

**INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON
ADULT AND LIFELONG EDUCATION
Selected Papers**

Edited by
S.Y. SHAH



**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADULT AND LIFELONG EDUCATION
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Preface

There has been a revival of interest in the discourse on Adult and Lifelong Learning all over the world since the year 2000. It continues to be an important theme of discussions among educationists and policy planners. While the *European Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000) generated considerable interest and debates in Europe, the declaration of UN Literacy Decade (2003-12) and the publication of the *Global Monitoring Report (2006)-Literacy for Life*, did succeed in motivating several developing countries to reiterate their commitments to Adult and Lifelong Learning. Further, the *Policy Dialogues on Lifelong Learning* initiated by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, (Hamburg) have also paved the way for pushing the agenda of Adult and Lifelong Learning to the center stage in many Asian and African countries. These Dialogues have not only clarified the role of Lifelong Learning in the creation of a learning society but also emphasized empowering people, expanding their capabilities, choices in life and enabling individuals and societies to cope with the new challenges of the 21st century. The policy debates on Lifelong Learning, however, revolve around the issues of national economic competitiveness and social cohesion. What should be the role of Lifelong Learning in promoting economic competitiveness vis- a- vis social cohesion among the learners?

Although Lifelong Learning has been acknowledged "as a need and a principle of education and learning systems worldwide", there is considerable variation in the policy and practice of Lifelong Learning in different countries. Yet, the underlying concern everywhere has been on providing a wide range of learning opportunities to all sections of society. It refers to learning that takes place throughout life span. It includes "all learning activities undertaken throughout life-whether in formal, nonformal and informal settings - with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence within personal, civic, social and for employment related perspective". In fact, the concept of Lifelong Learning is based on the premise that, in a rapidly changing, technology driven world, initial education is insufficient for an individual to meet the changing requirements of the knowledge-based society. The term "Lifelong Learning" has been used in a

variety of contexts from adult learning and continuing professional development to organizational and societal changes. While some of the countries have replaced the terminology of Adult Education by Lifelong Learning, others continue to debate its scope. No doubt, the change in nomenclature has brought it to “mainstream” of educational discourse unlike Adult Education which continues to languish as a marginal field. How did different countries and cultures perceive and pursue the idea of Lifelong learning?

This volume is mainly intended to provide a brief overview of the global discourse on the policies and practices of Adult and Lifelong Learning. It is structured in two parts. While the first part presents three papers which examine historical and conceptual aspects of Adult and Lifelong Learning, the second part includes nine case studies on policies and practices of Adult and Lifelong Learning in the United Kingdom, Denmark, South Africa, China, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Thailand, Brazil and Nigeria. With the exception of the paper on Denmark, the rest have been selected from the past issues of the *International Journal of Adult and Lifelong Education* published by the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education in India.

We hope that this publication will be useful to our readers interested in understanding the theoretical and practical aspects of Adult and Lifelong Learning in different parts of the globe.

S.Y.Shah

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Dedicated to

K.C. Choudhary

Chancellor

(International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education)

*In appreciation of his sincere efforts
at promoting Adult and Lifelong Learning*

Section I

**DISCOURSES ON ADULT AND
LIFELONG EDUCATION**

Adult Education and Adult Learning Between Poverty Reduction and Wealth Production

H.S. Bhola

Stating the Argument

During the last thirty years or more, discussions on the "education of adults" have been conducted in two concurrent and related discourses, that of: "adult education" and "adult learning". The discourse of "adult education" has a longer (and progressive) history; and adult education as a movement has been anchored in UNESCO, right from its inception in 1946. During our life times "adult education" has come to be associated with the Third World nations, almost all of them with high levels of poverty, and low levels of literacy, knowledge-capital and technology. The discourse of "adult learning", relatively speaking, is more recent and its contexts and concerns arise from Western realities of neo-liberal politics and knowledge-based economies, with needs for continuing education and training of workers to stay competitive under globalization. While UNESCO has long been the anchor of adult education, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development has now come to be the anchor for the movement for the promotion of adult learning.

Why these two separate discourses on the "education of adults"? There is a simple answer which has too often remained unstated. The discourse of "adult learning" has been invented to make a clean break with the tradition of "adult education" with its ideology of peoples' welfare, its history of public support from the state, and its focus on constituencies of the illiterate and poor farmers and non-skilled workers. On the other hand, the ideology of adult learning is promoting the so-called self-directed learning by adults, pursuing their goals of training for employment or leisure in a free "market of education" that is supported by a partnership of the state, civil society, and the private sector.

The news from the field about adult learning, lately, have not been too good. It is beginning to be understood that adult education and adult learning cannot be disjointed one from the other. They are indeed parts of the same one calculus of means and ends; and it is through good adult education that truly self-directed adult learning can be enabled and realized. Adult learning over the life-span is not merely a matter of learners' adventures into the land of self-directed discovery learning! Individual learning by adults (youth and children) will need good guides, trained counselors, committed mentors, and competent evaluators, equipped with a whole array of instructional materials and methods usable in face-to-face encounters and "at a distance", using technologies, both old and new.

Whatever needs to be done systematically, and with some expectation of continuity, needs a system. Adult learning to lead to learning societies, will need a nationwide, and multi-level network of institutions that can identify and meet the learning needs of individuals, groups, organizations and communities and sub-cultures using appropriate combinations of informal, non-formal and formal modes and methods. To meet the moral obligations of the "social contract" between the states and their citizens, the democratic state must play a central role in innovating and establishing the needed networks of institutions that will be necessary for actualizing adult learning, and ultimately lead to a learning society. The NGO sector is nowhere strong enough to serve as a surrogate for the state in these tasks. Leaving adult learning to the "market forces" will be a cruel hoax and a betrayal of the people, especially of the 1 billion poor living on less than 1 dollar a day, and another 1 billion who live on less than two dollars a day.

While the push for adult learning has not done much good, it has done considerable harm already, especially in the developing areas of the world. There is evidence from the OECD countries that sustainable networks of education and communication on the one hand, and legions of self-directed learners on the other hand have not emerged. In the meantime, those who already have more than enough are getting even more; and both educational disparities and social and economic inequities have increased. The developing countries may have come out even worse off.

Tragically, too many of the Third World nations have retreated from whatever

little adult education they were doing, using the fig leaf of "adult learning", for which they have done hardly anything at all by way of creating opportunities for adult learning.

Adult Education Versus Adult Learning: The Language of Discourse

At the surface, adult education and adult learning seem to be two aspects of the same one "instructional act", that of, "adult education" (or educating an adult) enabling "adult learning" (that is learning by an adult). But placed within the frameworks of history, theory, and ideology, the apparently simple descriptors of adult education and adult learning have generated policy discourses that are both complex and conflicted.

Policy discourses are seldom, if ever, straight forward and honest acts of communication between policy makers and their publics. Policy justifications offered by policy makers may be full of Orwellian double-speak involving semantic games¹, and policy proclamations may thus be tied up with slogans and spins.² Analysis of a policy discourse, therefore, has to be more than mere elaboration of the stated intents of policy, and working out the implications of policy intentions. Discourse analysis has to involve a deconstruction of the policy as constructed³ by policy makers: separating information from dis-information; exposing the cunning games being played with statistics; pointing to examples of policy makers quoting scriptures and misquoting constitutional principles, to suit their own selfish purposes; and decoding the coded messages embedded in the text of policies to serve various ideologies and vested interests. A discourse analysis will need to question whether a policy as formulated is indeed principled, and is in accord with the democratic principle of serving all the people in a society, all of the time; that policy is based on sound scientific and social scientific knowledge; and, finally, that policy is practical and will be possible to be implemented in the real world.⁴

At its simplest, discourse analysis is a careful reading of policy texts with all the fine print—and joining reading the lines, with reading between the lines, and reading beyond the lines! In its theoretical articulations, discourse analysis has come to be a combination of theories of linguistics, rhetoric, communication, logical

analysis, and ideological analysis. Discourse analysis has to be sensitive to the context⁵ in which the discourse was developed, and to the standpoints⁶ of the major actors participating in the discourse. In the following, we⁷ will locate the analysis of our discourses in the larger context of globalization⁸; and wind the analytical process itself around the axis of politics and economy.⁸

The Larger Context of the Discourse on "Education of Adults"

Globalization has indeed come to be a totally global, multi-faceted phenomenon that covers aspects from social, economic and political to technological, cultural and religious. While globalization has brought modernization to some sectors of economies in the Third World and a modicum of democratic norms to Third World politics, it has yet to show its human face to the billions of the abjectly poor in the developing world.⁹

Most salient aspects of the context of globalization for our discourse are: dependency of the developing world on the developed countries, translating into loss of sovereignty of highly indebted developing countries, left without the power to make independent political, economic and social policies¹⁰ leading to withdrawal of the state from provision of social services, such as education and health. The new *mantras* are democracy, development led by the private-sector at home and a free market economy regime in place, worldwide. This has created a small class of the elite in the developing countries that has acquired the tastes and resources needed for American-type life-styles and profligate levels of consumption, but the poor have been neglected and rendered even more poor. At the international levels, there have been huge transfers of wealth from the poor nations to the rich nations, and within nations from the poor to the rich classes.¹¹

The governing elite in developing countries who seek national economic "growth" rather than the welfare of the nation's people, choose to work with the formal economy, and in the urban areas where most business and industrial enterprises are located. Over the years, the relationship between the "formal economy" and "formal education" has come to be highly articulated. Formal education is indeed necessary for the professionalization of labour even at the lowest levels of the economy, and for that reasons formal education in urban areas keeps expanding. But rural economies

do not add much to the Gross National Product or growth indices, and are therefore universally neglected. The children of the rural poor have to be content with no schools or "consolation" schools—schools in name only that teach next to nothing. The youth and adults in rural areas, initially bypassed by formal systems of education, get no opportunities for adult literacy or adult education which they need even for marginal improvement in the productivity of their agricultural work. Most live in abject poverty, and the already poor are being pauperized as public goods such as education and health are also withdrawn from them under imposed structural adjustments, privatization and outsourcing. The welfare state, the pride of the West at an earlier historical time, has been demolished.¹²

Multiple Standpoints of Stakeholders

The discourse on the "education of adults" that we seek to develop and analyze is by no means monolithic. Indeed, different stakeholders have different standpoints in regard to these discourse. To begin with, the standpoints of the Western intelligentsia and those of the players of the realpolitik in the West, are not the same. The intelligentsia of the West are predominantly liberal and have generated Utopian texts and declarations as exemplified by the series of international summit held during the 1990s.¹³ The players of the realpolitik go about their corrupt tasks of bribing, manipulating, exploiting, and making and un-making pledges for assistance to poor nations. In the developing countries as well, the standpoints between the governing classes and citizens differ. But the citizens of developing nations are powerless in regard to their governing elite and, in turn, the governing elite are powerless in relation to the bureaucrats in international development agencies and in regard to the power elite of the West.

We question the authenticity of a "democracy" if it excludes half of its people living in rural areas and small townships of the developing world. We reject the economics of growth, and its preference of profits over people. We question the moral core of a state that abandons its poor and powerless citizens in the name of entrepreneurship and innovation. We believe in the necessity of distribution of wealth among citizens, through the instruments of a welfare state. This standpoint will demand an appropriate balance between formal education for children and adult literacy and education for youth and adults.

Rise of Culture and Sector of Adult Education under UNESCO

Adult education "as culture"—the education of adults as an inter-generational transfer of knowledge—is woven into the indigenous traditions of all human communities, collectivities, and cultures. But adult education "as sector", with more or less articulated structure for delivery, is a more recent phenomenon.¹⁴ Adult education as culture has always been with us, though it has been too often invisible to too many. Inter-generational knowledge transfer, socialization for gender roles, elders or peers teaching some knowledge about environment, food production and preservation, and general survival skills are all examples of adult education as culture. Adult education as a sector, with more or less structure—to articulate individual and community needs, to motivate and mobilize learners and volunteer teachers, providing materials for use in teaching-learning, providing feedback to learners—is a phenomenon of organized states, with or without the help of NGOs.

It is safe to say that adult education came to the developing world from the colonizers during the later part of their stay. Its objectives in early years of its transplantation in the colonies were modest. The populations in the colonies were all burdened with high rates of illiteracy, and the first objective of adult education, more often than not, was teaching of literacy. Adult literacy programmes that, in addition to the teaching of reading and writing, also taught some social or economic skills, morphed into adult education. Literacy still remains central to adult education in the Third World; and literacy statistics serve as surrogates of adult education statistics around the world.

The ideology of adult education has been ameliorative, a mix of charity and social work; its curriculum claimed to meet the felt needs of the suffering communities; its pedagogy claimed to respect the learner; and it was more often than not delivered by voluntary associations. At the end of Second World War when independence seemed to be on the horizon in colonized countries, adult literacy and adult education work was appropriated by national leaders organizing the peoples for struggles for independence, India being one significant example.

UNESCO was founded in 1946 aftermath Second World War. In the preamble to its constitution, it declared: "Since wars begin in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that defenses of peace must be constructed." At its first International Conference on Adult Education in 1949, UNESCO declared itself to be an adult education organization.¹⁵ All of the developments and discourses on adult education—on its ideology, policy, institutionalization, pedagogy, evaluation—over the last half century or more can be seen to have come out its five international conferences on adult education, and related reports from UNESCO.¹⁶

The Name Game

As stated earlier, naming and labeling of policies is a serious business, implying changes in ideologies, institutions, and pedagogy. With retiring old labels of policies, theory and knowledge produced under the old rubric also get buried. New distributions of power and allocations of the dividends of power begin to take shape.

For some forty years (from 1946 to the end of the 1980s), UNESCO stayed with the descriptor "adult education"—except for brief flirtation with the phrases "Fundamental Education" and "Social Education" in the early 1950s. In 1974, in a study sponsored by the World Bank, Coombs and Ahmed had proposed a taxonomy of education to include formal education, non-formal education and informal education. Formal education was education offered in schools, colleges, universities and technical institutions using pre-approved curricula, a ladder system of promotion leading to recognized credentials. Non-formal education was defined to be "any organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal education system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children"; and informal education was equated with socialization in families, in the religious centres, on the playgrounds and in the streets and markets.¹⁷

UNESCO documents made only occasional and hesitant uses of these terms until the 1990 World Conference on Education for All¹⁸ where non-formal education was first defined as per Coombs and Ahmad, but later used more often to describe basic primary education of children who had missed school—using non-formal modes, methods of teaching and learning and organization of delivery. More recently, the

World Bank has invented a new descriptor, Adult Non-formal Education (ANFE), but has not returned to using the descriptor, "adult education". In the meantime, adult education had come to be seen (and rightly so) as a life-wide and lifelong process, and was given such names as education permanente, and lifelong education. The Scandinavians tried to promote the idea of Folk Development Colleges as institutions of adult education. Adult literacy became functional literacy. In urban industrial settings, adult education had been combined with training leading to a thick alphabet soup that included ABET and ABEL, ABLE and much else.

At the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V), held in Hamburg, 14-18 July 1997¹⁹, UNESCO, while still flying the flag of adult education, began singing the anthem of "adult learning." The descriptor "adult learning" was preferred over "adult Education." In the selected speeches of UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura delivered during, 2001, a year he described as the construction of his mandate, there are references to "lifelong learning" but not directly to adult education, or lifelong education. In an eloquent paragraph (p.523), the D-G states: "UNESCO's most important task has been, and remains, that of helping all countries in the world to free themselves of poverty, ignorance and violence in whatever form they take. Our main instrument in this effort is education, carried out not only through kindergartens, schools, colleges and universities but also through out-of-school and non-formal methods. The chief educational goal in the past century was the provision of greater access to education.

We must now go beyond this and become ambitious for other educational achievements, especially lifelong learning and equitable access to quality education for all. In the twenty-first century, we will need education that responds effectively to the diverse aspirations and changing needs of individuals and societies so that all can participate and all can contribute to the best of their abilities."²⁰ The reader should reflect on the language of discourse in the preceding.

At the Mid-Term Review Conference of CONFINTAE V, held in Bangkok, during 6-11 September 2003, "adult learning" was again the descriptor of choice of the official organizers of the review meeting, though this was not true for all those present at the Conference. There were many participants who continued to use "adult education" in both their presentations and their deliberations. In the process of adoption of the

"Synthesis Report and Recommendations," resulting from the above conference, it was agreed to use the formulation—adult education and learning— thereby taking note of both aspects of education of adults in the same breath".²¹ This is noteworthy!

Adult Learning :The Other Discourse and its Context

By the end of the 1950s, adult education, as we had known it, had come to be a Third World phenomenon. The Third World was an area of high rates of illiteracy, and adult literacy came to be the arrowhead of most of adult education programmes. In the developed areas of the world, however, both adult literacy and adult education well-nigh disappeared from the educational discourse. Most developed countries believed that with universalization of basic education in their societies, and with universal secondary education becoming a norm, illiteracy among adults of their nations was unimaginable. Adult education came to be associated mostly with the re-training or professionalization of labour.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, there was a knowledge explosion leading to ever-increasing advances in technology and informatics, and innovations for use at work, school and home; and new demands were put on men and women, teachers, and preachers, soldiers and vendors, farmers and fishermen, and governors and citizens. Knowledge acquired at school became obsolete within years, and the life of books on library shelves decreased dramatically. Most importantly, old jobs disappeared and with them life-long careers with one employer. Workers on the job had to be laid off or retrained. Adult educators began to talk about lifelong education.

During the 1990s, globalization created a one-world economy, bringing with it the inevitable need for competitiveness; demographic changes resulting from zero population growths and graying of societies created the unavoidable need to import young workers from outside, and the necessity to learn to live with people with from other places with their particular colours, creeds and cultures, using multiple literacies.

It is too often forgotten that the Breton Wood institutions established at the end of the Second World War for reconstruction of post-war economies of Europe (and much

later of the Third World countries) were neo-liberal institutions. The principles they preached were leadership won by elections, smaller government, free trade and privatization, or at least partnerships among the institutions of the state, civil society, and the private sector to deliver the social goods of education and health. In an ideal state all of the services needed by the people had to be left to the market, including adult education and training. Since adult education had come to be associated with the state and sometimes NGOs (which are also funded by the state), the descriptor adult education was rejected and new descriptors were invented to include: adult learning, lifelong learning, learning society, and culture of learning.²²

Context of New Epistemology

To fully understand the origins of the above discourse, we have to know that this was taking place within the new epistemological discourse of post-modernism²³ that sought to de-construct old ideologies and theories, and norms and practices to reconstruct new ideas of policy and planning, organizing and management, and, of course, of pedagogy and institution of schooling itself. Education came to be defined not as transfer of pre-packaged knowledge, but an act of teacher-learner constructing knowledge together. Learning became a central concept in the enterprise of education, and over the years acquired the status of mystification. Neo-liberals happily got in bed with post-modernists to be able to subvert the role of the state in provision of both schooling and delivery of adult education.

In 1970, Ivan Illich in his book, *Deschooling Society* proposed that the generations of children, youth and adults be saved from the conditioning imposed on them by schooling; and that to enable people to enjoy true freedom, society must be deschooled. In place of the deadening bureaucracies of schools and other institutions of education, he proposed the establishment of "convivial institutions" institutions that would serve without controlling. As examples of convivial institutions, he proposed four webs of options made possible by modern technology: reference services to educational objects, skill exchanges, peer matching, and reference services.²⁴

Illich did not say much about who will create educational objects and undertake peer matching, and who will pay for the reference services and fund skill exchanges.

Little did he seem to know how his anarchist views about the existing institutions of schooling would be used by the neo-liberals during the 1980s and 1990s to destroy public school systems giving no freedom to learners and giving them abject poverty instead.

The first ever report of the International Commission on the Development of Education, *Learning to Be* (1972), had the word 'learning'¹ in its catchy title.²⁵ This was followed by *No Limits to Learning* (1979), a Report to the Club of Rome, which proclaimed that a human gap existed in our world in that human beings were unable to grasp fully the meaning and consequences of what they are doing. The good news was that this gap could be bridged. While there were indeed outer limits to economic growth; there are free inner margins, and therefore, there were no limits to learning. All we need is human understanding and action.

The report went on to say that the world faced a mounting challenge of complexity. In our age of responsibilities, there was a widening of context which meant that contexts proliferate, and more and more of human values are drawn in within these contexts. To meet the challenge, we need "innovative learning", and not merely, maintenance learning. Innovative learning, in turn, had two components: first, "anticipatory learning" that encouraged solidarity in time, and used methods of forecasting, simulations, scenarios, and model making and which avoided mere extrapolations and adaptations; second, "participatory learning" that encouraged solidarity in space, encouraged problem-setting rather than mere problem-solving; not just rational and logical thinking but also intuitive, and analogic thinking; and avoided being taken over by automata and non-participative cybernetic learning. Overall, the main objectives of innovative learning are autonomy and integration; and restoration of ethics and values, human relations that are consentient rather than conflictory, and (collective Utopian) images.²⁶

It is worth noting that the Report to the Club of Rome paid special attention to literacy, calling 'illiterates' "the wasted generation". The Report went on to ask for "Liberation of the 'Fifth World' by Literacy." The Report asserted that it is unfair for economists developmentalists to ask for instant economic returns on literacy. Immediate expectations should be dignity, alleviation of poverty and redress of marginalization, they added. All this needed adult education.

The title of the Delors Commission Report of 1996, *Learning: The Treasure Within*²⁷, resonated to the Faure Report, *Learning to Be* referred to above. While the Faure Report had talked of "the world of 'education' today and tomorrow", and "lifelong 'education' producing the complete man", Delors was completely mystified by the word 'learning', and made 'education' invisible in its discourse. Its four principles of learning were: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to live with others; and learning to be. Learning throughout life was an imperative for democracy. The role of education to enable learning is implicated but is unclear and conflated.

The European Leadership of Adult Learning

Adult learning was indeed a child of Europe, and was appropriately nurtured and nursed by a European institution: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It should also be noted that OECD is essentially an organization to promote economic development, though more recently, it has incorporated social and cultural correlates of economic development in its discussions.²⁸

In much the same way in which UNESCO came to be associated with adult education, OECD has come to be associated with adult learning, lifelong learning, learning society and cultures of learning. OECD has come to be the think tank for adult learning and the historian of the evolution of this concept and program of adult learning. Thematic reviews on adult learning have been conducted to examine adults' access to education and training and plans to enhance policies and approaches to provide further incentives. These thematic reviews have been joined with a series of studies examining modes of financing lifelong learning.²⁹ A more recent comparative and critical study captures the history of adult learning as well as adult learning as policy, process and results.³⁰

The concept of lifelong learning as an educational strategy goes back more than three decades and got constructed through the joint efforts of OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Over the years related vocabulary of adult learning, learning society and culture of learning came about. After the Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and with it the rise of the hubris of the capitalist West, the discourse and discussion of

adult learning became highly animated. In a policy brief, the OECD noted that adult learning was essential to meet the "challenges of the globalized world" that included economics, employment, education, governance, health, global poverty, environment and violence.

The Core and the Crux of Adult Learning

The ideal is of a self-directed adult learner engaged in defining his or her own educational and training needs, and continually preparing to rise to the challenges of new technologies and job responsibilities at the workplace (and perhaps also in cultural and political settings). There is the unstated assumption that the self-directed potential learner had the capacity to define the needs, invent an individualized course of study for himself or herself, and search for the producers and vendors of materials and services to fulfil those needs. There is also the assumption of connectivity and the capacity to pay, on the part of the adult learner.

Opportunities, Agents and Agencies for Learning

It is recognized that for adult learning to happen, "extensive opportunities for learning" will have to be created by some responsible agents and agencies. But the discourse does not come anywhere close to saying that systematically organized adult education will have to be the "enabler" of most of adult learning in the North, and in the Third World for all of adult learning, in the foreseeable future. An extensive network of vendors ready to provide all those kinds of services is assumed. This sort of network does not exist even in the North; and lot of what is available is tied with the need to entertain or make profits for the vendor. In the South such a network is decades away.

The discourse is quite clear on one point: that the state will not be the only agency for the creating the opportunities for making adult learning available and accessible to adult men and women. There is persistent talk of partnerships among the state, the civil society and the private sector. There is the strong implication, for the creation of an "educational market" to support adult learning by self-directed adult learners. Such a market, of course, is nowhere likely to emerge in the near future. In the meantime, in too many places, the state has already

withdrawn from good old adult education, without guilt for breaking the social contract with their citizens. The Utopian dream of a learning society, and a culture of learning is left to the non-existent educational market based on imaginary partnerships to realize.

The Unfolding Contradictions

In the North where adult learning has won over adult education, at least in rhetoric, the experience on the ground is not completely adequate. A realization may be slowly emerging that to achieve the policy objectives of a learning society, it will be "necessary to increase learning opportunities for adults" within the wider context of lifelong learning. And that while lifelong learning could provide an inspiring context, it is adult education (and programmes for youth) that must be organized for actually creating and enhancing those opportunities.

Depending on the country and particular context of needs, learning opportunities when those are created have been related to employment, upskilling and some social and civic preoccupations. It is notable that the primary focus is professionalization of labour for employment, social and civic needs are often mere after-thoughts. While employment is also a concern in countries of the Third World, the needs for those in the informal economy, struggling for subsistence below the poverty line, relate to production in the fields and small craft shops. The ideal of a learning society, Western-style does not travel well to these places.

The most devastating reality, however, is that of "strong inequalities in terms of access and provision, across countries and among specific population subgroups within countries. Those who already have enough of education and training are in the market for more. This means that the already qualified and already in the upper levels of management and control are benefiting, and not the already excluded. Even here, corporations are unwilling to invest in training for the fear of their trained people being stolen by other corporations. Those at work at the lower levels are simply laid off to hire the more educated and the more trainable.

Finally, two rather telling points. "Adults most in need of education and training are also those least aware of that need or the benefits." In other words, the poor with

low incomes and low social capitals must be “taught, guided and menforced” for them to be aware of their learning needs and how to satisfy them. “Even though there is some investment in adult learning from the public and private sectors, it is not enough.” This points to the emptiness of the rhetoric of partnerships between the public and private; and the necessity of bringing much more resources from the government institutions. Indeed the OECD takes the position that the need for public intervention in this market for reasons of both equity and efficiency.

In the World of Practice

The central assumption that “adult learning” could be delivered without “adult education” acting as the mid-wife is unrealistic. For lifelong learning to occur, there has to be provision of lifelong education. This is absolutely true in most of the Third World: where there are no institutional structures—governmental, non-governmental or private—to create an education market for adult learning to begin with. Most of the adults in need do not have the money to buy adult learning products, nor can they access those products and programs at a distance for lack of connectivity. Notably, even in the First World neither the self-directed learner nor a free market of education and training has become a reality.

As OECD literature points out, the market as it has emerged have not worked well at all. Inequality has increased. Greater disparities have emerged. A most cruel irony of history is being witnessed in the Third World where the state has withdrawn from its obligation to provide adult education, without guilt! In this withdrawal, the poor nations of the Third World are being invariably abetted by the international development assistance agencies which are following neo-liberal policies as proxies of the western governments. Too many of the adult educators in the Third World have been seduced by the concepts of the adult being responsible to his or her own learning, without understanding the hidden agendas of the neo-liberal Western states and their agents.

There is a silver lining to the dark clouds. Those who are doing “adult learning” work find that they are doing adult education with another name. To “create new opportunities for adult learning”, in practice results in “expanding the structures for the design and delivery of adult education” Also, those who develop discourses

on adult learning, lifelong learning and learning societies are unable even to build their arguments without the assumptions of an extensive system of "adult education".

Slovenia Experience: A Flower Blooming in the Wastelands

The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) is one such flower blooming brightly in the global wastelands of adult education today—hopefully there are other flowers that are yet unseen. Established more than a decade ago, it did understand the mutually-definitional relationship between adult education and adult learning. In the texts of its policies and plans and instructional products and evaluations, it has talked of adult education and/or adult learning as appropriate in particular contexts.

The SIAE played an important role some eight years ago in the adoption by the government of Slovenia of the Adult Education Act which also defined the Master Plan to form the basis for the determination and financing of adult education programmes in Slovenia. This is a most heart-warming development when we see so many of Third World countries that sorely need adult education (and adult literacy) are indeed shamelessly withdrawing from their responsibilities of providing adult education—the absolutely essential educational input for true democratization of societies and for alleviation of poverty from rural areas and urban ghettos.

The SIAE combines political lobbying and community activism with innovations in instructional approaches and evaluation strategies. Its contributions to the creation of a network of institutions of adult education to make adult learning possible is amazing. In the most recent issue of their newsletter, *Novicke* (Winter 2004), referred to above, they count institutions that are engaged nationwide in the delivery of services—of adult education for adult learning—covering areas from continuing education (28.5 per cent of total coverage), preparation for and/or accreditation of national vocational qualification certificates (18.8 per cent), further professional education (9.5 per cent), vocational education (8.1 per cent), higher education and vocational programs (5.6 per cent), primary education (3.6 per cent), project learning for young adults (1.35 per cent), and grammar school programmes (0.4 per cent). They have thus created a culture of learning in their country in the special contexts of their national needs as an East European country.

This is not to suggest, however, that these are the programs that Third World countries have necessarily to follow. In the Third world of course, there will be programmes dealing with agriculture, health, child care and nutrition, income generation, and awareness and protection against HIV/AIDS.

The case implies that in the education of adults today, there are some principles to watch for:

First, that adult learning is not independent of adult education: adult learning is built on adult education; and lifelong adult learning will require lifelong adult education.

Second, lifelong learning to lead to a learning society will require institutional networks interfaced each with the other, both vertically and horizontally.

Third, these institutional networks will never be developed by the market whose purpose is profits not distribution of social goods and opportunities. Seeking to create a market for adult education for adult learning is a prescription for disaster.

The Necessity of New Global Agenda

To expand the current role of adult educators around the world will have to be the first task. The new expanded role will have to go beyond the merely technical-pedagogic and must include a political-activist component. Such redesign of roles and provision of opportunities for re-education and new re-socialization of adult educators for the new roles will by no means be an easy task to accomplish. Planned inputs of education and schedules of socialization will have to be systematically adapted to various levels and locations of the existing systems of adult education, both national and international. In too many places in the Third World, institutional, professional and material resources needed for this capacity building may not even exist.

Adult educators will have to understand the ideological nature of globalization as we know it today. Under the umbrella of globalization, we see a battle between two gladiators: the free market economy and the welfare state. The free market economy seems to have now an upper hand. However, cracks may be appearing in the armor

of the mighty on. Adult educators will have to be clear about their ideological position and be ready to dedicate themselves to the challenging task of re-globalization: to give globalization a "human face".

In so doing they should recommit themselves to the historic and historical role of "adult education" in serving the educational needs of the poor, the powerless and the excluded. Adult education must be placed within the larger contexts of "lifelong education", dedicated, in turn, to poverty reduction, sustainable development and intercultural understandings worldwide drawing a circle of human solidarity that includes all humanity.

Dedication to adult education within the context of lifelong education should not mean rejection of adult learning and lifelong learning in a learning society of the future. It must be understood, however, that learning society is a knowledge-based society of knowledge-using workers and knowledge-using citizens. Even more importantly, it should be understood that learning societies are educated societies, saturated with institutions that educate citizens and workers. These institutions educate people in schools and universities and out of schools and universities, using both formal and non-formal approaches. Adult education well delivered promotes independent and self-directed adult learning. Lifelong adult education enables the emergence of lifelong adult learning. The route from ignorance to a learning society is through an educating society.

Finally, adult educators have to be aware of the nature and structure of the institutions that engage in lifelong education for lifelong learning. There is much talk today about partnerships between and among governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Under the neo-liberal ideology of Globalization, the goal is the establishment of the free market not only in economy, but also in education, health and security. Even the most important functions of the state are being outsourced to profit-making institutions. It has to be understood that a learning society of the neo-liberal dream is a free market of education where education is sold and bought—freely by those who know what to buy and have the money to buy the connectivity and then the packages of education. It exclude too many, in the greatest need for knowledge, to atleast marginally improve their lives.

Addressing Adult Educators of India

From the highest levels of politics in India, some frame-setting statements have come most recently that need recapitulation. The Honorable Dr. A. P.J. Abdul Kalam, the President of the Republic of India in the course of delivering the Vikram Sarabhai Memorial Lecture at the Indian Council of Social Science Research (New Delhi, 12 August 2004) said that in India "total literacy has gone up over the years, but the quality needed tremendous improvement... Education was essentially an aid to generate worthwhile learning, while learning itself is ultimately an individualized and lifelong process whereby human transformation occurs within the individual." The prime objective of a nation, he emphasized, is to impart education to unreached people of India in every nook and corner. Herein is an invitation from the President of India to all who are concerned for redoubled efforts to improve adult literacy both in quantity and quality. Herein also is indicated a clear implication that "adult education" is indeed the instrument of resultant "adult learning", and that lifelong learning is impossible without institutional structures of lifelong education.

While the President in the statements above set a frame for adult literacy and lifelong education, the new Prime Minister of India sworn into office during May 2004, offered a political-economic frame for India in the immediate future. He promised to lead a government that will care, and wants the people themselves to be personally engaged in building a future India. The Prime Minister let it be known that he well understands the limits of what the market can do, when the powerful control the market both as buyers and seller. The Prime Minister, therefore, offers to build a strong private sector joined with a strong public sector. He wants to join efficiency with equity, growth with job creation and a safety net for the huge mass of the unorganized workers. He offers to meet the needs of the so-called weaker sections and the down-trodden: the minorities, scheduled and other backward castes, and he promises policies and practices for the empowerment of women. Most importantly, he pledges a "new deal for rural India" and to make agriculture central to the development of the nation. Drinking water, health care and education are at the head of his list of what he wants to be delivered to the peoples. This is clearly an agenda that can be delivered only with education of the masses, adult men and women, who are already in the economy, in politics and making and remaking cultures.

These statements by the President and the Prime Minister can inspire and motivate, but they are no substitutes for formal policies and subsequent elaboration of those policies in plans and projects, joined with appropriate budgetary allocations. What has been suggested earlier in the text above to the adult educators of the world, also applies to adult educators in India from the centre, through the states, districts, development blocks, and down to the village levels

Adult educators in India have to understand Globalization in general and how it has influences Indian politics, economy, health services, education—and adult education—in particular. It is India's good fortune that India seems today to have developed happy mix of free market and pro-people regulation. Indian adult educators should take heart in the various statements regarding the economy and politics made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who has let it be known that while maintaining the free market economy, he will not forget the nation's obligations to the weaker sections of the Indian population.

As activists, Indian adult educators must work to ensure that this position regarding its political economy of India is indeed protected; and that the state is not allowed to withdraw from its functions that have traditionally become a part of the social contract between the state and its citizens. They must recommit themselves to adult education and lifelong education and press on the state to allocate enough resources to revive the objectives and operations of the National Literacy Mission and design and launch new programmes and projects of adult education for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

And as part of all adult education, adult educators in India should promote independent learning and continuing, self-directed adult learning so that lifelong education slowly, steadily and surely morphs into lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society.

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Lifelong Learning in the Twenty-first Century

Bikas C. Sanyal

The purpose of education is to cultivate the whole man, develop a desire for goodness, an eagerness for knowledge, a capacity for friendship, an appreciation of beauty, a concern for others. Individual growth has to be harnessed with social and ethical values through education which is a lifelong process beginning at birth, continuing through maturity, adulthood and old age. Man has to grow throughout life. One has to take inspiration from Michael Angelo, who created works of art unequalled by any other man and yet, when he was ninety, he regretted that he must die just he was beginning to learn the ABC of being a sculptor and painter? Education never stops.¹

Introduction

The concept of lifelong learning has been embedded in almost all traditional philosophies.² Before the impact of the commercial and industrial civilization most of the countries had a traditional society with a dominant role of the village community and a subsistence agrarian economy. Education in that society had to provide occupational skills, behavior codes, initiation into the value system and an understanding of the ultimate objective of life in terms of religion. Education was an integral part of life at its different stages, from childhood to old age; ancillary crafts and occupations had to support the primary function of food production for the community. The activities that a member of the society had to undertake in his or her different roles in the society were all indivisible elements of a single learning system where the elders educated the young in different institutionalized life situations, in the religious institutions, in the work-place and in the family. The societal leaders, the elders, the expert craftsmen and the religious teachers set the standards and provided the learning. Learning and life were closely linked. Learning was lifelong acquired in an informal system. With the advent of the modern civilization education was formalized but access became restricted to the elites of the society.

The earliest evidence of inclusive lifelong learning was to be found in France when the philosopher and legislator Marquis de Condorcet promoted the way we know it to day in April 1792 during the French Revolution in Paris. His proposal to the Legislative Assembly which was adopted later, was as follows:

l' instruction ne devait pas abandonner les individus au moment ou ils sortent desecoles. Qu'elle devait embrassertous les Eiges, qu'il n'y en avaitaucurt ou il ne fut utile d'apprendre, (car) l' instruction doit assurer aux homines, dans tous les ages de la vie, la facilite de conserver leur connaissance on d' eti acquerir de nouvelles³

Education should not leave the individuals after they have left school. It should embrace all ages, because learning is necessary for everybody, education should be provided to everybody of all ages, it should provide facilities for retaining what they have learnt or to acquire new knowledge (Translated by author).

Although other countries around the world including India were practicing lifelong learning in the form of adult education, France took a lead in the development of the concept, programmes and action by adopting the "*loi de 1959 sur la promotion sociale*" (The 1959 Law of Social Progress) which focused on providing education for second chance learners and for meeting changing needs of the economy. A series of action plans on the topic were formulated and adopted. The "*loi du 16 juillet, 1971*" (The Law of 16 July, 1971) obliged the enterprises to finance part of the lifelong education programmes. UNESCO initiated conceptual development of lifelong education sponsoring the work of Paul Lengrand with the title "*Education Permanente*" published in 1965⁴.

The events of May 1968 and the disturbances in university campuses all over the world provoked a general scrutiny of the education systems. A number of studies were published in the seventies in the field of lifelong learning.

In 1970 Paul Lengrand presented his report entitled *An introduction to lifelong learning* in a UNESCO conference which led to the setting up of the International Commission on the Development of Education chaired by Edgar Faure which resulted in the publication of the celebrated document *Learning To Be* in 1972⁵.

This report was the basis for the institutionalized programmes on lifelong education undertaken by UNESCO through the UNESCO Institute for Education in Germany immediately afterwards.

In 1973 the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published its *Recurrent education: a strategy for lifelong learning*.

In 1979 the Club of Rome published its report on lifelong learning entitled *No limits to learning: bridging the human gap* and drawing extensively on the Faure Report designed a model of society dependent on individuals able to analyze and process fresh knowledge and available information and rooted in responsible attitudes and values. With a period of lull in the eighties, the concern and interest in lifelong education resurfaced in the nineties facing a situation significantly different from the seventies with an evolution in its concept. We shall examine this evolution below.

Evolution in concept & definition from lifelong education to lifelong learning

The Faure Report *Learning To Be* commissioned by UNESCO, seeking to institutionalize the concept of lifelong education advocated (i) for the right and the need of each individual to learn for his/her social, economic, political and cultural development throughout his life, and (ii) for recognizing it as the basic concept of educational policies while acknowledging its diverse forms in different cultures. The Report went on to articulate the idea of lifelong learning as the keystone of the learning society covering all aspects of education. As a continuation of the same concept lifelong education was defined by UNESCO as that form of education which "covers formal, non-formal and informal patterns of learning throughout the life cycle of an individual for the conscious and continuous enhancement of the quality of life, his own and that of society". An attempt was made to introduce lifelong education as "a norm for educational practice at a national level and for the whole range of age groups and educational services". It was conceived as a holistic and integrated strategy directed toward 'the fulfillment of adaptive and creative functions of the individuals leading to the continuous improvement of the quality of personal and collective life'.⁶ While UNESCO was promoting lifelong education on the above terms the OECD was developing its

own concept of lifelong education. In 1973 it published the report *Recurrent Education: a strategy for lifelong learning* which was concerned with learning in relation to occupational activity and individual learning and dealt mainly with post-compulsory education and training.

The eighties and nineties saw some significant changes taking place around the world. The economic recession, the fall of the Berlin wall and the emergence of a market friendly society, the revolution in the information and communication technology and above all the phenomenon of globalization had an impact on the way human kind would prepare themselves to face the new challenges not only for survival but also for thriving.

In the nineties the term lifelong education was replaced by the term lifelong learning. Three reasons are put forward. First, to avoid touching on the sometimes negative associations that basic education may have for potential learners. Second, lifelong education often refers to the community. In the seventies lifelong education was associated with the more comprehensive and integrated goal of developing more humane individuals and communities in the face of social change while lifelong learning in the nineties has become more individual oriented. Third, lifelong education's thrust was more on structures and institutions and pointed to the need for ever present public policies and state intervention while lifelong learning has the idea of personal responsibility for one's own educational development to choose from what is available in the education and training market to remain employable.

However in practice one observes the updating and broadening of the concept by combining humanistic and social aspects with economic and entrepreneurial aspects as will be seen below.

The UNESCO publication entitled *Learning: the treasure within*, known also as the *Delors Report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century*, acknowledges the need to "rethink and update the concept of lifelong education so as to reconcile three forces: competition which provides incentives, co-operation which gives strength and solidarity which unites... There is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. 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. It should enable people to develop awareness of themselves and their environment and encourage them to play their social role and work in the community”⁷. The Report combines the four basic types of learning—the four “pillars”, ‘learning to know’ (to provide and update skills including self-learning, moral and ethical skills) ‘learning to do’ (to enable citizens to face new challenges, often unforeseeable, working in teams), ‘learning to live together, learning to live with others’ (to empower citizens in sociability and active citizenship while achieving social equity) and ‘learning to be’ (to provide the citizens with programmes of education for leisure, pleasure and manifestation of their innate qualities throughout the life). For this Commission “Learning throughout life is the heartbeat of society”.

While UNESCO was formulating policies for broadening the concept of lifelong education to transform it to lifelong learning OECD was formulating policies for broadening the scope of lifelong learning from simple economic points of view to a more holistic concept.⁸ The broadening of the concept is observed in the OECD as noted below.

The OECD defines lifelong learning as the “view of learning (which) embraces individual and social development of all kinds and in all settings—formally, in schools, vocational, tertiary and adult education institutions, and non-formally, at home, at work and in the community. The approach is system wide; it focuses on the standards of knowledge and skills needed by all, regardless of age. It emphasizes the need to prepare and motivate all children at an early age for learning over a lifetime, and direct efforts to ensure that all adults employed or unemployed, who need to retrain or upgrade their skills, are provided with opportunities to do so. The initial concept of recurrent education has moved on to include also informal learning arrangements.”⁹

While the evolution of the definition and concept gives us some glimpses of the *raison d’être* of lifelong learning a more elaborate description of the rationale of lifelong learning is important at the dawn of the twenty-first century. This is discussed in the next section.

Why lifelong learning?

In an attempt to move from a symbolic policy of lifelong learning that remains at the rhetorical level to one which becomes practical reality, to take forward the work started by UNESCO as mentioned above and further elaborated in the 1997 International Conference in Hamburg and the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education, hundred scholars and specialists from all over the world got together in a conference in Cape Town, South Africa in October, 2000. "They supported the notion that the aim of lifelong learning is to enhance active, democratic citizenship which connects individuals and groups to the structures of social, political and economic activity in both local and global contexts and emphasizes women and men as agents of their own history in all aspects of their lives"¹⁰

From a pure materialistic point of view it was observed in a recent study sponsored by the European Commission that "intellectual capital is depreciating at 7% per year (which is a much higher rate than the recruitment of new graduates) with a corresponding reduction in the effectiveness of the workforce". Yet another study asserts that "in electronics and related areas of engineering knowledge is doubling every 2.5 to 3 years and so 10 years after graduation a 32 year old engineer is practicing in a world where 80% of the knowledge he is using has been discovered since he graduated"¹¹.

However, the rationale of lifelong learning goes beyond the economists discourse and addresses identity and value formation, promotes citizenship education, facilitates democratic participation and helps conflict resolution. More specifically,

- Lifelong learning is universal, a meaningful if not an indispensable activity.
- It is a safety net and helps optimize life by enhancing capacity to solve problems ranging from reducing poverty, sickness (used in China, Philippines, India, Bangladesh), environmental degradation (used in Japan, Western Europe), human rights violation and risks of war (UNESCO programmes) at the macro level and helps deal with risks in complex modern life at the micro level.

- It helps keep pace with the development of new knowledge of today's knowledge based society, particularly in the domain of information and communication technology (ICT), helps learn new skills in rapidly changing societies (used in Japan and other industrialized countries) and face global competitiveness (many developing countries),
- It empowers people and especially deprived sections of the society (e.g., women, rural poor) and promotes social justice (used in Thailand, China among others).

- By definition it has unlimited time span liberated from a narrow utilitarian perspective.

- With increased longevity of the human race and the limited formal working life it provides meaningful education for leisure and satisfaction.

- Lifelong learning can provide skills in business ethics needed in today's market dominant, wealth creating society (Church organized courses for business leaders in UK). More generally.

- Lifelong learning is a way to reconstruct a new set of values that are more humane.

In this context, Koichuro Matsuura, the Director General of UNESCO, had the following message on the occasion of the International Day of Tolerance (16 November, 2003).¹²

"Modern Sociology has taught us that the values motivating our actions are not only multiple but also competing and conflicting without a possible standard measure of what is good and what is just. At the same time we have learned that tolerance and pluralism strengthen democracy and in so doing facilitate the full exercise of all human rights thus providing a solid foundation of civil society, social harmony and peace". (Lifelong learning can provide the means of "encouraging and reinforcing harmonious co-existence and relations between ethnic, religious, linguistic and other groups, ensuring that the values for pluralism and respect for diversity and non-discrimination are effectively promoted.

Who are the lifelong learners ?

The lifelong learners will be classified in two categories: by their role and by the stages of their existence.

Four types of learners can be identified by different roles they assume.¹³

- (1) Learner as an active and creative explorer of the world. Scientific findings confirm that almost from birth the learner is quite intelligent and manifests the capacity and desire to actively explore and make sense of his/her learning environment.
- (2) Learner as a reflexive agent. Research shows that reflexivity helps learners to become self learners. Lifelong learning needs to aim at building this competence through self management of the learning processes and results through active engagement in handling problems, self questioning and critically analyzing these processes and results.
- (3) Learner as a self actualizing agent. Self actualization (fulfilling one's potential as individual), curiosity and exploration are the lifelong drivers of human action.
- (4) Learner as an integrator of learning. On the one hand he/she integrates feeling, thinking, and action, and on the other he/she manages learning opportunities taking advantage of different learning settings : informal, non-formal and formal and in school, out of school and a wide range of learning contents.

Again four major groups of learners can be identified according to the stages mentioned above.¹⁴

- (1) Conventional first and second stage learners undergoing basic education and training.
- (2) Older learners often enrolled part-time in adult education programmes related to an occupation or for pleasure (retired citizens).
- (3) Students who have already obtained a higher education qualification and looking for highly specialized professional opportunities at an advanced level.

- (4) Learners who wish to diversify their occupational activity (in areas such as computer science and management) in order to move into professional sectors and who seek fairly general courses in such disciplines.

What are the enabling factors?

Two types of enabling factors can be identified: legal provision and learning environment. Four kinds of laws / policies can help lifelong learning.

First, laws promoting wider access (for example, the 1997 law of Thailand making basic education for twelve years free while affirming gender equality; the Malaysian law lengthening basic education from 9 to 11 years in 1980s).

Second, laws recognizing and promoting forms of education other than formal (For example, the Education for All Philippine Plan of Action 2000 recognising and promoting informal and non-formal programmes; the 1999 Lifelong Education Act of South Korea promoting out of school, adult and continuing education; the 1995 Education Law of China promoting all kinds of adult learning for both economic and cultural purposes— the Ministry of Education has made the promotion of national lifelong learning the top priority for educational development with intensive investment in distance learning).

Third, laws promoting integration of different types of education (For example, the 1999 Thailand's Education Act has institutionalized credit transfer among informal, non-formal and formal education; the Credit Bank System of South Korea established in 1998 helps integration of different types of educational deliveries through recognition of the acquired credits).

Fourth, laws providing the framework for setting up specific structures of lifelong learning (For example, the Bureau of Lifelong Learning in the Ministry of Education of Japan; the Lifelong Learning Policy Division of the Ministry of Education and the National Centre for Lifelong Education of South Korea; National Institute of Open Schooling, Operation Restoration, Jan Shikshan Sansthan and National Literacy Mission among others, of India).

The second type of enabling factors relate to the learning environment. This may be analyzed at three levels: micro, meso and macro. The micro level refers to the environment closest to the learner: mother and the family. In the pre-industrial society this was the most dominant environment. The meso refers to the school, the community and the workplace, the dominant environment in the pre-knowledge based, industrial society. The macro refers to the societal, national and global contexts in the knowledge based society.

Scientists say that learning starts three weeks after conception during the prenatal period. Mother's behavior during this period affects the development of the fetus. Use of drugs, smoking and drinking can cause birth defects and other long term harmful effects. The family environment is crucial in providing a foundation for the culture of learning. Although the importance of family is diminishing in modern society, the values of the family vis-a-vis learning is key in ensuring that the base for lifelong learning is established.

The school environment lays the foundations for the basic learning skills including learning how to learn to facilitate sustainable learning throughout life. The physical, social and cultural environments provided by the school collectively facilitate or obstruct lifelong learning.

The community environment is another important factor influencing lifelong learning. The more diverse learning opportunities there are in a community the richer is the environment for learning. Even as self-directed learning is a key element in lifelong learning, group learning, approaches also have a significant role.

The ever changing needs of the workplace make the latter another enabling environment for lifelong learning.

At the macro level the changes in the geopolitical order, the emergence of a market friendly society, the development of the information and communication technology, the emergence of knowledge based information society and the phenomenon of globalization are calling for lifelong learning with constant updating of acquired knowledge. The prolonged life of individuals is also creating new demands for learning for pleasure of the senior citizens all over the world.

The improvement in the learning environments enables the learner to expand the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills acquired during the basic education period.

Challenges facing the lifelong educator

The lifelong educator faces the following challenges.

First, providing lifelong learning so as to optimize individual differences in learning. One cannot ignore that there are individual differences in timing and pathways of learning.¹⁵ The provider has to focus on reducing hereditary natural handicaps while increasing hereditary advantages and to help unlearn negative habits while providing positive habits. Lifelong learning should be inclusive aiming at developing understanding and sensitivity so that the learners can live together in spite of differences, the advantaged attending to the needs, difficulties and aspirations of the disadvantaged while recognizing and promoting the special abilities of the disadvantaged.

Second, providing lifelong learning as a continuity of learning experiences in which the capacity to learn continue undiminished and even grow long after the body's tissues have begun to fall.¹⁶ However, the provider has also to consider that while our past learning influences our present and future learning, learned behavior and attitude should be able to change to adapt to new situations and integrate new experiences.

Third, providing lifelong culture learning. Frederico Mayor, the former Director General of UNESCO has the following to say in this respect:

"When we speak about culture we are looking at ways of living as individuals and ways of living together. A 'living culture' is one which - almost by definition - interacts with others, in that it involves people creating, blending, borrowing and reinventing meanings with which they can identify."¹⁷

But what we are seeing now around the world after 11 September 2001 is a different perception about culture. In this part of the world, culture can be hardly

separated from religion. In that context in a speech delivered by Bill Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States at the Yale University on 31 October, 2003 said:

I believe that fundamentalism —the sense that you have the certain truth and the entitlement to impose it on others - is not well suited to solving the problems of the modern world in either religion or politics. It is far better to deal with these problems using evidence and argument, with a willingness to experiment.¹⁸

I find an important role for the educators in this respect and I shall elaborate on this. Lifelong learning should place the individual's learning about his/her own culture and other cultures in the continuum of the individual's learning throughout the life span. To achieve this lifelong educators need to understand the process of learning one's own culture and the processes involved in learning about the diversity of others' cultures as well as to identify both inhibiting and facilitating factors. Culture needs to be learned more consciously as part of lifelong learning

At the dawn of the 21st century the educational planners face two more challenges. First, 40 million people are infected with the deadly virus HIV today in the world with approximately 8 million in South and South East Asia. By the end of 2003 the number was expected to increase by more than 10 per cent. Millions will die leaving many of our societies failed. UNAIDS the United Nations' lead organization for the co-ordination of the fight against AIDS and the World Health Organization are looking for hundreds of thousands of trained workers to face the challenge. Countries both developed and developing will need much more. Traditional learning systems cannot meet this demand. Educational planners have an important challenge to face this crisis through lifelong learning.

Second, how to handle the problem of international terrorism? What role peace and conflict research may play?. Education for peace and tolerance and respect for and understanding of other cultures may help. But eradication of poverty, elimination of discrimination and injustice among peoples should remain on the top of the agenda. Lifelong learning has a role to play.

The following questions need to be handled.

When a person brought up in one culture faces an unfamiliar culture and people how does that person react?

What learning processes are involved?

What is the role of learning in anticipating and reducing cultural shock in this global village?

What is the role of language in understanding one's culture and those of others?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of multi-lingual learning?

How do we develop our positive and negative attitudes towards unfamiliar people?

What is the role of learning in combating ethnic, religious and racial stereotyping and prejudices?

In reducing inter-cultural conflicts, discrimination and injustice among peoples?

In discouraging fundamentalism and 'extremism' ,in changing a culture of dependency observed in developmental work, in eradicating poverty?

We end our discourse with a set of strategies for life long learning for the twenty first century

Strategies for lifelong learning : the agenda for the future

In the speech mentioned above Bill Clinton gives some hints in this direction and I quote him again:

"I think the great mission of the 21st century is to create a genuine global community, to move from mere interdependence to integration, to a community that has shared responsibilities, shared benefits and shared values. How would we go about building that kind of world? .. (one of the main responsibilities) is to build institutions of global co-operation, so that people get into a habit of resolving their differences in a peaceful way, according to rules and procedures generally perceived to be fair"²¹.

To do so and more I suggest the following strategies:

Strategy 1

To design, legislate and execute a national policy for lifelong learning supported by a suitable organizational structure and offering programmes to face the challenges mentioned above.

Strategy 2

To integrate formal, non-formal and informal learning and in-school and out of school programmes through legislative measures as has already been done in some countries mentioned above.

Strategy 3

To build alliance with relevant stakeholders in lifelong learning: the government with its different ministries (e.g. education, labour and social welfare, women's affairs, health, finance among others), non-governmental organizations, the community, private sector, institutions of education and employment and most importantly, the media to design suitable programmes, execute and evaluate them in co-operation with each other.

Strategy 4

To prepare action plans for learning programmes that will promote a positive attitude to and facilitate lifelong learning.²² We shall deal with different levels and forms.

(1) Prenatal period

Provide education for the mothers for healthy development of the fetus with positive measures and anti-drug and anti-smoke campaign through health officials and media.

(2) Preschool education

Lifelong learning from the cradle to the grave' is a frequently encountered slogan. The action plan should include: enhancing provision and increasing participation developing a national frame of reference diversifying provisions and costs borne by families (where possible).

(3) Compulsory education upwards

Instilling ability and desire to learn, identifying in curricula desirable core skills including self-learning skills and family values fighting school failure and dropout through affirmative action policies, personalized pathways, developing remedial schools, special assistance to vulnerable children and collaborating closely with parents and community adopting the new information and communication technologies instilling in pupils an inclination and motivation to learn introducing new forms and methods of teaching to stimulate greater learner participation and intensifying co-operation with families and the entire community setting up new forms of administration

(4) Upper secondary education

Emphasizing core skills including family values, self-learning and entrepreneurial skills: fighting school failure and dropout providing personalized study options; diversifying provision including modular form and cluster of schools; developing co-operation between schools, business and industry; providing greater flexibility in admission, course organization and credit recognition; and developing guidance

(5) Higher Education

Adapting higher education to demand; diversifying provision and introducing greater flexibility to meet the wide variety of needs facing learners, the employment market, the community and society in general; organizing courses on distance learning mode using information and communication technologies (ICT); accommodating part-time, short-term and sandwich students on a modular structure; developing co-operation with industry, community and society in all aspects; promoting programmes

on ethical and moral education, respect for other cultures, human rights and democratic values; increasing provision specially for the second chance learners and the 'unreached'; fighting failure and dropout (the case of France)

(6) Adult education

Encouraging and facilitating access for adults through use of methods suited for them; providing maximum flexibility in timetables and admission; providing different types of financial assistance; providing training leave; enabling adults study for qualification of all types and levels; exploiting the potentials of distance education; mobilizing financial resources; improving and broadening provision through introducing literacy and continuing education programmes; use of new technologies; broadening subject area range including languages with focus on professional activities and options for selection; introducing second chance programmes specially for unemployed; facilitating transparency and transition between school education and adult education by organizing them along similar lines in terms of study area and forms of delivery to recognize and ease credit transfer and improve consistency between initial and adult education; developing co-operation and partnership between employers and trade unions for learning at workplace; encouraging participation by all kinds of institutions capable of providing adult education and co-operation among them; improving guidance and information where necessary; validating skills not formally recognized and unifying accreditation systems; making available 'individual learning accounts; providing education for 'leisure and pleasure' across the levels and wherever relevant promote policy dialogues with potential donors and sponsors of lifelong learning. Girls' participation and participation of weaker sections of the society through rational incentive measures and empowerment programmes; interconnections of informal education with formal and non-formal education so that the former could complement and strengthen existing learning opportunities; exposure to diverse cultural information and experiences to the learners with a multi media approach; culture learning programmes that recognize that our own cultural models are not absolute and that values, attitudes and behaviours are culture bound. One could design a 'culture-in-contact' programme based on information and materials collected from the various experiences of two individuals interacting with one another in diverse cultural contexts. These simulation materials would help develop their cognitive, affective and interpersonal skills in coping with cultural diversity. This has been applied

in a school with success in Germany-²³; multilingual learning as this helps learners understand and appreciate diverse cultures better; ethical and value education and education for peace, tolerance, democratic - values and human rights (Training materials and teaching kits are available at UNESCO)³⁴; education to control and prevent HIV/AIDS (Training materials are % available at UNESCO)²⁴

Strategy 5

To design a financing strategy for lifelong learning which will promote equity, increase motivation and participation of different social groups from the most disadvantaged to the advantaged. Consider the several mechanism given below and choose the most suitable one or the optimal combination.²⁵

- (1) Self-financing model (individual pay from their own savings, current incomes or future earnings).
- (2) Drawing rights model (this model recommends compulsory membership of all qualified employees in a social insurance system financed by the individual, the employer and the government, shared appropriately. Each member has the right to draw from a personalized account).
- (3) Individual entitlements (this would provide a guaranteed sum of money from the State for each individual after schooling which could be used for attending programmes of the individual's choice that satisfied the government established criteria).
- (4) Single-employer financing (this model requires all employers to pay for the qualified employee seeking education in areas of employer's interest).
- (5) Para-fiscal funds (funds administered by agencies which are autonomous and intermediate between the State and the private organization/individual).
- (6) State financing model (State chooses the programmes, selects the participants and runs them under State responsibility).
- (7) The employers contribute a percentage of the wage bill to the state for organizing programmes of lifelong learning.

Strategy 6

To promote research on lifelong learning

To create a database for tracking down the learning possibilities in education and non-education sectors

To identify suitable frameworks to take into consideration the different dimensions of lifelong learning

To get a more 'financed' lifelong learning landscape using both quantitative and qualitative research methods in the form of collection of good practices or monitoring and evaluation of existing practices

Concluding remarks

Education to-day has a tremendous challenge to face in a world of increasing complexity of life, in a market friendly society where wealth creation is becoming more dominant than achievement of peace and tranquility. Nevertheless for any society to achieve sustainable development a balance has to be achieved between material well-being and cultural and spiritual development. In that sense, lifelong learning has to combine programmes suitable for the ever changing world of work with ever changing world of life, programmes which could help citizens pursue a satisfying life of good quality devoid of violence and hatred and build a just, peaceful and a democratic society, programmes which would promote 'learning to live together'. As the UNESCO constitution states: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed".²⁶ Lifelong learning has an important role to play.

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Lifelong Learning and "Adult Education": Changing Terminology and Changing Ideas; A complex inter-relationship

Paul Fordham

As a well known adult educator, I was asked by a traditional "adult education" organization (IIZ/DVV) to help in the preparation and presentation of a paper for a major international adult education conference sponsored by UNESCO (Confintea V, 1997). The theme was "International Cooperation and Solidarity". At that time (1995), both consultant and sponsor felt confident in their "adult education" credentials, and sure that the Conference itself would enhance the role of "adult education". After all, it was organized by people who thought as we did. Seven years on, we can no longer be so confident.

A recent speech by the then Assistant Director General of UNESCO illustrates the difficulties¹. In September 2003, UNESCO organized a mid-term review of progress since Confintea V. The speech made by John Daniel on that occasion shows a continuing suspicion of the effectiveness of "adult education".

.....adult educators have a reputation for being boring, sanctimonious, backward looking and parentalist. They have a propensity to miss the boat when new developments of importance of adult education appear on the scene. This is not a good reputation to have, especially if we want to influence governments and the wider society.

Harsh words; but true in the sense that we certainly have to move beyond advocacy of what we believe is good. Or asserting that the adult education is the "key" to the twenty first century² without carefully justifying the assertion. The argument of the rest of this paper is that we can best do this by considering how to engage with education policy in general, without losing the ideals, which have carried us forward thus far. It will not be easy, as recent events in the UK neatly illustrate. (see below, Engaging with the Mainstream).

In the planning period for Confintea V, it was assumed that I would attend the Conference as an independent consultant attached to IIZ/DVV (the UK was not then a member of UNESCO). This all changed quite suddenly after the 1997 UK general election. Britain rejoined UNESCO, the new Government appointed a Minister for Lifelong Learning and he personally led the UK delegation. This seemed a sudden change and, in relation to the previous political era, so it was. What was not then apparent was that the change was part of a more general trend to incorporate lifelong learning into educational policy making as a whole. It re-emphasized that we had already moved into a completely new era; one characterized by rapidly changing frameworks within which international adult educators now found they had to work.

The international adult education "movement" (e.g. ICAE, IIZ/DVV, Indian Adult Education Association or NIACE in England) derives mainly from experience in English speaking and Nordic countries and, later, Germany, during and after the reconstruction period which followed the war of 1939-44. The purposes of adult education in all these countries were clearly linked to various social and political purposes; where the emphasis was on adult education as change agent in the direction of greater equality, on social, economic and political justice for the poorer sections of society and the prevention of international military conflict. This socio-political agenda was supported by a belief that quality of life improvements for all could be achieved through adult education. And that all human beings were potentially educable.

Within Europe, there were significant differences in both emphasis and provision. In the Nordic countries from the nineteenth century on, adult education was closely linked with national regeneration, including the use of national rather than international languages (though the latter were by no means neglected). By the middle of the twentieth century, supported by north European and north American adult educators, developing countries were beginning to be part of the "movement". It was still mainly an English-speaking phenomenon, even where this was not the mother tongue language. And it left France and the countries of southern Europe, with their quite different educational traditions, largely untouched. However, strong support for national liberation movements in the colonial/imperial world was a natural extension of the more local agendas of northern Europe and north America.

There have always been significant national differences in the way the socio-political movement agenda was defined. In England there was close association with the trade unions, the Labour Party and with various NGOs associated with the education of the working class, including manual workers; but no sense that the "nation" needed to be liberated. As the dominant force in one of the most powerful empires the world has ever known, the English are only just beginning to understand the idea of nationalism as a force to be reckoned with. It is very different in Scotland as a force of nationalism is itself a result of centuries of English domination. It is significant that the political response to the 2003 *Lifelong Learning* report of the Scottish Parliament seems likely to be more positive (from the "adult education" perspective) than the parallel evolution of policy in England; this will be returned to below.

The full socio-political agenda of the international movement is often denied or downplayed in practice. In India, Malcolm Adiseshiah said to me with some force in a private conversation in 1978, that "where there is no literacy there can be no 'adult education'. What he meant was that literacy had to come first because you could not have education without it. This was at variance with the view expressed at Confintea V, that if Indian women wanted to learn how to mend their water pumps before learning literacy, then that was perfectly acceptable. Indeed, they would not be motivated to literacy without it. In the 1978 conversation he had also seemed reluctant to accept that a wider equality agenda for India was an appropriate adult education strategy with which to begin.

In the developed world of the 1960s and early 1970s, the "adult education" agenda seemed of growing importance, at least on the political left. Programmes began to coalesce around more carefully thought out ideas and theories based on issues of social class, race and gender. Many adult educators began to be influenced very strongly by the writings and philosophy of Paulo Freire, himself a product of the experience of social exclusion and inequality in a developing country (Brazil). But there was also opposition to these socio-political goals from those who thought it more important to promote vocational skills training. Globalization of the world economy had begun to raise concerns about whether national economies had access to a sufficiently skilled work force to compete in the global market place. By the end of the 1970s, official support for "adult education" in the UK was in retreat.

What changed in 1997 in the UK was that "adult education", previously always on the struggling margins of education policy making and debate, was suddenly (as the jargon has it) "mainstreamed". Only the more perceptive of the national organizations, like the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, really understood what was happening as they had been at the center of the new Government's policy planning while the Labour Party was in opposition. Many professionals in the field remained more blinkered than this. And the question remained as to what should now happen to "adult education", what should it be called and where was it to be located? Should it even continue to exist in anything like the form we had known it? In such a situation of rapid change, discourse becomes even more important than before, either to protect what must not be lost or to look forward to a different future. At the national institutional level there has been debate about the appropriateness of changing titles. NIACE in England put the C (for continuing) in its title in the early 1980s because it wanted to show an interest in vocational as well as non-vocational adult education. It now prefers to refer to itself as the "national adult learning organization", though, for the present, the formal title remains unchanged.

"Adult Education" as Part of the "Mainstream"

For the whole of the twentieth century, not only was "adult education" struggling at the margins of educational policy making, but in the UK had been dominated by Universities and to a lesser extent by those (like the Workers' Educational Association) whose main concern was the emancipation of largely male manual workers. Moreover the liberal "adult education" tradition in English universities³ was protected by special grant arrangements until the early 1990s. This helped to isolate it in separate adult education or 'extra-mural' departments: protection was fine while it lasted, but the isolation proved damaging once protection disappeared. Apart from skeptics within the university mainstream, there were many professionals, especially those in the tertiary colleges who cater for large numbers of recent school leavers as well as adults, who resented university domination. The move to *Lifelong Learning* is not only more than a change of terminology: it represents a whole new policy agenda, which is broadly welcomed by many outside traditional "adult education". And, where governments accept lifelong learning, what was once marginal moves to a central position in educational

policy making as a whole. Lifelong learning can no longer be regarded as another version of the older "adult education" agenda.

An intermediate position in the move from marginal adult education to mainstreamed lifelong learning was a new emphasis on *adult learning*. There is now an acceptance that many educators of adults, such as health aides or agricultural extension agents, do not see themselves as "adult educators", or as part of the discourses current at pre-1997 UNESCO adult education conferences. The new focus on learning emphasizes that the starting points must be what local groups say they want to learn. There was a strong indication at Confintea V of some of these new uncertainties. For the important theme 2 --the condition and quality of adult learning--no comprehensive paper was forthcoming. The participants worked in separate thematic groups, talking about the role of universities, research, documentation, educational politics and monitoring. We had moved from adult education towards "adult learning"; and the concept of learning throughout life was embraced in the final declaration⁴. But we were still half inside a separate adult education sector. We had not faced up to the implications of being part of the mainstream.

Globalisation and the increased pressure towards vocational skills training

The first published attempt to consider the effects of globalization on adult education was coincident with the 1997 conference⁵. The book was written from the perspective of a major conference in the new South Africa. It accepted that "global economics dictate neo-liberal market based policies as the only acceptable solution,"⁶ but the book as a whole was perhaps over-optimistic that the socio-political agenda of adult education could also be maintained, especially in South Africa. The chapter (16) by Shefer, Samuels and Sardien on Race, Class, Gender and Culture, is a case in point. Keith Jackson, writing from the then neo-conservative UK (chapter 5) was much more pessimistic, contrasting the idealistic social dynamic of the 1970s with the solely economic dynamic of the 1990s. Are we in any better position today?

At Confintea IV (1985), UNESCO still saw "adult education" either as mainly remedial or as serving largely economic needs. One important function, reducing

inequalities, was then seen as "due to imperfections in the education system", not various social or political shortcomings. Lip service was paid to peace and international understanding, the development of creativity and to participation in cultural and political activities; but the main thrust was in the direction of a rather narrow view of vocational training⁷. However, in the intervening twelve years, some of the more deleterious effects of globalization had become more apparent. As the Delors Report put it in 1996:

*People today have a dizzying feeling of being torn by globalization whose manifestations they can see and sometimes have to endure, and their search for roots, reference points and a sense of belonging.*⁸

In 1997 there was also, for the first time, substantial NGO participation in the international conference. The gap in the conference agenda of an agreed paper for theme 2 was eventually filled by a participating NGO; its paper concluded that "education is politics and adult education is urgent politics".⁹ Fine words, but events since 1997 do not give much hope that we have yet moved very far from the views expressed in 1985. We are still locked into a largely economist driven education policy agenda. The urgent politics of most politicians seems to be the perceived need to be competitive in the global market place. Skills training reigns supreme, and the contribution of non-vocational study to social inclusiveness - and a readiness to contemplate skills training - is largely ignored.

During the preparations for 1997, the then Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg, asserted that we were engaged in nothing less than "redefining the field". It was certainly a call to renewed effort on our part, and my personal memory from the time was of great satisfaction, enthusiasm and sense of privilege at being part of this new beginning. What none of us then articulated clearly, and probably did not think about, was to ask what field we were talking about. With the benefit of hindsight, it seemed sensible when preparing this paper to go back to a small textbook written in 1989 for Tanzanian adult education diploma students.¹⁰

In this book a distinction is made between the field of operations and the field of study.

... adult education and the 'adult educators' have to be looked at in several different ways. If we are talking about a field of operations we need to distinguish between different kinds of ... programmes; this can be done within any one country. But if we widen our thinking to the whole field of study, then we have to look at both ... the local (Tanzanian) service meeting specific local needs and ... a world-wide and growing community of scholars, professional workers and volunteers who are trying to meet the educational needs of adults wherever they may be. (pp 2-3)

It was this community for which the Commonwealth Foundation facilitated the establishment of the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults (CAETA) in 1988. At that time the notion of both full and part-time "adult educators" was still a definite part of thinking within the international movement. In universities, which were involved in both fields, attempts were made to create or develop unified Departments which represented both extension work (the field of operations) and the growing field of study, offering advanced Diploma or higher Degree programmes. For a time this seemed to work. What few of those involved then realized was that mainstreaming would kill off the field of study. After all, if educating adults is part of a wider educational programme, then what is the justification for studying the separate need of adult learners? At the very least there would have to be a fundamental reappraisal, with perhaps a consolidation of effort. In the case of both the universities in which this writer has been involved in a senior role, the field of study no longer exists, except in the work of dedicated individuals whose main work has moved to the field of study, it is starting to be mainstreamed out of existence. The field of operations, however, is a different matter altogether and it is to this we now return.

Engaging with the Mainstream

With the publication of *The Learning Age*¹¹, it seemed for a time that lifelong learning and the aspirations of adult educators might happily come together, at least in England. The Minister's statement in the Preface about the enabling role of learning was widely welcomed.

Learning enables people to play a full part in their community and strengthens the family, the neighborhood and consequently the nation. It helps us fulfill our potential and opens doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning

for its own sake and are encouraging adults to enter and re-enter learning at every point of their lives as parents, at work and as citizens.¹²

What was not then expected was that these aspirations could so easily be set aside. What was lacking in the document was a vigorous argument, which emphasized that all the purposes for which adults come to learning are mutually supportive. Without this argument, it was possible to brush aside the aspirations as vague or not affordable in relation to other priorities. What was needed was an argued case which starts from learner motivation, especially if we wanted to attract the socially or educationally excluded – a stated aim of the Government.

In the 1980s the UK government funded an educational programme for the adult unemployed. Its main purpose was to increase employability; but one of its strengths was to build on the recognition that starting from specific job training could be counter productive. Many unemployed adults needed first to learn about how to re-direct their personal lives, by gaining or re-gaining confidence in themselves. With more understanding of how and in what directions they might change, they were better prepared to take up specific job training. Improving learner readiness to learn is as important as providing those training opportunities. The learning society can only become inclusive if the needs of learners with mixed motives are recognized, and learners are encouraged to take up particular skills training only when they are ready to begin.

Looking forward to the Bangkok mid-term review, one writer drew attention to the fact that “global economic institutions...make decisions that affect all of us, without consultation, or any kind of transparency in democratic accountability”. And he quotes one enthusiast for environmental and other protest demonstration that “we are witnessing the birth of a new global power: global citizenship, special power.”¹³ Perhaps: but it can also be argued that although this may be effective politics, it is hardly adult education unless accompanied by opportunities for more reflective adult learning. This is one area where adult educators have to look into the future and see how best to engage with these new social movements.

As another commentator points out: the “centrally important social movements of our time – in particular those currently campaigning against the British and American governments’ policy in Iraq and our foreign and defense policy generally,

and the wider environmental and sustainability campaigns, have little contact with adult education, at least in its *formal* manifestations." Moreover, the new movements are more amorphous than before and their means of communication are electronic rather than written.¹⁴ How should adult educators respond?

The question of active and appropriate citizenship is not explored in this paper, but is clearly linked with responses to the new global movements. It is mentioned here because there is currently vigorous debate about it in the UK, not least because of globalization and changing national identities.¹⁵ In terms of England and Wales, both these questions are central to the future of what have come to be called Adult and Community Learning Programmes (ACLs).

It was suggested earlier that Scotland may be different. It has a different educational system and tradition from England and is proud of its difference. It is also small, culturally more cohesive and has a newly re-established Parliament anxious to assert its difference: it has to prove its own worth. It has planned a more unified structure of provision than in England. And this may make it easier to defend what is more vulnerable – the activities which foster social cohesion and combat social exclusion.

The Learning and Skills Council in England is already being accused of renegeing on promises made only a year earlier that ACLs would be protected. As a NIACE spokesman (Peter Lavender) has argued: "Research shows that involvement in learning can improve health, reduce crime, break the cycle of poverty and promote citizenship". Quite so, but when money is tight, the programmes which deliver skills useful to employers will always have priority - unless adult educators can offer more than assertions about how valuable their work continues to be.¹⁶ And this has to include the arguments that skills training will be better if it is linked to the research findings listed above.

The last part of this paper has pointed to some of the issues arising in England as the Government and professionals alike struggle to deliver on pledges in favour of Lifelong Learning. They will not be relevant everywhere, but the intention has been to go some way to demonstrate that "adult education" can help national systems deliver if only it is bold enough. It is important to demonstrate that John Daniel was wrong.

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2. Confintea V, *The Hamburg Declaration*, p. 10.
3. Defined by Roger Fieldhouse as "non-utilitarian ... in that it is concerned with the education of the individual for personal intellectual advancement, or to make the individual a better citizen ..." quoted in Fordham, Paul, Foz, John & Muzaale, Patrick (1998), *A Chance to Change: access, citizenship and sustainability in open learning*. Leicester, NIACE.
4. ... The informed and effective participation of men and women in every sphere of life is needed if humanity is to survive and to meet the challenges of the future ... Adult education thus becomes more than a right; it is a key to the twenty-first century ... It is a powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice. Adult learning can shape identity and give meaning to life. Learning throughout life implies a rethinking of content to reflect such factors as age, gender equality, disability, language, culture and economic disparities" (paragraph 2 of *The Hamburg Declaration*., 1997).
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Section II

**POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF ADULT AND
LIFELONG EDUCATION IN SELECT COUNTRIES**

Skills for Life: Has the Need to Support Social Cohesion been Displaced by the Drive for Economic Success?

*Chris Atkin
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Introduction: The Skills for Life Strategy

Skills for Life, a national strategy to tackle the needs of adults in England with poor language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills, was launched by the government in March 2001 (D/EE, 2001). The strategy reflects on the previously identified low literacy and numeracy skills of the adult workforce (D/EE, 1999) suggesting that such limitations will have disastrous consequences for both individuals and the country's ability to compete effectively in the global economy. The strategy sets out the government's agenda for change and expresses the aspiration to improve the skills of those groups where LLN needs are greatest. Its stated mission is 'to give all adults in England the opportunity to acquire the skills for active participation in twenty-first-century society' (D/EE, 2001: 3). It is one of the biggest overarching policy drives ever to take place in post-school education in England, attracting massive government investment (3.7 billion pounds by 2006) (House of Commons, 2006). The strategy draws together 'all organizations involved in working towards improving the situation (literacy and numeracy) and setting targets for those organizations to ensure progress' (Crawley, 2005: 42).

Additionally, the strategy links across government agencies and connects with plans to reduce social exclusion amongst the most disadvantaged groups in England. The strategy has a focus on economic goals but is also seen, and supported, by the government as part of a wider social policy (Papen, 2005). Some of the key priority groups identified in the strategy are the unemployed and benefit claimants, prisoners and those supervised in the community and other groups at the risk of exclusion.

The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (now renamed the Skills for Life Strategy Unit) was set up to oversee the implementation of the strategy and to support its aim of working with identified priority target groups to increase their LLN skills (750,000 learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills by 2004 and 1.5 million by 2007) (Papen, 2005).

The strategy has had, and continues to have, a huge impact on all those involved in education in the post-school sector. It argues that by ensuring every opportunity for the adult population to develop their literacy and numeracy skills they are more likely to be active participants in the twenty-first-century, both socially and economically. As noted above, the government has invested large sums of money to ensure that the strategy is embraced and penetrates all areas of training, including community education, private training providers, prisons, workforce training and further education colleges in a way few policies have.

This paper explores the relationship between the Skills for Life strategy and those participating in Skills for Life training programmes. Using human capital and social capital theory, we argue that the Skills for Life strategy are being 'misrecognised' as legitimate by those charged with achieving the targets associated with it.

We argue that the Skills for Life strategy has been marketed as a tool to develop both the social cohesion and economic competence of adults but, in fact, the desire to raise human capital has meant social capital development has been squeezed out of praxis almost entirely.

We present findings from a research project that support these arguments and conclude that if the Skills for Life strategy are to achieve their full potential they must seek to value social capital in similar terms to human capital development through, for example, the equal weighting of accreditation in recognition of 'positive transformations in health and well being' (Hammond & Feinstein, 2006: vi) and other associated 'wider benefits of learning', as are given to more traditional accreditation of progression in areas such as literacy and numeracy.

Research Focus

Research suggests that adults with poor language, literacy and numeracy skills are more likely than the general population to be on lower incomes, be unemployed and be more prone to ill health and social exclusion (D/EE, 1999, 2001) and improvements in ones LLN skills is likely to make a positive impact on their life, both socially and economically. This research was guided by the general question 'What are the effects of the 'Skills for Life' strategy for adults with poor language, literacy or numeracy skills? In order to explore this question, the following sub-questions were constructed:

1. How do adult 'Skills for Life' learners understand their language, literacy and numeracy skills?
2. What types of training programmes are available to adult 'Skills for Life' learners?
3. How do learners engage with 'Skills for Life' training programmes?
4. How is progression measured and understood, both by the learner and by the organizing institution of the training?
5. What are the future aspirations of adult 'Skills for Life' learners?

Methodology

To address these research questions we undertook a study which explored the experiences of specified target groups of adults (long-term unemployed, prisoners and hard to reach groups) attending training under the umbrella of the 'Skills for Life' strategy. Learners were attending training across three institutions within the East Midlands area of England: a large further education college, a private training provider and a prison.

Life history interviews were the primary methodological approach for this study. The fundamental theme of life history research is that all aspects of life

interact with and have implications for each other (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Using this approach allowed data to be gathered that reflected the participant's experience contextually and also allowed for exploration of individual's understanding of events and the way they see, experience or interpret such events (Atkinson, 1998).

The research participants included 44 learners and 10 'Skills for Life' practitioners across the three participating institutions. All learner research participants were attending 'Skills for Life' training programmes and all practitioner research participants were engaged in either the delivery or management of language, literacy and numeracy provision. The learner sample is reflective of some of the key priority target groups identified in the 'Skills for Life' strategy. A total of 54 life story interviews were undertaken. These interviews were further supported through informal classroom observations and discussions.

Initial analysis of the data suggests that 'Skills for Life' learners attend their training programmes either electively (voluntarily) or as a result of a mandatory requirement (non-voluntary learners). Voluntary learners appear to attend training following some form of critical incident and have a clear idea about their reasons to attend such courses in terms of their goals. Conversely, non-voluntarily learners were attending training due to extraneous influences, such as a potential penal sentence or the removal of welfare benefits.

The Canadian 'Welfare to Work' system provides similar suite of welfare benefit and training programmes to those available within England. They also exhibit requirements to ensure self-sufficiency through employment, opportunities to upgrade literacy skills as well as limitations of welfare benefit if compliance with such requirements is not met (CCSD, 1999). The Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy Initiative, launched by the Canadian government in 2003 works to ensure that Canadians have the right skills for changing work and life demands, with a goal of enhancing the skills levels of Canadians who are entering, or are already in the workforce.

When Brown (1999) undertook research in Newfoundland, looking at the implementation of training interventions for unemployed adults dependent on

some form of government assistance, she found that participants questioned the role of training, suggesting that it should be specifically targeted towards local economic opportunity, rather than a model which had a more generic approach to supporting adults to re-enter the employment market. Learners participating in training programmes understood it to be compulsory and 'as a route to income support, not because they wanted training' (Brown, 1999: 126) with others noting that 'once started, though, some realized that they actually wanted to be there. However, once the announcement was made that they did not have to be in training to keep income support, about 50% dropped out' (Brown, 1999: 126). Learners in this group felt that 'employment is the main focus but self-exploration is important too. Confidence building is an important first step in going on - it is a spin-off benefit in many cases' (Brown, 1999: 126).

In this study, data suggested that research participants presented very mixed but turbulent experiences of education which generally encompassed some negative experiences and periods of disengagement, lethargy or lack of recognition of the value towards their education.

Their ongoing attitudes towards education can be seen as in external resistance to the continuing control which is being exerted upon them. Many adults engaged in 'Skills for Life' training could not relate their training experience to either the context of their day-to-day life or potential future employment opportunities. In fact, the decisions about what they should learn had, for many, been removed from them; they often have little or no choice in whether they either participated in training programmes or what types of training programmes they could attend.

Having established the research enquiry, we move on to discuss the theoretical framework that was identified as an appropriate lens through which to view the data.

Theoretical Framework

Social capital theory's central thesis can be summed up in two words: 'relationships matter' (Field, 2003: 1). Social capital as a concept was highlighted in the 1980's by Bourdieu (1986) and also, separately, by Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993).

Bourdieu uses social capital as one of four identified capitals (economic capital, social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital) to explore how fields (structured system of social positions) are inhabited (Bourdieu, 1990 in Jenkins 1992: 85). He suggests that relationships between people are constructed by domination, subordination or equivalency and that these relationships are connected through goods or resources: capital. He identifies social capital in terms of types of valued relations with significant others (Bourdieu, 1990 in Jenkins 1992: 85). For Bourdieu, social capital is potentially a tool for social control.

Alternatively, Coleman, sees social capital as functional:

It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspects of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors. (Coleman, 1988: 598).

In his construction of social capital, Coleman outlines three aspects of social capital: obligations and expectations, information flow capability and norms accompanied by sanctions. Sanctions form part of the framework of 'conditionality' imposed on those individuals who are in receipt of benefits from the governing state (Stanley, et al, 2004); Such sanctions form part of the 'normal' intervention strategies of the Department of Work and Pension (DWP) who are responsible for the management and delivery of the welfare benefit system in England.

Putnam (1993) further developed the concept of social capital during the 1990's, suggesting that social capital is present in 'features of social organizations such as networks, norms and trusts [between citizens and government] that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' Putman, 1993: 1).

Schuller (2000) embraces this formulation of social capital, arguing that social capital requires attention to be paid to the relationships which shape the realization of human capital's potential, including relationships between different groups as well as within groups.

In this paper we argue that social capital is used in a Bourdieuan form of social control. Targeted categories of adults (outlined previously) are attending

'Skills for Life' training programmes as part of a requirement to obtain welfare support. A network of social controls are being placed on members of the society who may on the one hand be seen as the most vulnerable and needy and, on the other as unwilling to participate in employment and a drain on the resources of the state.

The introduction of the 'Skills for Life' strategy was seen as an important signal in the development of social cohesion and a reduction of social exclusion, as well as an increase in economic activity as a result of the development of adult's literacy, language and numeracy skills. Papen (2005) argues that this strategy is amongst recent policy developments within England which are motivated by the government's desire to erase a 'dark spot' on the landscape of the emergent knowledge economy and their ability to engage successfully within it.

She goes on to argue that a social practice approach to literacy, which views literacy not merely as a skill but as something people do; an activity in which literacy is a part (Barton and Hamilton, 2000) has much to contribute in constructing our understanding of what counts as useful literacy, rather than considering individuals LLN skills in terms of the 'economic crisis' which has been constructed. Exploring the 'Skills for Life' strategy, using the lens of human capital theory reveals a different interpretation of the strategy, aimed squarely at developing a human capital 'stock' of adults who can effectively participate in employment to fulfill the government's desire to achieve high economic activity.

Becker (1975) was instrumental in bringing to the foreground the notion of human capital in relation to education. He formulated that human capital theory is based on the premise that greater economic return will result from educational investment. The formation of human capital is the process by which such capital is deliberately developed in order to achieve economic return. He describes the conventional outcomes of education in terms of knowledge and skills which enhance employability. Human capital theory is associated with two primary outcome assumptions:

1. that there is a causal effect of human capital on economic productivity, and,

2. that the differences in workers' earnings are entirely due to differences in their human capital investments. (Baptiste, 2001: 189-190).

This thesis was supported by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1987 when they stated that 'the development of contemporary economies depends crucially on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of their workers' (OECD, 1987: 69) and again in 1998 when they defined human capital as 'the knowledge skills and competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity' (OECD 1998: 9).

Baptiste (2001) summarizes the contemporary version of human capital theory as incorporating technology as a factor that mediates the relationship between human capital and productivity. He argues that human capital theory works towards an exacerbation of social difficulties rather than their alleviation, arguing that using such a theory in the development of educational policy detracts from more civically responsible practices.

Schuller (2000) also suggests that human capital focuses on the economic behaviour of individuals, especially on the way their accumulation of knowledge and skills enables them to increase their productivity and earnings - and in so doing to increase the productivity and wealth of societies they live in. The 'Skills for Life' strategy (D/EE, 2001) reflects this perspective in that the government is making significant investment in attempting to develop the knowledge and skills of the adult population to ensure that they, as individuals, as groups and the country as a whole are strongly situated when competing in the global market economy. Measures of outcome and target setting are also in line with human capital theory in associating success and achievement with outcomes such as qualification achievements. Schuller (2000) offers a summary framework in order to undertake a comparison between human and social capital perspectives, which identifies the differing focus. Interestingly, within the context of this study, Schuller (2002) suggests that social and human capital should not be seen as opposing or conflicting theories but rather theories which can act to complement and support each other.

	Human Capital	Social Capital
Focus	Individual agent	Relationships
Measures	Duration of schooling qualifications	Attitudes/values Membership/Participation Trust levels
Outcomes	Direct: income, productivity, Indirect: health, civic authority	Social cohesion Economic achievement More social capital
Model	Linear	Interactive/circular

(Schuller, 2000:5)

Discussion and Analysis

Analysis of the data collected during this study suggests that the interventions in place for those identified priority target groups in the 'Skills for Life' strategy are engaging some learners through a process of order and social restraint. However, coercive social control is also playing a part in legitimizing the actions which are being played out by the agents involved in the government's 'Skills for Life' strategy.

Long-term unemployed adults (more than six months) who are identified as possessing poor language, literacy or numeracy skills, through a process of formal assessment using instruments constructed by the Basic Skills Agency (BSA, 2002), are referred to attend a training programme entitled Basic Employability Training (BET). This process is undertaken through referral by job center plus (the government funded employment agency facility and the social security office in the United Kingdom) advisory staff to contracted specialists who are independent of them. The BET programme forms part of a suite of training programmes provided by job center plus under the umbrella of Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA). This suite of programmes is seen by the government as a vehicle for tackling the basic skills and other barriers to employment faced by people with the most severe basic skills problems... but the key aim of the provision remains to move people into work. (Webb, 2003: 13).

This programme lasts for a fixed period of 26 weeks and incorporates periods of job search activity, work placement activity and intensive basic skills support. Success, on this programme, is measured in two ways: by obtaining employment;

by achieving a 'Skills for Life' qualification. Should a participant complete the training programme and remain unemployed they are unable to re-enter the programme unless they evidence a further 26 weeks of unemployment.

Adults who it is felt by job center plus staff may be eligible to attend the BET programme, but who decline to attend either the skills assessment or the BET programme itself, can be 'directed' by job center plus staff to attend. If adults continue to decline to attend either the skills assessment or the BET programme then 'sanctions' can be imposed in the form of lost welfare benefits.

Whilst the government is endeavouring to ensure that all adults of working age reach a minimum standard of knowledge competency (human capital), there is an underlying assumption within the 'Skills for Life' strategy that this is a wholly realistic and attainable target for all adults of England. The government legitimize the intervention by stating they are in line with advice from the OECD on government support to assist adults of working age to achieve a minimum standard of basic skills (OECD, 1997).

It is widely recognized that adults with low level basic skills are more likely to encounter periods of unemployment or low skilled employment (Parsons & Bynner, 1999). Unemployed adults may be considered to be avoiding sustained employment by not taking any action to remediate their skills need and, therefore, the use of interventions such as/ 'directions' and 'sanctions' can be seen as legitimate. Indeed, there are signs of a general trend towards the use of such actions within recent government policy initiatives; see, for example, the recent debates surrounding incapacity benefit and disability living allowance which include the introduction of such interventionist techniques (House of Commons, 2006a).

Because such interventions are seen as legitimate, they are recognized as legitimate by the enforcers of the policy: the power relations which are at play are concealed. In effect, the intervention is presented, and potentially misrecognised, as legitimate and reasonable both by the enforcer (job center plus staff) and the target group (unemployed adults with poor LLN). The policy becomes successfully enforced upon the target group by those acting on behalf of the government. The target groups have little or no redress and are, therefore, dominated by those

imposing the policy. Similarly, those acting as enforcers of the policy have become instruments of control.

Adults who find themselves unemployed for long periods of time, whilst they may resent the actions enforced upon them, feel they are passive participants in the processes that are being carried out on their behalf, largely cause, ultimately, they are dependent on the welfare state for financial support in lieu of employment. As a society, or culture, adults of working age who have long periods of unemployment and receive welfare benefits from the government are expected to be able to evidence, as a minimum, that they are working towards obtaining employment (in any form) and are not relying on the government to provide them with financial subsistence indefinitely. The adoption of this cultural attitude adds it force to the power relations within society and allows for the systematic reproduction of such activity.

The introduction of the welfare state was designed, since its inception in 1911 (National Insurance Act, 1911), as one which provides welfare benefits as a form of financial support, acting as a 'cushion' whilst individuals seek new employment, not as an alternative to employment. This provides an interesting comparison with the work undertaken by Brown (1999) in Newfoundland, who identified adults who organized their employment around periods of unemployment, using welfare assistance as a distinct alternative to employment. Indeed, historically, their employment was based on periods of seasonal work such as fishing and farming which is traditional model of rural employment structures.

The policy culture associated with Work Based Learning for Adults is a deficit one which appears to embrace failure; indeed without failure it has no substance. Disciplinary actions form part of the contractual obligations associated with welfare benefits. Learners who do not act in accordance with the requirements of the course are disciplined via a series of verbal and written warnings, eventually leading to directions (refers to the requirement of an adult in receipt of welfare to undertake an action at the request of their advisor) and, ultimately, sanctions (refers to the suspension or withdrawal of welfare support to an adult who does not undertake an action upon the direction).

Reviewing the 'Skills for Life' policy in the light of both social and human capital theory, it can be argued that, given the process nature of the policy it is heavily weighted in favour of economic outcome. Similarly human capital, justified through the desire for tangible qualification outcomes and the desire to improve adults' knowledge and skills will (within the rationale of the policy) give them greater potentiality to become employed and contribute to society economically. Whilst it may be argued that this is a perfectly legitimate course of action, it does not take account of the importance of social networks in the construction of a society which demonstrates cohesion. Instead, it can be argued that the focusing of responsibility on the individual for both their successes and failures can lead to a situation of social fragility where there is little evidence of communities working together.

Voluntary learners participating in provision identified a range of aspirations for their training which included the acquisition of knowledge and skills, evidenced by qualification which would enhance their employability, clearly falling within the human capital model. Additionally, voluntary learners could be seen to have a purpose to their attendance at training provision, for example prison learners wanted to be able to communicate in writing with their social network beyond the prison environment (O'Grady & Atkin, 2006). In sharp contrast, non-voluntary learners more readily discussed the training programmes in terms of the wider benefits of learning (Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, 2006: *passim*) including feeling happier, enjoying the company of the assembled group and having a purpose to the day.

The social strand of the strategy is not recognized within its framework. Learners engaged in 'Skills for Life' training are more likely to achieve, and need to achieve, some of the wider benefits (Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, 2006: *passim*) associated with training before being able to advance towards working on more easily measured outcomes, such as qualifications. However, this does not form part of the 'Skills for Life' framework and there is currently no attempt to either capture this data or to implement any mechanisms by which achievements in these areas can be measured or financial reward for its development and progression. This is in sharp contrast to the financial benefits for achieving a 'Skills for Life' qualification.

The governments justify their large investment in skills programmes because unemployed adults and benefit claimants are likely to lack these skills required by employers (Field, 2002) to achieve greater economic success. Yet such programmes provide a good example of the lack of flexibility and adaptability required to support such adults to achieve these objectives (Porter, 2005).

Nevertheless, participation in adult learning identified as an important driver in affecting change and educational participation has a range of benefits which are non-academic, including health and social outcomes (Feinstein, et al, 2003). The government's recognition of this is visible through its funding of the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning which undertakes research 'to inform policy, to deepen understanding of the complex ways in which learning provides benefits in the lives of individuals, and to provide robust evidence about the scale of these effects and the returns they represent', (WBL, 2005: website).

The wider benefits associated with learning are as "important, if not more important than the acquisition of basic skills for many adult LLN learners Ward and Edwards (2002).

Illeris (2003) argues that the majority of participants turn up to training programmes because they have to, they are forced or are persuaded to attend, either directly by employers or authorities, or indirectly because the alternative would be social and economic marginalisation. He states that:

The majority of participants enter the programmes because they are more or less forced to do so and not because of an inner drive or interest. In practice they typically develop a variety of psychological defence strategies to avoid learning that challenges their identity and personal ways of thinking, reacting and behaving (Illeris, 2003: 13).

There is a substantial amount of evidence (Illeris, 2003, Foster, 2005) which confirms that the government continues to invest heavily in education which embodies the development of knowledge and skills in order to enable the continuing provision of employable adults (an approach underpinned by a human capital perspective on CE). Indeed, the Labour government states that 'education is our number one priority' (Labour Party Manifesto 2005). Wolf (2002) argues

that 'the philosophy driving modern British education policy is one of education for growth' (Wolf, 2002: 161). Education policy, she claims, pays little attention to either the lowest achieving youth or to the long term unemployed, suggesting that education is big because it is seen as the engine of economic development and that governments increasingly development interventionist strategies to ensure that education continues to be able to fuel economic growth and faced with competition from low wage economies of China and India, it is clearly tempting for governments to clutch at strategies driven by notions of 'value-added' and innovation.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we have argued that the role of social capital within the 'Skills for Life' policy is limited and overshadowed by the need to construct a human capital stock. Despite its best efforts, rather than having the synthesizing effect suggested by the government while launching the 'Skills for Life' strategy, the opposite appears to have happened; with an ever growing divide between the social and economic components of the strategy. As resources are limited the economic link with human capital is unmistakably in ascendance.

It is apparent that for some non-voluntary 'Skills for Life' learners, attendance at training programmes is undertaken passively, without interest or engagement in the subject. Following initial analysis of the data, there is evidence from the learners that in fact an environment which replicates a working environment in some way would be a more useful way of spending and accruing more usefully appropriate skills for employment. interestingly, Wolf (2002) also suggested that there is evidence from large-scale national surveys such as the British Household Panel Survey is that almost everyone who holds them [temporary contracts and short terms jobs] moves on to other employment, very often permanent and only a small proportion head straight back into employment' (Wolf, 2002:253).

The 'Skills for Life' strategy, at its inception, was seen as a policy which provide a win-win outcome for both individuals with low level language, literacy and numeracy skills, for employers and for the government. By supporting adults to increase their LLN skills it was envisaged they would be able to participate more

substantially within the economy and in society more generally (D/EE, 2001). The strategy has similar potential for success from a social perspective, then, in terms of the development of social cohesion factors of improved confidence, self-esteem, social networks and relationships as it does for economic factors.

However, the government's focus on qualification targets has overshadowed the social component of the strategy almost entirely; they are not recognized within the framework of the policy as it currently stands. In fact, the rigidity of the strategy framework could work to disrupt pockets of social cohesion (i.e. long-term unemployed adults who complete their BET training programme are prohibited from re-entering WBLA training until they have been unemployed for a further six months). There is little in the way of supported progression through institutions and for some education is an identity associated only with certain social conditions i.e. prison or unemployment. It is not something undertaken voluntarily or electively.

It seems clear that the government, and by default society would benefit from developing a more flexible approach to the delivery of the 'Skills for Life' training programmes (Atkin & Merchant, 2004; Atkin et. al., 2005). This idea embraces the concept of learner persistence presented in the work by Porter, et al. (2005). Their work drawn on findings from Young et. al., (1994) who found that students often do not participate in programmes long enough to reap substantial learning gains.

Porter et. al., (2005), established that students variety of difficulties that hampered their efforts to participate steadily and intensively in literacy learning and that programmes which provided a range of pathways to learners with less emphasis on group learning and more emphasis on one-to-one learning allowed students to dip in and out of provision as their ability to participate fluctuated (Porter, 2005). Such an approach to 'Skills for Life' training provision may allow for adults to become independent lifelong learners who embrace learning, rather than just 'going through the motions' of attendance without really engaging with the programme. Of course there are problems associated with measuring consistently and effectively elements of social capital and their development but this is important facet of any education policy that sets out to strengthen social cohesion in an increasingly economically and educationally stratified population.

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Life Long Education in Denmark

Asoke Bhattacharya

That a small nation with around 5.5 million people can become one of the most prosperous countries in the world due its unfailing commitment to Lifelong Education is evident in the case of Denmark. The country that innovated the first adult high school way back in 1844 (1842 according to latest research) and paved the path of universal enlightenment along with an all-pervasive cooperative movement in the rural society which interalia paved the way for industrialization and urbanization with a human face , overcoming the worst internal crisis due its defeat and dismemberment following the war with the mighty Prussian army in 1864 and averting a head-on collision between the bourgeoisie and the feudal lords - are so illuminating as a new path of social development that Denmark should be studied as a laboratory of social transformation. In this article we shall first study the latest Danish strategy of Lifelong Education and how this should be viewed as the continuation of its strategy of education over the last 150 years.

Denmark's Strategy of Lifelong Learning

Denmark's strategy of Lifelong learning covers all forms of education/ learning and skills – in the formal education system , in the domains of adult and continuing education at work and in many other settings in which people learn and develop their knowledge , skills and competence. This strategy is based on the globalization strategy of the Government expressed in the document entitled *Progress, Renewal and Development –Strategy for Denmark in the Global Economy* (2006). The overall aim of the globalization strategy is to make Denmark a leading knowledge society with strong competitiveness and cohesion. (*Denmark's Strategy for Life Long Learning*, 2007. The Document suggests that in an increasingly globalised economy, competitiveness and cohesion are preconditions for a regeneration of the welfare state. The knowledge, inventiveness and work efforts of people together with the

ability to continuously develop, produce and sell new goods and services are key to success. Denmark, the document points out, is distinguished by the fact that it has high rate of employment, low unemployment, relatively equitable income distribution and a generally high level of education. The Danish labour market is highly flexible and competitive. Denmark is one of the countries which invests the most in the development of human resources. Denmark is also characterized by its commitment to fundamental democratic values and a historic tradition of change through dialogue and cooperation. (*Denmark's Strategy*). For Denmark, the strategy emphasizes, a well-qualified labour force is crucial to ensuring competitiveness and prosperity. It also suggests that demand for low-skilled labour will decline in the years to come. Continuous growth of the economy is dependent on the increase of quality labour force. With an ageing labour force, new input in the labour market is also essential. Therefore, the skills of the labour force must be increased at all levels. More people must have quality education and they should enter the labour market faster than before. There is a need for a significant increase in adult education and continuous skill upgradation, especially of those with the lowest level of education and training. (*Denmark's strategy*).

It is the Government's aim that within the next one or two decades, Denmark shall become a country where everyone has the best opportunities to unfold her/his ability and create prosperity for herself/himself and for others. In the spring of 2006, in response to the challenges of globalization, the Government presented an overall strategy based on the results of the work of Globalisation Council and Tripartite Committee on Lifelong Skill Upgrading and Education and Training for All in the Labour Market, both set up by the Government. The national globalization strategy entitled "Progress, Innovation and Cohesion – Strategy for Denmark in the Global Economy" comprises 350 specific initiatives aiming at extensive reforms of education and research programmes and substantial improvements in the framework for growth and innovation in all areas of Danish society. The strategy focuses in particular on training and lifelong skills upgrading.

The overall aims of educational reforms are the following:

1. All children shall have a good start in school and achieve good academic knowledge and personal skill.

2. 95% of all young people shall complete a general or vocational upper secondary education by 2015.
3. 50% of all young people shall complete a higher education programme by 2015.
4. Everyone shall engage in lifelong learning.

With the finalization of the political document entitled *Agreement on Future Prosperity and Welfare and Investments in the Future*, achieved through a discussion among the majority of the parties in the Danish Parliament, the Government created the basis for structural reforms. A fund of 15 billion Danish Kroner (around 2 billion Euros) has been set aside over a six year period for new long term investments in education and lifelong skills upgrading (until 2012). In the spring of 2006, the government and the social partners drew up a joint final document on Lifelong Education and skills upgrading for everyone in the labour market. (*Denmark's strategy*).

Objectives of Life Long Learning

The Government aims at providing Lifelong Learning in all parts of society and in all areas in which the knowledge, skills and competence of people are developed and put to use. This applies at all levels, and in all parts of the education system - in adult education and continuing education, in the workplace through liberal adult education and in association and leisure activities. (*Denmark's strategy*).

The strategy has the following major objectives:

1. A coherent education system from preschool to higher education to provide opportunity for everyone to acquire excellent basic skills, a qualifying education and a solid foundation for lifelong learning.
2. A world class education system fostering talent but more accommodating to weak learners.
3. Relevant and high quality adult and continuing education for everyone in the labour market with particular emphasis on the need for lifelong skills upgrading for those with the lowest level of education.
4. Systematic competence development in the workplace both in the private and public sector.

5. Improved opportunities for guidance and counseling to ensure best possible conditions for students and adults to choose appropriate education programmes and participate in lifelong learning.
6. All forms of education and learning should be based on and build upon the knowledge, skills and competence of individuals.

The objectives also included coherent education paths and transparency in the education system to ensure best possible use of public resources, a global perspective embedded in all the programmes and creation of stronger higher education environment with better framework and condition for interaction between educational institutions and enterprises. The implementation of extensive reforms is based on all relevant players taking co-responsibility and contributing actively. This applies to national authorities, social partners, educational institutions, enterprises, liberal adult education providers, voluntary organizations, and municipal and regional players.

Lifelong Skills Upgrading for All

The document points out that constant changes in the labour market and in society continuously make new demands on the skills and adaptability of the individuals. Participation in adult and continuing education help individuals participate actively in the labour market throughout their working lives. The document suggests that the competitiveness of Danish enterprises and quality of services largely depend upon the investment in continuing training and competence development.

Denmark has one of the highest level of participation in adult and continuing education, competence development at work and liberal adult education activities during leisure. The public efforts in these areas play an important role in the development of qualification and competence of the of the labour force. In Denmark, 60% of the labour force participated in some form of learning activity in 2004. Total public and private expenditure for adult and continuing education amounted to an estimated 15 billion Danish Kroner in 2004.

On the basis of a close dialogue with the social partners, the Government has laid down the following goals:

1. Everyone shall engage in Lifelong Learning.
2. Adult and continuing education efforts must be effective and flexible.
3. Everyone must be provided with the opportunity to improve competence; those with the lowest level of formal education will be given special attention. Adult and continuing education must reflect changes in the qualification requirements and needs of the labour market.

In order to meet the goals, the Government has set aside an extra 2 billion Danish Kroner over a six year period for adult and continuing education out of which 1 billion will be spent on vocational adult education. (*Denmark's strategy*).

Only a few years ago, there existed "no overall lifelong learning policy or strategy" in the Danish Ministry of Education. The reason was that unlike education, Lifelong Learning was a transnational concept and the Danes had not yet reconciled themselves with such strategy. (Soeren Ehlers, *Four Danish Strategies Towards Adult Learning*, 2006). Historically speaking, the Danish King in his instrument of 1814, had opened up the possibility of continuing education through evening classes. The Danish parliament decided to provide subsidies to Folk High Schools way back in 1851 only a few years after the first Danish Folk High School was established in 1844 at Roedding.

These were internationally pioneering strategies so far as adult education was concerned and continued unabated till the recent years. The Danish parliament held its first general debate on adult education in 1972. Eventually, the first policy paper was issued and approved by the Danish parliament in 1984. We shall, briefly, taking cue from Soeren Ehler's important article in *Milestone*, present to our readers the Danish strategy of adult education from 1964 till the adoption of Danish Strategy on life long learning in 2007.

The Strategy for Adult Schooling (1960-1984) was first discussed in connection with "The Commission on Leisure Education" in 1965. The final report reflected the lifelong element. The concept of learning, as distinguished from education, was

not used till 2000. The understanding of the new concept was closely connected to UNESCO interpretation in its Tokyo conference of 1972. The strategy of 1965 Adult Schooling revolved round the concept that young people should be schooled and this mass education programme would be the responsibility of the Government as opposed to the previous mode of adult education through folk high schools which were voluntarily taken up by the young people and organized by voluntary agencies.

The seventies were marked by discussions on European Common Market. A sizable section of the Danish population favoured not to join the Common Market and this was reflected in the revitalization of Grundtvigian traditions for designing settings of nonformal learning in the voluntary sectors dominated by folk high schools which registered a rise in number. Following the Grundtvigian prescription of a Nordic University at Gothenburg, Nordic Folk Academy, an initiative of the Council of Ministers of the Nordic States was established there.

The 1972 Tokyo conference of UNESCO made 33 recommendations in the domain of adult learning. Denmark's policy of adult learning can be traced back to these recommendations.

The Strategy for Nonformal Adult Education (1984-95) had its origin to the "10 Point Programme for Adult Schooling and Nonformal Adult Education"—a proposal presented to Danish Parliament in 1984 by members of the Danish Social Liberal Party. The proposal was written by Kim Moerch Jacobsen, a faculty member of the Nordic Folk Academy. The proposal was the outcome of a discussion of the ministerial council of the Nordic States. The element of 'enlightenment', a Grundtvigian concept that qualifies education, was included in the proposal to the Danish parliament.

The links between the public and voluntary sectors engaged in nonformal adult education was established in practice. The Nordic and European strategies gradually merged in the following years. A restructuring of the systems for the education and training of adults took place, curricula were modularized, and problem-based projects became common. The general approach moved slowly from the collective to the individual.

The Strategy of Formal Adult Education(1995-2000) was based on three important policy papers published in 1995.The "10-Point Plan for Recurrent Education"included the previous nine points of 1984. The missing point was the"Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning(APEL)". There were serious reservations on this point Lifelong Learning was not yet accepted by the Danish Minister of Education. The EU policy paper entitled"Teaching and Learning: Towards the Knowledge Society" had emphasis on learning as opposed to teaching. It was learning through the new media. The Nordic Council of Ministers presented their own version "Golden Riches in the Grass:Lifelong Learning for All". This policy paper considered learning both for economy and equality.

The Adult Learning Strategy(2000-2006) is based on the outcome of the Lisbon summit in which the EU member States decided on a strategy for creating the world's strongest knowledge economy by 2010. Lifelong Learning was regarded as the core element in this strategy. This was followed up by restructuring of the education system. The EU Commission report— "Memorandum of Lifelong Learning"(2000) incorporated the elements of the Nordic Strategy.The Danish Parliament passed "The System for Further Education of Adults"(2000) which prescribed modular structure measured in ECTS credits.The Ministry of Education regarded ECTS as an instrument for the accumulation of learning and a tool for giving credits for adult learning in formal and nonformal settings.It has economic consequences too.

Grundtvigian Origin of Lifelong Learning in Denmark

Lifelong learning has three broad constituent elements:learnig for life,learning for livelihood,and learning throughout life. The Danish strategy had all these three elements. The initiator of this strategy was the Danish philosopher , litterateur and theologian NFS Grundtvig(1783-1872). Grundtvig witnessed the unfolding of Danish history during his childhood and youth when the great agricultural commissions were changing the face of rural Denmark. It was a veritable social transformation whereby the peasants of Denmark –mostly middle peasants owning 20 to 120 acres of land—became the driving force of Danish history. Around the same time , he witnessed some of the most eventful years which had far reaching effects on the future of Denmark as a nation. The British attack on Copenhagen

and the seizure of Danish fleet (1807), economic bankruptcy(1813),cession of Norway from the Danish realm(1814) – all these had greatly influenced his thinking.As a reaction to these unsettling events, Grundtvig meditated over the possible course of salvation of the Danish nation.The solutions he thought of were very unusual and radical.Between 1829 and 1831 , Grundtvig visited England thrice in connection with his study of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in various British archives.While in England, he greatly appreciated the English education system, particularly in the colleges of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He was impressed by what he perceived as the free and open relationship between the teacher and the student, in residential circumstances permitting the informal exchange of experience and knowledge outside as well as within the lecture hall. These impressions positively influenced him to seek to evolve a similar open interaction in educational institutions in Denmark. Thus he combined his idea of people's enlightenment with free and frank interaction between the teacher and the taught.

Grundtvig's emphasis on popular education emanated from his view that specialized education was a matter of a few but general education was a matter of the whole people.Grundtvig also felt that learning of the upper strata of the population goes astray if it is not balanced by the learning of the whole people.Grundtvig wanted a uniform enlightenment of all classes.The then existing educational institutions were not appropriate for generating such enlightenment.The new objective necessitated a novel form of institution : he prescribed folk high schools. Elaborating this concept, Grundtvig says that what all countries need is a civic and noble academy, a higher institution for the culture of the people and for personal competence in all major subjects.Such an institution must grow out of learning and it must have a living relationship to knowledge.Such an institution must be independent. It has to be a real, spiritual force by which life and the moment manifest their inalienable rights. The land, in its natural and historic character will thus be related to the life or reality and the requirements of the moment. This will be the common core from which the institution will branch out into all major functions of everyday life, combining all civic efforts.

Grundtvig further says that , if this school(folk high school) really is to be an educational institution for the benefit of life, it first of all should make neither education nor itself its goal but the requirements of life and it must take life as it

really is and only strive to shed light on and promote its usefulness. The Danish high school must necessarily teach language, history, statistics, political science, legislation and administration. At every high school of the people, which lives up to its name, the people and the home country must not be approached from the point of view of learning or of academic chairs, but rather from the requirements of life itself, and this means the life of the people. There must be concerns for the very core of life, its natural conditions, its diverse vocations, requirements and industries. There must be an effort to seek whatever knowledge of country and circumstances would be possible and desirable, useful and enjoyable for all those who love their country and who have an average intelligence. Only then can we be sure that we will be addressing all people when we speak to them in their own language.

Grundtvig warns that damage can be done when people are frightened by an abundance of books or when they are goaded to read them. Thus Grundtvig emphasized the value of spoken words coming from the mouths of the teachers and touching the hearts of the students. Grundtvig's words found many receptive ears. World's first school of the adults was established at Roedding in 1844. As years passed by, one folk high school after another began to be established by Grundtvigians and others, including Kristen Kold who was called the Danish Socrates. These folk high schools sent a current of youth to the Danish countryside and they were responsible for the world's most successful cooperative movement which changed the face of Denmark.

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The Solidarity in Literacy Programme in Brazil: Strategy for Literacy Training for the Youth & Adults

Regina Celia Vasconcelos Esteves

Introduction

The Solidarity in Literacy Programme was created in 1997 by the Council of Solidarity Community. This Council is a forum for the development of social action. The programme is part of a partnership between the federal government, private initiatives and the civil society. It is currently administered by a nongovernmental organisation — the Association for the Support of the Solidarity in Literacy Programme. The Programme is a non-profit public agency made up of a team of 220 Consultants.

The goals of the Programme are to reduce the indices of illiteracy in Brazil and provide wider access to education for youth and adults in those Brazilian municipalities which have highest illiteracy. The Programme has shown significant results since it began. The year 2002 brought the number of beneficiary youth and adults to over 3.6 million. The paper discusses the activities of the Programme and the partnership model developed by it, which became a model of institutionalisation of public action for the education of the poorest in the Brazilian society. It gives details of the model adopted to train the teachers. The paper surveys the quantitative and qualitative impacts of the initiative in the context of the initiative in the context of Brazilian education.

The Partnership Model

The Programme model is based on teaching modules of six month duration. Each module begins with the process of choosing the literacy teachers. The teachers

are selected from the concerned communities themselves. An average of one month is spent to train these teachers. Their training takes place in the campus of the partner institution of higher education. The teachers' training is followed by five months of classes for the literacy students. The classes take place four times a week for three hours a day. At the end of the programme the students are to enter into the formal system of education or continuing adult education programme in the municipalities. Apart from running literacy education directly, the Programme offers technical service to the cities that do not have youth and adult education schemes. The Programme, thus, helps students to continue their studies in their own place without interruption.

There is an administrative-technical coordinator at the level of the municipality, who is responsible for the conduct and progress of the course. This on-the-site coordinator receives a monthly honorarium of Real dollar 200 (US dollar 57.14) for the five-month module period whereas the literacy teacher is paid an honorarium of Real \$120 (US \$ 34.28) per month.

The literacy teachers are hired on rotation for each module. This allows 'anyone interested from the community to receive training. This means expansion of opportunities for the members of the community since the Programme encourages those already trained to join the mainstream school system. In addition to increasing the quality of education the Programme with its thrust on the community, thus, assures decentralization of power and strengthens the civil society.

Partnership in the Programme

The Programme institutionalises through the youth and adult education literacy training process. This is accomplished by strengthening the relationship between the civil society and various governmental and non-governmental organisations. A simple, at the same time, innovative strategy is worked out that involves effective participation of numerous sections and agencies of the society-businessmen, higher education and other institutions and organisations, state governments, individuals' mayor's offices and the Ministry of Education.

The first pilot project was started in 1997 in 38 municipalities with literacy rate ranging between 63 to 82 per cent. This included 38 partner institutions of higher education and 11 businesses. Today the Programme is active in 2,010 municipalities spread over seven metropolitan regions and in over 20 Brazilian states. There are partnership of 204 institutions (involving 1700 university professors) and 93 businesses. As of December 2002 some 3,600,000 students availed of the Programme and 170,000 received literacy training, of which majority (60 per cent) came from rural areas.

The model of partnership has grown both quantitatively and qualitatively. This is because of commitment and coordination among them. The role of each partner is defined according to their social function.

1. The Institution of Higher Education

The academic community belonging to the institutions of higher education of the federal and state governments and private management has the pedagogical responsibility in the municipalities. These institutions are free to choose their theoretical framework and evolve the practicals.

The freedom gives the Programme a democratic character. Such politico-pedagogical freedom is not allowed to dictate the goal of the Programme. The principles and frameworks are developed by a council of higher education institutions and are approved by the entire academic involved in the Programme and the Programme's National Coordination.

The higher education institutions are responsible for the project from the beginning to the end. They monitor and evaluate the project continuously, particularly acquisition of language and reading and writing skills and their social uses. The institutions have the authority to select and train the literacy teachers.

The partnership received from the academic institutions is institutional. Many times the project forms part of the activities of the dean's offices and continuing education programmes of the universities. However the teaching staff members participate in the project on voluntary basis.

2. Private Sector

Businesses, financial institutions, cooperative groups and others participate in the Programme by providing the necessary financial resources to the poor municipalities in the North and North-east Brazil. These resources are used to finance the costs of training the literacy teachers, their monthly honorarium, the students' daily meals and travel expenses in respect of the monthly and semester evaluations. These costs represent 50 per cent of the total cost per student. The private sector comes out to help the Programme out of a national urge to make Brazil a better country. The businesses and other participating concerns place great emphasis on monitoring the pedagogical outcomes with a view to keep track of their finance. This they do by visiting the adopted municipality and verify the works on the spot. Moreover, they follow up the annual reports and statement of accounts of the projects.

3. The Civil Society

There are individual citizens or "solidarity citizens", as they are called, who adopt students, especially in large urban centres. This is done through credit card payment or direct bank deposit of a certain amount on monthly basis for six months. Through such mode the "solidarity citizens" share the cost of the Programme in the cities of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, the Federal District and Goiania. These are the places where the illiteracy rates are not so high, but at the same time where there are sizeable concentration of illiterate people.

4. Non- governmental Organisations

These are the Programme partners who are associated with the "Large Urban Centres" projects. Such projects are developed for the underprivileged communities in the large cities and they have broad network of links with the Programme beneficiaries. The NGO partners mobilise the communities for students' registration and in arranging space for the classes. They also provide the minimal infrastructure requirements and offer support to the higher learning institutions in the training of literacy teachers.

5. Government

The partnership of the government takes place at different levels in the following way:

The federal government, through the Ministry of Education, finances the acquisition of didactic and support material and library kits for the municipalities. This amounts to 50 per cent of the student's study cost. Besides, the Ministry promotes and finances the Programme and also ensures continuity of education of those students, who complete the literacy' programme.

Public agencies, financial institutions and public businesses come up to support the Programme in the same way as the public sector does. They bear expenditure in respect of the students' meal, training and honorarium of teachers and evaluation and monitoring of the Programme. The state governments lend financial support to the Programme in the municipalities under them. They often adopt it as literacy training model.

The municipal administration in municipality plays central role in the Programme. They liaise with different agencies and provide the necessary infrastructure — classrooms and transportation of students and teachers and so on. Once the students have undergone literacy education, the municipalities direct them to join the formal system of education. In sum, the Programme is in true sense of the word a joint venture of various business houses, institutions and organisations and the state and federal governments. A special feature of the cooperation in the large urban centres is cost sharing by the federal government and private individuals under a campaign called "Adopt a Student".

Since it began in 1997, the Programme assumed the character of a national action. The comprehensiveness of it starts with the identification of most backward districts by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. This is followed by large scale mobilisation and participation of the civil society that assumes the proportion of a movement. It became a model of solidarity for a cause. Not

surprisingly, the Director General of the UNESCO's Institute of Education calls this Brazilian model a "partnership-engineering". Pedagogical diversity and continuous evaluation of results make the Programme credible in the public eye. The cumulative effect of the whole initiative against illiteracy has led to the general educational growth of the country.

The Programme's Guiding Principles

The concept of literacy in the present World has changed significantly. Reading and writing is considered more than just the knowledge of graphic elements of letters. The skill and the process of its acquisition, as it is understood today, is the ability that enables one to form a broad worldview of problems he faces in the day-to-day life as citizen of a country. With this basic idea of literacy, the Programme has evolved certain guidelines. The guiding principles are in consistent with the national and international debates on youth and adult education. They are also in coordination with the Law for Guidelines and basis of Education in Brazil (1996) and with the Brazilian National Education Plan that was developed in line with the Jomtien (Thailand 1990) and Dakar (Senegal 2000) conclaves. The leading points of those guidelines are as follows:

Literacy is practiced in consistent with the-exercise of citizenship — It is essential for the development of critical-contextual understanding of the situations one is placed in. The advances in information and communication and the alarming picture of illiteracy rates underline the basic need of literacy training.

Inter-cultural dialogue is an ally in the pedagogical process - This principle points to the necessity of dynamic reflection and use of the cultural context of a community. This involves linking information from different areas of knowledge to the local culture.

Literacy students and teachers are subjects in the teaching-learning process - The literacy students and teachers new package of knowledge and concepts for the specific needs of their community. This on the one hand contributes to the participating individuals' personal development and

increases effectiveness of the programme in transforming the local society. Solidarity, commitment and social responsibility are the virtues that are highlights of partnership and teamwork.

The Literacy Teachers' Profile

In the type of literacy education outlined above, the role of literacy teachers is of crucial importance. It is for this reason the responsibility of training the literacy teachers is assigned to the institutions of higher education. The professors of those institutions continuously supervise the teaching methods of the teachers by way of monitoring. Even before that, care is taken during the stage of selection of the literacy teachers. As mentioned earlier, the teachers are generally from the community they live in.

The selection is based on the criteria of educational level, age, availability, previous educational experience and area of residence. Young candidates are preferred. Again priority is given to those with higher educational level and who live close to the venue of classes.

The data collected in semester evaluation shows that the literacy teachers are primarily from the rural areas and they are usually between 20 to 24 years of age. Only about one-third of them had done regular teachers' training. Most of the municipalities of the country have low educational level. This at times makes literacy teachers' training difficult. At the same time picking up the trainees locally helps in their training in the specific social and cultural situation.

Training of Literacy Teachers

The training is divided in two phases. The first phase is an intensive course of an average of 120 hours on general matters. The second phase is the component of local and more practical matters. Besides the basic training course, the visiting faculties from universities guided the teachers continuously.

The outline of the whole course is as follows:

Concepts of literacy and reading and writing: theories and practices
Theoretical and practical basis of mathematics teaching

Historical-cultural context of youth and adult education
Description of specific demands of youth adult education
Organisation of pedagogical project (planning, procedure, didactic re sources, evaluation)
Reading, producing texts and linguistic analysis, and
Evaluation of literacy students, pedagogical practices and involvement with the community.

We have pointed out the involved higher education institution has the autonomy to plan and conduct training course. At the same time they are supposed to include these topics in their programme.

A preliminary problem the university faculty trainers face is lack of motivation among the trainees. They take pains to overcome this problem. In the training the thrust, in short, is on social uses of language and literacy.

Besides formal training, the teachers receive continuous informal instructions through studies, workshops and evaluations in connection with the Programme.

Subprojects to the Programme

Radio School: To supplement the literacy education in the classrooms and the training of literacy teachers a Radio School Project was started in association with the Secretariat of Distance Education, Ministry of Education in 2001.

Digital Literacy: While taking up literacy education, the Programme attends to other related needs of the community - the training of human resources and access to new technologies. With these in view, the Programme initiated orientation in computer literacy. The local community covered by the programme is provided with five computer terminals. The availability of the equipment allows every interested member of the community, not just the literacy students, to update their knowledge on different subjects.

The responsibility of the project of Digital Literacy was given to 20 universities and the project was implemented in 20 municipalities. The public and the private corporations have donated the computers.

The Impact of the Programme

The impact of the Solidarity in Literacy Programme can be seen on the students, teachers, businesses and partner universities. The impact is extensive and far-reaching. The Census of 2000 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics confirms this. The Census data show the Programme has significantly contributed to a decrease in illiteracy in the last one decade. The reduction in the literacy rate of adults of over 15 years was 32.3 per cent. In 1991, the national illiteracy rate was 20.3 per cent, whereas in 2003 it came down to 13.6 per cent. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics appreciates the role of the Programme as follows: ... "This improvement reflects, in part, the efforts of the Solidarity in Literacy Programme (non-governmental organization) that has the objective of reducing the indices of illiteracy in Brazil and triggering the public offering of youth and adult education."

The most important reduction of illiteracy occurred in the North and the Northeast. These are the areas where the largest number of municipalities served by the Programme is located. In the Northeast particularly the literacy indices dropped from 37.5 per cent in 1991 to 24.6 percent in 2000. This represents a decrease by 12.5 per cent. In the North the drop was by 8.3 per cent. In the South and the Southeast the drop was on the average of 4 per cent. The impact of the Programme is greatly seen in the rural areas where 70 per cent of the literacy classrooms functioned. The census data 2000 reveal a reduction of illiteracy rate in the rural areas by 12.5 per cent. The average reduction rate for the whole country was seven per cent. The Programme has guaranteed continuity and institutionalization of access to education of the youth and adults in Brazil. In December 2000 over 70 per cent of the municipalities ran the Programme. According to the data produced by the National Institute of Education Studies and Research, Ministry of Education, the registration rate in the youth and adult education courses increased 114 per cent in the served municipalities, whereas the national average was 42 per cent.

The Programme developed a new concept of partnership, which has not only benefited the people and the government, but the partner agencies also profited. The businesses, for instance, developed a new sense of social responsibility. This in turn has helped in the expansion of their market. Today over 50 percent of the business Programme partners are based at large urban centres in the south-east,

whereas the municipalities they have adopted are remotely located. The other partner agency, the higher education institutions have also gained. The Programme created a new dynamism in their activities. As a result of their involvement in the Programme, many institutions developed new curriculum and courses. Like the business houses they have also become more socially responsible, which is evident in their extension activities. It is found that 38.5 per cent of the higher education institutions of the country participated in the training programme of literacy teachers and 61 per cent participated in the other activities under the municipalities.

The Solidarity in Literacy Programme had a chain reaction in the government as well. The Programme was initiated by the Federal Government. But soon the state governments came up with their own programmes to fight against illiteracy, which has also become their priority agenda. Currently seven states have developed actions in conjunction with the Solidarity in Literacy Programme. At the municipality level, a growing awareness on the importance of people's education is noticeable.

Lastly, the Programme has contributed to the formation of literate Brazilian society, where the skill of reading and writing has empowered the learners to perform social functions as a citizen.

Summary

The Solidarity in Literacy Programme is a unique intervention in area of youth and adult education in Brazil. Its success lies in its pooling and effective coordination of different agencies of the Brazilian society. In the year 2002 the Programme's goal was to reach over 1.2 million students in about 2010 municipalities. But by December 2002 the number taught was 3.6 million. This is a tremendous leap. The Programme has been ever growing. The growth has even led to export of the Programme overseas in Timor, Mozambique, Guatemala, Angola and some other small countries.

The most important legacy of the Programme is the idea that illiteracy should not be dealt with as a narrow educational issue. It should rather be seen as a social issue. By creating a participatory movement and having devised effective coordination between demands and the resources, the Programme has an important example in the field of adult education.

Women's Literacy in China

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Introduction

Illiteracy, which is viciously interconnected with poverty, sets barriers for economic and societal development. In this constantly changing society, more and more governments and international organizations have realized this serious problem and devoted to the eradication of illiteracy. And the year 1990 was declared the International Literacy Year. Since that, much work has been done on illiteracy eradication and much more international cooperation has been initiated. With the efforts of various sectors of the society, great progress has been achieved in literacy work. However, the number of illiterates is still astonishing. In 2000, the world illiteracy rate was 20.3% with a total number of 862,000,000, but 25.8% with 549,000,000 for women (*Regional adult illiteracy rate and population by gender 1970-2015*, 2002). Clearly, this issue is especially pressing in Asia and Pacific region, with 625.4 million adult illiterates accounting for 71% of the world's illiterates. Of this number, 64% were reported to be girls and women. Facing this challenge, the decade from 2003 to 2012 has been proclaimed as United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), and it has been identified that women are one of the priority groups for UNLD.

In China, educational development has long been considered a national priority for improving the quality of the population essential for the sustained development of social economy. The elimination of illiteracy is addressed in the developmental agenda. And the literacy education in China is mainly concerned with illiteracy in rural areas. Women's literacy is not singled out as a special field, but it attracts much attention and concentration. In 2000, the illiteracy rate in China is 9.08% with a population of 86,992,069, and 13.47% for women with a population of 63,204,457 (*China Statistics Yearbook*, 2002). Though the illiteracy rate has been greatly decreased, but the total number is still very big.

Before coming to the specific issues, it is necessary to define literacy. As in Chinese context, Literacy (peasantry) has been defined as that a literate should acquire:

—“Knowledge of 1500 Chinese characters

—Ability to keep simple accounts

—Perform basic calculations

—Write short notes

—Read specially prepared simple newspapers and journals.”(Regulations for Illiteracy Eradication, 1988).

And in Chinese context, to learn literacy means to “learn culture”. And the counterpart of illiteracy in Chinese is “*Wenmang*” that means “culturally blind”.

The Chinese context for women’s literacy: The history and activities

Since 1949, the Chinese government has regarded women’s literacy as the corner stone for women’s emancipation and conducted a series of mass campaigns against illiteracy. As of 1958, a lot of literacy activities were conducted nationwide, and 16 million women were helped to be literates. In the wake of China’s economic reform and implementation of opening-up policy, the Chinese government once again has considered the improvement of women’s quality as an important task for women’s emancipation in current period and strengthened women’s literacy education. A lot of literacy activities have been conducted. Several projects such as ‘women’s literacy action’, ‘programs for promoting women’s quality’ have been implemented across the country. Over more than 50 years of endeavors on women literacy, China has successfully helped 120 million of women illiterates to be literates. The illiteracy rate among women has decreased from 90 percent in 1949 to 13.47 percent in the year 2000, especially illiteracy rate among women population aged from 15 to 50 years old has declined to less than 4.9 percent. Directed to the

'women's literacy action', the government decided to reward the excellent organizations and personnel in literacy achievement with 'Women Literacy Prize'.

Some concrete measures adopted in the literacy drive for women include 'spare-time classes' and 'night schools', all of which have been tried at different places with different degrees of success. 'Spare-times classes' provide flexible school hours for peasant women who work in the agricultural sector. Some of these "spare-time" classes would be open for 16 hours a day and students could walk in whenever they had free time and have lessons from teachers who would be available for them. And the 'night schools' just provide literacy class and skills training at night when women have finished their fieldwork and housework. However, sometimes they have to take care of their children. Thus some of the learners would bring their children to the literacy class with them.

Winter schools, off-season schools and mobile schools were other innovations that facilitated the spread of literacy among women. In cold and mountainous areas, where agricultural work was intensive in summer, women found it hard to attend classes during the farming seasons, and therefore expected to enroll in these schools according to local farming context. As 40 per cent of China is in mountainous areas, the number of 'winter schools' and 'off-season schools' was very big. Mobile schools were particularly useful where people had to walk long distances over through terrain or when classrooms were in short supply, or when the teacher did not live in the vicinity and came into the countryside from a nearby town or city.

In addition to these practical measures, the adult educators of China have initiated other methods too. For instance, husbands were encouraged to help wives in sustaining their literacy skills. Basic literacy would be imparted by the literacy worker/teacher. Similarly, children attending formal schools were encouraged to teach their mothers and grandmothers at home. If husband and wife were both illiterates, they were both expected to acquire literacy together and later mutually help each other to maintain their literacy level. To ensure that the husbands and children perform their roles as teachers well, a check on them was made periodically. Also, the teachers often organize learning groups among neighbors for mutual learning.

Besides all these, the literacy teachers try every means to make use of the local libraries, films, TV programs and posters for their teaching. And the literacy teaching focuses not only on literacy learning but also skill training that may help the learners increase their income. And the teachers often organize literacy learners to take part in sports and entertainment activities, especially during festivals.

Handbooks on hygiene, childcare and family planning are also made available for women, particularly the younger ones. In a few cases the family planning, health and literacy worker is the same person. For example, in some places the literacy activist who teaches women to read also writes out a leaflet as a family planning worker in which she explains the various methods of contraception, their side effects and advantages, etc. The neo-literate women are expected to read them and discuss them with the family planning worker. In the process the women's reading skills are enhanced.

The current situation of women literacy in China

Table1: Distribution of Illiterate and Semiliterate Populations by Province in 2000

Province	Population 15 years old and over			Illiterate or Semi-literate population			Illiteracy rates (%)		
	MF	M	F	MF	FM	F	MF	M	F
National	958084632	488979328	469105304	86992069	23787612	63204457	9.08	4.86	13.47
Beijing	11725426	6115642	5609784	577604	123251	454353	4.93	2.02	8.10
Tianjin	8197656	4155821	4041835	530019	116560	413459	6.47	2.80	10.23
Hebei	51493626	26018432	25475194	4425208	1684503	2740705	8.59	6.47	10.76
Liaoning	34431377	17456027	16975350	1993275	512250	1481025	5.79	2.93	8.72
Jilin	21730353	11086862	10643491	1247861	383673	864188	5.74	3.46	8.12
Heilongjiang	29392538	14989373	14403165	1859427	552057	1307370	6.33	3.68	9.08
Shanghai	14396805	7388533	7008272	893618	173496	720122	6.21	2.35	10.28

Jiangsu	58701589	29300602	29400987	4628144	1021676	3606468	7.88	3.49	12.27
Zhejiang	37637792	19199633	18438159	3218493	835434	2383059	8.55	4.35	12.92
Anhui	43959751	22317279	21642472	5905526	1684264	4221262	13.43	7.55	19.50
Fujian	26253482	13377090	12876392	2542608	745416	1797192	9.68	5.57	13.96
Jiangxi	29933672	15303281	14630391	2088099	472605	1615494	6.98	3.09	11.04
Shandong	71229052	35655926	35573126	7654312	1970801	5683511	10.75	5.53	15.98
Henan	67611621	34251961	33359660	5347609	1454437	3893172	7.91	4.25	11.67
Hubei	45937982	23694534	22243448	4275288	1052436	3222852	9.31	4.44	14.49
Hunan	49274575	25518898	23755677	2949581	704477	2245104	5.99	2.76	9.45
Guangdong	64673917	32291190	32382727	3343069	556863	2786206	5.17	1.72	8.60
Guangxi	32369442	16952612	15416830	1714347	350272	1364075	5.30	2.07	8.85
Hainan	5485403	2859903	2625500	532994	109919	423075	9.72	3.84	16.11
Western China:									
Shanxi	24115975	12451071	11664904	1368735	399297	969438	5.68	3.21	8.31
Neimenggu	18370972	9494716	8876256	2129891	663088	1466803	11.59	6.98	16.53
Chongqing	23849894	12313900	11535994	2122431	561094	1561337	8.90	4.56	13.53
Sichuan	63747910	32727728	31020182	6292420	1755869	4536551	9.87	5.37	14.62
Guizhou	24613920	12822259	11791661	4886140	1276469	3609671	19.85	9.96	30.61
Yunnan	31363388	16395088	14968300	4843205	1527303	3315902	15.44	9.32	22.15
Tibet	1800357	912484	887873	850596	313719	536877	47.25	34.38	60.47
Shanxi	26544943	13660611	12884332	2606144	771292	1834852	9.82	5.65	14.24
Gansu	18357151	9459279	8897872	3613287	1138605	2474682	19.68	12.04	27.81
Qinghai	3527890	1823122	1704768	897636	286105	611531	25.44	15.69	35.87
Ningxia	3929724	2008620	1921104	617661	190216	427445	15.72	9.47	22.25
Xinjiang	13426449	6976851	6449598	1036841	400165	636676	7.72	5.74	9.87

(Data Source: *China Statistics Yearbook, 2002*, <http://210.72.32.26/yearbook2001/indexC.htm>.)

Table 2: Distribution of Illiterate and Semiliterate Populations by Province in 1990

Distribution of Illiterate and Semiliterate Populations by Province in China									
(Based on population census, conducted in 1990)									
Province	Population 15 years old And over (in 10,000)			Illiterate & semi-literate Population (In 10,000)			Illiteracy rates (%)		
	MF	M	F	MF	FM	F	MF	M	F
National	81385.8	41920.9	39914.8	18224.6	5452.2	12772.4	22.27	18.01	32.00
Beijing	864.2	445.9	418.3	95.3	24.6	70.7	11.03	5.52	16.90
Tianjin	681.6	343.7	337.9	79.9	18.4	61.5	11.72	5.36	18.20
Hebei	4274.5	2164.2	2110.3	936.8	282.1	654.7	21.91	13.03	31.02
Liaoning	3067.7	1561.4	1506.3	354.5	102.6	251.9	11.56	6.57	16.72
Jilin	1854.3	944.4	909.8	265.1	89.1	175.9	14.30	9.44	19.34
Heilongjiang	2551.8	1304.5	1247.3	384.1	123.9	260.3	15.05	9.50	20.87
Shanghai	1104.6	566.3	538.3	148.1	33.5	114.6	13.41	5.91	21.29
Jiangsu	5201.2	2627.1	2574.0	1175.1	312.1	86.3	22.59	11.88	33.53
Zhejiang	3132.8	1606.9	1526.0	726.4	215.3	511.1	23.19	13.40	33.49
Anhui	4029.9	2067.0	1962.9	1686.1	438.0	948.1	34.39	21.19	48.30
Fujian	2103.3	1079.3	1024.1	480.7	111.1	369.6	22.85	10.29	36.09
Jiangxi	2612.8	1346.9	1265.9	623.0	165.3	457.7	23.85	12.28	36.15
Shandong	6125.0	3083.5	3041.5	1413.7	412.6	1001.1	23.08	13.38	32.92
Henan	6092.0	3089.9	3002.2	1394.9	433.1	961.8	22.90	14.02	32.04
Hubei	3920.6	2015.6	1904.9	868.4	250.5	617.9	22.15	12.43	32.43
Hunan	4360.7	2262.2	2098.5	746.2	209.4	536.9	17.11	9.25	25.58
Guangdong	4426.6	2249.2	2177.5	672.8	132.4	540.5	15.20	5.89	24.82
Guangxi	2840.9	1483.1	1357.9	468.0	112.9	355.2	16.47	7.61	26.16
Hainan	426.7	219.8	206.9	91.0	21.9	69.1	21.34	9.98	33.40
Western China:									
Shanxi	2021.0	1044.4	976.6	333.2	111.0	222.2	16.49	10.63	22.75
Neimeng	1511.9	791.6	720.3	330.8	115.4	215.4	21.88	14.58	29.90
Sichuan	8172.8	4226.1	3946.8	1745.0	551.4	1194.2	21.36	13.05	30.26
Guizhou	2208.5	1145.8	1062.7	804.3	245.9	558.4	36.42	21.46	52.54
Yunnan	2507.6	1285.8	1221.8	941.5	315.8	625.7	37.54	24.56	51.21
Tibet	144.1	71.8	72.3	97.4	38.8	58.6	67.58	54.06	81.00
Shannxi	2306.9	1194.1	1112.8	584.2	198.3	385.9	25.32	16.61	34.67
Gansu	1644.4	847.1	797.3	654.5	226.5	427.9	39.80	26.74	53.67
Qinghai	304.8	159.8	145.0	123.6	43.4	80.2	40.55	27.15	55.32
Ningxia	309.8	158.8	151.0	99.7	33.6	66.2	32.19	21.13	43.82

(Data Source: *China Statistics Yearbook, 1991, p85.*)

Findings from the tables.

The data in the tables are inferred from the China Statistics Yearbook. Table 1 and table 2 are from the fourth national population census conducted in 1990 and the fifth national population census in 2000. From the tables above, we may find following issues:

—Significant Achievement of Literacy Education in the 1990s

According to table 2, it is easy to find that the illiteracy rate in China was very high and the illiterate and semi-literate population was a big number in 1990. Compared with that in 2000, we see that great progress has been achieved in literacy work, including women literacy.

—The left out illiterates and semi-literates is still a big number.

China has enjoyed a great progress in literacy work, but according to Table 1, there are 86,992,069 illiterates and semi-literates left, of whom there are 63204457 that is a big number. It is still a big challenge and problem for China.

— The illiteracy rate is still high in Western China.

Compared with the illiteracy rate in other places, the 12 western provinces and regions have a higher rate, e.g. the women illiteracy rate in provinces and regions like Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Guizhou and Tibet is over 20%. And the western China lags behind the national level in many fields like economy, education and others.

—The women illiteracy rate is obviously higher than that for men across China. The national illiteracy rate in 2000 was 9.08%, and it was 4.86 for men and 13.47 for women. The women illiteracy rate is nearly 3 times than that for men.

Causes for women's illiteracy in China

While it is true to say that women's literacy in China has made great strides, compared with its own past as well as with several other developing countries,

the task has not been finished and a lot of work still remains to be done. The problems therefore need to be looked into and analyzed. Problems such as a large population, vast territory -much of which is rough and mountainous, underdevelopment and poverty, are some of the general factors affecting the spread of literacy. Some of the main causes for women's illiteracy in China are as follows:

Outdated notions and ideas towards women in traditional China

There is an old Chinese old saying that 'a talentless woman is virtuous.' Under this notion, women have been deprived of access to education but other household skills were given importance for women. With the influence of the traditional ideas, women in rural areas still remain low in positions. The poorer the region, the lower is the status of women. In some minority areas the situation is even worse because women are treated as subordinate to men. Consequently, Peasant women, with profound knowledge of agriculture, remained completely illiterate and have been deprived of any formal or non-formal education. In some cases women cannot get support from their families for literacy learning. Resistance mainly comes from their husbands and mothers-in-law. The resistance is stronger in cases where the husband is also an illiterate. Also, this resistance is due to the outdated beliefs that a woman's place is inside the house, and that literacy education is of no use to her.

The vicious circle of poverty and illiteracy

Of course, poverty is another cause for women illiteracy. In developing countries where there is great illiteracy rate among women, poverty is also a big problem and NGOs to solve. In China, especially in poverty-stricken areas in western China, illiteracy rate is higher than that of other places as stated. Evidently, poverty is a cause but also an affliction of illiteracy. There is a vicious circle between poverty and illiteracy.

Household responsibilities of women

In China, especially in rural areas, housework including child-rearing, cooking, cleaning, fetching of water and firewood as well as taking care of family members, are mainly the responsibilities of women. Not only older women but young girls

too are expected to do household chores and are left with no time or energy to attend literacy classes. Moreover, in rural and especially disadvantaged areas, modern household facilities are not common, which makes housework tiresome and time-consuming. Also, large-sized families are often seen in rural areas, which may greatly increase the housework.

Farming work and other responsibilities of women

In addition to family responsibilities, women are given more tasks such as farming work, income-generation including marketing and so on, which have been identified as another cause keeping rural women away from literacy classes or forcing them to relapse into illiteracy. In rural areas men have more free time for other activities than women. This is because many households still stick to the traditional arrangement that indoor chores are women's work even if they are full-time farm workers. Women themselves accept this as natural and make no efforts to change it, particularly in backward or relatively poor areas. Literacy workers find it most difficult to make much progress in these areas.

Literacy education itself

Another problem that was not directly addressed but became quite evident was the ineffectiveness of literacy education itself, including the shortage of qualified facilitators, lack of literacy materials and other concerned issues. In many remote areas, the present facilitators have not received any training on teaching adult illiterates.

It has been identified that, for the rural illiterate women, if learning means just getting to know how to read and write but nothing else, they will have no interest and motivation, thinking that 'distant water cannot quench present thirst. And the fact is that in many cases, literacy mainly focuses on literacy itself in order to help the illiterates pass the national literacy examination and the materials are almost the same as those for pupils but have no functional contents.

Government policies and regulations towards women's progress

In china, educational development is considered a national priority for improving the quality of the population essential for the sustained development of social economy. The elimination of illiteracy is addressed in the developmental agenda. Thus the government has issued laws and policies to ensure the effective implementation of literacy work.

"People's government at various levels shall, in accordance with relevant provisions, incorporate the work of elimination of illiteracy or semi-illiteracy among women into plans for illiteracy elimination and post-elimination education, adopt organizational forms and working methods suitable to women's characteristics, and organize and supervise the relevant departments in the implementation of such plans." (*Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women*, 1992)

China conducts eradication of women illiteracy and prevention. The first is just the literacy education for adult women. The latter is just education for girls, the purpose of which is to prevent them from being illiterates. And law ensures it:

"Parents or guardians must perform their duty of ensuring that female school-aged children or adolescents should receive the compulsory education. When parents or other guardians fail to send female school-aged children or adolescents to school, the local people's government shall admonish or criticize them and, by adopting effective measures, persuade them to send their school-aged female children or adolescents to school, with the exception of those who, on account of illness or other special circumstances, are allowed by the local people's governments not to go to school. The governments, society and schools shall, in the light of actual difficulties of female school-age children and adolescents take effective measures to ensure that female school-age children or adolescents receive compulsory education for the number of years locally prescribed." (*Compulsory Education Law*, 1986.)

Compendium for Women Development in China (2001-2010) issued by the State Council of P.R.China on 22 May 2001 has listed education as one of its topics. And

it includes three parts coming as objectives, strategies as well as social education and training. One of the objectives is that the women literacy rate among adults and adolescents is 95%. It points out that it should be continued to mobilize social sectors to participate in literacy education. When translated into action, the document will greatly help promote women literacy in China and finally lead to the all-round development of women.

Difficulties and problems at present

Though the Chinese government has declared that China has reached the goal of illiteracy eradication among adults and adolescents in 2000, it does not mean that all people in China have acquired basic literacy. Till now, about 376 counties have not fulfilled the literacy targets. The number of illiterates and semi-literates is still big, and in some provinces and regions the illiteracy rate remains high. China is one of the nine countries with great number of illiterates. The left out illiterates and semi-literates are mainly located in remote poverty-stricken areas and ethnic group regions, which makes quite difficult to conduct literacy work. Among the remaining illiterates, rural women account over 60% of the total.

In some places, there are limited funds and few innovative measures for literacy work. And in some places that have passed the national assessment, there is a high rate of illiteracy regression. Furthermore, the social mobilization has been decreased and the participation of NGOs and international organizations is not enough. Also, it is difficult for literacy, as a kind of non-formal education, to attract the attention of the public. And research in this field is quite limited.

Government has attached great importance to literacy for women

Besides the above-mentioned laws and policies, there are policies like *Regulations for Illiteracy Eradication* issued by the State Council in 1988 and *Guidelines for Literacy Curricular Reform* by the Ministry of Education of P.R.China in 2002, etc. In these policies, women literacy was addressed as a priority field and given much importance. And the government has conducted many propaganda campaigns to make literacy known and encourage more participation, and taken

many actions to raise funds, provide materials and necessary facilities for literacy education. Also, the government agencies on agriculture, forestry, health, etc. have also been mobilized to take active participation in literacy for women, which helps improve the functionality of literacy in China.

The specific actions and measures are as follows:

— Establishment of leading and coordinating groups for illiteracy eradication; a financial support system for illiteracy alleviation; a mechanism of monitoring and evaluation for literacy education; adult schools for farmers' education; schools for women; integrated and fully made use of all kinds of social resources for farmers' training; organization of women's learning of relevant knowledge in terms of literacy, science, techniques, management, marketing, laws and other kinds of skills to meet the needs of modern agriculture and market economy. Through the above mentioned, women's quality in terms of literacy, science and technology and spiritual condition has been improved, and the awareness of participating in social activities has been greatly increased.

Integrated basic education with illiteracy eradication for women

Experiences from practice have shown that China's success in illiteracy alleviation is linked closely with the promotion of school enrollment and consolidation of post-literacy. People have recognized, through decades of practice, the significant role of popularizing basic education in illiteracy alleviation and the interrelations between basic education and illiteracy alleviation. It is concluded that the failure in basic education will directly lead to the generation of new illiterates. Therefore, the Chinese government, over the past decades, has tried best to popularize nine-year compulsory education and has achieved remarkable progress. There has been a great increase of school enrollment rate, retention rate, graduation rate and popularity rate, and the number of students studying in primary school was 133.70 million with 95.90 percent of school enrollment rate in 1995 and 130.13 million with 99.11 percent of school enrollment rate in 2000. In the meantime, local education departments have mobilized those who did not enter schools or dropped out from schools with the age above 15 years old to return to schools for re-education.

The promotion of the enrollment rate and retention rate has helped prevent the generation of new illiterates, which greatly reduces the target learners of literacy education.

Literacy education should be oriented to the actual needs of learners.

To mobilize illiterate women to participate in learning, the Chinese government, on one hand, has taken propaganda campaigns to popularize governmental policies relating to agriculture and reiterated the significance of illiteracy alleviation through mass media and the cases that illiterates got rich through learning literacy and techniques. On the other hand, the contents and methods of education for illiteracy alleviation have been reformed in order to increase the functionality of literacy education. The teaching contents include language, practical arithmetic, knowledge of daily life and skills, knowledge about the society, and knowledge of conducting marketing and small business, healthcare for women and children, family education, and family's financial management, etc. And the word-oriented illiteracy alleviation has been converted to knowledge- and skill-oriented literacy education. Meanwhile, literacy has been combined with the training of practical skills to make illiterates learn one or two techniques in order to change their traditional styles of production and life, and to improve their quality of life. Examples of such combinations are literacy and sewing, literacy and weaving, literacy and chicken raising, etc. This kind of class is especially attractive to housewives and has achieved very good results. As far as teaching methods are concerned, a series of flexible methods have been adopted according to the disparities among regions in terms of economy, culture, education and custom, such as centralized learning, decentralized learning, teaching classes and learning groups etc.

The support of various sectors of the society

Besides the government action, women literacy in China has won the support of many organizations such as The All-China Democratic Women's Federation (now the All-China Women's Federation), the peasant associations, trade unions, Communist Youth League, etc. They provide not only funds but also personnel for literacy education. E.g. the Women's Federation has initiated the activity for

women to learn literacy and practical techniques and also the Educational Plan for Out-of-school girls; the Youth League has organized the 'Project Hope' and organized volunteers for women literacy in poverty-stricken areas; and the universities and colleges have organized students as volunteers for literacy practice in rural areas in their summer vocation. All these actions and activities have joined together to promote the literacy education for women in China. Also, some factories, enterprises and NGOs have contributed to the literacy course in China.

Prospects for women literacy in the coming years

Due to the large population of China, the number of illiterates is still very big in China. And the illiterate population is distributed mainly in poor rural areas and ethnic group regions in Western China. The average schooling years in Western China are only about 6.7 years. Moreover, 55 million among the total of 86.99 million illiterate populations are women. Therefore, there is a long and hard way to go for illiteracy eradication among women in China.

In the coming years, China should place emphasis on the following aspects of women literacy.

Initiate literacy projects by the governments at all levels

Determination and specific measures of the government are the premises of illiteracy elimination that involves various aspects and consequently needs the active participation of all social sectors. Literacy education is usually conducted in poverty stricken rural areas with low level of social development, weak infrastructure and backward education. Hence literacy promotion and poverty alleviation should be integrated and it is a complex and long-term course. It is unimaginable and unpractical to accomplish this goal without national will and determination.

In 2002, and the State Council has issued a document entitled 'Proposal for Illiteracy Alleviation during the Fifth Ten-Year Development Plan' submitted by the Ministry of Education and other 11 ministries, and another proposal entitled 'Strategic Plans for Illiteracy Alleviation and Popularity of Basic Education for the Western Regions'

has also been implemented, in which the achieving of the targets set in the illiteracy alleviation and popularity of basic education by 2007 is highly highlighted, and this is considered as one of the most important tasks in the development of Western China by the central government. Local governments should also focus on literacy education. Special emphasis should be put on the illiteracy alleviation of the people below 25 years old, to prevent the generation of new illiterates among this age-group people. Special projects will be launched and implemented for illiteracy alleviation among women. Besides, literacy projects will be launched for poor rural areas, and projects for ethnic group regions will be initiated for 22 less populated ethnic groups; and projects for women will be implemented, in order to increase women's educational level and awareness of health care, to increase women's social status and their capacity of participation in social affairs.

Reduce school dropout's rate and maintain the achievements of illiteracy alleviation

In this regard, compulsory education should be popularized and the school dropout's rate should be controlled. Moreover, new illiterates should be controlled at a great extent and illiterate population below 15 years old should be provided with compensatory education by local primary schools and middle schools to reach the national literacy criteria.

The role of adult schools should be fully recognized. Under the principle that literacy should integrate the learning of culture and techniques, training should be provided to the people between 15 to 50 years old who have completed literacy education in order to enhance continuous education after illiteracy alleviation, and maintain the achievements of literacy education and increase self-learning capacity of those who have attained basic literacy skills. Moreover, women's capability in obtaining new knowledge, technology and adaptability to social changes should be further strengthened.

Establishing a needs-oriented mechanism for illiteracy eradication.

A literacy mechanism oriented to learners' needs is essential to increase the quality and efficiency of literacy education, and help adapt to new challenges in

the 21st century. Literacy education should have more functional contents meeting the actual needs of learners. Specifically, women's learning should be emphasized and needs should be considered during the curricular reform; local primary schools, middle schools and adult schools should provide the women learners with opportunities for continuous education and other trainings. The contents of illiteracy alleviation should be further expanded to, for instance, applicable techniques, policies and laws, sanitation and health, family education and environmental protection, etc. that are closely related to people's daily life. Moreover, multi-approaches and methods for literacy education suitable for women's learning characteristics should be explored; evaluation methods of literacy education should be reformed and more attention should be paid to the evaluation of literacy education process and no longer focuses only on the results, e.g. the evaluation focus can be shifted from the number of words learnt, to the comparison between the life quality pre- or post-learning.

Encouraging and mobilizing the Society

It has been identified that, to effectively carry out innovative literacy activities in China and do it continuously, it is necessary to involve governments at various levels and NGOs into it and turn the individual intention and action into the community intention and action. And the literacy activities should involve the agencies of agriculture, forestry, education, science and technology, health and hygiene, etc. Also, the social forces should be mobilized to participate in illiteracy eradication, and coordination agencies for literacy education should be organized and tasks should be allocated to respective offices and people. Regarding women's illiteracy alleviation, tasks should be distributed to specific villages and responsible persons. The State will continuously reward those organizations and people who contribute most to literacy education, and newly added funds for illiteracy alleviation will be rewarded to the regions with great achievements for women literacy Education for illiterates is the starting point of civilization, and a basic work for promoting the quality of civilians of the country. And illiteracy alleviation for women is an issue relating to gender equality and socio-economic development of the whole society. The 21st century is an era of information, and calls for higher quality of women. Therefore, it is essential to make policies and take effective actions to help women to overcome all kinds of barriers they face in learning

knowledge, and to further promote women's emancipation. We all believe that the emancipated women are one of the major forces for the development of human society.

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Order Out of Chaos : Repositioning Africa for Globalization Through Lifelong Learning

Akpovire Oduaran

Introduction

At the turn of the new millennium, Africa continues to be saddled with conflictual situations that are incisively chaotic. In times like this, lifelong learning schools in Africa cannot afford even to claim foundational innocence with regard to the chaos that continue to trail and weaken different efforts aimed at improving the lot of Africans and securing their future in the context of globalization and its numerous impacts on the people. What we seek to do in this brief discussion, is to critically examine some of these often underestimated conflictual situations with regard to their possible effects on obliterating the people's awareness of the need to comprehend and compete in globalization on the one hand and reducing their interest in embracing lifelong learning projects on the other. Thereafter, we would attempt to propose some strategies for lifelong learning protagonists to consider in accelerating the rate at which Africa should and could reposition itself for effective competition in globalization.

Gap in Knowledge

A survey of the literature on analysis of conflictual situations in relation to globalization and lifelong learning in Africa has not yielded enviable results. The most relevant and insightful discussion revealed in the literature has centred largely on "pure" globalization issues or globalization in relation to the information age. For example, while Walters (1997) has assembled a whole amalgam of thoughts on globalization in relation to diverse issues on the continent, Nassimbeni and de Jagar (2000) and Cogburn (2000) have addressed the subject in relation to the information age.

Whatever gaps in knowledge that exist in discussions examining globalization and lifelong learning in Africa have been nearly filled by Bhola (1999), who focused mainly on the context of Namibia and Oduaran (2000) who discussed this issue in a global sense. Even though these different and relevant efforts have discussed globalization and lifelong learning as issues which impact one another, there has been relatively less profound and deliberate attempt to draw attention to the conflictual situations that are seemingly weighing down Africa's ability to enter into globalization beyond the mundane level of thought and policy. This discussion seeks to fill with the additional expectation that it might make some propositions that are worthy of consideration and actions. This can only be premised on our understanding of the context of the conflictual situations.

The Conflictual Situations

Ordinarily, it would seem that the conflictual situations being experienced in Africa should be left for governments, politicians and relevant specialists in different disciplines to handle. It is clear, however, that situations are permeating different boundaries of specialization in terms of their impact, and scholars cannot claim foundational innocence. Africa has witnessed immense and devastating conflicts, and the impact varies in degrees from one country to another. It may not be possible to examine all of these conflicts in this paper. It will be sufficient, however, to highlight just a few of them only to the level of raising our awareness and to the extent of conjecturing how lifelong learning might help in developing relevant projects aimed at partly remedying the situation. This is done in the hope that it is only when we have created order out of the chaos Africa is experiencing that the continent might be better repositioned for globalization.

The Theatre of Conflicts

Although largely ignored by the powerful Western media, Africa is notably a continent hunted down by conflicts resulting in numerous deaths and an alarming increase in refugee figures. On the last count, Shah (2000) noted that Africa harbours over 7.3 million refugees and that hundreds and thousands of people have been mowed down from a number of conflicts and civil wars. The scale of destruction and fighting in Africa has been enormous. Indeed, the realities of the conflicts in Africa may be no

less than the one in Kosovo but not much attention has been paid to the calamity. For example, since 1989, an estimated 500,000 people have been killed in Angola alone and this is not inclusive of the estimated 3 million people who have become refugees there (Shah, 2000). Besides thousands of Africans have been slaughtered in senseless conflicts in Algeria, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone (where over 50,000 have been killed), Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan and in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. These trouble spots in Africa have traumatized several interest groups that have been searching for ways of easing poverty in the continent.

Poverty

The UNDP *Human Development Report* (1997) opined that an estimated two hundred and twenty (220) million people in Africa are living well below the official poverty line, and this figure is projected to increase to three thousand (3000) million by the year 2000. And 9 out of the 78 least developed countries included in the 1997 *Human Development Report* are in the Southern African Sub-region alone. To illustrate this prevalence of poverty, Kazeze (1997) had observed that the incidence ranges from 12.5 per cent in Mauritius to a high of over 50 per cent in Mozambique. By the year 2000, the frequently publicized poverty eradication programmes have not made much impact and the pool of the poorest of the poor has been expanding. This expansion applies to the entire world as it does in a profound manner to Africa.

The three billion, half of the estimated six billion people inhabiting the earth today, are living on less than half US \$ a day (Shah, 2000). The reality of poverty is rather scathing in Africa. Illuminating light on poverty in Africa has been shed in the *Human Development Report* (1999) which revealed that although human poverty ranges from a low 2.6 percent in Barbadoes to a high 65.5 of percent in Niger, Africa is one of the worst continents wherein human poverty affected more than a third of the population. Indeed, the Report has revealed that the human poverty index has continued to exceed 50 percent in Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nepa, Niger and Sierra Leone. This implies that for all the listed countries and for some others in Africa that have not made returns on the basis of which the computation was done, poverty actually affects at least half of the population if we are to put it mildly. Furthermore, we are aware that there could be disparities within countries, between regions or districts, and

between rural and urban areas, and between men and women in Africa. Even so, the fact remains that fewer and fewer people in Africa are becoming "successful" or "wealthy" as a result of the several poverty alleviation or reduction programmes being implemented in Africa. Yet, poverty has a way of negatively impacting on people's ability to liberate themselves from grievous and excruciating circumstances in everyday living.

Although there are several manifestations of poverty on the continent that do not need much equivocation, the 1999 UNDP Report has more than confirmed the seriousness of the situation. For example, of the 45 countries that contributed a total trade flow of US\$ 4, 993, 093 and comprising the high human development index in 1997 no one African country was cited in the Report of 1999. Under the same measure, only Libya, South Africa, Tunisia, Algeria, Swaziland, Namibia, Egypt, Botswana, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Morocco, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Cameroon, Congo and Kenya managed to make it to the medium human development rank in 1997. Very painfully, the majority of African countries constituted the low human development rank in 1997 with Sierra Leone taking the rear in the 174th position and Nigeria with all its revenues from oil positioning itself in the 146th rank. This implies that majority of Africans are still living below the poverty line and they will be the participants in democratic practices and processes and in lifelong learning projects. The bulk of Africans are struggling very hard to survive and may not really be feeling the impact of development which, as Shah (2000) hinted, normally implies an improvement in living standards such that a person has enough food, water, clothing, stable social environment, freedom, basic rights etc., to have a fair chance for a decent life. The politicians and their political agenda in different African countries may not have sufficiently provided the people with possibilities for real development. Yet, many Africans are struggling to overcome pandemic diseases.

Pandemic Diseases

It is no novelty for anyone to say now that infant mortality is high in Africa. But even more disturbing at this time is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS on the continent. HIV/AIDS is spreading at a geometric rate in Africa. The 1999 UNDP *Human Development Report* points to the fact that at the end of 1998, the UNAIDS and the

World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that there were 33 million people living with HIV/AIDS. The Report noted that AIDS is responsible for 2.5 million deaths a year, more than twice as many as the 1 million deaths resulting from Malaria (UNDP, 1999). The Report further revealed that 95 percent of HIV-infected people are in the developing countries. On the African continent, HIV/AIDS is known to be seriously eroding life expectancy. Indeed, a loss of 17 years in life expectancy has been projected for the nine African countries with an HTV prevalence of 10 percent or more (UNDP, 1999). Among the nine countries are Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In those countries, it is projected that life expectancy will decrease to 47 years by the year 2010. And that was the life expectancy of these same countries in the 1960s. What this means is that all the huge investment in health services and gains made in improved health and life expectancy over the years will be eroded. To say the least, the future is very bleak for many African nations. The gravity of this problem may not be obvious to many of us now but when you consider the fact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is afflicting more youth than adult Africans then the picture must be clearer to us.

Environment Degradation

Although a global problem, environmental degradation is becoming intractable in the operations of many national governments in Africa. The 1999 UNDP Report describes environmental degradation as a chronic and "silent emergency" that is threatening the livelihoods of some of the poorest people of the world (UNDP, 1999). As already noted, many African nations constitute the poorest of the poor. In an era of environmental degradation, bio-diversity is equally important. Yet, we know that it is bio-diversity that usually cultivates or enhances the ecosystem productivity. In ecosystem productivity, every species, no matter the size, ought to have an important role to play in unity. For it is the unification of the activities of the species that help the ecosystem to have the ability to replenish itself and redeem from disasters. By so doing, the ecosystem is said to be naturally sustained.

Apart from the threat to its natural resources caused by reckless abuses, Africa remains susceptible to the global warming transcending the world and the loss of diversity and extinction. Both the impacts of the Biosafety Protocols of 1999 and 2000 are yet to be felt in Africa. For example, oil-prospecting companies in Nigeria

continue to operate below safety standards. The civil protests of the Niger Delta populations in Nigeria have only attracted more repressions from the government and even the unsung deaths of the people. And in all this scenario, the multinational oil corporations are paying absolute lip service to the development of oil producing communities while helping the Government to retrain its police to be able to deal more ruthlessly with the so-called recalcitrant Niger Delta youths who have been driven to the unavoidable choice of taking up arms in defence of their ruined environments. The misery that oil producing communities have to show for the several years of the abuse of their environment is a quick reminder that the people have more disorderliness to cope with than they could ever imagine. And all of this is taking place in the situation of massive illiteracy of the adult population.

Adult Literacy

In spite of the different efforts Governments in African nations have made to provide schemes of universal education, the progress so far made in reducing adult illiteracy is not cheering enough. For example, the 1997 adult literacy rate for all Sub-Saharan Africa was at 58.5 as against the 58.6 for Arab States, 83.4 for East Asia, 96.1 for East Asia (excluding China), 87.9 for South-East Asia and the Pacific, 87.2 for Latin America and the Caribbean and 98.7 for Eastern Europe and the CIS (UNDP, 1999). The 1997 adult literacy rates point to the fact that Sub-Saharan Africa is very much on the threshold of illiteracy. However, by 1998, adult literacy rates for Sub-Saharan Africa had recorded only a slight improvement. The UNICEF 1999 *Report on the State of the World's Children* revealed that in 1998 Sub-Saharan Africa male adult literacy rates stood at about 60 per cent as against the little over 40 per cent female adult literacy rates (UNICEF, 1999). Without overlooking this issue of the awkward position of adult illiteracy in the continent, it must be noted that in 1997, the UNDP Report (1999) recorded an adult literacy rate of as low as 14.3 per cent for Niger, 20.7 per cent for Burkina Faso, 25.0 per cent for Eritrea, 33 per cent for Gambia, 33.3 per cent for Sierra Leone, 33.6 per cent for Guinea-Bissau, 33.9 per cent for Benin, 34.6 per cent for Senegal and 37.9 per cent for Guinea. Although the rates are an expression of the overall adult population, it is disturbing to note that Nigeria with all its oil wealth recorded 59.5 per cent adult literacy rate in 1997 (UNDP, 1999). Yet, literacy and economics experts observe that a minimum literacy threshold of 40 per cent is needed for development to take place.

Conflictual Situations And Africa's Participation

The concert of forces ravaging the African continent has been selectively highlighted to include conflicts, poverty, pandemic diseases, environmental degradation and adult illiteracy. These are by no means the only forces weighing down the ability of the nations to rise up to the challenges arising from globalization. Before examining their possible impacts on Africa's participation, it might be in order for us to summarise some of the meanings ascribed to globalization.

Globalization

In a continent with four out of the five countries in the world with the biggest debt-repayment burden expressed as percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) in 1994, all the attributes ascribed to globalisation can hardly cut any ice. Most African countries are now cast under the shadow of a heavy debt burden. Indeed, Brazier (2000) in the *State of the World Report* listed the five countries as including Nicaragua with 8000.6 per cent debt-repayment burden, Congo 454.4 per cent, Guinea Bissau 340.7 per cent and Cote d'Ivoire 338.9 per cent. Yet, all these and other comparatively less indebted countries in Africa are being expected to cope with globalization.

Globalization has remained one phenomenon that keeps attracting, confused, conflicting and bewildering definitions. Even though its manifestations are observable in many spheres of life, most of the definitions seemed to have confined themselves to its economic aspects. Consequently, Nassimbeni and de Jagar (2000) have quoted the National Commission for Higher Education Working Group on Libraries and Information Technology in South Africa as describing globalization as a term "that captures multiple changes taking place in the world economy triggered by the dramatic impact of computer-generated information technology in automated production methods and instantaneous communication networks." And Cogburn (2000) confirms the view of emphasizing the economic import of globalization when he hinted that "at its most organic and fundamental level, globalization is about the monumental structural changes occurring in the processes of production and distribution in the global economy". But the truth is that globalization is not really new as we had argued elsewhere (Oduaran, 2000). It takes its roots in the early 16th Century and late 19th Century. But the market, tools,

actors and rules are new. For example, it is now facilitated by Internet links, cellular phones and media networks.

Globalization had always been there for ages. What is really new about its present era is its distinctive features. The UNDP *Human Development Report, 1999*) has described its current distinctive features to include:

- shrinking space.
- shrinking time, and
- disappearing borders.

These features are known to be linking people's lives more profoundly, more intensely and more immediately than was hitherto the case. Irrespective of the meanings ascribed to globalization, the phenomenon is much more than the flow of capital and commodities. It is the growing interdependence of the people of the world just as it is a process integrating not just the economy but culture, technology and governance (UNDP, 1999). Furthermore, globalization is supposed to open new and diverse opportunities for millions of people in the world, including Africa. But it also poses profound challenges to Africa in terms of the nations' government capability to comprehend and compete effectively in globalization.

Possible Impact of the Conflictual Situation on Africa's Participation

Considering the chaotic existence inundating the continent, it is reasonable to suggest that not many African nations are effectively competing in globalization. Although we cannot analyse the situation simplistically, it is almost correct to argue that under situation of conflicts, poverty, pandemic diseases, environmental degradation and adult illiteracy, very few African nations can ever comprehend and compete in globalization.

The emergence of the Internet has facilitated the extension of globalization. The Internet is mediating a global enclave. If globalization is relying on Internet connectivity, then Sub-Saharan Africa is far away from reaching the starting point in the race for globalization. The UNDP Report 1999 has estimated Internet users in Africa as a percentage of the regional population at 0.1. Indeed, the costs of Internet connectivity

are enormous and African countries struggling to shed the heavy weight of their debt burdens can hardly afford it.

Participation in globalization is premised partly on political stability, effective and prudent management of scarce resources. As already hinted above, Africa has remained for too long a theatre of conflicts. Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Rwanda, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra-Leone, for example, can hardly be expected to undertake any serious steps towards effective participation in globalization. Even in the several countries presently experiencing relative political stability, the imprudent utilization of scarce national resources could still pose a serious threat to participation.

Poverty is perhaps the biggest threat to Africa's effective participation in globalization. Globalization requires massive on-shore and off-shore capital movements and investment. It also requires deep understanding of the performance of stocks. But in the situation of massive individuals and national poverty, very little can be expected in terms of capital movements and transfers. It might, of course, be argued that all that poor African nations need to do is to provide the enabling environment for globalization to take place on their shores. That is correct, but, very soon the gap between the rich and poor can become so apparent and overbearing that those who are opposed to globalization in Africa would rationalize and point accusing fingers at the proponents. May be, UNDP's proposition of the Agenda for Poverty Eradication, enunciated in 1997, and based on people's empowerment as key to poverty elimination should have been one way out of Africa's predicament. Unfortunately, like the 1996 pro-poor growth strategy which preceded the Agenda for Poverty Eradication, job creation can only be enhanced by the availability of huge capital investments which is yet lacking in many African nations. African nations that are heavily indebted either to the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund must meet the conditions under which they accepted the loans. Many of such countries, structural adjustment programmes (SAP) have been foisted on them and this is said to have contributed to the contraction of the job market and subsequent loss of jobs by nationals.

As part of the consequences of globalization, privatization of public enterprises is being vigorously pursued under the silent pressure of the globalizing agencies and

nationals with little or no skills are being thrown into joblessness. These situations have made even more complex the ability of many African nations to see their way through the maze of techno-scientific economic manipulation on a global scale. But the problems transcend purely economic boundaries.

The geometric rate at which HIV/AIDS is spreading on the continent poses another major threat to Africa's participation in globalization. Let us take a few illustrative cases. The UNDP 1999 Report indicates the cases of HIV/AIDS per 100,000 people in Africa in 1997 as follows:-

Libya	(0.3)	Zambia	(530.1)
South Africa	(29.6)*	Senegal	(22.6)*
Tunisia	(3.6)	Coted'Ivoire	265.5)*
Algeria	(1.1)	Benin	(39.8)
Swaziland	(270.3)	Tanzania	281.4)*
Namibia	(420.6)	Djibouti	(263.7)
Egypt	(0.2)	Uganda	(249.0)
Botswana	(351.6)	Malawi	(505.4)
Gabon	(120.9)*	Angola	(11.2)*
Morocco	(1.4)	Guinea	(44.0)
Lesotho	(114.3)	Chad	(109.7)
Zimbabwe	(564.4)	Gambia	(43.1)
Equatorial Guinea	(5.0)	Rwanda	(204.9)
Ghana	(01.)	Central African Rep.	(205.4)*
Cameroon	(69.1)	Mali	(35.1)
Congo	(372.4)*	Eritrea	(101.6)
Kenya	(263.1)	Guinea-Bissau	(74.0)*
Democratic Rep of Congo	(80.0)	Mozambique	(33.5)
Sudan	(5.9)	Burundi	(142.5)
Togo	(185.2)	Burkina Faso	(92.2)*
Nigeria	(14.4)	Ethiopia	(35.9)
Madagascar	(0.2)	Niger	(30.7)*
Mauritania	(6.7)*	Sierra Leone	(4.6)*

*= Data refer to year prior to 1997.

The data on AIDS cases per 100,000 people in 1997 in Africa may look innocuous on the surface. But if one takes a close look the rates are frightening for the following nations:

Zimbabwe	(564.4)
Zambia	(530.1)
Malawi	(505.4)
Namibia	(420.6)
Congo	(372.4)
Botswana	(351.6)
Tanzania	(282.4)
Swaziland	(270.3)
Coted'Ivoire	(265.5)
Djibouti	(263.7)
Uganda	(249.0)
Rwanda	(204.9)

Many of these countries which occupy the upper threshold of 200 and above have comparatively less populations. The data on HIV/AIDS cases in Africa reveals that if nothing else, HIV/AIDS bears profound economic costs in terms of lost labour and sick-off days and the eventual death of human labour in which the nations have made huge investments in education and training.

As the HIV/AIDS pandemic afflicts the labour force in Africa, there is no doubt that many governments ran the risk of not having sufficient team of highly educated personnel who can adequately comprehend and participate in globalization/Given this background lifelong learning in Africa needs to assist in repositioning the continent for competent and effective participation in globalization. The question then is how would lifelong learning accomplish this intricate mission?

Improving Lifelong Learning in Africa: Some Propositions

Lifelong learning is not a new concept as such. Elsewhere, I have pointed out that the concept is very old and almost ageless as part of its early expositions

could be credited to the philosophical views of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (Oduaran, 2000). However, it is pertinent to note that the General Council of UNESCO adopted in 1976 a definition as follows:

The term 'lifelong education and learning denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system; in such a scheme men and women are the agents of their own education (UNESCO, 1976).

In the definition adopted by UNESCO, one observes that there is an emphasis on the learner in the evolving learning societies that are emerging globally. It is in this vein that we might want to accept the suggestion made by Longworth and Keith Davies (1996; 21-37) to the effect that we agree with Elli who had proposed that:

Lifelong learning is the development of human potential through continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes, and to apply them with confidence creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environment.

In adapting that conceptualization as our guide in this present discussion, we are placing emphasis on human potential, the improvement of which Africa needs very urgently. This is so because at the centre of globalization processes and globalization is that human element. It is being argued here that one of the best ways of helping Africa to reposition itself for globalization is the pursuit of a human development model that recognizes the equality of all Africans in exploring their inherent abilities to the extent of understanding the root cause or causes of their problems as a people. Thereafter their creative efforts can be challenged or stimulated enough to develop their abilities to mobilize resources for investing in and managing globalization. This we shall illustrate shortly when we move from theory to praxis.

Partnership Between Formal and Non-Formal Education

Lifelong learning apparently embraces educational practices and outcomes in both

formal and non-formal settings. Consequently, modern definitions of lifelong processes have begun to include the provision of credit for experiential learning (Kintzer, 1997). What this means is that for Africa to reposition itself it needs to give equal attention to both the formal and non-formal sectors of the education system.

The latter segment had endured substantial neglect and under-funding for too long. All learning activities outside the formal school system need to be articulated and systematically assisted to improve on their operations in order to help our people to discover and develop their potentialities through the acquisition of globalization-related knowledge, understanding, values and skills cumulatively and throughout life.

Vibrant Quadruple Partnership

There is no lifelong learning system that is an end in itself. Rather, it is always means to achieve an end. And in our own case, we are conceptualizing it as it means to achieving the goal of repositioning Africa for active and effective participation in globalization. In this context, we are suggesting that lifelong learning practitioners and theorists must evolve a system of unifying all the partners involved in business and training in a vigorous partnership.

The partnership being suggested ought to compulsorily bring together the Government, corporations, employers, labour unions, institutions of learning, non-governmental organizations and civil society for the purpose of agreeing on a collective strategy for getting Africa out of the woods. In this case, joint training programmes are to be worked out. But then, the governments should take responsibility for co-ordinating the supply of lifelong learning activities. The one safeguard we need to build in here is that if the government itself becomes the stumbling block to partnering, the civil society must take the initiative for co-ordination. And this is why the different civil societies in Africa may long be over-due for some form of systematic re-organisation in order to give room for valuable and quality leadership.

The partnership being suggested needs not only to be well-focused and organized but also to evolve a system of what Seng and Hwee (1977) term as regular appraisal

and evaluation which is compulsory for relevance and effectiveness. The appraisal and evaluation must go beyond the limit of being ends in themselves or being mere checks on current progress to the level of challenging the development of new areas and drive all partners towards new levels of achievement (Seng and Hwee, 1997). The partnership being suggested will further benefit from our re-examination of other inputs like curriculum reforms.

Curriculum Reforms

It is true that all learning begins from the basic level of learning to read, write and compute comprehensively. But actions being suggested in this discussion require that the curriculum reforms needed in lifelong learning in Africa should embrace the elements and principles of globalization itself as well as the understanding of the contradictions that have been hindering our participation.

Other than the reforms that are required to bring about more profound understanding of the processes of globalization and forces and events slowing down the growth process in Africa, there is a need to involve techno-scientific and technical schemes addressing problems of under-productivity. The laboratories and workshops at all levels and facts of the education system need to be well equipped and funded. Moreover, the industries need to be systematically brought in to strengthen the programmes of education and training. For example, learners could be attached to these industries for hands-on experiences that are carefully monitored and evaluated. Nigeria has a very rich experience with its Industrial Training Fund scheme under which vocational and technical trainees are posted to and sponsored in designated industries for a reasonable length of time for the purpose of their being enabled to acquire practical skills during that attachment. This strategy has been further extended through inauguration of a nation-wide scheme known as the 'School-on-Wheel' programme.

The School-on-Wheel Programme in Nigeria features the mounting of multi-purpose technical workshop on a truck, which tours rural areas with the intention of providing technical skills to unemployed school leavers, who abound in their localities. Although we do not have a publicized evaluation of that scheme, it may

have potentials for quickening the rate of, and expanding the scope for, acquiring technical skills that are lacking so rampantly on the account.

Scholarship Networks

One reality that slows down development in Africa is the apparent weak co-operation among different schools. Sometimes, there is a huge gap in knowledge of what different lifelong learning scholars are doing in different African nations. Sometimes, this gap in communication, collaboration and co-operation is attributed to the differing language blocks into which Africa is divided because of the scramble for and partnership of Africa. That might well be the case, but it is equally true that within the same language group the much-needed co-operation and collaboration is seriously lacking. Consequently, scholars of lifelong learning in Africa are subjecting themselves to the adage which says "what the right hand does, let not the left hand know." For a simple illustration, what lifelong learning scholars in West Africa are doing to promote programmes and scholarship is not profoundly known and valued in Southern Africa and vice-versa. Yet, all sub-regions need to unite their efforts in order to make progress.

If we must make realistic progress in strengthening lifelong learning in Africa, then the building of scholarship networks should be encouraged. That is why it is cheering to know that there is already in existence an International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA). We can propose something of this nature for lifelong learning in the hope that it will expedite the coming together of scholars even where in Africa to examine and design strategies for assisting the entry of the continent into globalization as a principal not an 'under-dog.' But we can do much more than this.

Micro-Enterprises

Micro-enterprises are receiving attention and enjoying the consensus in West and East Africa. Southern African sub-region needs to double its efforts in encouraging and sharing up the growth of micro-enterprises schemes here. It is noteworthy that South African, Botswana and Zimbabwean governments are putting in place different schemes aimed at facilitating the participation of citizens in micro-

enterprises. But, there is need to re-double efforts in strengthening the managerial skills of the operators, so that whatever financial support the micro-enterprises are receiving does not go down the drain. The need for the success of micro-enterprises cannot be emphasized. Their growth and viability is one surest way to ease the large-scale unemployment and poverty that has been the lot of Africa for many years now!

Managerial Reforms

It has been alleged that several management personnel in the public and private sectors of the African economy are yet to comprehend the intricacies and effects of globalization. If it is true, there is hardly any need for one to suggest that these middle level management personnel may require some training in the understanding of globalization and how to build the phenomenon into present and future programmes. The implementation of this suggestion cannot be delayed. As part of the managerial reforms being suggested, African governments need to consider seriously the strengthening of policies and funding of lifelong programmes and projects. The payment of lip-service to the cause of lifelong learning in different countries could only have indicated some degree of unwillingness to get on the "boat" of globalization, no more, no less.

Africa's Opto electronics Development

Globalization is mediated by the modernization of the information technology. We had already drawn attention to the relative weak position of Africa in Internet connectivity. Yet, the continent needs to improve on its Optoelectronics development level. Optoelectronics is the fusion of photonics technologies (the use of photons in delivery mechanisms) with microelectronics (the use of electrons in delivery "mechanisms) with a view to attaining greater efficiencies in data processing and transmission that could have been achieved by electrons only (Cogburn, 2000). It is clear that Optoelectronics has revolutionized the global communication system resulting in the popularity and use of the Internet. Worldwide Web (WWW), Integrated Systems Digits Networks, Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) and the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) beyond what one could have imagined a decade ago. But in all this revolution that has pushed the information technology beyond the

primary level of communication, Africa has yet to catch up or even get started in several countries.

One way Africa can get into the mainstream of the information technology is to invest in it. But in a much more profound way, private initiatives and investment need to be encouraged and promoted by the governments. To be able to do this, the speed arises for the development of infrastructures for the generation and distribution of power.

Towards African Model of Lifelong Learning

One last way to reposition Africa for globalization through lifelong learning is conceptualise and design a lifelong learning discourse model. It is intended that this model would be applied to outlining and explaining the contradiction and weakness in Africa's socio-political and economic policies and programmes. Within the context of the learning discourse model, we would seek to design a situated lifelong learning curriculum. This curriculum would be contextualized such that it can address the dominant disruptive circumstances in any given African country. For example, if this curriculum is directed at Nigeria's Niger Delta region it needs to address the problem of environmental degradation, occupational dislocation arising from the destruction of the people's sources of income, unemployment and human misery within environments yielding over 90 percent of the national income. Or it were focused on Botswana, it may need to address among other dominant issues the problem of HIV/AIDS. And if it were to be continent wide, emphasis may shift to the cultivation of genuine democratic practices, conflicts resolution and poverty alleviation.

Conclusion

This paper has emphasized the need for scholars and practitioners to rise above the prevailing level of foundational ignorance of the concert of forces, events and contradiction in Africa as they influence the development, relevance and effectiveness of our specialization. As a way forward, the paper highlighted for brief discussion the so-called forces, events and contradiction. In doing this, attention was drawn such selected issues as conflicts, poverty, pandemic diseases, environmental degradation and illiteracy.

The highlight of the issues was made even more contextual by means of trying to articulate their effects on the awareness of Africa's peoples and governments of globalization as well as the need to participate more actively therein. It was realized that Africa cannot possibly conceptualise how lifelong learning might help in the understanding of and participation in globalization by repositioning itself unless some propositions have been made. Consequently, the discussion has been concluded with a highlight of some propositions that might mediate the repositioning of Africa for globalization through lifelong learning. It has never been our intention to offer a foolproof modicum for invigorating Africa's participation in globalization. After all there are numerous scholars who do not see much good in globalization but we have taken the opposite position in this discussion. For weal or for woe, there have been gaps in this discussion. But this is good for such gaps could be vital for furthering the desirable debate on globalization as it affects Africa.

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Approach to Rural Development in Developing Countries for Poverty Eradication: Practices of Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Kazi Rafiqul Alam

Introduction

The Beijing Declaration was made on 15th September .1995 in the Fourth World Conference on Women. Progress has been made on gender equality, human rights of women and violence against women is now an illegal act in almost every country. Progress however, is uneven and far from sustained. Women continue to represent the majority of the world's poor. There has been no breakthrough in women's participation in decision-making process. They have no voice to improve their situation. To address these multi-faceted gender issues, it is essential to take an integrated approach.

To get a more comprehensive picture, rural dimension should be added to this. World Rural Women's Day is celebrated to highlight the special contribution that women make to rural communities around the world. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that women produce more than 50% of the food grown worldwide. Women play a central role in the agricultural sector, bearing the burden of household tasks and off-farm income generating activities while maintaining responsibility for family nutrition, food security and child-care.

It is thought that if advances are to be made in reducing world poverty, women must have access to appropriate education and training from basic literacy training to technical training. World Bank reminds us that when women farmers were allowed access to a primary school education, farming yield increased by 24%. Educated women are also more able to make informed decisions on crop and

technology selection, capital allocation and credit schemes, health and nutritional issues. The Message of UN Secretary-General for International Women's Day - 8 March, 2003 states that promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women represent a new way of doing development business.

Situation of women in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the developing countries with a low literacy rate for women the literacy rate is half of that of men. Girls go to school late and drop out first with slightest economic jerk, with no scope for sustaining the literacy that they might acquire. The girls have no say over their marriage at whatever age it may be and almost no control over the children to be begotten, divorce mostly is at whims of the men, marriage is rarely registered rendering legal remedy difficult. Women and girls are last to be fed and least to be clad. In most poor families women and girls are the last and residue eater having least nutrition with the result first to fall sick and last to go for medical service, if at all. The women have little ownership on the assets of the family, little control over the family decision. They have no employable skill training whatsoever, their movement outside the family is somewhat controlled, they have little scope for working in the productive sector, so the poverty rate is double among the women. Thus the women have a very low status within the family and the society. The women are not quite aware about their own rights and still less is the possibility of realizing such rights. They do not know how to promote their cause and how to achieve equality with men.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) was established in 1958. It works in Consultative Status with UNESCO and in operational relations with UNESCO. It is a Non-Profit Non-Government Organization in Bangladesh working for the poor and the disadvantage group of population particularly the women. It has a large number of interventions in various socio-economic fields but education is the basic component in all relevant interventions. It addresses the problems of the society through field level programme implementation and awareness creation through its IEC (information, education and communication) materials.

DAM Strategy on Women Development and Gender is based on the premise that literacy facilitate development of the women, their empowerment and gender

equality, DAM started its literacy programme in late seventies. After working for few years and imparting literacy to a large number of illiterates, DAM could understand that while literacy is the essential pre-requisite, retention of literacy is the necessary condition to achieve sustainable development, achievement of gender equality and thus empowerment of the women.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission believes that men cannot be divorced of in the matter of women development and promotion of the cause of women, and gender equality cannot be achieved without willing cooperation of their male counterparts. DAM's strategy in this regard is to approach the situation through education for both males and females and providing development information, skills training and micro-credit for the women. This strategy of DAM is implemented through a programme of Ganokendras (Community Learning Centres). If Empowerment means selfconfidence and exercising control over decision that effects the women and the family, if Gender is a social construct and Gender Equity ushers Empowerment, then DAMs Ganokendra Programme is the answer.

Ganokendras' Evolution - past, present and future

Catering to the needs of the rural women through Ganokendras is an evolutionary process spreading to and covering more and more fields of activities according to the needs of the women towards promotion of their interest with the goal of improving their status and for that matter gender equality in the family and the society. In 1992, the programme was started with 20 Ganokendras and around 2000 members mostly for continuing education and post-literacy of the neo-literate women. Gradually new elements were added to the activities of these centres by the community as they felt the needs. For example poverty alleviation and income generation activities were added in 1995, supplemented by skills training and micro credit. Water and sanitation activities were covered in 1997 and anti-drug and anti-tobacco activities were introduced in 1998. With the increase of the incidence of child and women trafficking in the country, particularly in the border districts in the west part of the country, child and women trafficking awareness activities were added in 2000. The main objectives of various activities however, remained as women development and promotion of gender equality.

Programmes of Ganokendras

Starting with 20 centers in 1992 on experimental basis the number of effective Ganokendras now stands at 807 spread over 7 districts of the country having membership of 80700. The Ganokendras are organized and managed by the groups of neo-literate women with necessary support from DAM in the form of books, materials, technical know-how (capacity building training support) and at times some seed money for micro-credit. One Facilitator (woman) is recruited by the community for initiation of activities and operation and supervision of the Center. The overall management responsibility lies with the Management Committee democratically formed by the community people.

These Centres have been gradually transformed into a focal point for community development and creation of awareness on various social and economic issues particularly related to women. At the centre, neo-literate women, the local educated community and the neighbouring people gather, read books, newspapers, and journal and discuss their family problems, identify issues for community attention or raise them to appropriate authorities. Participants, especially girls and women, get exposure out of family situations, which widen their mental horizon and brings forth a positive attitudinal change towards improvement of their status in the family and the society.

The following are the general objectives of the programme:

- (i) Improvement of the status of women in the family and the society
- (ii) Organizing a community library and developing an institution through which lifelong education and skills training can be provided to the neo-literates women
- (iii) Enabling the people to network with NGOs and government agencies for availing the services for improvement of the quality of life of the community especially the women

Process of Organizing Ganokendra

In organizing Ganokendra need assessment surveys - household surveys, resource identification surveys and motivational campaign are undertaken in each of which, the programme beneficiaries / women are closely involved. The household surveys or baseline surveys are conducted to make an assessment of the situation of the needs of women in the community as well as of the individuals that needed to be addressed through the programme.

The resource identification surveys conducted in most cases, simultaneously with the baseline surveys which are aimed at identification of material resources, including accommodation of the center, resource persons, possible programme personnel, membership, financial resources (including local contribution) etc. During the process of need assessment survey, consultation meetings at the community level are organized with the beneficiaries of literacy project of DAM and others, the community members, field personnel of DAM and also of some other NGOs working in the area. All the clientele groups come to a consensus regarding the objectives and functions of the Ganokendras and also regarding their management and operation. The beneficiaries actively participate in selecting sites for the Centres, identifying members and planning activities to be undertaken at the centre level.

Operation and Management of the Ganokendras

The overall management of the institution is vested with the management committee formed by the local people where the women have very important role. Members of each Ganokendra raise funds for undertaking activities at the local level. Usually land for the Ganokendra house is donated by the community. The members provide voluntary labour and building materials for construction of the Ganokendra buildings (normally tin-shed Kutcha house). The Management Committee mobilizes the local contribution in the form of furniture, books and reading materials and games and sports apparatus. The members of the Ganokendra also pay subscriptions regularly and raise funds for payment of honorarium to the community worker, sharing cost of training and for miscellaneous expenditure.

In addition, local elite and community members contribute towards setting up and operation of the center. Support from DAM for the Ganokendra is generally provided in the form of training, technical services and supply of materials (posters, leaflets, books and reading materials) during the initial years of operation. DAM's field staff supervises and monitors the activities of the Ganokendra and attends monthly management meetings to provide guidance and advisory services.

Since the members of the Ganokendras decide about their own activities, each Ganokendra has organized different activities depending upon local needs and interest. Of the 807 Ganokendras, 247 implement programmes on income generating activities with seed fund from DAM. In some cases, Ganokendra members are linked to other NGOs operating in the locality for providing skill based training or offering micro-credit for poverty, alleviation and improvement of the status of the women.

Monitoring and feedback

The activities and performance of Ganokendras are regularly monitored through a system specially developed for the purpose. The monitoring mechanism brings out information on management and functional aspects of the Ganokendras. The monitoring reports also highlight weaknesses and shortfalls and bring these to the notice of the DAM for corrective measures.

Impact

The Ganokendras have their tremendous impact on social, economic and gender promotion aspects of life of the women in the project areas. Some of the contributions made and changes brought by the Ganokendras are described below:

- (i) The Ganokendras contributed substantially towards promotion of the quality of life of the people in general and the women in particular. The skill training, micro-credit and expansion of awareness and knowledge are the contributing factors. -There are many success stories of the very poor women and with very little literacy who could improve their status in the family and the society

participating in decision making on equal footing with their male counterparts.

- (ii) The Ganokendras work as awareness creation centres for the community on issues like women development and gender, drug abuse, environment, population growth, water and sanitation, infant mortality, HIV/ AIDS etc. which have favourable impacts in the life of women. For example awareness about necessity of marriage registration, legal provision for divorce, control over their own bodies in child-bearing etc. has made it possible to take legal measure for enforcement of their rights and as a result cases of divorce decreased. Awareness about population growth decreasing the number of child birth, safe water and sanitary practices including 100% coverage on sanitary latrines reducing water-borne diseases and awareness about health and nutrition has been contributing towards improved health status of the concerned families.
- (iii) The Ganokendras are used as training centres for various skills training and crafts training etc related to income generation and improvement of life and living of the women. Training in employable skills contributes towards self and wage employment for higher earning and thus empowerment of the women.
- (iv) There are various service delivery organizations remarkably in the Non-Government Sector and particularly for the women. The Ganokendras are used as service delivery units for the women by such organizations. For example, the Ganokendras are utilized by the health related service providers for immunization, by the veterinary personnel for vaccination of poultries and cattle, by some NGOs as credit distribution centres, savings accumulation, pooling of group resources, co-operation and poverty alleviation, women mainstreaming etc.
- (v) The Ganokendras are utilized by the community people as the centre for their cultural, sports and recreational activities - cultural events, sports

and games competition and recreational activities are organized through these centres which develops spirit of cooperation and working together. This ultimately contributes towards social peace.

- (vi) Woman constitutes about 70% of the membership of the Ganokendras. The Ganokendras are run by women leaders - the Community Worker or the facilitator who remains in charge of the Ganokendra is invariably a woman. The centres work for sensitization on various legal and social aspects particularly important for women. Females are now more conscious of their position and actively participate in the decision making process in the family and in the society on equal footing and more active in protecting their rights.
- (vii) Men are not however excluded from the Ganokendra activities. They participate as general members of Ganokendra, are included as Members of Ganokendra Management Committee, participates in various Ganokendra-based activities including, gender promotion, cultural programme, awareness creation programme, fund raising, promotion of education programme of the children - reducing drop out in schooling, and also getting benefits from other service providers.

Sustainability

A decade back the first group of 20 Ganokendras were organized. Now there are 807 such Ganokendras in the country - Bangladesh with some 80,700 direct beneficiary families. In fact 80700 communities are getting direct/indirect benefit out of this programme. The programme is running successfully and has been the source of better understanding, more involvement in decision making in equal footing with the males and improved quality of life for most of the members in the communities. Although at the beginning some assistance including technical and financial, from Dhaka Ahsania Mission was necessary with the passing of time the Ganokendras became self-sustaining and DAM's assistance is gradually withdrawn and the women run the Ganokendras by themselves.

The sustainability plan includes full understanding among the initiators at the very beginning about withdrawal of DAM's support within 5 years. Seventy-five Ganokendras have now become self-sufficient and do not need any help from Department of Social Welfare of the Government of Bangladesh as distinct organizations. Apart from these a substantial number of the Ganokendras will become self-managed within a short time. However, DAM will remain available for guidance and will provide training if required by the Ganokendras.

The following are the main reasons why the Ganokendras have become a sustainable concept as a programme of gender equality in the rural areas:

- (a) The Ganokendras are owned and managed by the local people - the women members of the community but the whole community enjoys the benefits.
- (b) The Ganokendras provide the opportunity for self-development of the women through improvement of literacy achievement and increased earning supported by micro-credit.
- (c) The Micro-credit which is an important input towards income generation is administered and managed by the women groups themselves as per the well-developed system covering sanction and repayment of loans, deposit of weekly savings etc.
- (d) The Ganokendras have become a central place in the rural setting where all issues of local and social interests are discussed with participation of male and female members on equal footing and decisions are taken in a democratic manner.
- (e) The Ganokendras are education based centres. Information, education and communication are at the core of the system. The knowledge base provides the fundamental optimism of its sustainability through change of attitude of the women towards life and improvement in behaviour & cultural pattern.
- (f) The Ganokendras through creation of awareness among the women on economic and social issues, pattern of use of natural and non-renewable resources, changing production and consumption pattern etc., revolutionized the thinking process of the hitherto ignorant people.

- (g) Dhaka Ahsania Mission as the catalyst of the concept, has a phase out plan. The phase out plan is developed in consultation with the women organizers. As such mental and physical preparations among the women are always there to continue the activities of the institution by themselves on a sustainable basis.
- (h) The Ganokendras is a flexible concept, new dimensions are possible to be added if that is beneficial to the individuals and the community. The Ganokendras are free to gather physical and financial resources from any source and introduce any action programme they like.
- (i) The Ganokendras aroused consciousness on civil rights, women rights and child rights and paved the way for development of leadership traits among the women by virtue of role-play in group formation and management of the Ganokendra and expansion of the boundary of knowledge.

Replicability

The Ganokendra programme for education and information based women development and gender equality in the rural areas is replicable within the country, in the region and even globally. Within the country it is extensively tested and from the initial 20 Ganokendras now the number of Ganokendras has exceeded 800 spreading over several districts of the country. In the Region the model is replicable in situation of low income and with low level of literacy but determination for promotion of the cause of women. Several countries of the region more or less have the similar economic and social conditions as that of Bangladesh and as such the model is widely replicable in the Region. Globally also the programme will be replicable. What is necessary for replication of the programme is a spirit of cooperation and working together for common interest among the women and to be earning members and thus to improve their status in the family. Of course a group of people with necessary know-how and organizing ability is a precondition for successful replication of the concept. In fact within the country several organizations have already replicated the model and in some countries

viz., Pakistan and Nepal the model has already been replicated in their context. As has already been noted several national and international organizations have published the model in their literature or published the same as separate booklets as an innovative, effective and replicable model.

It may be noted here that some organizations including UNESCO have highly appreciated the model and published the same for replication in the Asia-Pacific Region, either as a separate book or as section of their relevant publications. Some of these are noted below:

- a. *Beyond Literacy - Ganokendra* - A book published by Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE).
- b. *Ganokendra : the Innovative Intervention* - published in the Handbook on Effective Implementation of Continuing Education at the Grassroots by UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok
- c. *Innovation and Experience in the Field of Basic Education in Bangladesh* - published by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

Challenges

Challenges of the programme include those in the process of organizing the Ganokendras and also in running the same. Some of the challenges are lack of 'appreciation and understanding about the model to begin with, lack of willing cooperation of the community, difficulty in finding appropriate accommodation, fully motivated facilitators/ social workers in the rural areas who are invariably women, non-availability of suitable reading materials and seed fund for income generation activities etc. These however, could be overcome and the model now successfully run by the women in the rural community.

UNESCO-Paris in their Internet Magazine *The New Courier* No.2 - April, 2003 brought out a feature in the Literacy for Change Section with the caption: *Literacy in Communities -Village Revolution*. In this feature Brendan O'Malley of UNESCO showed the literacy aspects of the Ganokendras citing two case studies. But there are thousands of such success cases, of the Ganokendra Programme. He casually

mentioned that ... *But perhaps more significant is the ebullience and confidence of the women of the village, characterized by the fact that Hira did not have to think twice about inviting a group of outsiders to look around her family, compound. Through her use of literacy she had liberated herself from the constraints of male-dominated traditions, as well as from many aspects of poverty: and now her husband ask her to borrow books for him to read. In the early days, many of the women who returned home late from the classes were beaten. Men didn't think we should leave the house for anything, said Hira. But now attitudes have changed completely. The status of women has been raised a lot. Now if someone says your wife needs to go for training in Dhaka, the husband will gladly agree.*

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Towards Sustainable Development Through REFLECT Methodology in Tanzania: Major Trends and Lessons

Eustella Peter Bhalalusesa

Introduction

This paper focuses on major trends and lessons drawn from a pilot project (Community Level Basic Education-CLBE) by Action-Aid Tanzania that has been implementing REFLECT methodology in two poor and rural communities in Tanzania. The approach used to collect information for the evaluation consisted primarily of desk study and field visits to the project areas where face-to-face interviews and focused group discussions were conducted with REFLECT instructors, participants in the REFLECT circles, district officials and community leaders. One notable observation is that where properly implemented REFLECT Methodology is very potential in conscientising and empowering poor communities to play active roles on matters concerning their own development. However, REFLECT approach is not a panacea. In its ideal form REFLECT methodology may not help much to solve the problems of increasing adult illiteracy. It would appear therefore, that a country like Tanzania would need to make the implementation of REFLECT methodology context-based. The brand REFLECT approach has to be creatively modified to suit the social, economic and political realities of the Tanzanian communities. Strong political commitment in the provision of resources as well as continuous technical support by and for the facilitators is also a necessary pre-requisite.

The Tanzania Vision 2025 targets at a high quality livelihood for all Tanzanians through the realization of, among others, universal primary education and the eradication of illiteracy. Within the Vision 2025 context, education is the strategic agent for mindset transformation and for the creation of a well-educated nation,

sufficiently equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to competently and competitively solve the development challenges, which face the nation. In light of this, the education system is being transformed qualitatively and quantitatively, with a focus on promoting a science and technological culture at its lowest levels, giving a high standard education to children and adults. The Vision emphasizes the need to ensure that science and technology, including awareness of its application for promoting and enhancing productivity and reducing people's vulnerability to poverty, permeates the whole society through continuous adult learning and publicity campaigns. Within 'the same context, the Ministry of Education and Culture has decided to adopt the REFLECT Methodology as an appropriate approach to provide adult basic education in the country. Several pilot programmes have been launched and these have demonstrated some positive results as well as some lessons.

In this paper major trends and lessons drawn from a pilot project (Community Level Basic Education-CLBE) by Action-Aid Tanzania that has been implementing REFLECT methodology in two poor and rural communities in Tanzania are analysed. One notable observation is that where properly implemented REFLECT Methodology's very potential in conscientising and empowering poor communities to play active roles on matters concerning their own development. However, an argument is also made in this paper that although, REFLECT approach may play a great role in bringing about sustainable development, it is not absolute.

Unless some modifications are made to make it context based, REFLECT methodology in its ideal form may not help much to solve the problems of increasing adult illiteracy in Tanzania. Strong political commitment in the provision of resources as well as continuous technical support by and for the facilitators is also a necessary pre-requisite. The descriptions and conclusions given in this paper are based on an evaluative study to assess the impact of the CLBE project for the period of four years (1998-2002) it has been in operation.

The approach used to collect information for the evaluation consisted primarily of desk study and field visits to the project areas. The desk study involved detailed analyses of documents to delineate information relating to the rationalisation of the

project establishment, implementation process as well as to overall progress of the project. The field visit involved five weeks of comprehensive work in programme site where face-to face interviews and focused group discussions were conducted with REFLECT instructors, participants in the REFLECT circles, district officials and community leaders. Interviews were also used to collect information from the officials within the Ministry of Education and Culture (Adult Education Unit). The field visit also provided an opportunity for direct observations of REFLECT circles and some activities/projects performed by participants of the REFLECT circles.

The paper begins by highlighting the origin and meaning of the REFLECT Methodology as well as its development in Tanzania. This gives basis for third part that describes the implementation of the CLBE project with specific focus on the REFLECT methodology. The fourth part illuminates the main achievements as well as emerging issues observed from the project implementation. The last section provides the major lessons and recommendations for improved practice.

REFLECT Approach: Origin and Meaning

The evolution of REFLECT approach can be linked with the initiative by Action Aid in the early 1990s to explore a new approach that would combine adult literacy and social change. REFLECT is the acronym for the Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Community Techniques. It is based on the theory of conscientization, a theory pioneered by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Emphasis is placed on dialogue and action, awareness arising among population, co-operation and empowerment. Under this approach, adult learners take time to explore development challenges they are experiencing and together they find ways to overcome them. Such issues become a basis for learners to be taught literacy and numeracy skills.

Communities are encouraged to use these skills to solve their personal and community problems, and generate income to improve their livelihood. Therefore, REFLECT is a participatory learning process reflecting upon their socio-economic, cultural and political commitment. It builds people's confidence enabling them to make decisions that will improve their lives and act upon them. This empowering process gives an opportunity to freely discuss any issue including sensitive cultural traditions.

The role of a facilitator in this context is to play the part of a core learner to create an environment where every one can learn and contribute as equally as possible. Their main task is to keep the interactive dialogue on track.

REFLECT was established by Action Aid and first used in El Salvador (South America), Bangladesh (Asia), and Uganda. REFLECT is now used in over 60 countries to tackle problems in agriculture, HIV / AIDS, conflict resolution and peace building. This article attempts to demonstrate how REFLECT is used as a poverty alleviation strategy to tackle problems of poverty and bring about sustainable development.

Development of the REFLECT Approach in Tanzania

The introduction of REFLECT approach in Tanzania can best be understood by looking back into history of the various approaches/ models that were adopted in the field of adult education in Tanzania since early 1960s.

Immediately after independence in 1961, the government adopted the Fundamental Education Model promoted by UNDP/UNESCO during the period 1946-1964. Adult basic education in this model was restricted to acquisition of reading and writing skills as an end in itself. The teaching and learning process did not take into account different needs, interests and characteristics of adult learners located in different local circumstances. Effort was geared towards teaching as many learners as possible within the shortest time since majority of the population was illiterate. At independence, for example, 85% of the total population (80% men and 98% women) did not know how to read and write (*Nationalist Newspaper*, 24 August 1967).

Due to weaknesses inherent in the Fundamental Education Model and following the Teheran Congress in 1965, UNESCO in collaboration with UNDP launched an environmental functional literacy programme between 1967-1972 in eleven developing countries (including Tanzania), to find out the most effective means of eliminating illiteracy in these countries. This model, modified from the fundamental education model was adopted with the assumption that there was a positive correlation between illiteracy and socio-economic development.

Through the functional literacy approach, literacy education was conceived as a means to an end. Hence, it was defined as the ability to read, write and count as well as acquisition of functional skills and knowledge about socio-economic conditions and one's daily life activities. At the level of practice, however, functional literacy ended to be restricted, to improving vocational skills, or simply, to work-oriented aspects of literacy programmes related to issues of priority to the nation in the area economic development. Tanzania's Five Development Plans (1961-1974) for example underscored the importance of functional literacy but mainly in so far as it would raise and improve agricultural productivity particularly related to cash crop production without taking into consideration the fact that the majority of people were still subjected to poverty and miserable living conditions.. Within this narrow notion of development, functional literacy found itself severely limited hence, could not eradicate illiteracy. Learners most of whom were women were de-motivated and as a consequence withdrawn from adult 'basic education classes. Studies conducted in the 1990s (Carr-Hill et al., 1991; Kater et al., 1992) indicate that adult basic education activities started to deteriorate in the mid 1980s and since then ceased functioning.

As a response to the Jomtien Conference on Education for All in 1990, and following the findings of studies conducted in the early 1990s and the national literacy survey of 1992 which showed adult basic education activities have almost ceased to operate, Tanzania had to re-consider the functional literacy approach. Tanzania adopted UNESCO's conception of adult basic education, as an educational provision for adults that meet their basic learning needs'. Within the same context the government designed an Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) in 1993 to increase access to quality sustainable basic education for adults and out of school youths, through the development of learner-centred and community based approach.

Four wards were selected for the pilot phase (*Kiroka in Morogoro, Kishinda in Mwanza, Soni in Tanga and Sembeti in Kilimanjaro*). With the financial assistance from African Development Bank (ADB), ICBAE was scaled up in another eight districts in Tanzania mainland. These were Masasi, Newala, Songea Rural, Tunduru, Nachingwea, Liwale, Biharamulo and Kigorlla.

In recognition of the positive impacts of REFLECT methodology in countries where it was first used (El Salvador, Bangladesh, and Uganda), Tanzania decided to adopt the REFLECT approach in the ICBAE pilot areas in 1998. Within the same year, Action Aid -Tanzania (AA Tz) began undertaking a long-term community based education programme (Community Level Basic Education -CLBE) in two rural districts (Kigoma Rural and Liwale) of Tanzania. Within the two districts, two divisions (Ilagaia in Kigoma and Makata in Liwale) were selected in which communities were to use REFLECT approach to tackle development issues and learn literacy. The project was for four years (1998-2002) and was funded by DFID.

The CLBE Project and implementation of the REFLECT approach

As indicated earlier, Action-Aid Tanzania (AA Tz) started to undertake the long-term community-based education programme since October 1998, in Kigoma Rural and Liwale districts. The purpose of this development initiative was to enhance provision of quality basic education for poor people, especially girls and women through the introduction of complementary, flexible educational initiatives linked to the formal school system of Tanzania.

Accordingly, due to high levels of illiteracy, the focus of adult education interventions also was to provide basic literacy and functional skills to men and women of ages between 15 and 50, with special emphasis to women, the majority of whom were among poorest socio-economic group.

The project was taken as complementary to the key issues, which the Ministry of Education and Culture is trying to address through Education Sector, Development Programme (Ed-SDP) and as a major contribution in developing strategies to ensure access and equity so as to maximise educational opportunities for the poor.

The REFLECT approach to adult literacy is a sub-component within the CLBE project. This sub-component was initiated as a developmental tool not only to facilitate the 3Rs, but also to enable communities realise that they are responsible for their own development.

Following this, REFLECT circles were meant to be nucleus for identifying and discussing community problems at village level as well as for offering opportunities to share, discuss and learn practical issues that were important to their lives.

Since then Action Aid has been using REFLECT approach to adult literacy and it has drawn interest in communities and government circles. The circles have increased in number and the magnitude of participants attending sessions, while participation of educational officials at local and national levels has increased tremendously. By December 2002 there were about 42 REFLECT circles (4 in Makata and 38 in Ilagala) with an enrolment of 1324 learners and 64 facilitators as indicated in the table below.

**Adult Learners and Facilitators in REFLECT Circles
(December 2002)**

Project Area	Learners			Facilitators		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Makata (Liwale)	115	126	241	13	6	19
Ilagala (Kigoma)	-	-	1283	13	32	45
Total			1524	26	38	64

Each of the REFLECT circles is managed by a committee of about 5 people. Members meet at least twice a week for about 2 hours. Some of these REFLECT circles undertake projects ranging from farming, gardening, carpentry, brick making, diary goats and poultry keeping as income generating activities for the circle members. More efforts have gone into getting the groups move beyond this to get more involved in exploring poverty issues among them.

At times the circles provide good source of advise to community related activities. For example due to failure of crop sale during the last season in one of the project areas (Nambunju in Liwale District) REFLECT circle it was suggested to the village to rehabilitate the road leading to the village to enable vehicles reach the village. When the villagers undertook road rehabilitation work, they have been able to sell their crops, because vehicles have been able to get to the village after road was rehabilitated. So road maintenance has started paying off to the villagers as a result of REFLECT circle initiatives.

Elsewhere, REFLECT circles have mobilised villagers in well water cleaning whenever it was necessary. In Makata village, REFLECT circles have sparked the village community to start using bricks in construction of their houses, something, which was not there before, and the circle boasts of good sale and profits for its brick making industry.

REFLECT relies on volunteer facilitators who are chosen from among men and women in the community who can read and write. The facilitators receive a honoraria of Tshs 10,000 per months from Action Aid. The communities are supposed to contribute the same amount or give non-monetary support to the facilitators.

Summary of achievements as observed from the project

Overall the implementation of REFLECT Methodology has demonstrated positive results although this was not without some challenges.

(1) REFLECT circles have become focal points for discussing community problems like water issues, roads, soil fertility and health, HIV/AIDS and agricultural issues. REFLECT methodology has given communities the opportunity to explore consciously why they are poor and what factors affect them. (2) Income generating activities (although in small scale) have been initiated and these activities keep the circle members together and earn them income to improve their livelihood.

Accordingly, it has created an opportunity to explore effective ways for collective action, all of which would not thrive in a migratory life style, which has been characterizing the pilot project areas. (3) Gender disparity has been reduced among REFLECT members and activities can be done with less gender bias. Families have learnt to share workload and plan together in the best interest of the family. (4) More involvement of women in development efforts has emerged in both areas.

There is increased confidence among women to participate in various meetings, and talk in public. Women can now participate effectively in discussions, contest for leadership positions and make their voices heard. (5) There is an increased

awareness among people. They now know that problems are not God given. This awareness has not been the result of telling people "how things are" but a process where people learned through experience, and which allowed them to question their reality independently. One participant from one of the project areas had this to say: "REFLECT has indeed opened up our eyes. It has changed our attitudes and the way we look into things. Now we know that there is a lot we can do for ourselves instead of waiting for the government to do everything for us. REFLECT circles are better-organised groups in the villages, which can be used in the annual planning process and as important analysis point on community problems.

Emerging issues

Examining the achievements so far realised through the use of REFLECT approach and the way these have been accepted by both the community and the government, one sees a bright future. However, the project has not been free from challenges.

Small scale projects in REFLECT circles

One of the challenges observed within the two communities and in the four pilot areas for the ICBAE programme is that, although, income generating activities have been initiated among REFLECT circle members, and assist them to earn income, they are in small scale to bring about considerable and notable impact on poverty alleviation. For example, gardening and/or keeping 15 chickens' for a group of twenty-five participants. It should be noted that for REFLECT Methodology to bear the expected outputs as a developmental tool, participants need to move away from small projects into large scale projects. Nonetheless, such projects need considerable amount of capital investment.

Accordingly, it needs skilled and knowledgeable facilitators who are able to lead the participants to analyse their problems and come out with feasible solutions. It also demands facilitators who are innovative and capable of leading the participants into viable project identification and project proposal write up. Therefore, continuous technical and material support is imperative.

Based on the experiences gained from this project, it would appear that the whole philosophy of REFLECT approach is still unclear among practitioners in Tanzania. Even in other places where REFLECT methodology is being implemented (in the four pilot areas of the Integrated Community Basic Adult Education) similar observations have been made (see for example, Mbunda, 1996; Swai, 1999; Mushi & Bhalalusesa, 2001).

The circles are led by untrained and voluntary facilitators most of whom are primary school leavers. Hence, their knowledge in project identification and proposal write up is limited.

Balancing literacy training and pressing community problems: The dilemma

Although REFLECT Methodology has demonstrated ability in assisting communities to analyse; plan and implement community actions, it was not evident as to what extent the use of REFLECT Methodology has helped to reduce the rate of illiteracy in the participating communities. Even illiteracy component was still here, it was not the prime objective. The REFLECT circles were used more as a 'social or community forum' than literacy learning circles. It became evident that whereas the participants in the REFLECT circles appreciated the importance of being literate, they also felt that this alone would not solve their immediate pressing problems.

They found it more urgent to learn how to design and run small income generating projects because they believed it would increase their income and liberate them economically. Therefore, more emphasis was placed on organizing the community for collective reflection about various aspects of their lives.

This is a big challenge given that Tanzania has to improve by 50% the current literacy rate from 68% to 84% in twelve years to come, as indicated by the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (2000). According to the Dakar Framework, countries have to achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015. In other words the gap that existed in 2000 should be halved. Unfortunately, REFLECT methodology in its ideal form is meant to help participants tackle practical development problems of which literacy training (if and where necessary) is just a part but may not be a priority.

Project's acceptance and ownership by beneficiaries (sustainability)

This was another emerging challenge. In Tanzania sustainability is a common setback to most projects that depends on donor funding. Experience demonstrates that many donor funded projects fail to continue once donor assistance is reduced or withdrawn. This project in which REFLECT practice was implemented was community based hence its ownership was supposed to rest upon the community. It was anticipated that by the time of the evaluation, the positive aspects of the programme such as increased awareness on the importance of education, increased enrolment in REFLECT circles, and general improvement of the quality of education would be evident. This would have stimulated the community to continue with the same spirit.

However, the impression we got from the community members indicated that they were in a dilemma as to whether or not they were truly ready to accept and take over the responsibilities of sustaining the programme. For example, during the four years of the project operation, Action Aid Tanzania had funds from DFID to run the project. Therefore, it provided continuous technical support (training workshops) and allowances to the facilitators, something which the local communities were unable to sustain. Failure to maintain this kind of support is likely to affect the motivation and commitment of facilitators. An alternative would have been for the district councils to take over these responsibilities. But, this was also uncertain given that currently, adult education activities in the country are inactive with less government support.

Lessons learned and recommendations for a way forward

Based on what has taken place for the four years, what overall picture can we draw out of the CLBE project? Accordingly, how can we explain this big picture? What lessons can we draw from the experiences of experimenting REFLECT approach for sustainable development? Overall, it would appear that when and where properly implemented REFLECT methodology can be a viable vehicle for sustainable development. Through its process of analytical dialogue people learn not only to share ideas but also to realize that there is much they can do for and by themselves even to what may appear as an insuperable problems. Indeed,

communities have huge capacities to work to improve their life conditions in their areas when they are fully motivated and their energies well taped. However, the challenges experienced also indicates that REFLECT methodology as a whole is not a simple operation.

Certain conditions have to be met for successful results, and these offer good lessons for Tanzania in its efforts to scale up REFLECT methodology countrywide. Accordingly, REFLECT is a new approach still in its early development stages. As a new approach, it involves a significant change process and indeed a new learning experience within the education system. Like any other innovation, successful initiation and implementation depends on a number of interrelated variables.

The need for social mobilisation and advocacy

REFLECT is a new approach still in its early development stages. As a new approach, it involves a significant change process and indeed a new learning experience within the education system. Like any other innovation, successful initiation and implementation depends on a number of interrelated variables including its clarity on it's meaning to potential users and the degree of difficulty as experienced by users during implementation.

Apart from these, successful implementation also involves analysis of the social conditions in which people work and the planned and 'unplanned activities that mayor may not influence the productivity of a given change. Therefore, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture needs to take a more proactive role in social mobilization and advocacy. Action Aid Tanzania has produced several documents and booklets about the implementation of the REFLECT methodology in Tanzania.

The government could learn from such experiences. Indeed, a change programme, which is strong in quality and practicality, needs to be well thought out and planned. However, experience has shown that any innovations are adopted for political expediency. Hence, the time line between the initiation decision and start-up is too short to attend to matters of social analysis, clarity, quality, as well as practicality.

The need for political commitment and government support

Throughout the paper, it has been observed that REFLECT methodology can do a lot in helping communities to analyse and solve development problems confronting them. However, REFLECT methodology also needs some considerable capital investment in recruitment of competent personnel and financial support to initiate income generating projects.

In the context of harsh economic realities and insufficient resources, realisation of this approach depends for the most part on the voluntary consent of the government in power in the allocation and distribution of resources. Therefore, government needs to revive its commitment and interest to the adult education sector. Otherwise, the good philosophy of REFLECT methodology will remain more of a paper work than reality.

The need for a holistic multi-sectoral approach

The experience gained in the two project areas has shown that education alone is not a panacea to every problem. Poor communities have multiple interrelated problems calling for a multi-sectoral approach. This calls for the government and other interested parties to look for alternative funding possibilities, which will allow more investments in diversified programmes that address other aspects of peoples' lives such as HIV/AIDS and improvement in agriculture.

The need for trained and skilled facilitators

It has been demonstrated clearly that REFLECT methodology demands skilled, knowledgeable and innovative facilitators capable of leading participants into fruitful dialogue, as well as into feasible project designs. Unfortunately, in Tanzania, adult education activities continue to rely heavily on untrained volunteer facilitators most of whom have very low educational attainments. Adult education activities also depends much on primary school teachers who apart from taking this as a part-time job also have proved to be unsuitable to working with adults.

There is need therefore, for the Ministry of Education and Culture to collaborate with Action Aid Tanzania to improve capacity of facilitators and practitioners at

different levels through training especially in the philosophy of REFLECT methodology, project identification, design and management as well as in cross cutting issues like HIV/AIDS. While facilitators could be recruited from a pool of existing human resources within the communities, training could be in the form of workshops, seminars and field trips to learn from successful practices within the country. These initial or short-term training should be followed up by in-service training' at regular intervals as well as incentives for motivational purposes.

The need for a context based REFLECT practice

The insights gained from countries with long experience in REFLECT practice (like Asia) indicates that although, literacy is always a key aspect in REFLECT, emphasis to learn literacy is different from context to context. Phnuyal (2002) noted for example, that in Asia REFLECT practice has several models. The literacy focused, REFLECT practice model gives priority to literacy training and takes basic literacy (reading, writing and numeracy) as a key aspect for the personal as well as the collective empowerment of oppressed groups and communities.

Another model is the community-action whereby more emphasis is placed on organizing the REFLECT circles as social forum to identify problems and explore new opportunities. REFLECT approach provides participants with a framework for critical self and social analysis, as well as a 'basket of tools and techniques' for this analysis; although, a key objective of the participants can be learning literacy. The third model is the People's Rights focused REFLECT Practice model which is more prominent in Bangladesh.

Nepal and India where the major emphasis is on enhancing people's rights movement through REFLECT work. In this model same as in community-action focused REFLECT practice model, the literacy component may still be there but it is not the primary objective. REFLECT is aimed at strengthening people's organizations, which aim at securing or protecting people's rights.

It would appear therefore, that Tanzania would need to learn from such experiences and make the implementation of REFLECT methodology context-based. In other words, the brand REFLECT approach has to be creatively modified

to suit the social, economic and political realities of the Tanzanian communities. In places here there is still pockets of high illiteracy rates for example, the literacy focused REFLECT practice with emphasis on mastery of the basic 3Rs (reading, writing and numeracy) is recommended while in other places with very little percentage of illiteracy rate the community focused REFLECT approach could be adopted.

A need for partnership and collaborative effort

Action Aid Tanzania has clearly demonstrated that there are considerable efforts made by NGOs in addressing development issues such as education. By their nature and mode of operation NGOs work very closely with the target population and their impact is directly felt and appreciated by the communities. For example in this pilot project Action Aid has been able to penetrate the remote and isolated areas of the country where government provision of basic education and other necessary social services was not available.

However; subsequent analysis of the findings from this pilot project and also from other related works (see for example Mushi et al, 2001 and Mushi and Bhalalusesa, 2002) indicate that most NGOs operate in isolation and are not co-ordinated by the government.

The fact that they operate at a small scale and are able to directly reach the target population they have a chance of becoming more popular than the government. Sometimes NGOs are mistakenly perceived to be operating another parallel system. There is therefore, an urgent need for the government to recognise the role played by NGOs and coordinate them. NGOs should be recognised where they add value to development and the mode of operation should be of partnership and co-operation.

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Lessons from Adult Education Programmes in the East and South-East Asian Countries: A Case Study of Thailand

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The prevalence of high rate of literacy in the East and South-East Asian countries has evoked considerable interest among administrators, academicians and activists of South Asian countries which have a comparatively lower literacy rate and are keen to catch up with their neighbours. As against 83.4% and 87.9% adult literacy in the East and South East Asia and Pacific, the adult literacy rate in South Asia was 52.2% in 1997.¹ While the number of adult illiterates declined in East Asia from 324 to 281 million during 1970-90; in South Asia, there was actually an increase from 302 to 397 million. (See Table No.: 1) How did East and South East Asian countries succeed in achieving high literacy? What type of literacy programmes

Table No.1
Adult illiterate (age 15 and over) and illiteracy rates

	Adult illiterates (in millions)				Illiteracy rates (%)				Decrease
	1970	1985	1990	2000*	1970	1980	1990	2000*	% points
World Total	890.1	965.1	962.6	942.0	38.5	29.9	26.9	22.0	-16.5
Developing countries	842.3	908.1	920.6	918.5	54.7	39.4	35.1	28.1	-26.6
Of which: Sub-Saharan Africa	115.0	133.6	138.8	146.8	77.4	59.1	52.7	40.3	-37.1
Arab States	49.7	58.6	61.1	65.8	73.5	54.5	48.7	38.1	-35.4
Latin America/Caribbean	43.0	44.2	43.5	40.9	26.2	17.6	15.2	11.3	-14.9
Eastern Asia	324.1	297.3	281.0	233.7	46.8	28.7	24.0	17.0	-29.8
Southern Asia	302.3	374.1	397.3	437.0	68.7	57.7	53.8	45.9	-22.8
Developed countries	47.8	57.0	42.0	23.5	6.2	6.2	4.4	2.3	-3.9

*. projected.

Source: UNESCO: Cited in Daniel A Wagner, "Literacy and Development", *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol.15, no:4, 1995.

did they devise? What was the role of primary education in the East and South East Asian countries? Are there any lessons to be learnt from the adult education programmes of East and South East Asian countries? Although scholars argue that universal primary education is the single most important factor which has contributed to the higher rate of literacy in most of the countries of the region,² the role of adult education programmes in the liquidation of illiteracy cannot be ignored, specially because of the continuation of the problem of drop-outs and never enrolled (out of school) children.³ Studies have shown that all those children who enter primary school may not leave it with an enduring capacity to read and write and within a short period, a section of them may relapse into illiteracy. Without an effective component of adult education programme, it may be difficult to achieve universal literacy. Since most of the countries of the region have designed and implemented a variety of adult education programmes during the last fifty years, it would be interesting to review them so as to identify effective strategies and exemplar practices which could be adopted or adapted in other regions. The scope of this paper is, however, limited to Thailand mainly due to its rich and varied experiences in the field of adult education.

East and South East Asia: General Scenario

Countries in contiguous areas of South East Asia and East Asia, notwithstanding the noticeable political differences, language and culture have undergone sweeping changes in economy and society during the last fifty years. Of the twenty three countries in this region; China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam have not only experienced great disasters of warfare and invasion but also achieved great feats of national survival and regeneration. Korea stands divided. China has repudiated the policies of Mao and struck out in new directions. South Korea, Taiwan, HongKong and Singapore have witnessed modern economic growth and have moved to establish more open societies. With the liberalization of economy and reshaping of their trading relationship, most of the countries have opened up to foreign direct investment. These counties are characterized by high macro economic stability, per capita income and sound governance. As a consequence of rapid social and economic development in this region, there has been tremendous improvement in several indicators of human development.⁴

Education has expanded enormously in most of East and South East Asian countries resulting in a general increase in literacy rate. Adult literacy rate in Asia has risen from 48% in 1976 to 72% in 1997. As against 98.7% of adult literacy in Developed Countries, East Asia had 83.4% adult literacy rate in 1997. There is considerable disparities in the overall literacy rates in the countries of the region, ranging from a low of 58.6% in Lao PDR to a high of 97.2% in the Republic of Korea (See Table No.2). Countries such as Korea, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand already had high literacy rates by 1970. All the countries of the region have shown deep commitment to combat illiteracy and developed different types of adult education programmes. Where the economy is planned, adult education is approached in a deliberate way and is linked with development plans as in Lao, Vietnam, and China,. In these countries, illiteracy is seen as a major impediment to development.

Concept of Adult Education

There is diversity within the region regarding the use of the term 'adult education' and the meaning attached to it. During the last fifty years the countries of the region have brought out the several policy statements which defined the concept and programme. In Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, the term nonformal education is used to cover all the activities organized for out of school population. In China adult education is defined as 'worker peasant education' and it's scope is very wide including civic and political education as well. The main objective of Chinese adult literacy programme is to meet the needs of rural people in acquiring knowledge, recreation and enhance their ideological and ethical standard and improve their productive capabilities and quality of life.⁵ Singapore is well known for it's civic education campaigns.

The Lao PDR uses both the term literacy and complementary education to cover adult education programmes. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam calls adult education complementary education. In both these countries, complementary education includes development of technical skills among workers and inculcation of political awareness. In industrialized countries like Singapore, Korea and HongKong, vocational education is not considered a part of adult education, except in retraining or updating initial training.

Table No.2
Adult Literacy In Selected East & South East Asian Countries

Country	Adult Literacy (%) 1997		Estimated No. of Adults	Public Spending Education			IMR		GNP per Capita
	Total	Female (000)		As% GNP	Adult Edn. %	Primary Edn.	1995	1994 US\$	
Singapore	91.48	7.0	196	3.26	-	26.8	6	23360	
Korea, Rep. of	97.2	95.5	697	4.46	-	41.9	223	8220	
Malaysia	85.7	81.0	2057	6.10	-	33.4	13	3520	
Thailand	94.7	92.8	2613	3.80	1.66	52.8	32	2210	
Philippines	94.6	94.3	2234	2.97	-	-	53	960	
China	82.9	74.5	166173	2.56	2.78	36.8	47	530	
Indonesia	85.0	79.5	21505	2.22	-	-	75	790	
Vietnam	91.9	89.0	2916	-	-	-	45	190	
Mayanmar	83.6	78.8	4913	-	-	47.7	150		
Lao PDR	58.6	46.8	1170	2.35	3.79	42.2	134	320	

Source: *Human Development Report 1999*, pp.134-137, 229-231. *Impact of Non Formal Adult Education in the Asia Pacific Region - 1997*, pp.20-21.

They equate adult education with education for leisure.⁶ However, vocational oriented programmes are a significant component of adult education in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand.⁷ In Indonesia, promotion of literacy is inseparably linked to the pursuit of peace and progress.⁸ However, functional literacy is not an end in itself but an essential means to assist the individual and his society to deal with the increasingly complex problems which the process of development engenders. In fact different countries have a different approaches but common factor are the development of basic literacy skills, functional literacy like agricultural techniques, health care etc. aimed at development and enhancing civic awareness among poor. Thailand goes beyond this and tries to promote "critical thinking" among adult learners. However, none of the countries in the region equates adult education with literacy though some give prominence to it. In almost all the countries, the target group is rural poor and urban slum dwellers. Both mass and selective approaches have been adopted in different countries to tackle illiteracy. All the countries differ significantly with regard to planning and

management of adult education programmes and have a comparatively low budget allocation in the range of 1.66% of total budget on education in Thailand to 3.79% in Lao PDR.⁹

The Case of Thailand

Among the East and SouthEast Asian countries, record of Thailand has been spectacular in terms of all indicators of development. Thailand, relatively speaking, is a large country (with the exception of China) not only in terms of population but also in respect of the national endowment. It was the fastest growing Asian economy till 1995. It has registered highest average real GDP increase of almost 10% per annum during 1988-95 compared to 6% per annum in the preceding eight years. Compared to Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, China, which allow little open dissent, Thailand has a liberal democratic polity.¹⁰ Unlike most of the counters of the region, Thailand has designed and implemented a number of innovative adult education programmes very effectively. The rich and varied experiences of Thailand in the field of adult education may provide valuable insights to the policy planners from other countries of Asia.

Society and Culture

Certain special characteristics of Thai Society and culture have been very conducive for planning and implementation of adult education programme. Thailand (meaning 'land of free') was never colonized and has always been able to 'select, adopt and adapt' and hence there was speedier acceptance of what was selected. Constant but select borrowing has been continuing characteristics of development process in Thailand.

The majority of population of being Buddhist (95%), there is an heightened awareness among masses about social problems and issues and a-keen desire to participate in community development activities. There are 3,57,048 Buddhist monks and 30,179 monasteries in Thailand which have also been playing an important role in educating the masses. The 'khitpen philosophy' and 'Kalamasutra' which are corner stones of the Thai society have been instrumental in motivating and mobilizing the masses for common action for development.¹¹

According to 'khitpen' philosophy, the ultimate goal in life is happiness which needs to be defined by each individual. Happiness is linked to the extent to which

man and his environment are in harmony. Education must aim ultimately to increase man's happiness and search his harmony.

To achieve harmony one should gather the widest range of information on technical and social environment.¹² Hence education is accorded an important place in Thai Society. The presence of large number (2000) of non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in community work in Thailand has further given a tremendous boost to adult education programmes.

Thailand is a small country, sandwiched between two great civilizations of China and India. It has a population of 59.7 million with a GNP of US\$ 2210 in 1994.¹³ It has a low fertility rate of 1.7 and IMR of 32 (See Table No.2). It spends 3.80% of GNP budget on Education (1.66% on adult education).¹⁴ It has an impressive adult literacy rate of 95.1%. (97.2% male and 93.9% female).¹⁵ While eastern region of Thailand has 99% literacy, the north eastern region has literacy in the range of 96-98.9%. Over the years, there has been gradual increase in literacy rate (See Table No.3). In view of the excellent socio-economic indicators of development Thailand stands out among the countries of the South-East Asian region.

Table No.3
Literacy Rate in Thailand (Age 10+)

	Literacy Rate in Thailand (Age 10+)					
Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	1996
Total	70.8	71.8	87.4	93.4	94.2	95.1
Male	80.6	88.9	92.3	95.6	96.3	97.2
Female	61.0	74.8	82.6	91.2	91.0	93.9

Source: Department of Non Formal Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand.

Non-formal Education

A distinguishing feature of Thai education system is the consistently high priority accorded to basic education since the enactment of compulsory Primary Education Act in 1921. All the subsequent policy documents of 1932, 1940, 1977 have accorded top-priority to basic education.¹⁶ While the World Conference on

Education For All held in Thailand in 1990, proclaimed the eradication of illiteracy by year 2000 in Asia, the Thailand's National Social Economic Development Plan of 1992, projected education as a life long process and stressed the need for strengthening non formal education. Since 1979, all types of adult education programmes in Thailand were known as Non Formal Education. The objective of non-formal education is to "provide a second chance education to support and promote learning activities for youth and to organize an informal learning environment for the public".¹⁷

During the last six decades, a variety of non formal education programmes have been tried out in Thailand which can be broadly categorized into four: (i) basic education programme including literacy, primary and secondary education; (ii) Vocational Education Programme; (iii) In-formal Education through libraries, village reading centres, museums etc, (iv) Distance mode-through radio and television. Although Thailand has had a strong tradition of adult education and had adopted compulsory primary education as early as 1921, the first national government survey in 1937 revealed 68.8% illiteracy among the population of over 10 years of age.¹⁸ In order to liquidate illiteracy, Thai government adopted campaign approach. Systematic attempts were made over a period of two years to plan a comprehensive curriculum and literacy materials.

Thailand launched two major literacy campaigns during 1940-43 and 1983-87. These campaigns were aimed at providing an opportunity for those who have not completed the fourth grade of education and are unable to read and write simple Thai language. The campaign was based on the principles of voluntary participation, individualized instruction, decentralized operation and well designed curriculum. The duration of the campaign was one year divided into two parts of six months each. Total contact hours were 200. All those who attended 70% of classes were given a certificate of basic literacy.¹⁹ Compared to fourteen million people who participated in literacy campaign during the first phase, nearly five million (588,518) attended during the second phase.²⁰ Thai literacy campaign received Noma Literacy prize for its success in mobilizing village volunteers, officials of government and NGOs.

Functional Literacy Programme

During 1950s, when the concept of Fundamental Education was propagated by the UNESCO, Thailand responded by evolving the Work Oriented Functional

Literacy through integrated curriculum of literacy and vocational skills. Later in 1969, this approach was modified with the inclusion of problem solving abilities to assist villagers in coping with rapid socio-economic changes. Thus the aim of functional literacy programme implemented since 1971, was to achieve the dual objective of teaching literacy skills and of assisting learners to cope with problems in their daily lives.

Specific programme aimed at providing: people having no chance to study in the formal school system with an opportunity to receive education which was functional in content and at the same time entitled them to obtain certification equivalent to primary and secondary Education. It was expected that through this programme, out of school youth and adults would continue to acquire knowledge and skills and become better prepared for work and at the same time have access to higher education. These programmes were organized, by walking teachers, volunteers, Buddhist monks, for hill tribes, factory workers, military persons, prisoners and all others interested in learning.²¹

Functional literacy programmes are of two types. The programme which has a primary school equivalency certification combines the teaching of literacy skills with issues of development, problem solving and critical thinking abilities. The curriculum is based on the needs and problems of the target groups. It is divided into three parts. 60% of contents is region based, 20% national based and 20% local based (to be determined by the instructor and learners on whatever topics they may find of interest). The total duration of curriculum is 200 hours. The learners with 70% attendance record would receive a certificate which entitles them to secure rights and privileges as Grade 4 primary school pass outs.²²

An important aspect of Thai Functional Literacy Programme is the provision made to cover people with special needs and living in far off and remote areas. A major group of illiterate population is hill tribes who live in the Northern parts of the country. A special curriculum for the hill tribes was developed by integrating relevant knowledge and information for the hills tribes with the national primary curriculum. The syllabus included four components: Thai language, arithmetics, fundamental knowledge and skills. About 25 % of the curriculum is based on issues of national concern, 50% on the general problems of hill tribes and 25% on locally relevant issues.

Thus adequate weightage is given to the special needs of target groups. The learning process is self paced. Each learner can learn accordingly to his/her schedule.

Competency based tests are available to assist the learner to measure progress. Compared to 6000 hours of learning by primary school children, adults will have to spend 2800 hours of learning. To begin with, trained teachers are sent to live in the hill areas. Later local people are trained to take over teaching. A village education centre is constructed with the help of the local community to serve as a learning centre and as well as lodging for the teacher. The villagers are free to visit the centre at their convenience to learn and engage in discussion with teacher. The teacher becomes local resource person who organizes classes for both adults and children and provides relevant information both directly and indirectly to the community.

The Hill Area Education project was initiated during 1980-81 and catered to 272 villages in 10 provinces by 1988. Not only did it succeed in liquidating illiteracy from isolated pockets, but also gave a boost to the promotion of literacy in Thailand. The percentage of literacy increased from 71.8 to 93.4 during 1970-90.²³

Post Literacy Programme

One of the striking features of Non-formal Education System is the provision of well planned programme of post literacy so that the neoliterates do not relapse into illiteracy. This was attempted through the organization of Reading Centres, setting up libraries and launching reading campaign.

Village Reading Centres

It is widely known that neoliterates must have access to reading materials in order to retain and further develop their newly acquired skills. With a view to encouraging reading and setting up village Reading Centres, government provided select villages two daily newspapers and other periodic reading materials and handbooks if villagers undertake to build a simple centre and establish a local committee to manage it. By 1987, there were over 27,000 Village Reading Centres in the country.²⁴

Temple Reading Centres

To further accelerate the expansion of Reading Centres in the rural communities, the Ministry of Education encouraged the setting Reading Centres within the compound of monasteries. The project was well received and within a short time, over 2,000 temples were able to set up Reading Centres with donation from the public.

Public Libraries

In addition to public libraries at provincial and district headquarters, Thailand has setup mobile libraries using boats, motor-cycles, book vans, book boxes to cater to the readers residing in far of places.

Good Books for Villagers Campaign

In order to increase the supply of reading materials to the rural areas, several measures have been carried out; a series of fifty pictorial booklets dealing with a wide variety of topics were developed with the cooperation of professional writers and were distributed to every village of the country; requests have been made to the major rural development agencies to be aware of the needs of neo-literates and to modify their print materials accordingly; all provinces have been given government support to produce simple wall newspapers focusing on local news, information and utilizing village writers; a major campaign to donate used books for villagers was conducted during 1984-85. Over one year period, close to 10 million books and magazines were donated by the public.

The materials were classified and sent to rural schools, village reading centres and public libraries; a private organization named "Good Books for Villagers" was set up to promote production and distribution of suitable books for villagers. The organisation produces low-cost printed materials for sale, certifies books which are appropriate for villagers and encourages book publishers as well the general public to support increased supply of books to the rural areas²⁵

The Reading Campaign

Along with the campaigns to eradicate illiteracy and to increase the flow of reading materials to the rural areas, Thai government also launched a Nation wide Reading Campaign in 1984. The campaign aimed at promoting reading habits among children, youth and the general public. The campaign began with training workshops for teachers, librarians and key personnel involved in the promotion of reading. Some of the activities promoted in the Reading campaign were: Reading Competition, Book Exhibition, Reading Circles, Animated book presentation and story-telling, Training workshop and development of reading promotion manuals, Campaign to promote reading through various forms of mass media.²⁶

As recommended by the National Educational Development Plan (1993-96), Thailand has set up a variety of learning networks for providing life long learning for public and students. They are set up in monasteries, mosques, Churches and public places and are known by different names, such as education centres, community education centres, learning centres etc.²⁷

Continuing Education Programme

A variety of skill oriented Continuing Education Programmes have been organized to provide the opportunities for neoliterates to upgrade their literacy skills and utilize them for the improvement of life as well as acquire educational qualifications comparable with, Upper Primary Education, Lower Secondary Education and Upper Secondary Education. These are offered through various forms of equivalency continuing education programmes.

The curricula used are based on the formal school curricula with 4 major modifications as follows: The contents are grouped into different major topics which can be taken in one semester rather than spreading over a period of two years. Thus, the students can reduce the time taken to complete any level to half of the formal school system. The academic subjects such as Mathematics, Sciences, English, Thai are not taught in isolation but are integrated with discussion of problems in the daily life of the adult learners. Regional and local variations of contents are also given due importance. The student can choose to study through the classroom approach, distance education or self-study. In the classroom approach, the students attend evening classes in the formal Secondary Schools or participate in learning groups organized by Walking Teachers, regularly 3-4 times a week. In the Distance education approach, the students learn through radio programmes, self-instructional materials and monthly tutorial sessions. In the self-study approach, the students can select any learning materials they desire and prepare themselves for the equivalency examinations. They are however, required to participate in periodic learning activities organized at a central place.²⁸

Distance Education

Thailand has more than twenty years of rich experience in distance education. In recognition of the increasing demands for functional and equivalency education, the radio and correspondence education programme was launched in 1977 to serve people who are unable to attend regular classes. Today Thailand has 525 (FM&AM)

radio stations which are used for broadcasting knowledge oriented programmes, providing advice and stimulating innovative ideas on various socio-economic issues. It has set up Thaicom Distance learning Centre in 1996. Distance Education Programme is one of the most popular and effective programmes of non-formal education in Thailand. For instance, in the Samat Sakom Primary School at Ban Pan district, hundreds of children and adults come to attend evening classes.

This particular school organizes four different types of educational programmes consisting of pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, and non-formal education through distance learning. Nonformal education facilities in this school are provided to youth and adult learners who have successfully completed compulsory education but failed to continue or to those who never had a chance to attend a formal school. The distance learning programme at Wat Clongtonnatbamrung rural primary school is organized by its teachers. Since 1993 the school annually enrolls at least 300 adults and conducts tests for certification at both primary and secondary levels of education.

Depending on the levels of educational attainment, groups of adult learners are formed to facilitate teaching-learning process. Most learners receive free of charge, the learning materials and on week-ends they undertake group activities. Besides the teaching-learning activities, multimedia as self-learning package, radio and television programmes and group meetings are the modes used in this programme. Each group is also required to participate in several community activities. The group activities are so designed as to cultivate among them the feeling of brotherhood, citizenship, collective responsibility and to develop their own skills and attitude towards their communities. To further facilitate participation of those who have extensive life and occupational experiences, the programme also allows transfer of life experiences, occupational experiences as well as credits from other educational activities to be counted towards the attainment of equivalency certificates.

There are other variations of the project implementation with various target groups. For example, the Department of Vocational Education, which organizes home-based agriculture training to primary schoolleavers, also utilizes equivalency training programmes to prepare students for lower secondary education. After lower secondary education, these students can continue to work towards a diploma in agriculture education.

The flexibility of the Continuing Education Programmes and the increasing demands of the labour market for higher levels of education have made the programme highly popular. Each year over 80,000 people attend paying tuition fees ranging from US\$20-50 per course. The programme can indeed be self-financing but due to the government's concern that the programme will be inaccessible to disadvantaged segments of the population who cannot afford the tuition fees, the government has provided funds to subsidize half of the operation costs of programmes. In terms of students' achievement, it was found that students in these equivalency continuing classes tend to have comparable academic achievements to those in the formal schools. However, there appears to be a great deal of variations among students due to past academic backgrounds, duration of time elapsed since last schooling, and availability of time for studies.²⁹

Vocational Continuing Education

Skill training is the most widely organized activity in the non-formal education. A large number of government and private agencies organize skill training programmes for the out-of-school population. Many of these programmes are standardized packages. Others, however, are developed in response to a specific local group need or interest. The characteristics that they share are brevity and specific focus. In 1984 approximately 900,000 individuals participated in these programmes. These programmes can be categorized as follows:

Demonstrations and Extension

Programmes of this type are conducted by field workers of all the major rural development agencies; Interest Groups Learning Programme; 15 individuals or more interested in acquiring a particular skill can form a learning group using a relevant local resource person who will receive an honorarium from the government for 6 to 30 hours of instruction; Short Term Vocational Training Programmes; 100 to 300 hours of courses offered in educational institutions, non-formal education centres, or through mobile units in 4 major areas viz. Industry, Home Economics, Engineering and agriculture; Long Term Intensive Training Programmes (3-5 months): Participants live in the training institution for specific periods of time undertaking the study of theory and engaging in its practical application.³⁰

Mobile Trade Training School

In order to impart skill based training to adults living in far off places, Thailand introduced an innovative project named Mobile Trade Training School in 1960. Each mobile van was equipped with equipments and two instructors and a driver and it moved from village to village at an interval of 1-3 years. Provisions were made to impart vocational training in selected areas, in one or two shifts per day.. Total duration of training programme was 300 hours in five months. This programme offers a short, low cost, flexible training programme in non-agricultural skills for rural out of school youth.³¹

Lessons

Several important insights can be derived from the Thai experiences of planning and implementation of non-formal education during the last six decades. Thailand has not only succeeded in bringing down the illiteracy rate from 68.8% to 5% during 1940-1995, but also developed a strong net work of continuing education programmes and reading centres thereby moving towards learning society. Thailand's experience confirm that universal primary education, promotion of basic literacy and provision of continuing education should be perceived and planned as an integral part of the total effort to provide education for all.³²

Thailand has conceived literacy promotion as a continuous process without any long intervals of inaction. Basic literacy programmes were followed by post literacy programmes. Due care was taken to provide plenty of attractive reading materials to neoliterates so that they do not relapse into illiteracy. Literacy was not for literacy per se or as an end in itself but seen as a component of developing systematic equivalency programmes at par with formal education. The development of strong continuing education programmes, specially vocational training implemented through class rooms, and distance education mode has been a model to several countries of South Asian region.

One of the distinguishing features of Thai experience has been the importance accorded to basic education. While the budget allocation to primary education has been above 50% of total education budget since 1960s, the budget allocation for non-formal education has increased from 0.3% to 1.66% during 1961-1998.³³

Thailand has shown that through community mobilization, a vast quantity of reading materials-used books and magazines can be collected for setting up libraries and reading centres. In 1985, Thailand collected about ten million publications from the community. By organizing public reading competitions and annotated story telling, Thailand has generated considerable interest among the masses in sustaining their interest in reading.

During the early phase of literacy campaign, Thailand took certain strong administrative measures which gave a boost to literacy promotion. It was specified that only literate persons should be employed in Government and all illiterate adults in the family of civil servants should be made literate within a stipulated time. Besides instructions were given to Monks not to ordain illiterates into Buddhism.

Thailand has constituted a strong machinery of interdisciplinary team of professionals, technocrats and civil servants to plan and implement non-formation education. The provisions of security to the teaching staff and the provision of remuneration according to the number of hours taught also helped in involving and sustaining the interest of the teachers in literacy and adult education activities. The varied experiences of one country can, however, be transplanted to another country only after careful consideration and keeping in view the socio-political and institutional context.

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Year	1961	1965	1970	1973	1980	1998
Nonfonnal Education % of Total Education Budget	0.3	0.4	0.8	1.1	1.8	1.66
Primary Education % of Total Education Budget	54	58	55.8	52.5	53	52.8
Edu%GDP	1.9		3.3			4.2

Source: Department of Nonformal Education, Bangkok.

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About the Book

The term "Lifelong Education/Learning" has been used in a variety of contexts from adult learning and continuing professional development to organizational and societal changes. While some of the countries have replaced the terminology of Adult Education by Lifelong Learning, others continue to debate its scope. No doubt, the change in nomenclature has brought it to "mainstream" of educational discourse unlike Adult Education which continues to languish as a marginal field. How did different countries and cultures perceive and pursue the idea of Lifelong Learning?

This volume is mainly intended to provide a brief overview of the global discourse on the policies and practices of Adult and Lifelong Learning and select case studies from nine countries. It contains following papers:

HS Bhola (*Adult Education and Adult Learning between Poverty Reduction and Wealth Production*), Bikas C Sanyal (*Lifelong Learning in Twenty-first Century*), Paul Fordham (*Lifelong Learning and "Adult Education": Changing Terminology and Changing Ideas: A complex inter-relationship*), Chris Atkin and Anne O'Grady (*Skills for Life: Has the need to support Social Cohesion been Displaced by the Drive for Economic Success?*), Zhao Yuchi and Liu Yibing (*Women's Literacy in China*), Regina Celia Vasconcelos Esteves (*Strategy for Literacy Training for the Youth and Adults: "The Solidarity in Literacy Programme" in Brazil*), Akpovire Oduaran (*Order Out of Chaos: Repositioning Africa for Globalization through Lifelong Learning*), Kazi Rafiqul Alam (*Approach to Rural Development in Developing Countries for Poverty Eradication Practices of Dhaka Ahsania Mission*), Eustella Peter Bhalalusesa (*Towards Sustainable Development Through REFLECT Methodology in Tanzania: Major Trends and Lessons*), Asoke Bhattacharya (*Life Long Education in Denmark*), SY Shah (*Lessons from Adult Education Programmes in the East and South-East Asian Countries: A Case Study of Thailand*)

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