA position paper suggests that the implementation of the NQF in South Africa has striven to emphasize, along with “foundational competence”, the notion of applied and reflexive competences – the abilities to put into practice in the relevant context the learning outcomes, and to reflect on them during the process of acquiring a qualification. In regard to the training of ABET practitioners, nurturing these competencies of necessity underlies practitioner training. The combination of competences implies that people (educators and learners) develop different views of knowledge from traditional notions.

Table 10.1. Competences emphasized by SAQA

Applied competence	Foundational competence	Reflexive competence
The demonstrated ability to perform a set of tasks in an authentic context. A range of actions or possibilities is considered, and decisions are made about which actions to follow.	The demonstrated understanding of what the learner is doing and why. This underpins the practical competence and therefore the actions taken.	The demonstrated ability to adapt to changed circumstances appropriately and responsibly, and understand the consequences of action or inaction.

The traditional definitions of knowledge have implicitly designated formal institutions of learning as the primary site of learning. This perception has been reinforced by the fact that in most instances, an institution awards a qualification before the learner obtains any further learning in a practical environment. In other words, the sub-text is that once the qualification has been awarded, learning is over, and unless a learner registers for a new, formal qualification, learning for life is over! This bias towards qualification-as-destination is at odds with reality (SAQA 2005:2). In this way educators are supposed to help learners to see learning as part of daily practice, by themselves embracing a new “philosophy” of meaningful learning (which is also learner-centered). By the same token, educators are required to see

themselves in terms of “lifelong” and “life-wide”⁸ education so that they take charge of their own learning and career-pathing. This ability for autonomous learning is indeed a critical cross-field outcome, which permeates all learning on the NQF.

► *The Impact of the NQF on Training ABET practitioners*

Prior to 1994 educator training was extremely small scale, although important seminal work provided the foundation for post-apartheid training in the ABET sector. Currently various universities offer training from certificate courses lasting about one year to up to three years, and some offer postgraduate studies in adult basic education. The Education and Training Standards Generating Body (SGB) defined the unit standards for educator training and the learning outcomes which are used to develop courses and qualifications and also the relevant courseward.

The SAQA impact study (2005:60) showed that there was some contradictory evidence in regard to whether the implementation of the NQF had led to a major redesign of courses. Some HE providers stated that they had undergone major redesign processes of their curriculum. One public HE institution said this was of one of their highest priorities. Another GET/ABET institution explained that they had gone through a major redesign process due to government department requirements.

Other respondents reported difficulties with the redesign process. Some said that while they had to try to redesign courses in line with NQF requirements, the process was very slow. One employer stated that they had redesigned the process to comply with NQF requirements, but still taught the course using the same materials.

Most respondents did feel that the quality of the learning programs had improved since the implementation of the NQF. An ETQA respondent (from an Education and Training Quality Assurance body) stated: “I can tell you there is a difference. A difference of attitude, there is a difference of quality of ethical issues, there is a difference of curriculum.” The respondent suggested, “You couldn’t think back that we ever had the old system.

8. “Life-wide” refers to crossing traditional fields of learning and to the multi-sectoral nature of adult learning.

You know the way people were taught. What you call lackadaisical. This is a fantastic system.”

Some education and labor departments felt that learners benefited from the new learning programs: “On the side of learners, I think there’s a lot of support there’s a lot of room being given to them to be more creative and take charge of their own learning.” “I think learners enjoy the outcomes-based system more, because it is more practical.”

One respondent had mixed feelings about the outcomes-based education system, mainly because she felt that teachers had not been given enough training to deal with the implementation of the system.

Notwithstanding the views on the introduction of the NQF and all the SAQA-related machinery, the tensions between the sectors of HE and SAQA’s ETQAs are visible, as HE deems itself to be an ETQA in its own right. Blom and Keevy (2005) make the same point when they suggest that through quality assurance mechanisms, the quality of education and training has improved (2005:19). But there are still problems: *Most of the problems [with QA] are associated with lack of capacity [of QA bodies and also of providers], contestation, overlapping responsibilities, lack of meaningful [memoranda of understanding] legislative anomalies and power struggles. QA seems to have become embattled in bureaucratic processes.* They conclude that there is still much to do to improve the quality of the education and training system (2005:20), not the least being the need to simplify quality assurance processes.

► *Policies and Practices: The Gap*

Sadly, ABET delivery in South Africa is dismal: only a small proportion of adults requiring a basic education are reached. There is clearly a gap between policy and practice. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (1999) states that this gap is evident in the fact that between 1995 and 1996, only about 334 000 people (of a potential 4 million adults in need of basic literacy) participated in ABET programs throughout the country. Seven of South Africa’s nine provinces spent less than 1% of their education budget on ABET in 1998 (HSRC, 1999). South Africa is now faced with the imperative of reducing the gap between policy and practice through the implementation of programs and initiatives that will bring about the desired changes in the lives of many more South Africans. The HSRC audit indicates that participation in the state sector is “disturbingly low when compared with

the goal of universal access to ABET programs” referred to in the Multi-Year Plan (DoE, 1998:7).

The Multi-Year Plan (1998) outlined the proposed model for delivery of all ABET services and spelled out the criteria and norms for quality ABET delivery with the challenge of serving 2.5 million learners by the year 2001. However, the plan was not translated into deliverable outcomes and the state did not reach even one-third of this number by that time (Aitchison, Houghton & Baatjes, 2000).

Some studies, (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000; French, 2002), even suggest a decline in ABET provision and delivery while the sector is becoming increasingly marginalized. Funding allocated to ABET is only 0.83% of the national education budget. In addition, the lack of recognition of adult educators and their status with regard to their conditions of service as adult educators employed in the sector is poor. Limited delivery is due to several reasons: (i) bureaucratic bottlenecks that tend to hamper policy at the level of implementation; (ii) the lack of capacity to translate policy into practice and of (iii) political will to financially resource implementation adequately.

While school and early childhood education will always receive the bulk of the national education budget, the funding of education for the parents of these children is also crucial. This education itself has many positive effects on the education of the nation’s children.

Adult Education Teacher Training

Adult education teacher training has to be well conceptualized so that teachers can work in different contexts (health, environment, the workplace, and water management) and settlements (urban, rural, formal, and informal) in order to reach the most marginalized and disadvantaged communities, which are the primary target group of all ABET programs. Training ABET practitioners in basic and generic skills allows them to work in a variety of specialized areas, including literacy, numeracy, primary health care and HIV/AIDS, English as a second language, small business development, and environmental education. The introduction of unit standards and the fact that learners may accumulate them has helped improve adult education by ensuring that sufficient numbers of grassroots teachers are adequately trained.

► *Diplomas and Certification*

Presently South Africa has the following qualifications.

- A one-year National Certificate in adult basic education and training enables educators to register with SACE⁹ and to teach. Adult educators who wish to add to their existing qualification to teach adults can also take this certificate.
- The National Higher Diploma in adult basic education and training builds on the certificate and is a two-year program.
- A first degree in adult education requires three years of training and a postgraduate (B.Ed.) degree in Adult Basic Education builds on the three-year program and adds one year.
- Finally, Masters and Ph.Ds in Adult Basic Education can be earned.

Adult educators are required to be trained for a minimum of one year (or 120 notional hours) to gain an entry qualification or to add to/supplement their existing qualification. While the task of training these educators has seemed to fall on the tertiary institutions,¹⁰ the ABET Institute of the University of South Africa has taken on most of this responsibility.

Adult educators have found career advancement into policy positions in government, with many of the current ministers and directors being the holders of an ABET practitioner's certificate or diploma. ABET practitioners are recruited by a range of ministries (other than the DoE): as extension workers by the Department of Agriculture; trainers in water, sanitation and environmental education by the Department of Water and Sanitation; trainers in health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and family planning by the Ministry of Health; skills development facilitators and trade unionists trainers by the Department of Labor; youth development and community development workers by the Department of Social Services.

Assuring the Quality of Training and Delivery

While the quality assurance of educators lies with the ETDP SETA, the Higher Education Council regulates the training of educators by tertiary institutions and also regulates the quality of all higher education degrees, diplomas and certificates in South Africa. However since the training of educators is not a

9. The South African Council for Educators. Registration is mandatory if educators wish to practice.

10. The universities of Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape as well as the University of South Africa are engaged in presenting some level of adult educator qualification.

prerogative of universities and colleges, smaller private providers can enter this field and have their accreditation regulated by the ETDP SETA which will require them to comply with the unit standards for teacher development and with several other quality related issues. The unit standards for practitioner development and their subsequent career-pathing are determined by the SGB for ETDP.

Measures for a robust monitoring and evaluation system have not as yet been put in place and the DoE¹¹ is now charged with setting up a system for this (DoE, 2005). It is proposed that the monitoring component should incorporate the criteria for M&E suggested, for example, by UNESCO's Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Program, which is seeking to develop international mechanisms and tools for measuring literacy progress.

The DoE draft document seeks systematic monitoring of the instructional processes in adult learning centers and to help practitioners achieve higher standards of teaching while evaluating the worth/merit of the teaching-learning processes in terms of specified objectives. The hope is to measure outcomes as follows. First, newly literate adults have acquired the competencies as outlined by the unit standards; the adult centers achieve their goals and targets; there are better trained practitioners, learning and support materials, and management systems.

In addition to quantitative indicators, it is proposed also to consider the perception of "inputs and processes" including: the availability and quality of facilities and resources; the availability and quality of learning programs and learning materials; and the attainability of specific outcomes, e.g. appropriateness of assessment criteria and appropriateness of performance indicators. In addition, perceptions of processes are also being proposed: the quality of teaching and learning (time on task, teaching methods/strategies, programs for learners with educational special needs, etc); training and support for practitioners and facilitators; and the participation of other community members and the governing body. Any model will evolve along with the evolving ABET sector.

Blom and Keevy (2005) note that the SAQA study on the impact of the NQF on education and training suggests that the NQF has led to a better under-

11. Led by ABET director, David Diale.

standing of quality beyond traditional notions but that much remains to be done to improve the quality of the education and training system. They follow David Diale (DoE) in suggesting that quantifying findings in terms of discrete “levels of impact” should not be over-emphasized as it can lead to a conflation of issues such as “extent of impact” (measured in numbers) and beneficial impact (assessed more qualitatively by looking at issues such as quality of education and training, access and redress, and also obviously the quality of the educators).

► *Evaluations of Training*

The UNISA ABET Institute has undergone a number of impact evaluations on its training of adult educators. These have been conducted mainly by DFID. The evaluations do not form part of the government’s strategy for assessing the impact of educators, but they are cited because the ABET Institute is the largest training provider of adult educators in South Africa. Other providers include small non-government initiatives and other universities (Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town). Each provider conducts assessments of their training provision for ABET educators.

SAQA has produced two reports on the impact of the NQF. The second cycle report (2005) points out that some kind of “divide” remains between institution-based learning and other forms of learning. SAQA notes that from very early on, the debates on the NQF were characterized as discipline-based and institution-based learning and workplace learning. The debates continue, but at the moment, a space is opening where “education and training are not considered to be opposite but a ‘continuum of learning’” (SAQA, 2005:27).

The report notes that NQF is/was to integrate education and training for adult learners but that the DoE and Department of Labor (DoL), the two sponsoring departments, share no language or understanding; their tensions create a real danger of protecting sectoral interests at the cost of integration and training and across formal, nonformal education, and training opportunities. Political will is needed to drive the process of developing an integrated approach. But the SAQA survey (including qualitative information) showed that “most respondents believed that the providers of education and training support lifelong learning and that the NQF has contributed to an awareness of lifelong learning”. And indeed, a substantial number believe that providers are more responsive to the needs of learners as a result of the NQF: “The NQF processes is a guideline ... it guides us to provide quality in

training and then to ensure that the training programs we produce ... are in lines with norms and standards set ... if we are following the NQF processes we ... [produce] quality not quantity” (SAQA, 2005:77).

The NQF was originated to be a “radical credit accumulation and transfer system, promising to accredit learners for accumulated proficiency and undertaking to open up access to education and training routes that had previously been closed to them.” Financial commitments are, however, necessary to fulfill these ambitions (SAQA, 2005:27).

The NQF has to start from the reality of the power of different types of learning and views on its nature and purpose, although there seems to be some agreement regarding “learning” in the context of application. This may be where the promise for developing an integrated approach to education and training lies (SAQA, 2005:25). James Keevy of SAQA has indicated that focus group discussions with learners show that they do not question the outcomes-based model, taken as “obvious,” but teachers can have difficulty in terms of the support and materials they are given.

The SAQA report (2005) indicates that, at the moment in quality assurance processes there is a very open-ended conception of the NQF to try to “address employment opportunities as well as economic development as well as career paths as well as redress past unfair discrimination”. Jansen (2004) comments that there seems to be no policy in the world able to address all these things in the ways envisaged, let alone simultaneously.

► *Effectiveness of Training*

Training large numbers of adult educators who work across a variety of ministries (each with its own SETA) has not lent itself to a holistic or integrated evaluation of teachers across all sectors. However, individual ministerial or provider impact assessments have shown that trained teachers are an improvement on untrained teachers and that continuous teacher development assists in keeping educators motivated and updated about curriculum development.¹²

12. Several studies by private providers of ABET aimed at evaluating the delivery in municipalities, business and other government sectors, such as the police. Within the DoE, impact assessments have focused on smaller niche programs such as the Rivoningo EU-funded ABET program, which showed that trained teachers were effective under optimal conditions.

ABET Director David Diale states that the absence of a robust M&E mechanism makes it difficult to judge the effectiveness of adult education thus far. A recent discussion document being drafted (by the DoE) on ABET monitoring and evaluation suggests that the few gains and innovations in ABET have gone undocumented and unnoticed.

It appears that teachers (especially those with an “ordinary” teaching qualification) are finding that they can do with more support¹³ mainly because they have difficulty balancing the curriculum and outcomes-based education. Teachers need more support, training and materials to cope with finding a way to organize outcomes-based learning.¹⁴

As the unit standards for learners are all in the process of being developed, trained teachers receive in-service development to ensure that they are aware not only of the unit standards but also of how to apply them. Provincial departments conduct one-week training workshops but they are often too short and are inconsistent across provinces.¹⁵

Blom and Keevy (2005) indicate that the introduction of the NQF was seen as having a “moderate” impact in terms of learners’ needs and responses of teaching practices. In the second cycle impact assessment of SAQA and the NQF (2005:62), 122 stakeholders were surveyed from across nine provinces including providers (administrators/managers and academics/lecturers/teachers and key individuals from GET, including ABET, FET, HET), businesses, organized labor, quality assurance bodies, standard setting bodies and government departments.

Interviews were followed by questionnaires from 77 interviewees and 501 further respondents were surveyed using the same instrument. A quantitative analysis of all qualifications on the National Learners’ Records Database was also undertaken and a qualitative analysis of certain qualifications was carried out.

13. Discussion with National Teachers’ Organization of South Africa (NAPTOSA) representative Rodney Veldtman. Members come from all types of educational institutions, including Public Adult Learning Centers (PALCs). NAPTOSA is one of the relatively smaller unions; the biggest teachers’ union, the South African Democratic Teachers’ Association (SADTU), is aligned to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

14. Discussion with James Keevy, SAQA.

15. Discussion with Rodney Veldtman, NAPTOSA.

Respondents on both surveys saw the NQF as having (only) a moderate impact on responsiveness to learners' needs and of teaching practices to them. This may reflect lack of follow-up training but it may also be too soon to derive the long-term impact of the NQF given the dearth of baseline data.

A number of evaluations have been conducted on the effectiveness and impact of educators trained by the UNISA ABET Institute. The ABET practitioner training program has been evaluated continuously over the past ten years by DFID. All evaluations agreed on the effective use of distance education for training and supporting educators and on the impact of the educator in teaching, learning and development. In addition, evaluators commented on the personal development and empowerment of educators. Materials used for training educators received the Commonwealth of Learning award for the best distance materials in 2002.

Roles and Functions of Educators

In line with the unit standards, educators in South Africa should (after successfully completing an ABET practitioner course) demonstrate that they can, for instance: undertake policy analysis; engage in policy debates; utilize a range of teaching/facilitation methods and assessment methods; identify and remediate learning difficulties; develop and evaluate teaching material; profile learners and communities; identify target groupings; adapt teaching and learning situations to target group's needs; improve knowledge in selected area of learning; demonstrate communication and assessment skills; relate teaching to social context; identify area of research; design research approach; compile research reports; utilize a variety of qualitative, quantitative, and participatory research methods; contribute to the development of a common, shared vision for ABET across sectors; understand the situation within each district and its importance in terms of ABET; understand the usefulness of community profiles; know how to assess and prioritize needs and do a community profile; know how to collect information on relevant structures, organizations, institutions and other possible partners in an area; identify key roles that managerial staff may need to play, such as collaborative management, teamwork facilitation, counseling, monitoring and strategizing (Singh & McKay, 2004).

Given the interdisciplinary and inter-ministerial nature of their work, educators need to be well equipped to deal with issues such as how to network and

build partnerships with other stakeholders and institutions, how to form linkages between ABET and other developmental objectives and needs and how to ensure stakeholder participation and people-centered development.

Participatory Approaches and Methodologies

Teacher education within the ABET sector has always been characterized by participatory and learner-centered methodologies. These approaches underlie the practice of outcomes-based education (OBE) and by implication it should be easier for adult educators who have been specifically trained to teach in a learner-centered way to use more OBE-type methods. The problem cited by many teachers is that the unit standards themselves are written in a language that is incomprehensible to most “English-as-another-language” readers. As one ABET practitioner put it, “If we do not understand what they mean we don’t know what to do.”¹⁶ So, while teachers are trained in the methodologies most aspired to across all education sectors, they are hampered by not being able to put their skills into practice as they are unable to demystify the unit standards!

In this regard, Veldtman¹⁷ commented that provincial departments of education do hold workshops from time to time—but more guidance is needed for teachers (and more possibility of sharing experiences). In Botswana, too, our research shows that teachers thus far are not sufficiently exposed to alternative teaching methods and strategies. And in Namibia, personnel from the Directorate of Adult Basic Education pointed out that the tendency for adult educators is to “revert” to traditional modes of teaching, and therefore that more support for teachers in developing alternative methodologies is needed.

Teachers and Students

Based on the UNISA statistics for enrolments in ABET practitioner courses,¹⁸ 80% of registered students in 1995 were men. By 2000, approximately 70% to 80% of students enrolling each year were females. The learner profile by gender in the State ABET programs reflects the gender breakdown of the teachers being trained: 80% of the learners are female, in keeping with global

16. Discussion with ABET teachers in KwaZulu-Natal.

17. Discussion with Veldtman from NAPTOA.

18. Since UNISA’s ABET Institute has trained in excess of 50 000 adult educators, these statistics seem to be a reliable indicator of the male/female educators in the country.

literacy trends where most learners are female, for the following reasons: (i) men are reluctant to admit that they are illiterate; (ii) they don't want to be taught by female teachers; (iii) they would prefer gender-segregated classes; (iv) they would prefer learning job skills, and (v) they are, as migrant workers, away from home.

Mixed-Age Group Classes and Language

In all areas where the learner population is dispersed it is necessary (and economical) for teachers to deal with mixed-age and mixed-ability groups, difficult under any circumstances. Catering for learners' needs across the age spectrum is as challenging as teaching learners in multiple languages — a phenomenon which is increasing with the rapid urbanization of learners into the main metropolitan areas.

In theory, South Africa has opted for a multilingual policy with all 11 languages receiving equal status and English (the language of the economy) as an additive. In reality, learners need to be cajoled to learn in their mother tongue as they recognize the economic benefits of learning English. Institutionalizing mother tongue education is difficult in the main metropolitan areas where learners (new migrants) from all over the country need to be taught in one class. Teachers struggle to teach the variety of languages for learners in ABET level 1 who need to be taught in the mother tongue. In the higher ABET levels, there is a dearth of materials in the mother tongue in learning areas such as social studies, math and life orientation.

“Schools”

The NQF makes provision for learning to take place anywhere. SANLI program participants appeared to be prepared to learn in any venue; schools are (grudgingly) being made available for ABET classes to be held at night but the problems associated with this have not been sorted out. Who pays for electricity when the buildings are used, who cares for the buildings, etc. School teachers tend to be proprietary about furniture and equipment, and do not allow the ABET teacher to put the desks in groups or to put a poster on the wall.

Sometimes you get into a classroom and the teacher has left all her notes on the board so you can't even use the board. ... we can't put anything on the walls ...

sometimes they give us a classroom but they lock up the toilets ... we don't have a cupboard to put our things in and so have to carry our things to and from class ... thieves come in and steal our watches and cell phones ... and they mug the learners when they go home at night.

The government needs to address the use of school buildings, not least because crime increases in places where people tend to group. In general, ABET programs can make more cost-effective use of available educational facilities. They do not require major investments in new buildings.

3. Adult Educator Capacity Building in Botswana¹⁹

Adult Education Policy and Practice

The Botswana National Literacy Program (BNLP) was launched in 1981 following a recommendation of the 1977 National Policy on Education, for “adults and youth” aged 10 and above. The goals were to enable an estimated 250 000 illiterate youth and adults (40% of the population aged 15–45 years) to read, write and calculate in Setswana in 1980 to 1985; to apply knowledge in developing their cultural, social and economic life; and to perform community duties and to enjoy the rights and obligations of citizenship.

Throughout the process, cognizance is taken of the proposed educators in order to ensure that the educators can teach the new curriculum, that it is educator-friendly, makes sense, and can be understood, appropriated and managed by them (Torres in UIE, 2005). For that reason, it has been critical to define the profile and quality of the educators. In many ways, the curriculum for adult learners has not been conceived with the teacher or end-user in mind. This results in many implementation difficulties at the learning interface. Clearly, the view of the educator and the training that the educator receives is central to such a process.

For professional development in non-formal education (NFE), the National Commission on Education (1993) recommends that “The Department of

19. The study draws heavily on the Evaluation of Botswana National Literacy Program (BNLP), which started in June 2003 and was conducted by a team of the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE). The evaluation exercise did a comprehensive review of the curriculum and operations of BNLP as per the Revised National Policy on Education (1994).

Adult Education of the University of Botswana should be the lead agency for the training of out-of-school education personnel and for research and evaluation in this sector” (REC. 76, Revised National Policy on Education, 1994). Despite political support for educator development, however, the state is unable to enroll more than a handful of educators in university training programs each year and the cadre of LGLs is left without the benefit of training. In the *Report of the National Commission on Education 1993*, “Vocational and Technical Training” and “Out-of School-Education” are highlighted with proposals on enabling such learning opportunities for adults, who lack basic education or wish to further their initial education in four main areas: work-related skills training, adult basic education, extension programs and continuing education. Each proposal requires training a specific cadre of educator.

► *Education System Reforms: The Botswana Blueprint*

After more than 20 years, the BNLP is under review in order to develop a curriculum²⁰ that might offer a systematic program for learners to reach the equivalent of the exit of Primary Education (UIE/DNFE Blueprint for Botswana, 2005). The new ABEP Blueprint (UIE, 2005) opens the way for appropriate administrative and teaching staff selection for the DNFE by suggesting that educational level and professional profile must be accompanied by the right attitude and empathy to handle difficult social and human contexts and to experience satisfaction with the job.

The DNFE’s Blueprint suggests using mother tongue as a language of instruction in the initial stages to acquire basic literacy and to further understand and develop the language; using Setswana as a language of instruction and as a subject area; introducing English as a second language in Level 1 once basic literacy in the mother tongue is ensured; and using English as a language of instruction in a few selected modules, starting in Level 2 (UIE, 2005).

This implies among other things that all program facilitators are at least bilingual, proficient in mother tongue and in English, and able to teach them; appropriate and sufficient instructional and reading materials are made available in these languages, including languages other than Setswana; and all available technologies and media are used to support ESL education (UIE, 2005).

20. The proposed program is referred to as the new program, the new national curriculum or the ABEP.

The possibility of including all minority languages as languages of instruction for basic literacy purposes will depend on these three factors as well as on the effective demand from the interested groups. The extent to which English can be offered in this program and the competencies to be expected in this language will also depend on these factors, especially in rural areas.

The Blueprint states explicitly that ABEP will be **Competencies-based**. Competencies refer to knowledge plus know-how. A competencies-based curriculum ensures deep understanding of phenomena, connecting theory and practice, translating ideas into actions, using scientific knowledge in everyday life.

Outcomes based: Outcome-based education and outcome-based curriculum focus on competencies, that is, on what students can actually do with what they are taught, on the short-term and medium-term impact of learning on their daily lives. Therefore, assessment is not focused on the capacity to retrieve or repeat information but rather on the capacity to translate learning into better thinking, better doing, changing attitudes, anticipating and solving problems, etc.

Recognize prior learning: Children, youth and adults, even those who are illiterate and have never attended school, have a wealth of competencies, knowledge and experience that must be acknowledged (i) as the starting point for the teaching process in every level, area, and lesson; (ii) as valid knowledge and know-how to be accredited when deciding about the level at which learners must be placed when joining a program, and (iii) for accreditation purposes, as regulated by the National Qualification Framework (UIE, 2005).

To recruit personnel with the values, attitudes and skills required for the implementation of ABEP, the Blueprint recommends continuous education and training, both pre- and in-service, support to ensure that facilitators become familiar and confident with the program components, particularly the curriculum. This will require a program to address the critical shortage of capacity. In addition, the Blueprint recommends adequate remuneration. It also outlines the need for (i) developing appropriate *instructional materials and availability of such materials* in sufficient numbers in every learning center; (ii) continuous evaluation to inform curriculum development and implementation, and (iii) diversifying program implementation and modalities to respond to the *various contexts and needs*, instead of trying to create a single homogeneous model for all.

The Blueprint points to the difference between the *prescribed* curriculum (i.e. curriculum proposal and instructional materials) and the *implemented* curriculum (what happens in the classroom) and the gap between them. This is attributed to a great extent to the teacher who is required to define and give shape to the *real* curriculum.

Botswana's Adult Education Policy embraces all those whose "job function includes helping adults to learn." This function may be a primary one, as with a Ministry of Education District Adult Education Officer, or a secondary one, as with a pastor who organizes nonformal education for young adults in the community. The specific functions may comprise different roles, such as teacher, community organizer, administrator, material developer and so on while the technical content of the job may be very varied, ranging from health to business management to construction skills. The scope of training in Botswana is therefore inclusive in its conception of the adult educator. If adult education is broad and contested, so too is the definition of the *adult educator*. Youngman (2002:3) points out that any discussion of adult education personnel has to take into account the fact that "many people who can be said *objectively* to be adult educators do not *subjectively* regard themselves as such."

However, the government's extension services coordinated at national, district and village levels provide a very important component of adult education. At the national level, the Rural Development Coordination Division of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning chairs the Rural Extension Coordinating Committee which brings together the directors of all the extension departments (ranging from the Ministry of Education's Department of Non-formal Education to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's Department of Wildlife and National Parks). The hierarchy includes national inter-ministerial committee, District Extension Teams and Village Extension Teams, all of which seek to integrate the operations of the different departments. These services provide a concrete example of the existence in Botswana of post-CONFINTEA training in terms of organizational context and curriculum content.

However, literacy and the associated techniques can and should be integrated into the training of all extension services providers across the sectors as they will need such understandings to know how to make literacies accessible to adults in this target group. Access to services could be expanded by disseminating user-friendly materials such as forms for accessing old

age pensions, national identity cards, passport applications, clinic cards, posters, pamphlets and HIV/AIDS publications that could in turn be translated into other languages and used in NFE classes.

► *Policy and Practice: The Gap*

When the *Revised National Policy on Education April 1994* is read in conjunction with the Commission's *Report*, a comprehensive policy for adult education emerges. Youngman (2002) describes the framework as a forward-looking and progressive national education policy, which provides a conducive policy environment for initiatives in adult education within the CONFINTEA conception. The challenge now lies in ensuring that the social policy environment sets targets for delivery. It is necessary for the process of re-curricularization to simultaneously provide a strategy for large-scale training and for the sustained and organized training of adult educators to "deliver" the curriculum.

Adult Education Teacher Training

The majority of the educators in the National Literacy Program are recruited as Literacy Group Leaders (LGLs) who receive initial training for two weeks and subsequent refresher training annually by the DNFE.

Youngman (2002) states that the Department of Adult Education of the University of Botswana has a key place in providing training for adult educators and was designated in *The Revised National Policy on Education April 1994* as "the lead agency for the training of out-of-school education personnel and for research and evaluation in this sector". Since its inception in 1979, the department has always enrolled students from a wide variety of backgrounds and has had students from 20 different government departments as well as from a number of non-governmental organizations: most students are working adults sponsored by their employers. This department offers a variety of short-term, in-service training courses for adult educators but its main focus is providing qualification programs at five levels with the M.Phil./Ph.D. (Adult Education) program — a research-based qualification.

Several other institutions also provide training for adult education personnel on a sectoral basis and seldom identify themselves as part of the field of adult education: the Botswana College of Agriculture provides qualification programs and short in-service courses for agricultural extension workers;

the Department of Social Work at the University of Botswana students will have a role as community development workers. In addition, some government departments provide training for specific cadres, such as the village health educators who receive their initial training from the Ministry of Health. Other institutions such as the Institute of Development Management's Training of Trainers course for workplace trainers (Youngman, 2002).

In addition to training adult educators in Botswana, a significant amount of training occurs outside, usually in North America or the UK: "this training can be problematical in terms of relevance and it can undermine national capacity-building, for example when students are sent outside the country for courses locally available".

► *Accessing Training*

However, educator improvement implies that educators have the opportunity for training aimed at developing educator capacity. So, while the University of Botswana currently offers a diploma, degree and postgraduate courses in Adult Basic Education for people interested in a career in Adult Education, it is lamentable that DNFE staff, if selected, can attend one of these courses and as reported in the UIE report, the "DNFE has never been allotted more than four slots per year for educators to enroll for the certificate or diploma courses". Access is further limited by the fact that the courses presented at the University, especially the diploma course in Adult Education, are considered too expensive for the Ministry of Education to afford, and the DNFE gets no more than eight places on the diploma course per annum. The interviewed NLP staff state that "... not more than three senior staff nationwide go for training every year ... and that nobody has been sent for master studies in the past three years." Lack of access to professional development for DNFE personnel (especially at the grassroots level) seriously hampers impact.

For district officers and cluster supervisors opportunities for further training are rare, so personnel are normally not upgraded for many years. As one cluster supervisor points out: "After seventeen years of service we are [JC] certificate holders, yet we are expected to perform other duties which are at a higher level" (UIE, 2004).

According to UIE/UNESCO (2004), other training opportunities building the capacity of DNFE are restricted by the low qualification level of the

employees. Permanent staff at the DNFE are usually employed with only a Junior Certificate and are therefore usually excluded from such training.

A further aspect related to lack of access to training is the fact that most courses presented by the University of Botswana are fulltime, one or two years, making it difficult for DNFE staff to attend. South Africa and Namibia have introduced distance education training programs for grassroots trainers and this has helped to develop this level of capacity in the two countries.

Supervisors are trained at the University of Botswana in Adult Education; however, many District Supervisors have enrolled for the University of South Africa's ABET practitioner certificate, diploma or postgraduate qualification. The DNFE also provides short supervisor training courses to make sure that supervisors encourage a participatory approach. In one case, a supervisor reported that she had received no orientation since she started working more than ten years ago and had had to learn on the job by reading files and participating in meetings (UNESCO/UIE, 2004).

► *Training LGLs*

Although all LGLs are required to undergo two weeks' initial training, their training is decentralized, and uneven, with no uniform curriculum across districts. New recruits have tended to be trained in understanding the organizational structure of the DNFE, how to complete an attendance register, how to mobilize/recruit learners and how to keep them motivated. In addition, newly recruited LGLs are taught how to teach and interact with adult learners, what different teaching methods to use, how to teach mixed-ability groups, and how to find and use appropriate learning materials. Usually LGLs are also taught to optimize the learning environment and, sometimes, the skills needed for development or income generating projects. In reality, the short initial training and the usually low level of education²¹ of LGLs often means that all topics are not covered. Refresher courses often tend to concentrate more on the teaching problems identified²² by the LGLs and do not allow for a deeper training in the foundations of adult education and development.

21. The UIE evaluation reported that with regard to education level, 25% of the interviewed LGLs had passed the JC certificate, 42% were at Secondary School Form 3 level, 25% at Form 2 level and 8% had reached the 10th grade of Secondary School. Most LGLs have not managed to go beyond Grade 7.

22. It is recognized that the problems of teachers could be incorporated as action research points to improve teaching. However this cannot occur unless the trainers themselves are trained in this technique.

Annual refresher focuses on teaching problems. Before refresher training course, training team usually meet with LGLs and the Cluster Officer (who supervises them) to establish problems (UNESCO/UIE, 2004). The follow-up training could be used for action research on the problems, but the ability of the trainers has not seemed to permit this kind of facilitation, and teachers who themselves have a low education need to address their own learning. The LGLs do, however, have considerable community organizing experience and because they live and work in their communities they have the advantages of access.

Maruatona (2004:3) states that in Botswana, (like in Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia) instructors are trained to teach literacy by being exposed to principles of teaching adult learners. "After graduating, these volunteers are posted to provinces and districts where they are paid very small monthly honoraria. In Botswana, each session could have about 20 trainees per annum depending on the number of recruits. These depend on the need to replace those who left the program. Others are those who formed their own groups and therefore need initial training as literacy instructors."

A recent evaluation of LGLs by UNESCO/UIE (2004) states that follow-up during supervision is weak on helping teachers ensure that the skills are practiced. The report recommends that LGLs get the opportunity during initial and refresher training to exchange ideas and experiences on different teaching strategies and methods, and that their monitoring and supervision focus more on pedagogical aspects as opposed to only concentrating on administrative issues. This will, however, be contingent on the trainer's training.

It is essential that the process revisits the vision of educators to ensure that the curriculum can be implemented. Training "grassroots" level workers is important as this is the cadre that interfaces with learners and interprets curricula outcomes in relation to learners' needs. Clearly, as is shown here as well as in the UIE (2004) report, ad hoc and sporadic, piecemeal training of grassroots educators is entirely inadequate.

Accreditation

The DNFE recognizes LGL initial training. Other professional and supervisory personnel may receive a certificate, diplomas, degrees or postgraduate offerings presented by the University of Botswana or a qualification obtained by open and distance education, as presented by the ABET Institute of UNISA.

A more professionally-oriented curriculum is offered for adult educators trained in a local or regional university course in: principles of adult education; psychology of adult education; the introduction to planning programs for adult learners; adult learners and society; adult learning in practice, and an introduction to educational research.

Career Opportunities for Literacy Educators

In line with the broad definition, career opportunities exist in any of the fields and ministries that provide learning opportunities for adults. Although the LGLs receive limited training they could, with adequate training and support, advance their careers and become supervisors and professional adult educators. Adult educators with better-developed skills could enter the domain of adult education materials developers, adult education researchers and the range of adult educators needed for working across ministerial departments.

Training may be regarded as formal to the extent that it complies with criteria such as adequate quality, recognition for accreditation purposes by a recognized body and whether it leads to a qualification recognized for salary purposes (in particular by government). It is clear, however, that training for supervisors and professional adult educators is formal insofar as the universities are involved and insofar as educators are remunerated according to a recognized salary scale. However, the training of LGLs is non-formal and LGLs are only recognized for the purpose for which they are trained. It is crucial, however, that the new cadre of LGLs be formally trained and accredited and that the system makes provision for their development by opening up career paths.

► *Evaluating the Quality of Educator Training and Delivery*

While South Africa, by virtue of the SAQA Act, has introduced a system for education training quality assurance (ETQAs), no equivalent body exists as yet in Botswana. End-users and training providers assess the quality of training provided to adult educators.

In interviews with the NLP staff, a common response was that that the two-week initial training for LGLs was too short to enable them to become *au fait* with the rudiments of teaching adults. Moreover, LGLs stated that refresher programs were “inadequate, always the same or tended to focus on problems they experienced” and did not take them beyond these predicaments.

However, the UIE (2004) reports that in Orapa, where a process of change is being promoted, LGLs reported on the refresher training as “an innovative experience” since the workshops were outcome-oriented and were very motivating for LGLs.

Training topics identified by LGLs include: how to prepare lessons and compile a lesson-plan, banking, how to write a last will and testament, how to register to vote, HIV/AIDS, recruitment strategies, group dynamics, how to use the class time properly, and how to methodologically introduce the key words in the primers (used for initial basic learning).

All respondents indicated that the training was useful for their practice and some suggested that peer learning and peer observation also be included as training methods. In most cases, LGLs requested more training in the refresher courses in: improving their general education, new methods and new strategies for using the primers, instruction in use of primary school books, how to teach ESL, social and civic studies, improved knowledge of lesson plans, assessment instruments, home economics and life skills (UIE, 2004). Clearly, the LGLs express the need for a more professional training that generally equips them with the generic skills all teachers need to survive structured into a sensible program.

There is no formal pre- or post-test evaluation of training courses, so evaluation is limited to observation (supervision) of the LGLs after the training courses.

The Chief Adult Education Officer at Head Office is responsible for coordinating training in the regions and districts and together with the Regional Officers s/he supervises training courses. The Cluster Officers are trained at national level by the National Training Team. While observing classes, supervisors obtain suggestions from LGLs for inclusion in the training courses. Regular supervisory visits to LGLs can also be seen as a follow-up to initial training; refresher courses are based on problems identified during supervision as noted in the supervisors' reports. All respondents (UIE, 2004) were very clear about the dynamic interrelationship between supervision and training. Supervisors also participate in the training courses with their LGLs; some even do some team training. Before a training course, the training team meets with LGLs and their supervisors to determine the problems that have arisen. In this way, the system attempts to ensure a feedback loop.

Supervisors are supervised by the District Officers and, for those posted in the villages, receive only rare visits. The District Officer meets from time to time with her/his (subordinate) supervisors, reads their reports and intervenes if there are any problems recorded.

During the UIE impact evaluation (2004) the NLP staff interviewed stated that supervision of the LGLs ought to be done on a regular basis by Cluster Supervisors or Adult Education Assistants. However, the frequency of supervisory visits and the number of LGLs to supervise per officer varies. Some respondents indicate that each LGL should be visited at least once or twice per month. Others said that it is done once or even several times (2-3) per week. But these guidelines are sometimes difficult to achieve, particularly where LGLs work in remote areas. In this regard, some LGLs stated that they only received visits every two, three or four months, from time to time, once a year or never!

► *The Impact of Educator Training*

The 2003 National Literacy Survey²³ indicates an increase in the national literacy rate of 81% as compared to 68.9% in 1993.²⁴ However, the 2004 UIE/ UNESCO study shows that training efforts for LGLs has been inadequate. The various factors involved in ensuring good practice cut across a broad spectrum of indicators from policy to learning outcomes with improvements required across all areas: materials, curricula, and conditions of employment for educators, educator development and in resourcing. A cadre of grassroots educators who can take on the challenge of adult education needs to be trained in large numbers to do the work.

► *The Use of Untrained Educators*

Although all LGLs are required to have undergone an initial two-week block of training or a class demonstration before they can teach on their own, it is suggested that (in this sense) the LGLs are essentially untrained. In a period

23. The National Literacy Survey, a 10-year exercise meant to assess the progress of Botswana's literacy rate. The first survey, conducted in 1993, established a national literacy rate of 68.9% (70.3% females, 66.9% males); the second survey, conducted in 2003, established a national literacy rate of 81.2% (81.8% females; 80.4% males).

24. The performance in literacy tests increased the national literacy rate by only 1.6%. Since the survey states that only 3% of the eligible population took the literacy tests it is difficult to attribute the increase in literacy to educator training rather than to an increase in school enrolment rates. This assumption may be supported by the disparities of literacy attainment by age given the findings of the survey suggesting that literacy rates decreased with an increase in age and that older people were less likely to be literate.

of two weeks one can hope at best to show a trainer how to implement a training package. In the absence of a well-developed learning package and given what is observed in the field, this form of pre-service training is not sufficient. The UIE (2004) report states that many LGLs have been deployed without having received the initial orientation. Moreover, although educators have the opportunity to attend some follow-up training opportunity to acquire further skills and update their knowledge and information after each year of practice, this intervention usually ends up focusing almost exclusively on problems which educators encountered during their teaching. This valuable time is then spent trying to resolve problems rather than presenting directed training to enhance LGLs' performance. If the meetings were organized as action research gatherings, they could contribute to the capacitation of the LGLs but this cannot be a substitute for a good quality-training program for all grassroots facilitators.

► *Conditions of Service*

The LGLs are not considered DNFE staff but volunteers who are legally eligible to be offered permanent appointment after six months of service: many have been “volunteers” for ten years or more because of the low budgetary allocation for basic and literacy education. LGLs are free to leave the program at any time and regularly do so if they find a better job: “each time a teacher deserts the program the group either disbands or it takes a long time before a substitute is found” (Maruatona, 2004:6). These employment conditions, poor professional development of NLP staff in the field and a weak human resource development policy seriously affect the DNFE.

In view of the need to develop and implement the proposed ABEP program, training and human resource development should be a priority of the DNFE. But before any further investment is made into that, the UIE (2004) report states, the employment conditions of the LGLs will have to be improved.

Roles and Functions of Educators

The Botswanan Adult Education Policy embraces everyone whose “job function includes helping adults to learn”. Concurrently, roles and functions have extended to embrace this broad definition of “aiding learning”. In the framework of the Adult Basic Education Course (ABEC) pilot project, a manual was developed to train LGLs. On the basis of this experience, the DNFE developed a 10-week pre-service training curriculum for LGLs that is

currently being piloted in four major areas: conditions of the adult learner and group dynamics, classroom process, community contexts, and the teaching process. The curriculum includes tasks/contents, knowledge, attitudes, skills and learning experiences.

The course pairs theoretical components with practical exercises, an important initiative that is helping to improve the quality of the pre-service training. These resources could be usefully drawn upon and developed into training material for the new cadre of grassroots trainers who will be needed for the ABEP program. However, it is recommended that the program be modularized and professionally delivered so that each staff member can receive the training necessary to “qualify” to teach.

The new National Training Center in Kang has recently opened the facilities which are shared with BOCODOL, a resource for the DNFE that could be commissioned to provide the necessary educator development program using distance education to the new cadre of grassroots facilitators.

Community-based Partnerships

The fact that Botswana regards adult education as multi-sectoral and as a multi-disciplined profession is vital in the literacy programs but has been neglected in recent years. The active involvement of local bodies could rectify this. For the NLP, the Village Literacy Committees (VLCs) are the most important, according to the National Literacy Report (2003) since they encourage potential and actual learners to participate in the literacy program. The DNFE should revitalize the VLCs by ensuring that their members receive a sitting allowance. It should also encourage CBOs, NGOs and churches to support the literacy program and ensure that extension teams are involved in the post-literacy phase.

Teaching in Sparsely Populated Areas

In Botswana, the most vulnerable people are located in some of the most remote parts of the country. The new ABEP curriculum places special emphasis on rural areas, given that almost half of Botswana’s population lives in rural areas and that these areas show a much higher concentration of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy (34.3% illiteracy rate, compared to 14.6% in urban areas) and, in general, scarce educational opportunities. Explicit linkages between the education policy and the Revised National

Policy for Rural Development (2002) are essential. The National Literacy Survey (2003) indicated disparities of literacy attainment between the districts: town districts had high literacy rates than the more remote areas. Some districts like Ngamiland West and Kgalagadi South recorded rates below the 1993 national rate of 68.9%.

Resources and skills are unevenly distributed. LGL training is decentralized and not uniform across the districts, one reason for the disparities in literacy attainment in some districts. Resources are generally easier to access at the “center”.

Limited and unevenly distributed resources along with relatively infrequent supervision in remote areas affects classes in rural areas and distant²⁵ from the District or Cluster Offices. The effectiveness and frequency of supervision of LGLs seem to depend very much on the availability of transport and the distance of the location where classes take place from the Cluster or District Office. Moreover, although supervisors are expected to monitor an average of 10 to 15 LGLs, many work with up to 20 LGLs and cannot supervise them all.

Even if the policy of resource sharing²⁶ were effectively implemented, it would only partially resolve the problem of facilities. A major obstacle is the concentration of learners in rural areas which impacts on delivery and on the distances that learners have to travel to attend classes. These kinds of problems could be usefully revisited by using a sliding scale that includes sparseness, lack of infrastructure such as transport and the personnel funding formula.

Who Teaches?

➤ *Gender*

The extent to which men and women are involved as educators of adults reflects gender-status imbalances in the country overall. At the regional level, local supervisors and local facilitators are usually female while their male colleagues assume higher-ranking administrative positions.

25. It is also recognized that supervision is most often limited to controlling administrative tasks.

26. See discussion on the use of venues below.

The Botswana National Literacy Survey (2003) gender distribution is significantly imbalanced among literacy learners: women outnumber men by almost two to one and this imbalance would be even greater were it not for the large the number of men attending literacy classes in prison! The urgency of motivating men to enroll for adult education requires more than a passing comment.

However, given that women are more motivated to attend adult education training, the National Survey recommends that adult classes affect the economic lives of learners better if they taught work-related skills and if the general literacy was more directed towards strengthening the participants' economic situations. This focus on work-related learning and livelihoods would presumably also attract more male learners who, it appears from discussions with the DNFE, readily attend classes teaching skills training such as bee keeping and agriculture.

► *Language Issues*

Setswana, the national language, is spoken by about 70% of the population and the remaining 30% of the population speaks 26 other local languages. English is the official language. The general trend in education over the past few years has been to use Setswana as the language of instruction in the initial years and to introduce English as early as possible, first as a second language and then as a language of instruction. In Botswana the question of mother tongue education and multilingualism is clearly an issue.

The National Survey (2003) shows that almost 50% of drop-outs have a mother tongue *other* than Setswana. The degree of language and ethnic diversity indicates a demand for literacy among all ethnic groups but teachers will need to be trained to work with bilingualism (or multilingualism). Intercultural learning must be advocated and incorporated into the NLP and the future ABEP. Bilingualism and multilingualism should be recognized and developed as national cultural assets.

The DNFE should facilitate the acquisition of literacy in mother tongue languages whenever possible. The vitality of the minority languages and cultures will depend on the promotion of literate environments in the different local languages. According to the National Survey (2003), the most common (non-Setswana) languages were Ikalanga and Zezuru/Shona; and none of the respondents could read Sebirwa, Setswapong and Sesubiya.

The National Literacy Survey (2003) found that people read and wrote in other languages, but the new ABEP curriculum recognizes the need to develop materials in other mother tongue languages for the initial stages of learning even though policy doesn't provide for this. Once literate in their mother tongue, learners could be introduced to Setswana as a second language to improve their economic situations and to help preserve the rich and diverse cultures in Botswana.

Mixed-Ability and Mixed Age Groups

Mixed-ability groups are the norm in adult education and the problem is not going to disappear. Educator training providers need to give serious attention to training educators to use methods and approaches which can minimize their difficulties.

While mixed-ability groups pose a challenge for teachers (and the issue was raised by 27 teachers), the notion of mixed age groups was not cited as a major issue in Botswana, with only four respondents suggesting this as a problem. However, the National Survey reveals that the population of adult learners is ageing and that "older adults" come to class with eyesight problems. Learners' eyesight should be tested and they should be provided with reading glasses, if necessary. It is important to note here, however, that the text/font of the primers presently being used by the DNFE makes the materials totally inaccessible to even the best sighted.

The texts are handwritten since they were developed before the use of PCs were introduced but it is surprising that neither the DNFE nor the University has made the effort to get the text of the primers typeset and that learners have had to struggle with this for more than 20 years. Typesetting the materials would have reduced the problem of poor reading sight of learners by at least 75%.

The National Survey revealed that the demand for literacy remains high among dropouts and that 78% would like to resume literacy courses. Of those who stated that they did not want to return to classes, 66% stated that they were prevented by health problems, particularly failing eyesight. This is not surprising as a large proportion of dropouts are of advanced age.²⁷

27. The problem of older learners needing reading glasses is universal. The extent of the problem could have been minimized by "typing" the primers.

It seems to be a gross violation of learners' rights that they have had to contend with such poor quality texts for so long. Moreover, since the initial text is in Setswana, the DNFE could have utilized text from across its borders where Setswana is also an official language. Denying learners their right to read because "someone" feels that they might possibly become "contaminated" or that they might compromise their national pride if they were exposed to (high quality) texts from an area some 100 km away (i.e. South Africa) is very unfortunate.

It is necessary also that the new policy makes provision for learners or potential learners who are differently-abled. Certain disabilities have specific requirements and teaching learners with learning difficulties would mean that the LGLs (or whatever the new cadre will be called) will need to have specific training to teach these learners.

When designing the new learning materials for the ABEP, attention will have to be given to the age specific differences in literacy rates since they have implications for curriculum planning, especially the types of materials developed in order to meet the needs of different age groups.

"Schools"

Learners feel exposed to public scrutiny and sometimes open to humiliation because they are taught under trees. "People don't like very much to learn under trees. It means: Government is taking us as not important, because they spend a lot of money building classrooms, building big, big, big offices, then, when it comes to us, because we are not important, we have to learn under trees, and are not interested in that." (UIE report, 2004, headman interviewed). "Adults don't like to be taught outside, because other people laugh at them sitting outside on the ground" (UIE, 2004).

Moreover, "half the 'classrooms' visited were without shelter and roof (under trees). But even in cases where there were shelters, the zinc roofs caused the rooms to heat to over 40° requiring the LGLs to supply learners with plenty of water during classes, or compelling classes to find a shady place (under a tree!)."

4. Adult Educator Capacity Building in Namibia

Adult Education Policy and Practice

In many ways, Namibia has demonstrated its readiness, willingness and ability to deal with literacy as part of the broader development context. After independence, political will and an enlightened leadership contributed to the development of its nonformal programs while simultaneously focusing on the development of people and communities. The 1996-2000²⁸ Second Phase Policy Guidelines state, “the National Literacy Program in Namibia (NLPN) is part of the Government’s commitment to national development and education for all.” Article 20 of the Namibian constitution states: “All persons shall have the right to education.” It is the responsibility of the government to provide basic education to all residents, including adults. The Namibian education policy for adult literacy (like the South African policy) highlights redress as its point of departure.

Namibian practice appears to be *ahead* of its policy. However, DABE still experiences problems in getting many promoters to adopt learner-centeredness as their basic approach to teaching. Many relapse easily into teacher-centeredness, acting and performing more like “traditional teachers”. The policy also confirms that learners have a right to mother tongue education but this is not always possible because of the relatively large numbers of indigenous languages and because all materials are not always readily available in all indigenous languages. The policy also asks for networking at all levels which does not always take place. Namibia is still a long way from becoming a nation of readers.

► *Emerging Issues on the Implementation of the NQF*

The National Literacy Program caters for adults to become functionally literate over a three-year period after which they receive only a certificate of attendance. Mechanisms for establishing equivalences between Adult Upper Primary Education Stage 4 courses and examinations with the Grade 7 examination in formal education are yet to be put in place (although the exit point of Stage 4 is considered equivalent to Grade 7). Learners receive no equivalent accreditation.

28. The current policy is still in operation at the time of this research, pending the policy review process.

Entry into Stage 4 (AUPE) is very difficult and learners battle as there is a big gap between the two levels. Some suggested that materials are not easily comprehensible for most learners. This means that teachers also struggle to help the learners through the learning process.

Meanwhile, establishing a learner-centered environment underpinned by an OBE method in keeping with the philosophy of the NQF is yet to be institutionalized.

As far as the Vocational Educational and Training system is concerned, the levels on the VET system were incongruent with the NQF.²⁹ To correct for this, the VET system in Namibia now offers three-level vocational certificates in an effort to “lend credibility to the pronouncement of an outcome-based flexible system” (Ndjode-Siririka, 2003:13).

Much work still needs to be done on generating a flexible system that is outcomes-based; the VET system should operate to meet industry’s skills, implying that the learning environment is geared to nurturing “skills-competent workers” (who can do their job well) “learning the skills to adapt to new situations and to relate to other workers”. In keeping with the underlying philosophy of outcomes-based education, Ndjode-Siririka (2003) points out that such skills transcend a narrow, “mechanistic view of the world,” and that there must be input from industry to help with appropriate skills and techniques to analyze workers’ skills and reconceptualize their jobs (while providing for non-mechanistic ways of handling these). Foregrounding critical cross-field outcomes as conceived in South Africa is imperative for avoiding a mechanistic approach.

► *Multisectoral Education Reforms*

The NLCN emphasizes stakeholder participation in literacy as a means of managing literacy and of developing communities. The notion of active committees is an important vehicle in understanding the culture of delivery in ABE in Namibia where the committee structure for ensuring literacy is integral to the success. Committees tend to involve many people who share responsibility, which improves the chances of success; they are useful for delegating work and more people learn from such activities.

29.Ndjode-Siririka (2003), Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology

Literacy Committees

a. Class literacy committees

- Help the promoter to secure a suitable meeting place which is conducive to learning.
- Assist the promoter in controlling members whose behavior might be disruptive to the class. This would include those who may arrive drunk, are always late or are disruptive in any other way such as being unnecessarily argumentative.
- Assist the promoter in arranging other events which the class might decide to be involved in, such as fund raising for a special event, e.g. the National Literacy Week.
- Assist the promoter in following up on those who might have dropped out of the class and encourage them to return.
- Assist the promoter in attracting others to join the program, through campaigns and advertising in the community.

b. Community literacy committee

- Initiate support and supervise the literacy program in its area.
- Mobilize the community to participate actively in the program.
- Support the District Literacy Organizers in their work, through giving advice, acquiring facilities (such as classes) and generating funds for the numerous activities the learners will be involved in.
- Taking responsible for the arrangement of special events such as National Literacy Week and International Literacy Day celebrations.
- See to the good conduct of the promoter for necessary disciplinary measures.
- Assist the DLO in the selection of promoters.
- Report regularly to the Regional Literacy Committee, through the Regional Literacy Organizer on the progress of literacy programs in the community.

The more people that are involved, the more knowledge and experience are brought to the situation (McKay, 2002). Committees start at the grassroots level and continue to the national level, each with roles and functions and a strategy for communication across the various levels (McKay, 2002): class literacy; community literacy; district literacy; regional literacy committee; and national literacy committee.

In addition to the significant use of committees in Namibia, the post-independence momentum and the political will in education have contributed to

the success of the literacy program, suggesting the need to support literacy from grassroots committees to the presidency.

Literacy is located within education (not yet a framework) with opportunities exist for movement upwards and across learning as learners can and do move into Namcol FET learning areas. The creation of the NLPN in 1992 signaled a major reform of the adult basic education system to introduce learner centeredness by encouraging extensive participation of local communities. Intrinsic to the NLPN is the introduction of promoters, DLOs, CLDCs (one has been established in all thirteen regions), Regional Literacy Committees, Regional Literacy Organizers (RLO and the Regional Coordinator for Adult Education, Libraries and Culture.

The Department of Adult Education, Libraries, Arts and Culture was established within the Ministry of Education soon after independence. In September 1992, the NLPN was launched and could build upon a long tradition of literacy and adult education dating back to the missionaries and the continuing education programs of the churches, NGOs and SWAPO during the liberation struggle. Its goal in 1997 was achieve a literacy rate of 80% in 2000.

The NLPN covers three stages of literacy learning, each lasting about a year. Between the launch in 1992 to 2004, 443 500 adult learners, of whom 70% were women, have enrolled. Of these learners, 74% were tested and 76% achieved basic competence in reading and writing. The latest literacy assessment shows the literacy rate in Namibia of Namibians aged 15 and older to be 83%, which is very high measured against international standards. The NLPN reached its goals by 2005: the 2005 enrollment was 17,124 students (excluding students from Erongo, Kunene and the Kavango regions) (all statistics supplied by DABE). As with all literacy statistics, however, some questions need to be asked: What definition of literacy is used? What is regarded as functional literacy? How were learners assessed? (See the Appendix for program details.) Given different social and cultural contexts, definitions and standards of literacy and methodologies for collecting and compiling literacy data, comparisons between countries must be made with caution.

Adult Education Teacher Training

The DABE *District Literacy Organizer's Handbook, National Literacy Program in Namibia* is the core guide of the NLPN, written by David Macharia and

Agenta Lind. Policy Guidelines for the Second Phase, 1996–2000 of the NLPN, *Literacy: Your Key to A Better Future*; the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture published its National Policy on Adult Learning: *Adult Learning—a joy, a tool, a right and a shared responsibility*: July 2003. The NLPN is organized into three year-long stages. Stage 1: Basic numeracy and initial mother tongue literacy; Stage 2: Reinforces and consolidates stage I acquisitions; Stage 3 introduces basic English (official language in Namibia), extends numeracy, teaches life skills, basic agriculture and some business skills and entrepreneurship.

Upon completion of the third level the learners are considered equivalent to Grade 4 of the formal education system. They can continue their studies into Stage 4, viz., Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) where English is the language of teaching and learning. The exit point is equivalent to Grade 7 and in this course learners are expected to do the following:

1. English in every day use
2. Know your land and people
3. Mathematics in our daily lives
4. Making a living
5. Science in our daily lives
6. Living off the land and water
7. Livelihood for all
8. Literacy, gender and HIV/AIDS
9. Understanding yourself, body, mind and soul

The general consensus is that the jump from Stage 3 to Stage 4 is too big and that the materials are very difficult. Perhaps the use of English as the language of teaching and learning contributes greatly to the difficulties experienced by the learners. Moreover, materials are generally too difficult for most learners.

► *NLPN Teachers/Promoters*

Various levels of personnel are used on the NLPN for a variety of organizational, supervisory and conceptual roles. Promoters (NLPN teachers), extension workers, health workers, NGOs, private sector consultants, agriculture extension officers can all be found working in the field of nonformal education. They can be regarded as adult educators since they all contribute towards helping the nation reach the set targets for achieving adult literacy and roll out a variety of life skills programs. However, the NLPN is mainly capaci-

tated by promoters and District Literacy Organizers (DLOs). A “promoter” is not a “traditional teacher”, but rather a community leader-adviser, confidant, supporter, learning organizer, literacy teacher, etc. Fact-finding missions undertaken in the 13 regions indicate that learners generally feel supported by their promoters. The strong committee basis that orients and supports adult learning has also operated to redefine the roles and functions of educators.

► *Training Promoters and DLOs*

The DABE and regular in-service training (INSET) train promoters for three weeks of initial training; the District Literacy Organizer visits the class at least once a month to monitor and evaluate the NLPN as part of a determined initiative to make Namibia a literate nation.

► *Training Adult Educators and District Literacy Organizers:
A Partnership with UNISA ABET*

In 1996 Namibian College for Open Learning (NAMCOL) joined forces with UNISA ABET to train adult educators for the Namibian National Literacy Campaign (NLC). As part of the initial arrangement, UNISA ABET provided training material to NAMCOL, which undertook to present the tutoring component. During the contact sessions, NAMCOL adapted and supplemented the program to suit its own unique circumstances, and developed supplementary material, which required extending the course for an additional year. NAMCOL also modified the tutorial system to suit the Namibian context.

The Educator Training Program

In the first year, students register jointly with NAMCOL and UNISA. They study the UNISA modules for all first-year certificate students and submit assignments to UNISA for assessment and write the usual ABET examinations at UNISA examination centers in Namibia. Students must submit a field project in Namibia based on their experiences of adult education.

NAMCOL extended the South African course so that it would be more specific to its own context. It developed and presented modules on research methods and development studies to students in their second year as part of the certificate qualification. The partnership has been one of mutual learning and sharing.³⁰ At the end of the second year, students receive a NAMCOL-

30. NAMCOL'S second year of the CED influenced the ABET Institute which undertook to develop its diploma with modules for UNISA second-year students on research methods and development studies.

UNISA Certificate in Education for Development (CED) that allows them to be employed in development/literacy posts in various government departments, particularly in the DABE.

The Training Curriculum for Promoter Training

a. Week 1

- *Determine learning needs and expectations*
- *Literacy and development, to include what is literacy; the role of literacy in personal, community and national development*
- *NLPN policies and plans in the context of Namibia's history and developmental needs*
- *The role of the promoter: community mobilization, communication and human relations skills, and the recruitment of learners*
- How adults learn: factors affecting learning; motivating adults to learn; and methods of teaching adults
- Assessing community needs

b. Week 2

- Teaching literacy and numeracy
- Practice using literacy and numeracy primers in the classroom
- Lesson plan and preparation
- Teaching a class of learners of mixed abilities
- Use of supplementary materials especially for post-literacy

c. Week 3

- Class administration
- Organization of the learning environment
- Organization of special events
- Evaluation and monitoring of learners' and class progress (DABE, 1995:25)

After the second year, students return to the UNISA system to complete the third year of the UNISA ABET Diploma. This system has worked well for both countries. NAMCOL students have had the benefit of cost-effective African courses subsidized by the South African government; they have had the opportunity to put their own stamp on the course with their own tutorial system and setting their own additional assignments. UNISA has benefited because it based its further development of courseware on the developments already taking place in NAMCOL, and the UNISA ABET educator qualifications were recognized for accreditation and salary purposes in Namibian government

long before the South African DoE considered it to be imperative. This additional push from Namibia led to the course being recognized in South Africa.

The Namcol Tutorial System

UNISA provided no tutors for Namibia; in the partnership agreement, NAMCOL undertook to provide students with its own learner support. The student population on the CED course was sparsely spread and NAMCOL could not use the system of tutoring used in South Africa. NAMCOL presented training to its year intakes of students (usually around 30 students per annum) at 2 two-week residential workshops in Windhoek. Students were accommodated by NAMCOL, received tuition and worked with their peers. After programs, students were expected to submit assignments to UNISA and to take the final UNISA examinations.

Career Opportunities for Literacy Educators

Some of the promoters have been appointed as DLOs after further study, thus getting fulltime employment in DABE. They are also encouraged to study further through NAMCO in a two-year Diploma in Adult Education and Community Development offered in collaboration with the ABET Institute of the UNISA. Once they qualify and get the Higher Diploma in Adult Education and Community Development, many other possibilities become available. It is also possible to work at the CLDC as a Community Learning Development Coordinator. To date all district literacy organizers have followed this route.

Teacher Accreditation

Promoters only receive an attendance certificate. A credit-based system is not yet operational in Namibia. For a qualification, they can enroll at NAMCOL in the two-year Diploma in Adult Education and Community Development. Most DLOs and government officials in the DABE have trained via the UNISA NAMCOL partnership and many are engaged in the B.Ed. (Hons) in adult basic education.

Assuring the Quality of Educator Training and Delivery

The numbers of adult educators who are active in Namibia require constant monitoring and evaluation, the responsibility of the Monitoring and Evaluation Division. The DLOs regularly consult with the promoters, inter

alia to assess quality of training. Also, regular fact-finding missions are undertaken in each of the thirteen educational regions in Namibia.

Reports are written and sent back to the regions at regular intervals. In addition, regular meetings are held with the Regional Coordinators on a quarterly, monthly and weekly basis. The notion that feedback must become a culture and that information must be filtered down to all levels is strongly emphasized. Literacy Committees operate in every situation where a literacy program is run and these monitor the work done by the promoters and work in unison with the promoter, the Regional Coordinator and the DLO.

► *Training Effectiveness*

According to the trainers of trainers, the impact of the educator training is that learners have high regard for the promoters and the communities in which they work mostly give them the support they need to function effectively. Many experienced promoters and DLOs have studied further and some have moved on to become community workers and councilors. It seems as if the experience of being a promoter enables some to grow into other careers.

According to the DABE Director, promoters' training is efficient and relevant. The training accommodates regional variations with an emphasis on decentralization. It strongly promotes the establishment of a culture of reading and writing with a firm understanding of numeracy.

In the interview with the trainer of trainers, the point was made that the training is adequate for the objectives the NLPN has set for itself: that learners should reach Stage 3 after about three years, which is equivalent to Grade 4 of the formal education system. The claimed literacy rates seem to support the notion that the teacher training is generally effective.

The guidelines for recruiting promoters recommend that the promoter must have reached at least Grade 8 but that individuals with much higher education should not generally be recruited because they "would be looking for work all the time, and would leave the community as full time employment is ensured" (DABE,1995:15).

► *Assessing the Impact*

The impact of promoter training must be viewed within the context of the overall NLPN whose success is indivisible from the contribution of the

promoters and all the other agents involved in delivering the NLPN on a daily basis. Two external evaluations have been made: the first was sponsored by SIDA and UNICEF in 1996 and carried out by Agneta Lind as the Coordinator of the Overall Evaluation, assisted by a number of internal evaluators, literacy learners and other external evaluators. The evaluation led to the NAMCOL UNISA partnership.

In July 1999 a second evaluation was commissioned by the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. It was sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Royal Netherlands Government, and carried out by Prof A N Kweka of the University of Dar es Salaam and Ms. J. Jeremiah-Namene of DABE. A third evaluation report is due in 2006.

Both evaluations are extensive and detailed. The 1996 evaluation aimed at “determining the effectiveness of the NLPN during its first phase of implementation and provided some measures (both quantitative and qualitative) against the base line data. This enabled DABE to help explore the NLPN’s future potential, reinforce what is being done right and what might be improved upon things that are in obvious need of repair” (DABE, 1996:7). The 1999 evaluation highlighted the need for more advanced training for the DLOs, which led NAMCOL to extend its contract with UNISA and take on the UNISA ABET diploma course.

Conditions of Service

The NLPN does not use volunteers. All promoters are employed on a part-time basis. In rural areas they earn \$800 Namibian dollars and in urban areas \$1500 per month. The national minimum wage is about \$450, and it would seem, therefore, that the promoters are comparatively well paid. As far as career pathing is concerned, promoters are able to enroll at NAMCOL to do the two-year Diploma in Adult Education and Community Development, which opens up further opportunities for them.

Participatory Approaches and Methodologies

In literacy, the approach is based principally on the Language Experience Approach (LEA) with a strong focus on learner-centeredness, and using a combination of phonics and whole word. The LEA can be regarded as innovative, although it has been in use now for many years. The strong learner-

centered approach promoted by DABE requires that the learner and the promoter participate fully in unique and specific ways. DABE personnel found that educators tend to revert to “traditional” methods of teaching despite efforts made to acclimatize them to alternative methods and strategies.

Sharing/Coordinating Experiences

The DLO and the Community Learning and Development Centers (CLDC) are supposed to broaden the experiences of promoters and other educators involved in adult education, and to expose learners to other ways of doing and being. The current use of the LEA, incorporating phonics and the whole word approach for establishing mother tongue literacy is workable. In the teaching of other learning areas an approach that approximates the outcomes-focused approach is also finding favor with the promoters and they are in theory fully supportive of learner centeredness.

Materials Production

The primary aim of the materials development office in Namibia is to ensure relevance, appropriateness and accessibility for learners. Departments produce some materials for learners, especially in the indigenous languages, because few publishers will easily publish materials with small print runs. The issue of appropriate materials development has been recognized as one to be addressed at national level. There are many lessons about the development of materials for Namibian learners.

DABE employs fulltime Education Officers as materials developers. They function in a separate unit within DABE. (Besides producing materials for learners, they have also published the District Literacy Organizer’s handbook and other publications relating to the NPLN.) The level of some AUPE level is too difficult and irrelevant. It seems that in their original development the authors merely adapted corresponding school-based materials.

Adult Skills Project: Collaboration between Private Sector and DABE

DABE has endeavored to link livelihoods with literacy. One initiative has been Development for Self-Employment that is a collaboration between the private sector, most notably a commercial bank, and DABE. Loans are made

available to prospective entrepreneurs; DABE screens and trains prospective beneficiaries and provides them with support for their enterprises, a model of livelihood education.

Who Teaches?

No union or organization exists for literacy promoters, DLOs, etc., who are free to belong to the Workers' Union or to join the Teachers' Union.

► *Untrained Teachers*

With all the training possibilities open to teachers, what is the practice around utilizing untrained teachers? According to the trainer of trainers, some promoters are offered full-time jobs and at times leave before a replacement can be found. A promoter is appointed in collaboration with the regional Literacy Committee and invariably comes from the local community. A key requirement is that the promoter must be fluent in the local language, and given the 26 indigenous languages in Namibia, the situation is complex. Occasionally, no suitable candidate is available. It is the exception to use untrained promoters. Where it is possible, DABE does take the new promoter through a one-week induction course.

► *Gender*

The NLPN “employs” 1,373 promoters from Stage 1 to 3; 949 of these are female. Females make up 69% of the promoters, about the same as the number of female and male learners in the system. Currently from Stage 1 to Stage 3, 18,270 learners are participating in the NLPN program and of these 64% are female.

Learners evaluate promoters during “fact-finding missions” when they have an opportunity to express their feelings, attitudes and opinions about the promoters to the regional literacy committees . The missions visit all 13 regions on a rotational basis in collaboration with the DLO, the RLO and Literacy Committees. Reports are written for regional response and the DLO should give individual feedback to the promoters as part of the INSET.

Mixed Age and Ability

Official statistics cite learner enrolment in the three stages is 18 270 and currently 1 373. In the NLPN policy, learners attend classes ranging from

15 to 30 students for eight hours per week for forty weeks at 320 hours per level. In reality many classes tend to have about 15 learners per class. Promoters are functioning, which gives a ratio of 1:13, an optimal size. That the DABE has permitted classes to continue with such low ratios can be seen as a measure of the commitment of government and also as one of the reasons why these programs have succeeded.

Literacy programs do not organize classes by age cohort groups as the numbers cannot justify running classes for very small groups. In the NLPN, youth under the age of 16 are never taught with older people. The experience has been that once younger people are introduced into a group many of the older learners leave. Promoters are trained to deal with mixed age groups in their three-week course, where they are taught about the psychology of learning and learn how to deal with different age groups.

Language Issues

The policy in Namibia gives learners a right to mother tongue education at the basic level. This is not always possible because there are 26 indigenous languages and not all materials are readily available in all of them. As far as language fluency is concerned, promoters are appointed in collaboration with the RLO and are drawn from the local community; they must be fluent in the local language.

► “Schools”

A large number of literacy learners are still taught under trees with no chairs, exposed to the vagaries of the weather. Where learners use the primary schools as venues, the desks are too small for them.

5. Conclusions

► *Adult educators who can act as intermediaries and development agents in education, training and the development sector ARE URGENTLY NEEDED*

In South Africa, UNISA has trained more than 50,000 adult educators since 1994. They have been deployed in “mass” literacy and other campaigns (such as voter education). UNISA also ensures that personnel are rooted in the communities in which they teach and develop nurturing relationships with

their learners. Meanwhile, systems have been put in place for supporting and monitoring the educators.³¹ In Namibia, the quality of training of educators in the Ministry still needs to be reviewed but a strength of the national literacy program is its rootedness in communities through committee structures: “community involvement” is part of the “package” for successful mass education.

► *Well-trained, well-supported adult educators are critical to the success and quality of literacy and nonformal education*

The development of competent educators is contingent upon adequate teacher training, accreditation and the recognition of adult educator qualifications by the ministries as well as upon the location of the qualifications within the respective NQF. However, training must be organized outside of government using partnerships with universities or other teacher training institutions. This will enable the countries to go some way toward professionalizing educator training, which means decent conditions of service; a status and salary commensurate with qualifications are important; and conditions of employment must be in place. Career paths for educators would improve the situation.

► *Distance Education for Mass Educator Training*

It is possible to organize the required cadre of personnel for undertaking mass literacy programs making use of “distance education” options (such as that provided by UNISA) combined with grassroots involvements in the community evidenced in the South African cadre of UNISA-trained educators (including their roles in communities) and in the committee-based structures supporting the NLPN in Namibia. The increasing demand for education and training and dwindling resources make distance education an obvious central facet of adult education and a central component of the lifelong learning equation. Distance education can assist in going to scale to develop capacity cheaply (in South Africa mass-based grassroots educator training cost US\$100 per educator for a year-long course).

Participatory methodologies are a contribution that adult educators can offer to the educational arena more generally. This experimentation highlights

31. Money is not always the issue. When economies of scale are reached, the per capita costs of training adult educators by distance education are minimal. UNISA ABET has, for example, trained educators and provided all tuition materials and contact tutoring for student teachers at a cost of \$ 100 per annum.

ways of “educating” that proffer options (for other educators too to consider) for organizing education processes. Although they have been developed in a context to account for the experiences and inputs of adults as part of the learning process, other educators can also gain from seeing how such methods have been developed and used in the adult education field. In other words, the approaches that have been utilized for nonformal (adult) education provide exemplars of practices that should be foregrounded so that others can benefit from the trialing of (innovative) styles of learning which should be granted the necessary status—in all types of educational arenas.

► *Quality Assurance*

Quality assurance can all too easily slip into a bureaucratic process of filling in checklists. The ETQA system in South Africa is not the panacea. If QA depends on the assessor’s own knowledge, it runs the risk of becoming a quantitative, checklist-driven activity without any deep understanding of the issues. Quality assurance must not become a quantitative exercise. To appreciate end-users’ perceptions and to monitor whether the outcomes-based philosophy is being used, mechanisms for assessing these issues qualitatively (while also taking into account results that can be quantitatively measured) need to be put in place. Determining which bodies are to be involved in quality assurance needs to avoid turf issues like those experienced in South Africa.

The Botswana Blueprint addresses the various stakeholders to be engaged in assessing educators’ performance. Specific criteria and strategies need to be devised for assessing such performance in a multifaceted and non-threatening manner. It is laudable that the Blueprint makes provision for a multifaceted evaluation of educators, but the process of educator development needs to begin urgently so that educators can support the program at the start of delivery.

► *Learning and Teaching Materials*

Supporting teachers by developing materials that fit in with the outcomes-based and learner-centered approach was an issue in all the countries under consideration. Materials development requires high-level skills and teachers on the whole *can’t/won’t* and *should not* need to undertake such tasks. Mechanisms for cross-country sharing and customization to suit local contexts need to be organized. In Namibia, the DABE has a dedicated materials development office to develop materials for the learners, but materials

are not always available in all the indigenous languages and the suitability of some materials has been questioned—especially in Stage 4 where learners find them to be very difficult. In Botswana, it is clear that adult learners have often had to struggle with material. Problems with the development of suitable material could be addressed by considering sharing some material produced “across borders” while permitting time for the development of suitable local material.

► *Conditions of Service for Educators*

Adult educators need to be legally recognized, which affects their conditions of service. This will require a shift from regarding the delivery of (adult) basic education as voluntary to treating it as formal. Adult educators must be trained and remunerated and receive the same conditions of employment as their peers in the formal system. Within the framework of the NQF and the philosophy of LLL, the adult educator has a critical role to play. This underscores the case for professional support for adult educators.

In South Africa, the recently formulated norms and standards for funding adult education centers is a step in the right direction. A culture of supporting adult education (with attendant financial commitments) needs to be generated so that adult education is not seen as an “add on” to other national commitments, as seems to have been generated in Namibia via the committee structures and the attendant processes and the commitment of those involved in the program. National commitment has been expressed in the number of promoters functioning to support the NLPN: this gives a ratio of 1:13 optimal sizes for any education program, and the fact that the DABE has permitted classes to continue with such low teacher:learner ratios can be seen as a measure of the commitment of government and also as one of the reasons for the success of the programs. Salaries of promoters can also be said to be reasonable as are the career and further learning options open to them.

The issue of the sites of learning needs to be taken up in all three countries. Sites of learning are often linked with a sense that adult education is not receiving government attention. The UIE (2004) report on Botswana highlighted this as an issue and it is a perennial issue in South Africa.

Instead of investing in expensive buildings, arrangements should be made to make more cost-effective use of available and existing educational and other government facilities.

► *Policy and Practice: Developing a Supportive Culture for Adult Learning*

Even when policies are in place to cater for the provision of adult education as a national commitment, gaps can exist between the policies and practices, often because of financing issues.

In South Africa, less than 1% of the education budget is allocated to adult education. Partnerships involving a range of concerned parties help to address the operationalization of policy.

Clearly, however, no policies are workable without the commitment of those activating the attendant projects. The Namibian experience shows that the development of active committees can be an important vehicle in understanding the culture of delivery in ABE. The NLPN was based on developing commitment by creating a decentralized committee structure, with involvements down to the village committee. The program works with a rural development focus, involving people in seeing adult education as part of community development. Meanwhile, the definition of “promoter” in Namibia helps both the promoters and the learners to recognize their broad range of roles in the community. All these features of the Namibian situation can indeed be argued as going beyond what has been accounted for in policy documents. What this points to, in any case, is the importance of not relying on policy alone to create the culture and commitment required for the success of adult education programs.

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Annex Interviewees

South africa

- Mr D Diale, CES (Director) DoE
- Mr V Jacobs, (Acting Director) Adult Basic Education and Training DoE
- Mr Fezile May, Adult Basic Education and Training, DoE
- Mr Johannes Geldenhuis, Adult Basic Education and Training, DoE
- Mr Rodney Veldtman, (Assistant Director) National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
- Mr James Keevy, (Assistant Director: Research) SAQA
- Mr Eardley Twigg, Assessments UMALUSI
- Teachers from the Department of Education KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Botswana

- Mr Patrick Maphorisa, (Director) DNFE
- Members of the DNFE steering committee for the proposed ABEP
- Dr Tonic Maruatona, University of Botswana and consultant to DNFE ABEP

Namibia

- Mr Justin Ellis, DABE Secretary, Lifelong Education
- Mr Beans Ngatjizeko, DABE Director
- Mr Bornface Mukono, DABE Deputy Director
- Mr Cletious Mushaukw, DABE Education Officer: Materials Developer
- Ms Mary Matengu, DABE Education Officer
- Ms Himeesora Kaimu, NQA: Chief Higher Education Officer
- Ms Ndeshii Afunde, NAMCOL Distance Education Coordinator
- Mr Ephraim Dawids, NAMCOL Manager Marketing Learner Support Services

Training of trainers

- Ms Ann Nujoma-Angula, DABE (Education Officer)
- Mr Joel Kavetuna, DABE (District Literacy Organizer and Community Learning Development Coordinator)

- Mr Steve Kaangundue, DABE (Education Officer)

Adult skills development for self-employment

- Ms Mavis Simasiku UNAM Student
- Ms Juliet Buiswalelo UNAM Student
- Ms Helena Ndeutapo UNAM Student
- Ms Elvisa Tjituka UNAM Student
- Mr Ben Munyandi UNAM Student
- Ms Lydia Shaketange UNAM Lecturer
- Mr Gilbert Likando UNAM Lecturer

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABEP	Adult Basic Education Program
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACE	Adult Continuing Education
ALC	Adult Learning Center
AUPE	Adult Upper Primary Education
BNLP	Botswanan National Literacy Program
BOTA	Botswana Training Authority
CED	Certificate in Education for Development
CHE	Council of Higher Education
CLDC	Community Learning Development Center Coordinator
COSDEC	Community Skills Development Centers
DABE	Directorate of Adult Basic Education
DAE	Department of Adult Education (Kenya)
DLO	District Literacy Organizer
DNFE	Department for Non-Formal Education
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labor
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programs
ETDP	Education and Training Development Practitioner
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
HE	Higher Education
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council

LGL	Literacy Group Leaders
LLL	Lifelong Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Kenya)
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NLPN	National Literacy Program in Namibia
NQA	Namibian Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTA	National Training Authority
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PED	Provincial Education Department
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Policy
QA	Quality Assurance
RLO	Regional Literacy Organizer
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SANLI	South African National Literacy Initiative
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Bodies
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United Standards
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VLC	Village Literacy Committee
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TIVET	Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (Kenya)

Chapter 11.

Benchmarks and Financing for Adult Literacy

by David Archer, ActionAid

1. Introduction

There are nearly one billion adults who cannot read and write, according to UNESCO statistics. The real figure is probably nearer to two billion¹ and still more if numeracy and the actual use of these skills are taken into account. Most of these are people living in extreme poverty. Almost two-thirds are women, and nearly 1 in 5 is a young person between 15 and 24 years old. Yet these people have been abandoned in recent decades. Although governments worldwide have signed up to a United Nations (UN) goal that promises a 50% reduction in illiteracy by 2015, they are investing scandalously little in programs to deliver that goal.

In 2005, ActionAid and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) undertook the largest-ever survey to systematize experience of what works in adult literacy and to determine how much it costs. We analyzed 67 successful literacy programs in 35 countries in order to see whether they shared any common features that could be simplified into concrete, hands-on benchmarks and costings for policymakers. Although no one, least of all the GCE, would advocate a ‘blueprint’ approach to literacy, there was remarkable consensus among the practitioners we surveyed as to the basic ingredients for success. This was reinforced by the positive feedback we received to early drafts of these benchmarks from 142 respondents in 47 countries (including policymakers and practitioners from governments, NGOs and universities).

1. Official UNESCO statistics put the figure at 785 million but the figures are notoriously unreliable because they depend on self-reporting. Wherever rigorous measurements are taken, the figures are significantly higher.

It turns out that we do know what works in adult literacy programs and there is no great mystery to it. There are clear steps that can be taken to design and manage good quality, cost-effective programs – and where this is done they can yield exceptional results.

Our starting point for determining costs had to be determining the key characteristics of quality programs for example in respect of:

- duration and intensity of learning programs;
- way in which budgets are managed;
- whether facilitators are paid and how much;
- ratio of facilitators to trainers and supervisors;
- approach taken to materials development;
- length of training programs;
- choice of languages;
- level of importance to be attached to wider issues of the literate environment.

We therefore went through an extensive process to define 12 core benchmarks from which we could define reasonable projections of costing (as well as drawing on actual costs of existing successful programs on the ground).

In order for this costing to make sense, we then had to look at the outcomes of the programs we documented – to see whether finances put into literacy would be a good investment. Whilst we believe that literacy is an integral part of the fundamental human right to education, we also wanted to provide compelling practical reasons for governments and donors to invest now in adult literacy. The following emerged clearly:

- Literacy is vital to reducing gender inequality.
- Adult literacy is critical for the healthy development and education of children, especially girls.
- Literacy is vital to human and economic development.
- Literacy is vital for fighting AIDS.
- Adult literacy programs work.

Literacy, in short, is the fertilizer needed for development and for democracy to take root and grow. It is the invisible ingredient in any successful strategy for eradicating poverty. Unfortunately, in recent years it has become all too invisible, as people have refused to make this sound investment. Funds have been channeled into primary education but very little has gone into adult

literacy even though there are strong returns and the investment seems to make good financial sense. We hope the full benchmarks below can help us make the case afresh for literacy and help countries and donors project the cost of developing an effective program.

2. Full Benchmarks

The benchmarks that are set out below are designed to facilitate serious planning to achieve the Dakar 'Education for All' goal of a 50% reduction in adult illiteracy by 2015. We hope these benchmarks will provide a starting point for policy dialogue between governments, funding agencies, NGOs, and those adults who have been deprived of their right to education. They might also be used as a checklist against which a government or donor might ask questions about an existing or proposed program. However, they are not intended as a blueprint or a set of conditions. Our research affirms the widely shared insight of experienced practitioners that the success of any literacy program depends on flexibility to respond to unique local needs and circumstances.

1. Literacy is about the acquisition and uses of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programs should reflect this understanding.
2. Literacy should be seen as a continuous process that requires sustained learning and application. There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programs should be defined to encourage sustained participation and celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end-point.
3. Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an enabling environment and resources. They should: i) ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and links to all relevant development programs; ii) work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organizations, and iii) ensure links between all these agencies, especially at the local level, and ensure relevance to the issues in learners' lives by promoting the decentralization of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.
4. It is important to invest in ongoing feedback and evaluation mechanisms, data systematization and strategic research. The focus of evaluations should be on the practical application of what has been learnt and the

impact on active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality.

5. To retain facilitators, it is important that they be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all of their hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up).
6. Facilitators should be local people who receive substantial initial training and regular refresher training, as well as having ongoing opportunities for exchanges with other facilitators. Governments should put in place a framework for the professional development of the adult literacy sector, including for trainers/supervisors - with full opportunities for facilitators across the country to access this (e.g. through distance education).
7. There should be a ratio of at least one facilitator to 30 learners and at least one trainer/supervisor to 15 learner groups (1 to 10 in remote areas), ensuring a minimum of one support visit per month. Programs should have timetables that flexibly respond to the daily lives of learners but which provide for regular and sustained contact (e.g. twice a week for at least two years).
8. In multilingual contexts, it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn. Active efforts should be made to encourage and sustain bilingual learning.
9. A wide range of participatory methods should be used in the learning process to ensure that learners are actively involved and that the learning is relevant to their lives. These same participatory methods and processes should be used at all levels of training of trainers and facilitators.
10. Governments should take responsibility for stimulating the market for producing and distributing a wide variety of materials suitable for new readers, for example by working with publishers/newspaper producers. They should balance this with funding for the local production of materials, especially by learners, facilitators and trainers.
11. A good quality literacy program that respects all these benchmarks is likely to cost between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year for at least three years (two years initial learning + ensuring further learning opportunities are available for all).
12. Governments should dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programs as conceived in these benchmarks. Where governments deliver on this, international donors should fill any remaining resource gaps (e.g. through including adult literacy in the Fast Track Initiative).

3. Evidence Base and Rationale for Benchmark 11 on Costs

Below is the feedback that we received on the question of average costs per enrolled and successful learner. We asked for detailed breakdown of these costs, but most people provided only a total figure. Some people struggled to give us this information at first and needed to be chased to provide the figures.

The results show a significant diversity across regions but perhaps not as large as one might expect. We find that the average cost per learner in Africa is US\$47; in Asia it is US\$30 and in Latin America, it is US\$61. The costs are higher for “successful” learners (US\$68, US\$32 and US\$83 respectively). Understandably, costs in countries like Canada, Belgium and the UK are much higher per capita.

Organization	Country	Enrolled learner	Successful learner
Asia / Pacific			
Average (N=3)		\$30	\$32
International Nepal Fellowship	Nepal	16	18
Bunyard Literacy Community Council	Pakistan	30	30
ActionAid Vietnam	Vietnam	35	38
Literacy Assoc. of Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	40	40
Latin America / Caribbean			
Average (N=12)		\$61	\$83
National Literacy Program	Peru	61	125
Ministry of Education	Brazil	38	38
SESI	Brazil	57	73
Fundacion IRFA	Bolivia	20	29
Fondacion de Poblacion	Bolivia	22	27
Comite nacional de alfabetizacion	Guatemala	19	53
Fundacion Ayuda en Accion	Peru	90	110
ESCAES	Peru	67	72
Projeto Escola Ze Peao	Brazil	125	167
Ayuda en Accion	Bolivia	167	199
Centro de Alfabetizacion	Ecuador	31	40
Centro Josue de Castro Estudos e Pesquisas	Brazil	56	58

Organization	Country	Enrolled learner	Successful learner
Africa			
Average (N=14)		\$47	\$68
ActionAid International	Tanzania	50	51
AAEA	Angola	30	36
Community Skills Dev. Project	The Gambia	60	80
People's Action Forum	Zambia	22	31
ActionAid	Ghana	20	31
Africa Educational Trust	Somalia	28	X
TOSTAN	Senegal	32	38
TINTUA	Burkina Faso	20	X
EPID	Kenya	43	80
Jeunesse et Développement	Mali	55	89
Work for Rural Health	Malawi	63	100
VIE	Niger	39	118
ADRA	Sudan	75	115
Univ. Witwatersrand	Lesotho	118	178
Other			
East End Literacy	Canada	2,646	2,646
Lire et Ecrire	Belgium	1,423.00	X
NALA	Ireland	742	742

The figures given are not entirely reliable as few people completed the detailed breakdown so we do not know if we are comparing like with like. We do not know what indirect costs have been included in each calculation. Some respondents gave the same figures for costs per learner and costs per successful learner. This suggests a 100% success rate, which may seem implausible but it may be that practitioners refuse to accept that any adult learner “fails” if they are participating in the process (who are we to question the value if learners themselves see the value)? To get a fully accurate calculation of costs of literacy would clearly require much more work and intensive communication with respondents. The timeframe did not allow us to enable to complete this. We strongly recommend that more work be done in this area.

Notwithstanding these caveats, the above figures gave us enough confidence to develop this benchmark. In general, we increased the costs that people reported given that so many respondents listed a range of extra things

they would do if resources permitted. We also anticipate that fulfilling all the commitments in these benchmarks would add costs to most existing programs (e.g. engagement in providing further learning opportunities/generating reading materials and a literate environment/paying facilitators properly and giving them professional development options).

4. Level of Support for Benchmark 11

85% of the 142 expert respondents we consulted agreed with this benchmark (A good quality literacy program that respects all these benchmarks is likely to cost between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year for at least three years (two years initial learning + ensuring further learning opportunities are available for all)).

Most people who commented reinforced the benchmark, agreeing that their programs or ones they knew of were within this range of costs or not far outside it.

A good quality literacy program is possible with a unit cost between US\$25 and US\$40. Roshan, World Education, Nepal

Depending on cost of living in each country and literacy programs, our average cost is between US\$30 and US\$60 per learner per year. IRFA Bolivia

The estimated costs are correct.
National Commission for Adult and Non Formal Education, Nigeria

Depending on the cost of living in each country and the type of literacy programs. Our average cost is between US\$30 and US\$60 per learner per year in our radio literacy programs (distance education). Fe Y Alegría, Latin America (programs across 15 countries)

Whilst there is broad agreement, clearly this benchmark might be set too high or too low for some countries and for some contexts where the cost of living is very different:

It is unaffordable for countries like China to provide this amount (50-100US\$ per year) for a learner. It is estimated that nearly 30-50US\$ would be spent for

each learner within 3 years in China.

Basic Education Department, the Ministry of Education of China

Based on our experience the cost varies between US\$10 and US\$150 depending on the country of work in the Arab World. EPEP, Arab Countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan & Morocco)

In certain locations, for example in the North (Tombuctu, Gao and Kidal), literacy work has to be connected to economic activities especially when targeting women or young men - and this means the cost is usually between US\$100-US\$200 per participant. ASG Mali

If facilitators are paid more and trained more, and if much more effort is made to supply good reading materials including newspapers, the costs may well be higher. Bob Prouty, World Bank

5. Evidence Base and Rationale for Benchmark 12 on Financing

The Fifth CONFINTEA Conference and Mid-term Conference (Hamburg, 1997; Bangkok, 2003) argued that a minimum of 3% of government education budgets go to adult learning. Although this seems modest, most countries fall short.

There are problems in establishing a figure for all contexts when literacy rates vary enormously from one country to another. Surely a country with low adult literacy levels should be investing substantially more? There are also, of course, problems in using a percentage of the education budget as a reference point, as much then depends on the adequacy of the education budget in the first place (for example, if countries are not dedicating 6% of their Gross Domestic Product to education then resources are unlikely to be sufficient). Despite this, our feeling was that the education budget should still act as the central base of funding for literacy, as this makes clearest sense to most policy makers. It may be that governments can find creative ways to secure a balance of resource inputs from all ministries and this should certainly be encouraged.

We were keen to draw on the Dakar Framework for Action to remind donors of the commitment that they made that any country with a viable plan

to achieve Education For All (EFA) by 2015 will not be allowed to fail for lack of resources. Unfortunately, that pledge has not been kept. Many countries have come up with education sector plans but donor support has been largely through the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) that was founded with a narrow focus on universal primary schooling. Following advocacy work by the Global Campaign for Education, the FTI has promised that it will open up to the full EFA agenda though this has not yet led to clear guidance or a change in the indicative framework of the FTI. Recent developments suggest that FTI may well be reformed to become a genuine “Global Compact” mobilizing funds for EFA, as envisaged in Dakar. If this happens, FTI will need to develop benchmarks or “assessment guidelines” on adult literacy. We believe that this research and consultation process provides a solid foundation for establishing these.

Unfortunately, there is a second fundamental problem with the FTI, which is not about the scope but about the funding. Donors have not provided adequate funding even for the initial batch of approved FTI countries. Major new momentum is needed on this urgently. The promises of new aid made at the G8 meeting in July 2005 and repeated in the UN Summit in New York in September 2005 suggest that this resource gap may well be filled. However, sustained pressure will be needed to ensure substantial amounts of new aid are earmarked for education and channeled through a reformed FTI.

Drawing significantly on the data from our survey, Jan Ravens and Carlos Aggio did some further analysis of costs for the EFA *Global Monitoring Report* in June 2005. They concluded that the total cost of achieving the Dakar goal on adult literacy (to halve illiteracy by 2015) in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia would be about US\$10 billion, or US\$1 billion per year, which would need to be mobilized through international aid. As present aid to education is about US\$1.5 billion annually, this certainly requires a significant increase.

6. Level of Support for Benchmark 12 on Financing

83% of respondents agreed with this benchmark (Governments should dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programs as conceived in these benchmarks. Where governments deliver on this, international donors should fill any remaining resource

gaps (e.g. through including adult literacy in the Fast Track Initiative) though some people felt unqualified to answer.

Donors should stop supporting short-term programs associated with 'magic lines' that only contribute to reinforcing restricted visions of literacy. National Institute of Adult Education, Mexico.

Agree; our adult education spending is almost 3% of the national education budget. We are convinced that the pledge made at the World Education Forum is not honored by all the Donors Ministry of Education, Namibia

Our government spends less than 1% of the national education budget on adult basic education. Farrell Hunter, ALN, South Africa

International communities and such powerful agencies as the World Bank, major bilaterals and regional banks should take a more active role in literacy development. Akihiro Chibo, UNESCO, Japan

The government should be able to coordinate a common basket approach at country level to ensure that all local donors' contribution are coordinated and channeled to priority areas. Andiwo, Kenya

The percentage of the national education budget that is spent on adult literacy must be defined based on the level of literacy. The lower literacy rates are the higher the budget should be Avodec, Nicaragua

This seems too small relative to its importance. Dan Wagner, US

Agree as an ideal but in practice 3% for adult literacy is a distant dream for a country like ours. Maarifa, Tanzania

Actually in Mali adult literacy gets less than 1% of the total education budget. ASG, Mali

With only 2% given to education, we shall be lucky even if we get 0001% from here for Adult Education! Bunyad, Pakistan

This would be quite an achievement. At this stage adult literacy programs are not even recognized by the government nor funded in any shape and therefore

falls on the shoulder of NGOs to do so. EPEP, Arab Countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan & Morocco)

In the present economic crisis the State has not been able to finance this sector. For example, the budget for the national plan of action on adult literacy for 1999-2003 was less than US\$500,000. IIZ-DVV Guinea Conakry

I disagree. This is context-dependent. Some countries will need to dedicate far more. Some may need less. I would use the development of a national strategy as the starting point, not some arbitrary dollar figure. Also, not sure why the benchmark should be education sector budgets when all sectors have a role. But the broad principle is right—there should be a dependable source of financing based on nationally determined needs and existence of a sound program to address those needs. Bob Prouty, World Bank

3% of national education sector budget to adult literacy is a desirable one. Actual contribution by most developing countries is far less than that. Basic Education Dept, Ministry of Education, China

7. Final Words

In most countries, youth and adult literacy have suffered from years of under-investment and poor quality provision. Yet there is growing recognition that the realization of a wide range of poverty reduction and development goals depends on countries making significant progress towards adult literacy of all. For very modest investments countries can see dramatic benefits. The case for new investments in adult literacy is compelling.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

GCE	Global Campaign for Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
UN	United Nations

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Chapter 12.

Literacy and Lifelong Learning: The Linkages

by Rosa Maria Torres

1. Introduction

This paper attempts to deal with misconceptions about literacy and to show the intimate relationship between literacy and lifelong learning. Youth and adult literacy have been neglected over the past two decades within national and international agendas. The Education for All goals (Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000) prioritized children and primary education. The Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) do not even include adult literacy within MDG education goals. Recommendations against investing in adult literacy and adult education in general, promoted by the World Bank since the late 1980s with respect to developing countries, were based on i) scarce resources and the need to prioritize children's education and primary school, and ii) the low cost-effectiveness of adult literacy programs.¹ Neither of these arguments is valid because children's and adult education are intimately related and the low cost-effectiveness claim was not based on sound evidence and knowledge of the field. This has been acknowledged and rectified in recent years by the World Bank (Lauglo, 2001; Oxenham and Aoki, 2001; Torres, 2004).²

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1. Both arguments can be found in the World Bank's 1995 *Priorities and Strategies for Education*. The low cost-effectiveness argument was based on a single study (Abadzi, 1994) commissioned by the WB the data referred to the findings of the Experimental World Literacy Program implemented between 1967 and 1972 in 11 countries (see Lind and Johnston, 1990).
 2. Some recent WB-supported studies (see Carr-Hill, 2001, conducted in Uganda) conclude that adult (out-of-school) education may be more cost-effective than primary (school) education. This is a tricky argument that may lead to see adult and non-formal education as a substitute for children's schooling.

The goal is not to eradicate illiteracy but to ensure literacy for all in order to create *literate families, communities and societies*. Achieving this goal implies working simultaneously on four complementary fronts:

- a. Universal quality basic education for all children, placing literacy (acquisition, development and use) at the heart of school efforts and reforms.
- b. Ensuring literacy for all youth and adults, not only through specific programs for adults but also as part of family and community education efforts, and through all possible means.
- c. Promoting a literate environment and a literate culture at local and national level, stimulating not only reading but also writing, and engaging all institutions, forms and technologies related to literacy (e.G. Libraries, schools, newspapers, radio, TV, digital technologies, etc.
- d. Dealing with poverty in a structural manner, not only through ad-hoc focalized interventions but also mainly through sound and fair economic and social policies. There is no way to achieve quality education for all and literacy for all without eliminating poverty, ensuring equity and promoting national human and economic development.³

2. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning (LLL) has become a paradigm for education systems worldwide, implying that:

- a. *Learning* (not information, education or training per se) is what matters.
- b. The emerging *information* and the *knowledge* society fundamentally implies the building of *learning societies* and *learning communities*.
- c. Continuous learning is essential for survival and for enhancing quality of life, as well as for national human, social and economic development.
- d. There are many learning systems, places, means, modalities and styles.
- e. Learning opportunities for all must be ensured throughout life.

3. Literacy and Lifelong Learning

The term *literacy* refers essentially to the ability to read and to write (numeracy is often added as a complement or a component of literacy). Although the term *illiteracy* and *literacy* have traditionally been used refer

3. This fourth strategy is essential. Literacy for all and education for all require trans-sectoral policies. Education policies must be intertwined with economic and social policies. See: Torres, Rosa María, "Justicia económica y justicia social 12 tesis para el cambio educativo", Movimiento Internacional Fe y Alegría/Entreculturas, Madrid, 2005. See <http://www.fronesis.org/libreriarimt.htm>

to 15 year-olds or older, learning to read and write is an ageless concept and learning process for children, youth and adults.

Social convention sees childhood as the “normal” age to become literate. People are supposed to learn to read and write during their “school-age” period. Such social convention assumes societies that effectively ensure children’s universal right to go to school that ensure the right to learn. However, that is not the case in most countries in the South and in many countries in the North. Millions of children do not have access to school at all or to a school that ensures the right to learn, or do not have the conditions to remain in school long enough to acquire solid reading and writing skills. Thus, millions of children, youth and adults are forced to learn to read and write when they are young or adults, through formal or non-formal “second chance” education options.

“School age” is not equivalent to “learning age.” Moreover, notions such as “late entry” to school or “over age”, which use age as a discriminatory factor, must be revised. Given the objective economic, social and educational conditions offered to the population, education and learning systems must assume lifelong learning as an inevitable reality, be open and flexible to accommodate the literacy needs of learners at any age.

Literacy Acquisition and Development In and Out of School

It is commonly believed that people start to learn to read and write when they enter school or pre-primary school, and that such process ends with the last day of school. That belief is the result of lack of knowledge and prejudice. Abundant theoretical and empirical research informs us that

► *The basis for literacy acquisition is rooted in early childhood*

Understanding the nature and role of the written language is a process that begins well before reaching “school age” and going to school. At 2-3 years old, children start building hypotheses about the written language and its social uses, by seeing or listening to writing and/or reading acts and materials around them (at home, in the street, on the radio, on television, etc). By the time they get to school, children have already strong ideas - many of them sound and valid - of what reading and writing in their own language(s) are about. This occurs not only among children coming from privileged families but also among children coming from poor families and poor

literate contexts. Evidently, the context and stimuli determine important differences in children's early introduction to literacy.⁴

School systems do not build on the previous knowledge children bring to school but ignore and despise it: the same is true for adult learners, although the need to respect and start from previous knowledge is much more emphasized in adult education than in child education). Longitudinal studies on child literacy acquisition processes reveal that school often contributes to stopping children's curiosity about language and a spontaneous desire to learn to read and write. Becoming literate turns out to be a difficult, painful experience for millions of children worldwide, a learning process that could be facilitated if policy makers, school administrators and teachers were more knowledgeable about literacy acquisition and about the home-school learning transition.

► *Literacy development goes far beyond the school system*

Traditionally, the world of education has associated literacy with schooling and improving literacy with teacher training and school reform. However, being able to read and write with understanding, for self-expression, information, communication and learning purposes, implies much more than going to school and having motivated teachers. Out-of-school factors are equally important for literacy development, facilitating or inhibiting learners' desire and capacity to learn to read and write and to use the written language meaningfully in daily life. Economic, social, cultural and linguistic policies must converge if the target is a literate nation.

The family and the local community have a critical role in making literacy accessible, necessary, and enjoyable throughout life. Access to cultural activities, to a sport yard, to a library, a museum, a reading center, a cyber cafe, newspapers and mass media, etc, complements school life, enhances a literate and a learning environment for all, and can make an important difference in a person's life and in the life and future of a whole community.

Often, many such resources exist in poor urban and rural areas but are not used properly, in a planned, coordinated and inter-sectoral manner for the benefit of all. The school or community library are meant only for school

4. See for example the rich theoretical and empirical research by Emilia Ferreiro in the Latin American region and comparative studies with other countries and regions.

students, not for the entire community. If computers are available, they remain locked up at school rather than being accessible in a multi-purpose community reading and learning center. Adult literacy classes are often held under a tree while the school building remains underutilized. Newspapers hardly ever trespass school buildings even when there are no textbooks or interesting materials to stimulate students' reading.

► *School does not guarantee literacy*

Illiteracy is generally associated with lack of access to school and continues to be identified with the out-of-school population. However, illiteracy is also related to access to poor quality formal and non-formal education. Abundant studies, statistics, and tests confirm over and over again that the school system is doing a poor job with regard to literacy education.

Literacy remains the most important mission delegated by societies to school systems. This mission is now in crisis and under heavy scrutiny in the South and in the North where reading and writing results from (both public and private) schools have become a major national issue. National and international tests, most of which place a special emphasis on literacy skills, show consistently much lower reading and writing results than those expected in each specific country. So-called "developing countries" regularly occupy the last places in such international tests when compared to "developed countries".⁵

The main problem lies evidently on the teaching side and on the conventional school structure and culture. Everything suggests that major changes are needed in the teaching of reading and writing in schools, but schools and teachers clearly need to be supported in their literacy mission with strong and renewed family, community and societal strategies.

Literacy is a Trans-generational Issue

Considerable evidence shows the importance of parents' education - and especially of mothers - for children's lives: health, nutrition, childcare,

5. See OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), administered to 15-year-olds in schools to measure reading, mathematical and scientific literacy, and problem-solving in life situations. The survey was implemented in 43 countries in 2000 and in 41 countries in 2003. <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/> See also the International Adult Literacy Survey of 2001, where results in participating developing countries such as Chile were devastating. See IALS: <http://www.statcan.ca:8096/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=89-588-X>

protection, school attendance, etc. Adult and parental literacy are tightly linked to children's literacy. In all regions and across countries and cultures, illiterate women acknowledge that one of their strongest motivations to learn to read and write revolves around the school and their children's education. They want to help them with school homework, feel more confident to approach the school, attend school meetings and speak with teachers. So important is parental education for children's wellbeing, that, as we have argued elsewhere, children's right to basic education should include the right to educated parents.⁶

Child and family literacy programs in developed countries stimulate parents to read to their children nightly before bedtime, something that millions of parents in developing countries cannot afford to do because they do not know how to read, because they have nothing to read or simply because they have no time.

Based more on prejudice than on consistent data, parental illiteracy has come to be considered a predictor of children's school failure. In the framework of modern competition among schools for students' academic results that are associated with incentives for teacher or school performance, a predictable situation is emerging and spreading: public schools are selecting students to ensure high ratings.⁷ Extreme poverty and parental illiteracy are a red light for school principals. There is also evidence that school repetition, a decision to a great extent taken by every teacher on unclear grounds, is often related to prejudice against poverty, racial status, and parental illiteracy.⁸

The trans-generational impact of literacy is also true in the relationship between teachers and students. Teachers who do not have reading habits and do not enjoy reading and writing cannot teach their students. Policies addressed to teachers' literacy development, including the free distribution of newspapers to schools, book series produced for teachers at low cost, digital literacy, etc., are critical for transforming schools into reading institutions and to enhancing their literate environment.

6. Torres, Rosa María, "Children's right to basic education," in: Education News, No. 14, UNICEF, New York, 1995. See http://www.fronesis.org/rmt_textos.htm

7. In the Latin American context, Chile has the oldest system of school achievement evaluation and competition between schools and incentives associated with achievement and competition. That public school principals reject students from very poor backgrounds and/or having illiterate parents has triggered an alarm in the past few years. The same is true in other countries in the region that have similar policies, often following World Bank recommendations.

8. See: IBE-UNESCO/UNICEF, School Repetition: A Global Perspective, Geneva, 1996.

Literacy is a Solid Foundation for Lifelong Learning

Not all knowledge and learning depend on being able to read and write. In fact, a large portion of the information and knowledge that are essential for life and for cultural reaffirmation and renewal are learned without any formal education and are often transmitted orally from one generation to another at home, in the community, and in school. It is wrong to equate illiteracy and ignorance.

Nevertheless, the written language has a central role in schooling, in the building and transmission of knowledge, and in lifelong learning. Books continue to be the most important means for the preservation and transmission of knowledge. Despite the unprecedented expansion of the audiovisual culture, reading and writing remain at the core of information and communication media such as radio, television, film, or video. Digital technologies require proficient readers and writers. Combating the digital divide, by democratizing the access to and use of computers and other modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), implies a huge literacy effort worldwide.

Literacy is the most important passport to lifelong learning. Being able to read and write marks a before and an after for school children. Metaphors used by adults who learn to read and write include “light”, “window” or “door.” Reading and writing accompany people throughout life and enable them to keep informed and intellectually active.

Literacy is Essential for Human Development and for Improving the Quality of Life

Human development is about much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. And it is thus much more than economic growth, which is only a means - if a very important one - of enlarging people's choices. Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities - the range of things that people can do or be in life. The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and to be able to participate in the life of the

community. Without these, many choices are simply not available, and many opportunities in life remain inaccessible". (UNDP 2001:9)

In recent years, literacy has been framed in an economic logic dominating the world and the education field in particular. Internationally, current dominant trends link adult literacy to "livelihoods" (Oxenham *et al.*, 2002), to "poverty alleviation" amongst the extremely poor and as a preventive strategy to "prevent children's failure in school."

However, attributing literacy *per se* the capacity to change people's lives by impacting significantly on their income, employment, or poverty is not realistic. Today, basic literacy does not make a difference between getting and not getting a job, much less getting a good job. Unemployment is high and on the rise worldwide, especially in the South. Millions of high school graduates and professionals are unemployed and millions migrate to the North in search of better living conditions. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the possibility to break the cycle of poverty in this region implies at least twelve years of schooling.⁹

And yet, literacy improves the quality of life of people in many and most profound ways, not necessarily economic in nature. As has been traditionally acknowledged, literacy is related to human dignity, self-esteem, liberty, identity, autonomy, critical thinking, knowledge, creativity, participation, empowerment, social awareness and social transformation, all of them important human satisfactions, beyond material conditions.

Adult and third-age learners often refer to reading and writing as "a companion," "a weapon to fight loneliness," "a means to travel without traveling." Substituting the fingerprint with the writing of one's own name is the most important act of dignity for an illiterate person, affected by shame and low self-esteem.

Literacy is also related to mental and psychological health. Neuropsychological research suggests that people who cultivate an active and complex mind throughout life - very much linked to reading and writing, as opposed to the passive activity of watching television - age well and are less exposed to diseases such as Alzheimer and dementia. In a comparative study between

9. See ECLAC/CEPAL 2000 <http://www.eclac.cl>

literate and illiterate elders in the Northern Manhattan community, illiterates obtained lower scores than literates on measures of naming, comprehension, verbal abstraction, orientation, and figure matching and recognition.¹⁰

Measuring the personal, family and social impact of literacy in terms of improving people's quality of life implies going beyond narrow economic frameworks and indicators, identifying and creating new, more integral and qualitative indicators.

Literacy is a Lifelong Learning Process

For decades, people have considered that literacy acquisition occurs within a short period of time, that is, with a few years of schooling for children, a short literacy program or campaign for youth and adults. The idea that functional literacy requires four years of schooling, attributed to UNESCO, has been quoted and adopted by national and international policies worldwide. In fact, it was adopted in 2000 by the Millennium Development Goals that consider that the completion of primary education by the year 2015 is "reaching grade five", an extremely modest goal and in many cases below the educational levels already being achieved in many countries in the South.

Four years of schooling, for children, youth or adults, is insufficient for ensuring sustainable literacy and basic education. A UNESCO Latin America regional study on functional illiteracy conducted in seven countries in the region (Infante, 2000) concluded that at least 6 or 7 years of schooling are required to deal meaningfully with reading and writing, and that if they are used both within and outside the school, 12 years are needed to fully master them if they are used both within and outside the school, in different contexts including home, work, social relations, etc.

The accelerated expansion of schooling in the past thirty years in the South has expanded literacy and the literate population especially among the younger generations. On the other hand, the accelerated expansion of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) – computers, cellular phones, and other modern devices – since the 1990s has further enhanced and diversified the need and the practice of reading and writing

10. See "Effect of literacy on neuropsychological test performance in non-demented, education-matched elders" in *The Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* 1999, 5:191-202 Cambridge University Press.

for millions of people, especially for youth. The definitions, needs and uses of literacy have become more and more complex, as a result of all these developments in the framework of the globalized, highly inequitable and competitive world that is emerging.

In other words, becoming literate can no longer be viewed as a specific period in anyone's life but rather as a lifelong learning process in itself. Multiple degrees and levels of mastery of the written language span illiterate and literate. Terms such as "basic literacy," "initial literacy," "functional literacy or illiteracy," "neo-literates," "post-literacy," etc. express the need to go beyond the usual dichotomy.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
LLL	Lifelong learning
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Chapter 13.

Operationalizing the Policy Discourses of Lifelong Learning: Challenges for Africa

by Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo

1. A Brief History of Lifelong Learning Discourses

In 1968, growing dissatisfaction with the formal education system and student uprisings protesting the irrelevance of schools in addressing societal problems and its authoritarian processes were influential in shaping discourses of lifelong learning. Paul Lengrand, former head the Adult Education Division of the Education Sector of UNESCO, presented “An Introduction to Lifelong Learning” in 1970, which led to the creation of the International Commission on the Development of Education, comprising experts who were asked to study the state of education

Chaired by Edgar Faure, the Commission made public its findings in the 1972 “Learning To Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow.” Known as the Faure Report, it asserted the right and necessity of every individual to learn throughout life for his/her social, economic, political and cultural development and it defined the key principles of lifelong learning:

Every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life. The idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society. The lifelong concept covers all aspects of education, embracing everything in it, with the whole being more than the sum of its parts. There is no such thing as a separate “permanent” part of education that is not lifelong. In other words, lifelong education is not an educational system but the principle in which the over-all organization of a system is founded, and which accordingly underlies the

development of each of its component parts (pp. 181-182). We propose lifelong education as the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries.

The Faure report also called for education for the largest number of people and emphasized the need to relate the different learning contexts — formal, non-formal or informal. Resources should be distributed fairly throughout these learning contexts. Such a holistic approach and vision for learners to become more humane through quality education emphasized the learners' participation in determining educational processes and therefore demanded greater flexibility.

In 1973, the OECD published *Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning*, which focused on how learning could be used to respond to market demands and how individuals could compete with their newly acquired learning. The OECD concept of recurrent education was associated with post-compulsory education and training; the lifelong learning discussion was recast in terms of economics and employability. The OECD and later the World Bank continued to put forward the market-driven lifelong learning perspective in contrast to the more holistic and more encompassing discourse of UNESCO.

In 1975, the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) produced a series of monographs that were meant to conceptualize and operationalize lifelong education. One monograph listed the characteristics of lifelong education as follows.

- Education does not end at the end of formal schooling but is a lifelong process; lifelong education is not confined to adult education but encompasses and unifies all stages of education: pre-primary, primary, secondary and so forth, thereby seeking to view education in its totality.
- Lifelong education includes formal, non-formal and informal education.
- The community plays an important role in lifelong education from the time the child begins to interact with it and continues its educational function in professional and general areas throughout life; educational institutions — schools, universities and training centers — are only as one agency for lifelong education and can no longer exist in isolation from other educational agencies.
- Lifelong education seeks continuity and articulation along its vertical or longitudinal dimension (vertical articulation and integration at

its horizontal and depth dimensions at every stage in life (horizontal integration).

- Lifelong education is universal and represents the democratization of education.
- Flexible, offers diverse content, learning tools and techniques, and times.
- Ultimate goal is to maintain and improve the quality of life.
- Three major prerequisites for lifelong education are opportunity, motivation and educability. (Dave, 1975).

Other voices joined the discussion. One of the better-known works, *No Limit to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap. A Report to the Club of Rome*, envisioned a society that relied on individuals to critically analyze and participate in their society's development through learning, very much along the lines espoused by the Faure Report.

The 1970s discourse on lifelong education, however, did not gain momentum for many reasons. Some argued that the UNESCO discourse was too idealistic and therefore impossible to attain. Recession and cuts in public expenditures in the mid-seventies were not conducive to the OECD discourse of providing more work-related learning opportunities. For several years, there was little discussion and debate on lifelong education.

While arising from a totally different context, the 1990s lifelong learning discourse was both i) a continuation of the tensions between the more holistic and more humane approach vis-à-vis the more economic perspective and therefore largely work-related and ii) sharper in terms of its shift from education to learning. (DELETE In the nineties, the lifelong learning discourses re-emerged. The tensions between the more holistic and more humane approach vis-à-vis the more economic perspective and sharpened in terms of its shift from education to learning.) It also resurfaced at the time when the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990) introduced the EFA goals that would become the dominant educational discourse for the countries in the South. The nineties lifelong learning discourse then was faced with two challenges, first, the tensions within the discourse between the more dominant economic approach and the more holistic and humane approach, and the difficulty of finding its bearings in countries in the South that were now following the EFA agenda which produced a discourse divide: lifelong learning for the North and Education for All for the South (Torres, 2002)

The EFA goals of early child care and education, universal primary enrolment, life skills for the youth, adult literacy, are clearly along the principles of learning at different stages in our life while the EFA goal on gender equality is consistent with lifelong learning principles of broadening access of learning opportunities. Unfortunately, 15 years implementing the EFA agenda primarily revolved around universal primary education, leaving the other goals to recede into the background. As a result, the inherent connection between EFA and lifelong learning has not been operationalized. Reduced to ensuring entry into the formal education system, EFA implementation has not, thus far, given due credit to the contribution of non-formal education and the importance of literacy in laying the foundation for continuous learning.

In 1996, *Learning: the Treasure Within* (the Delors Report, named for the Chair of the International Commission), UNESCO reintroduced the debate on lifelong learning, this time acknowledging the latter's key role in an evolving economy: "A key to the twenty first century, learning throughout life will be essential, for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labor market and for better mastery of the changing timeframes and rhythms of individual existence."

The report also articulated the same holistic vision of the Faure Report by elaborating on three other pillars of learning (aside from Faure's learning to be): learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together. Emanating from the rapidly changing globalized economic, social, political and cultural milieu, this latest interpretation of lifelong learning sought to bring together the multiple reasons for the demand for learning on the eve of the 21st century: "... rethink and update the concept of lifelong so as to reconcile three forces: competition, which provides incentives; cooperation, which gives strength; and solidarity, which unites ..."; "... not only must it adapt to changes in the nature of work but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming whole beings, their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the critical faculty and ability to act."

The Delors Report (p. 199) refers several times to the EFA discourse and clarifies its relationship to lifelong learning. While asserting the importance of the framework of the basic learning needs which pertains to every person - child, youth and adult - it also cautions that

...any tendency to view basic education as a kind of emergency educational package for poor people and for poor countries, in our view would be an error.

The broad definition of the function of basic education is not only applicable to all societies, but should lead to a review of educational practices and policies at initial level in all countries. What the world community endorsed at Jomtien was the universal provision of an education worthy of all, an education that provides both a solid basis for future learning and the essential skills for living a constructive life within society. The fact that much education, in both industrialized and the developing countries falls far short of that standard does not suggest that we should settle for less, but rather we should strive for more.

By arguing for a maximal interpretation of the EFA agenda, the Delors report points out “formal education systems tend to emphasize the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning, but it is vital now to conceive education in a more encompassing fashion. Such a vision should inform and guide future educational reforms and policy, in relation both to contents and to its methods.

The lifelong learning discourse of the 1990s could combine an economic and humanistic interpretation of lifelong learning, making it more palatable in many countries, particularly within the European Union (EU). However, because of the predominance of UPE discourse in the EFA agenda, the policy discourse of lifelong learning, even with its four pillars, did not seem to be coherent with the mostly Southern countries implementation of EFA.

For Europe, even before the Delors report, a series of documents on lifelong learning: the 1991 Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community; the 1991 Memorandum of Open Distance Learning in the European Community; the 1995 European Commission White Paper, and Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society had come out and laid the foundation for a more pronounced, elaborated strategy of lifelong learning in the development of the region.

By 2000, the EU Heads of States had agreed on the Lisbon Strategy where the region would be the most competitive knowledge society of the world by 2010 through lifelong learning. While couched in predominantly economic terms, the view was that lifelong learning also translates to personal fulfillment and enables the individual to exercise his/her rights as citizens. It was no wonder that given such an encompassing interpretation, the discourse could be easily integrated into education and training policies in EU member states, even with governments from a range of political parties.

The same could not be said for other regions in the world. Only a few countries like China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, South Africa and Namibia, gave the same attention as the European region to lifelong learning as a key policy educational discourse. Aside from the previously cited reason that most countries were adopting the EFA educational discourse, more particularly the goal on UPE, and becoming short sighted in their appreciation of lifelong and life-wide educational and learning process, lifelong learning had assumed many other names: recurrent education, permanent education, continuing education, adult education. It was difficult to specify which country had embraced the principles of the lifelong learning discourse. Moreover, while the vision and mission of lifelong learning seemed to have resonated in many countries in the world, its operationalization had taken many different forms that implemented only some its features.

In addition to being divided from the EFA discourse, the lifelong learning discourse in the nineties also shifted from lifelong education to lifelong learning. The difference was not only semantic but also substantive. Lifelong education, as put forward by the Faure Report, was associated with the more comprehensive and integrated goal of developing more humane individuals and communities in the face of rapid social change. On the other hand, the more dominant interpretation of lifelong learning in the nineties, especially within Europe, was linked to retraining and learning new skills that would enable individuals to cope with the demands of the rapidly changing workplace (Matheson and Matheson, 1996; Bagnall, 2000). *Learning to earn* was the slogan easily associated with this perspective. It also seems that lifelong learning, as it is presently promoted, has become more individual oriented whereas lifelong education often referred to the community. The emphasis of lifelong learning on the learner could also be interpreted as assigning more agency to individuals in contrast the focus on structures and institutions. The crisis in welfare states brought about by massive unemployment has been pointed to as one of the reasons for resuscitating and subsequently transforming the concept of lifelong learning (Griffin, 1999). By promoting individual agency in determining the learning agenda, the welfare states try to abdicate its responsibility to provide economic opportunities.

For countries in the South, this shift from education to learning posed challenges at different levels. The mode for addressing the millions of women and men lacking access to educational learning opportunities was

mass campaigns whose emphasis was to reach the numbers rather than the multiple learning needs of individuals. How will the massive, centralized bureaucracies of Ministries of Education respond to flexible and self-directed learning? How would teachers trained to be at the center of the classrooms and in control of the learning agenda through the curriculum be prepared for the shift towards learner-centered pedagogy?

In the end, the nature and character of lifelong learning makes it a challenge to grapple with both conceptually and operationally; this was already acknowledged in the early years of the discourse: "... it is often difficult to conceptualize lifelong *education* in its entirety on account of its comprehensiveness and multiple modalities" (Faure, 1972). Despite this, countries and stakeholders have moved the lifelong learning agenda forward, have appropriated the discourse and tailored it to their context and needs.

2. Implementing Lifelong Learning in Different Contexts

Today, the more dominant explanation for the need for lifelong learning is for individuals to be able to adjust to the fast-changing demands of the economy by acquiring needed skills and knowledge to compete in the labor market. It is also argued that individuals in the 21st century need to learn and equip themselves with skills to use information and communication technologies (ICTs), which has changed many of our societies. While formerly in the background, the argument for learning new values and attitudes is gaining ground.

HIV/AIDS demands a lifelong learning approach. Its about sexuality and changing roles. We have to work simultaneously with children and adults to discuss in new ways. There's need for partnership and linkages between government, private sector, civil society, between health institutions, schools, universities, workplaces. Teaching and preaching about AIDS has failed. No learning can take place until we take 'learning' seriously. The social status of women must change; their self-image must be such that they can negotiate sexual relations as equals. We have to think in more radical ways to ensure a prosperous future in the Southern African region. (Justin Ellis, Undersecretary of Lifelong Learning and Culture in Namibia, cited in Walters, 2000)

How has lifelong learning been implemented in the four key areas of: i) policy advocacy; ii) providing learning opportunities for all; iii) bridging the gap between formal and non-formal education, and iv) providing life skills? The answers reveal both similarities and differences in the interpretation of the discourse.

Lifelong Learning as Policy

The EU Lisbon Strategy is an agreement among member states on the need for lifelong learning policies as the strategy for regional development. Other than these countries where policy and programs go towards this end, very few countries (e.g. China, Japan, Namibia, South Africa, South Korea and Thailand) have clearly delineated lifelong learning policies.

In Thailand, the urgent need to reform the curriculum and the management of education due to economic, social and education crisis was the context for establishing the 1999 National Education Act as the legal basis of lifelong learning. The law defines education as the “learning process for personal and social development through imparting of knowledge, practice, training, transmission of culture; enhancement of academic progress; building a body of knowledge by creating a learning environment and society with factors available and conducive to continuous lifelong learning,

The law also provides that “Credits accumulated by learners shall be transferable within the same type or between types or from different educational institutions, including learning from NFE or informal education, vocational training or from work experience.”

The guidelines for developing the appropriate lifelong education into a learning society are: i) provision of appropriate education to cover all age groups of learners (before school, schooling, working and aging groups); ii) development of appropriate contents to meet the needs of the learners, so that they can apply their knowledge in their actual vocations (learning to know, to do, to be and learning to live together); iii) developing more varieties of qualified learning resources (family, society, resource centers and ICTs, and iv) promoting inter-related and transfer of knowledge in the three systems of education (Suwantipak, 2001; Somtrakool, 2002).

In China, the 1995 Education Law stipulated that the State operate a lifelong education system and create conditions so that its citizens learn throughout life. In 1998, the Education Invigoration Action Plan for the 21st Century stated that a lifelong learning system be established throughout the country by 2010. Finally, in 1999, a decision was made on deepening education and generally promoting quality of education provided to strengthen the lifelong learning system. Concretely, the four major drives to lifelong learning are: 1) to universalize literacy and basic education; 2) to popularize higher education; 3) to systematize vocational education; and 4) to practice community based adult education. Not only is lifelong learning seen as an important education perspective but more important it is also the means for development where the goal is for China to be a learning society (Shuping, 2002).

The context in Namibia and South Africa are post-colonial and post-apartheid; both countries have embraced lifelong learning to respond to the reality of the large gaps of educational access. It is also important to note that within the region, through the Southern African Development Community (SADC), there is a Technical Committee on Lifelong Education and Training whose main objective is to foster regional cooperation and integration by promoting lifelong education and training as an integral part of all education and training. The Committee has defined and justified lifelong education:

Lifelong education is a comprehensive and visionary concept that includes formal, non-formal and informal learning extended through the lifespan of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social and vocational and professional life. It views education in its totality, and includes learning that occurs in the home, school, community, and workplace, and through mass media and other situations and structures for acquiring and enhancing knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Lifelong education, in response to the constantly changing conditions of modern life, must lead to the systematic acquisition, renewal, upgrading and completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as are required by these changes. (Technical Committee, 2001 cited in Aitchison, 2002)

A more advanced form of operationalization of lifelong learning is to create structures to ensure programs and resources. In Namibia, there is a Ministry of Lifelong Learning and Culture while in Japan, as lifelong learning has become a key priority, the Bureau of Social Education, which

had a low profile at the Ministry of Education, has become the Bureau of Lifelong Learning. In South Korea, the Lifelong Learning Policy Division sits under the Ministry of Education.

Many of the policies have espoused a holistic approach of lifelong learning but the implementation has been uneven as to which features are operationalized.

Providing Learning Opportunities for All

Ensuring that learning opportunities are available for everybody is one of the key challenges of lifelong learning. Historically, even if all our societies embraced lifelong learning as a common sense practice, in reality many groups have been excluded from such learning opportunities. For example, girls and women have been marginalized from schools and in the case, they have access to the formal system, the relevance, quality and outcomes remain within the stereotype division of gender roles. Today there have been many measures to address this historical as well as present day reality and the issue now is to assess how such are able to genuinely empower women.

One approach by which learning opportunities are democratized is through the community learning centers (CLC). In Asia, the CLC is a local place of learning outside the formal education system. Located in both villages and urban areas, it is usually set up and managed by local people in order to provide various learning opportunities for community development and improvement of the quality of life. A CLC does not necessarily require new infrastructure, but can operate from an already existing health center, temple, mosque, primary school or other suitable venue. CLCs have been recognized as effective delivery mechanisms of literacy and continuing education Programs through community-based approaches. The UNESCO APPEAL has been instrumental in supporting this idea and facilitating the exchanges of experiences of several countries in the region.

In Africa, community schools are examples of how initiatives brought closer to the community are more flexible as they have adjusted their schedules, their facilities and provision of staff according to the needs of their intended beneficiaries (Hoppers, 2000).

The Adult Learners Week Festivals is another mechanism of making visible the participation of learners and the need to democratize learning opportu-

nities in society. One of the resolutions at the 5th International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg, adult learners week (and its different forms, whether as learning festivals or literacy week) is now celebrated in more than 30 countries in the world, five of which are in Africa, Botswana, Mali, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa. One of the key outcomes of these learning festivals is their ability to mobilize all partners (government, NGOs, academic institutions and private sector) involved in learning. Moreover by celebrating learning through widespread use of mass media, the importance of learning throughout life is given high visibility.

Bridging Formal and Non-formal Education Through Accreditation and Equivalency

As a holistic perspective of learning, one of the key concerns of lifelong learning is the synergy of formal and non-formal education. Accreditation and equivalency programs are the most common mechanisms for bridging them. In Southern Africa, for example, the National Qualification Framework (NQF) makes it possible to give value to NFE programs so that students can enter formal education programs.

In South Korea, the Credit Bank System (CBS) was introduced in 1998 to give citizens greater access to a variety of educational opportunities and to foster a lifelong learning society by recognizing diverse learning activities. CBS beneficiaries included high school graduates who were previously unable to attend post-secondary institutions and workers with professional certificates who did not acquire university degrees. Learners primarily acquire credits through programs at educational and vocational training institutions, enrolling part-time in colleges or universities, acquiring various national certificates, and passing the B.A. examination program for the self-educated. The system provides associate and bachelor degree courses based on a standardized curriculum and syllabus, which in turn, works as the criteria for accreditation and credit approval.

The Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) constitutes a committee for credit approval composed of diverse social group leaders to screen earned credits and/or learning experiences and learners' activities. KEDI also provides a consulting system, an online service, resources and information for learners and educational institutions. Prior to the credit bank system, non-formal modes of higher education were not formally

recognized or accredited since education was the equivalent of a formal school system. It is important to point out that South Korea has one of the highest attendance rates for tertiary education in Asia, yet the government has decided to embark on this program as a concrete way of realizing its vision of open and lifelong learning (Eun Soon Baik, 2000).

In contrast to the CBS, which caters to tertiary education in South Korea, in the Philippines, the Asian Development Bank has funded an elaborate Non-formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency System (NFE A&E) for elementary and secondary levels. Launched in 1999, the NFE A&E is the national equivalency program that provides an alternative system of learning and certification; one of its challenges is to overcome the deep social bias in Filipino culture that any learning experience, opportunity and pathway outside of the formal school system is considered second class, inferior or inadequate. The four core components include: 1) the curriculum framework; 2) learning materials; 3) learning support delivery system, and 4) accreditation and equivalency testing.

The curriculum framework is based on the definition of the functional literacy as “a range of skills and competencies - cognitive, affective and behavioral - which enable individuals to 1) live and work as human persons; 2) develop their potentials; 3) make critical and informed decisions; 4) function effectively in society within the context of their environment and that of the wider community (local, regional, national and global), in order to improve the quality of their life and that of society.” A set of major indicators of functional literacy accompany this definition and form the basis of the five learning strands for the modules, which detail the range of competencies an adult Filipino citizen will need to possess to function effectively in Filipino society.

The learning materials meanwhile consist of 439 learning modules in the elementary and secondary levels in English and Filipino, 40 audio tapes and 5 video tapes designed to cover the competencies of the five learning strands. These aim to help learners progress along a continuum of learning from basic to functional literacy and ultimately to self-learning. The learning materials used at the different levels along this continuum reflect the shift from the facilitator-aided instruction towards self-learning. Except for communication skills, the four other learning strands may be taught in either English or Filipino as the learner decides, as the modules are available in both versions. At the moment, however, competencies are only tested in Filipino.

The Learning Support Delivery System (LSDS) was developed to expand learning support service delivery by contracting qualified service providers for learning support including NGOs, local government units, state colleges and universities, church based organizations, people's organizations, and umbrella organizations (NGOs with national networks and member organizations).

The certification system consists of paper and pencil tests of multiple choice questions and essay writing. Recognizing the limitations of such tests, the Bureau also developed a portfolio assessment for secondary students. A portfolio is a collection of learner's work that shows efforts, progress and achievements, and includes the learner's records, test scores and other achievements, including work samples. Portfolios may be used as a work folder for formative assessment or as a presentation for summative assessment.

In Africa, South Africa's National Qualification Framework (NQF) is the most developed accreditation system. Most of the countries that are in the process of developing and/or implementing accreditation programs are in Southern Africa (Botswana, Namibia and South Africa) and East Africa (Kenya, Uganda).

The discussion about the relevance of accreditation, equivalency and certification is carried out at many levels. On one hand, it is presented as a means of recognizing and giving value to individuals' learning outside the school system. In South Africa, for example, the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU) was one of the key stakeholders pushing for the NQF, coming from the apartheid regime that discriminated in terms of access to formal education and did not recognize workers' competencies learned outside school.

On the other hand, there are also those who question the real motivation of the mechanism for transferability and portability of skills. With globalization, recognized and accredited competencies could be linked to national and international systems that could be translated into a sophisticated global system of classification of flexible and mobile labor at all times (Preston, 1999). Another issue is the quality of the learning and the content and methodology of tests and assessments.

Given that the implementation of accreditation, equivalency and qualifications programs in Africa are in their early phases, it is not possible

to discuss the impact of such programs in providing alternative pathways to learning that support learners throughout life.

Life Skills and HIV Prevention

One of the EFA goals of providing life skills for the young and adults has been gaining attention for the last years because of the new realities and problems that the population is facing. More and more, all over the world, we hear of life skills projects that are addressing conflict, gender relations, democracy and HIV prevention. Many times however, even there is the term “life” within life skills, such programs are not articulated within the framework of lifelong learning, i.e. in reality as life itself unfolds and societies change, it is necessary that the individual continuously learns new skills so that he/she is able to face the challenges.

In Africa today, life skills programs on HIV prevention for the young abound. More often, these life skills are encompassing and cover interpersonal, attitudinal and psychosocial dimensions. It is aimed at developing skills in communication, decision-making, creative thinking, negotiation, stress management, values analysis and confidence building.

In research undertaken by UIE, in collaboration with the ADEA working Group on NFE on the contribution of non-formal education to HIV prevention, the preliminary results are showing an increasing number of non-formal education programs addressing HIV prevention. For the young, most of these are labeled life skills projects while there are also “Life Skills” Program (not labeled as such) that are addressing gender-based violence. In these kinds of programs, there is a component of consciousness-raising on the relationship of HIV infection and gender-based violence as well as other “skills” component of how to deal with violence in married and other intimate relationships. In addition, many projects are addressing gender-based violence not only at the individual level but also at the community level. In the said study, it has also been emphasized that when conceptualizing and implementing HIV Prevention Programs, it is critical that people living with HIV/AIDS are involved.

The proliferation of life skills projects addressing HIV prevention and women’s empowerment, and citizenship is an indication that in our world today where the pace of change is overwhelming, there is a need for everyone

to constantly learn new skills. The four pillars of learning mentioned in the Delors reports (Learning to be, Learning to do, Learning to know and Learning to live together) indeed form the basis for the minimum skills every individual in our world need to equip himself/herself with to ensure that she/he is able to take control of her/his life and participate constructively in community and social development processes.

Lessons and Challenges

No country has as yet achieved this full goal of a lifelong learning system and it remains a visionary call for an open learning society, operating through a multiplicity of educational networks. A key purpose of lifelong learning is democratic citizenship, connecting individuals and groups to structures of social, political and economic activity in both global and local levels. SADC Technical Committee on Lifelong Education and Training, cited by Aitchison

On diversity, unevenness and incomprehension of the vision of lifelong learning: For many countries, lifelong learning remains a common sense principle operating in people's daily lives as we make meaning and adjust to rapid changes. The vision of the Faure Report to make lifelong education the master educational principle for developed and developing countries is still far from being realized, even if there has been some progress mostly in countries in the North. The fragmented way by which many stakeholders look at educational discourses (i.e. lifelong learning and EFA) has made it impossible to conceptualize and operationalize the intimate relationship between lifelong learning and EFA, despite the similarities of the discourses. Presently, there seems to be a convenient discourse divide: minimum EFA goals for the South and maximum, lifelong learning goals for the North. How this translates to the international division of labor and services has already been raised many times. The links between EFA, Lifelong learning and the present challenges posed by the Millennium Development Goals need to be clearly articulated. The important question to ask is how lifelong learning, if operationalized, could help eradicate poverty, ensure UPE, ensure women's empowerment and the prevention of HIV. This brings us to the next question of how lifelong learning could be relevant in a society where groups of people have been denied literacy opportunities.

On the place of literacy in lifelong learning. The gap between those with access to learning opportunities and those without coincides with the

poverty gap and is unacceptable. Even as we speak of the need for lifelong learning rapidly changing economic and technological changes means that there is no basic foundation for such learning to take place because of illiteracy in many countries. If governments cannot address the large pockets of illiterate populations, the gap will widen, as those who have also good foundations for learning will continue learning and competing while those who have no foundations will continue to be marginalized. Particularly important is the need to address the gender gap in literacy fueled largely by cultural norms that systematically discriminate against women to learn to read and write.

On partnerships and funding. Given the character of lifelong learning, actors in the field must work to ensure that learning opportunities for all are made available. Collaboration and coordination of government, community, civil society and the private sector is urgently needed to guarantee that all stakeholders' initiatives are mobilized and properly acknowledged. Finally, appropriate financial resources must be allocated to ensure that the relevant content, methods, human resources and infrastructure are in place. Without these resources for the education of millions of citizens, lifelong education appears to be impractical and impossible to implement.

On lifelong learning as an individual and societal project in Africa. We need to envision lifelong learning as a personal and societal project that could address our highly conflictual communities and societies. The challenge is to build a learning society with a conscious process of reducing all forms of educational exclusion, of creating relevant, quality educational content and processes that enable individuals to actively participate in development processes in their communities and societies.

Concrete steps to realize the vision and principles of LLL

- Make a clear policy of lifelong learning within the education and development policy framework and create coherent relationships between EFA, MDGs, and NEPAD with respect to the vision of lifelong learning. The role of literacy, adult education and NFE in this regard needs to be clearly articulated. Rather than coming up with a lifelong learning action plan, as many European countries have been doing, integrate and clearly articulate the LLL principle in current educational plans and/or development plans.

- Review existing structure or create a committee/structure /mechanism to promote and coordinate lifelong learning at national levels. A parallel mechanism/structure could be put in place at the local/community level.
- Conduct media and other popular forms of campaign to promote learning and to drum up support for individuals to actively participate in different learning opportunities.
- Establish flexible, diverse, relevant programs that are primarily addressed to those who have been perennially excluded for reasons of gender, class, age, ethnic affiliation and language.
- Prioritize learning and education by allocating the appropriate level of resources needed to address the population most in need of education.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB Asian Development Bank

APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Program of Education for All
CBS	Credit Bank System
CLC	Community Learning Center
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LSDS	Learning Support Delivery System
KEDI	Korean Education Development Institute
NFE	Non-formal Education
NFE A&E	Non-formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency System
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education

APPENDIX I.

PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE ADEA 2006 BIENNALE

Documents providing a general overview of the Biennale 2006 themes

- EFA Global Monitoring Report. Literacy for Life. Regional Overview – Sub-Saharan Africa (EFA Global Monitoring Report Team)
- Education By All: A brief for Literacy Investment (Peter Easton)
- Investing In Literacy: Where, Why and How? (Peter Easton)
- Creating a Literate Environment: Hidden Dimensions and Implications for Policy (Peter Easton)
- Effective Schools for Sub-Saharan Africa (Adriaan Verspoor)

Documents on the theme of literacy

- What makes Visions, Policies and Strategies in the field of Literacy in Africa ? (Tonic Maruatona)
- Integrating Literacy and Non-formal Education in Burkina Faso's Education Policy (Pierre Balima)
- Brazilian National Policy of Adult and Youth Education (Ricardo Henriques et Timothy Ireland)
- Learner-centered Processes and Approaches : The connection between non-formal education and creating a literate environment (Sonja Fagerberg Diallo)
- Diversifying the Provision of Education in Senegal: Examples from the non-formal sector (Papa Madéfall Gueye et Kassa Diagne)
- The PAFNA project in Senegal: An efficient and promising literacy project (Fondation Paul Gérin-Lajoie)
- Processes, Approaches and Pedagogies in Literacy Programs - Case study on the experience of the Institute for Popular Education (IEP) in Mali (Maria Diarra Keita)
- Selected cases of Fruitful Interactions between Formal and Non-formal Education in Africa (Anna Katahoire)
- Creating a Literate Environment: Hidden dimensions and implications for policy (Peter Easton)
- Decentralization, Management of Diversity and Curriculum Renovation: A study of literacy education in four African countries (Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda) (John Aitchison)

- Assessing the 'faire faire' Strategy in Literacy in Senegal (Amadou Wade Diagne et Binta Rassouloula Aw Sall)
- Use of African Languages and Literacy: Conditions, factors and Processes (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Tanzania and Zambia) (Hassana Alidou)
- Capacity Building for Educators of Adults in Three Southern African Countries: South Africa, Botswana and Namibia (Veronica McKay and Norma Romm with Herman Kotze)
- The Financing of Literacy and Non-Formal Education by the FONAEF in Burkina Faso (Alice Tiendebreogo et Cora Mathias Batabe)
- Study on the Costs and Financing of Adult Literacy in Senegal (Binta Rassouloula Sall and Kassa Diagne)
- Benchmarks and Financing for Adult Literacy (David Archer)
- Literacy and Lifelong Learning: The linkages (Rosa Maria Torres)
- Literacy and globalization: Towards a learning society in Africa – Growth points for policy and practice (Catherine Odora-Hoppers)
- Operationalizing the Policy Discourse of Lifelong Learning: The Challenges for Africa (Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo)
- Continuation and Extension of Literacy Programs: From literacy to adult basic education and beyond in Uganda (Anthony Okech)
- Measuring the right to education in Burkina Faso (Valérie Liecht and Germaine Ouedraogo)
- The NQF and its Implementation in Non-formal Education – with special reference to South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Kenya (Veronica McKay and Norma Romm with Joyce Kebathi and Herman Kotze)
- Integrating Literacy and Income Generation for Rural Adults - Adult Literacy Education in the People's Republic of China (Zhang Tiedao Ph.D, Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences, China) (In English Only)
- Etude longitudinale sur l'alphabétisation au Mali (Denis Dougnon) (in French only)
- Capitalisation des expériences en alphabétisation et éducation de base des adultes de la direction du développement et de la coopération suisse au Burkina Faso, au Cap Vert et au Niger des années 70 à 2005 (Rosemarie Lausset – A la demande de la Direction du développement et de la coopération – Section Développement)
- Estudio sobre políticas y programas de Alfabetización y Educación Básica de Jóvenes y Adultos (Dr. Jaime Canfux Gutiérrez, Dra. Águeda Mayra Pérez García, Lic. Leonela Relys Díaz, MSc José del Real Hernández) (In Spanish only)
- Longitudinal Development of Non-Formal Education in Thailand (Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission - The Permanent Secretary Office, Ministry of Education Bangkok, Thailand) (in English only)
- Literacy in Post-Conflict Situations - Lessons from Sierra Leone (Ekundayo J.D. Thompson, Mohammed B. Lamin, Edward D.A. Turay and Olive B. Musa) (in English only)
- L'édition en langues nationales - Etude de cas du Mali (Abou Diarra) (in French only)

Documents on the theme of effective schools

- Synthesis Report: Local studies on the Quality of Primary Education in Four Countries (Madagascar, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania) (Ward Heneveld)
- Local study on the Characteristics of Effective Primary Schools in the Province of Toamasina – Madagascar (Lina Rajonhson)
- Local Research on the Characteristics of Effective Primary Schools in Singida Tanzania (Fulgence Swai, Alice Ndidde)
- Critical Characteristics of Effective Primary Education in the Rwenzori Region of Uganda – A Study of 30 Schools in 5 Districts in Uganda (by a team of educators from the five districts)
- Cost-Effective Inputs: a Meta-Analysis of the SACMEQ and PASEC Evaluations (Katharina Michaelowa et Annika Wechtle)
- Le redoublement : mirage de l'école africaine (Jean Marc Bernard, Odile Simon, Katia Vianou) (only in French)
- School Management and Pupil Success – Case Studies of Sixteen African Schools – Summary of the Country Reports from Guinea, Mali, the Central African Republic and Senegal (Guy Pelletier)
- Synthesis of the ICP Questionnaires related to findings of the AFIDES report (ICP)
- Teachers for Rural Schools: A Challenge for Africa (Aiden Mulkeen)
- The AVU Teacher Education Initiative : An African Response to the Challenges of Teacher Development and ICT Opportunities (Kuzvinetsa Peter Dzvimbo, Fred Simiyu Barasa and Catherine Wangesi Kairuki)
- Utilizing Open Educational Resources (OERs) to Support Higher Education and Training in Africa (Peter Bateman, Eliot Pence and Benjamin Bett)
- Optimizing Learning and Education in Africa – the Language Factor - A Stock-taking Research on Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (ADEA/GTZ/UIE)
- Report of the Conference on Bilingual Education and the Use of local Languages, Windhoek, Namibia, August 3-5, 2006 (Conference rapporteurs)
- Proceedings of the Seminar on Curricula Adaptation, Cotonou, Benin, December 1é-15, 2005 (CEPEC International)
- Lessons of the Experience with Direct Support to Schools Mechanism: A synthesis (Aloys Blasie' Ayako)
- School Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons learned in Guinea, Madagascar and Senegal (Georges Solaux et Bruno Suchaux)
- The School Project: An Educational Activity Contract Between Schools and Their Environment (Aide et Action)
- Rearranging and Consolidating Spaces for Horizontal Dialogue in view of the Contributions of PTAs and Communities to the Achievement of EFA goals (Boubacar Niane)
- The contribution of National Parent Organizations to the achievement of EFA (Jordan Naidoo)

- Effective Schools for Disadvantaged and Underserved Populations (Joseph DeStefano, Ash Hartwell, David Balwanz and Audrey Moore)
- Complementary Education Programs in ADEA Countries (Balwanz, Audrey-Marie Schuh Moore and Joe De Stefano)
- Gender Responsive Pedagogy (FAWE)

Documents on the theme of early childhood development (ECD)

- Making Schools Friendly for Small Children (Kate Webley) (in English only)
- From Bisongo to Satellite Schools: Responding to the Need for Integrated Child Development in Burkina Faso
- Exploring the Links Between Adult Education and Children's Literacy: A Case Study of the Family Literacy Project, Kwazulu Natal, South Africa (Snoeks Desmond) (In English only)
- Ensuring Effective Caring Practices within the Family and Community (Isatou Jallow)
- Fatherhood and Men's Role in Early Childhood Development: The Fatherhood Project, South Africa (Alex Mashiane) (In English only)
- Strengthening Families' Abilities to help HIV/AIDS-affected Children Prepare for School (Lydia Nyesigomwe) (in English only)
- Une année d'éducation pré-primaire obligatoire pour tous les enfants (Rokhaya Fall Diawara) (in French only)
- Pre-School Education and School Readiness: Kenya's Experience (Samuel Ngaruiya)
- Senegal's Experience in Early Childhood Management: The Little Children's Home (La case des tout petits) (Ndeye Khady Diop Mbaye)
- Making Schools Ready for the Children: The Case of Schools in Pastoral Communities in East Africa (Nathan Chelimo)
- Investing in Early Childhood Development: the Potential Benefits and Cost Savings (Karen Hyde)
- Evaluating the Costs of Scaling up Early Childhood Development Interventions: the World Bank Costing Model with Burkina Faso and the Gambia (Alain Mingat)
- A Costing Model of the Madrasa Early Childhood Development Program in East Africa (Juliana Nzomo, Aga Khan Foundation)
- Coordination du développement et de la mise en œuvre des politiques (Eveline pressoir) (in French only)
- Convergence, Coordination and Integration: Action at a National Level - Eritrea's Integrated Early Childhood Development Program (Mussa Hussein Naib) (in English only)
- Convergence des activités pour la survie et le développement du jeune enfant : l'expérience du Cameroun (Apollinaire Kingne et Jim Watts Munang) (in French only)

At the 2006 ADEA Biennial Meeting in Gabon, 536 participants from 38 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including 41 ministers and deputy ministers of education, came together to explore three themes related to improving the quality of education in Africa: effective literacy programs, effective schools, and early childhood development programs that can be scaled up. The 13 studies in this publication describe the fundamental role of literacy in education and national development, its place in national education policies and budgets, and specific programs that have been designed to straddle the formal and non-formal sectors in order to provide pathways from education to the labor market. These papers raise several critical issues, including the need to make education reform more holistic so that it takes a lifelong learning perspective while ensuring quality learning opportunities in formal, non-formal and informal settings. The papers point to ways of developing national literacy policies with multi-sector and private-public partnerships. Further, they address the issue of the professionalization of educators and providers of literacy programs by providing them with better training and more incentives to carry out their work.



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