Towards Equitable Diversity in Education: Move Towards a Paradigm Shift

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The first part of this paper is a tentative sketch of one's contribution to the growing process of a much-needed shift in our understanding of education in sub-Saharan Africa. It is primarily a response to the failure to meet the real needs of the majority of children through formal education. This sketch does not pretend to be complete and for the time being is at the level of a polemical discourse rather than developed theory. The second part of the paper describes and analyses two projects in Namibia that were pragmatic responses to particular social contexts in which conventional formal education has not even partially succeeded and it is accepted that the conventions of formal education have to be diversified if equity and relevance are to be achievable in the long term. The final part of the paper points to some of the wider implications and challenges of these projects in the light of the theoretical framework of the first part.

Let us begin with a brief reminder of the history of formal education in Anglophone southern and eastern Africa. Formal education in the region came in through two channels: one was the activity of missionaries, at first preparing converts to continue the work of their denominations through basic literacy, numeracy and religious education, and to develop the skills of manual and domestic labour. This corresponded, to some extent, to the aims of church schools for lower classes in Britain but never became a universal system in Africa. The other channel was through the colonial administration, establishing schools for their own children and for the children of the elite-to-be primarily on the model of upper-middle class education – the grammar school. Missionary schools assimilated into this stratum, with the result that the examination to which only the top twelve per cent in England and Wales were accessed – the GCE 'O' level exam, run by Examination Boards or Councils – became the standard by which every child in school in southern and eastern Africa was measured. The peculiar British system of Examination Boards was continued in African countries even after Independence, locking formal education into the system of an academic elite in Britain rather than one of education for the masses (which in Britain led to the Certificate of Secondary Education, or the Royal Society of Arts or City and Guilds certificates).

Whereas compared to the rest of Europe, Britain did not have a modern national curriculum until quite late, African countries devised national curricula as part of nationhood building, on achieving Independence. Uniformity, as opposed to diversity was built into the concept of nationhood. In Namibia and South Africa, diversity had been negatively exploited through apartheid, and the leaders of these new governments sought different ways of establishing national uniformity. The predominant curriculum style of the early independent states in Africa was one of heavily detailed prescribed content (Bernstein's collection code in a strong classification model). Attempts to africanise curricula after Independence failed at anything more than at a superficial level, since the very form of education predetermined what cultural capital was valued, and what content was relevant in relation to the examination (Hawes, 1979). Even when England and Wales, under the Labour governments moved toward comprehensive education more akin to continental models and changed the examination to the G.C.S.E, education in Africa did not follow suit (Namibia was the first exception in 1993).

When Education for All was declared in 1990, at a worldwide conference on education held in Jomtien, Thailand, formal education was already failing dreadfully in Africa. During the 90s, it had lagged even further behind. A universal system had been created which had minimal anchoring in African reality, hardly acknowledged African epistemology and cosmology, was irrelevant to the lives of the vast majority of the population, and yet had to be strongly signalled in political rhetoric (Fuller, 1991). The failure of Universal Primary Education in Tanzania, for example, was first and foremost a failure of relevance in terms of form and content. As long as formal education did not prepare children for the demands of life, parents found it better to take them out of school and let them learn what they needed to know in other ways. The expense of formal education also shows its origins: it grew up as – and still is – the education of an urban middle-class, rich enough to pay for it through taxes and private contributions. African countries quite simply cannot afford formal education for all, on the British, French and Portuguese model[1]. Where governments have succeeded in raising school enrolment and completion rates, for example, in Zimbabwe, schooling has been meaningless for the majority. Because their education was not relevant to students' lives, tens of thousands of 'O' level successes have not led to employment or further education, created "diploma disease" and alienated a generation from other alternatives.

The failure of formal education through its rigidity, lack of relevance and expense, led to demands being made on non-formal education. The need to train or retrain adults in literacy, numeracy and skills has grown proportionately with the realisation that formal education is dysfunctional, and has led to non-formal education being regarded as the poor relative of, and second best to, formal education.

The dysfunction of formal education is also being felt in Europe. Formal education grew up partly to protect children from – and partly to prepare them for – work in an industrialised society. Only as the need for child labour was obviated by improved technology, was it possible to reach Universal Primary Schooling in Europe. With the shift to high technology, it is becoming less possible to train directly for work, even with the increase in the service industry sector. With increasing technology, the need for labour is being reduced. Where the Protestant work ethic once was the foundation of work and schooling and gave meaning

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[1] It is an interesting exercise to surmise what would have been the result had formal education in Africa been modelled on the Scandinavian systems. Until as recently as one generation ago, there were differences between town and country schools, and teaching was only three days a week in many areas. School holidays were placed to correspond with the agricultural or fishing year so that children could assist in the work. The Scandinavian systems are the most equitable and "examination free" in Europe today. Curricula styles have tended to open frameworks rather than detailed content.

to both, it no longer has any legitimacy. There is no value in education directly related to the labour market: instead, education must prepare children and young people to cope with time instead of work. In order to keep young people away from unemployment (the last throes of stigmatism based on the Protestant work ethic) formal education is extending to twelve compulsory years.

At the same time, fundamental questions are being raised about the theoretical foundations of formal education (Gardner, 1991). Research on intelligence, child development, curriculum and class, race and gender, and the way formal systems create their own dysfunction, combine with parents' responses to the inadequacy of education for their children. Although the critical research has yet to be brought together as a new paradigm for education, movements such as home schooling and the flexi-curriculum are operationalising alternative forms of education in a pragmatic way. For the time being, however, these are largely the prerogatives of well-resourced middle-class families (Meighan, 1996).

The dysfunctional of formal education in Africa bears certain superficial resemblance to the situation in Europe, such as the inability of education to prepare all children for employment, when full employment opportunities do not exist. Yet at the same time, the discourse of education for employment remains widely used as an argument for pre-vocational skills in the curriculum or even as a justification for sending children to school at all. At a deeper level, the appropriateness to Africa of accepted European paradigms and theories of intelligence, knowledge, learning and curriculum is doubtful, but little evidence of the critical research is seen in terms of results in curriculum development or at universities in Africa. On the other hand, critical pedagogy has imbued non-formal education, especially adult literacy training, to a much greater extent.

At the same time, the context and reasons for the dysfunction of formal education in Africa are different from those in Europe. There are new challenges to face in Africa. Quite possibly the most urgent is the impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems. As noted, a formal education system is highly resource-intensive. The impact of AIDS is already becoming evident in terms of human resources: the attrition rate amongst teachers and education administrators is increasing. As young and middle-generation adults become ill and die, so does the capacity to resource education from home contributions and through the fiscal base. The role of children changes. Many more become orphans earlier, and the breakdown of supportive extended family structures leads to children taking over the role of adults and caregivers at young ages. Girls in particular have to take on adult roles earlier – as providers and as sexual partners or mothers.

Yet formal education predicates the complementary role set of teacher and pupil, whereby the teacher is an adult and the pupil is a child. In many parts of Africa, this no longer applies. Similarly, the world of the child-adult is increasingly becoming one of the critical provisions of food and health care, which means a very different type of knowledge than what is taught in the formal curriculum, and a very different utilisation of time and space than a classroom and a timetable.

The globalisation process is reflected in increasing uniformity and conformity in education, where the similarities between the modern school in different countries are greater than the similarities between schools within each country (Melber, *in* Avenstrup, 1997). Although the globalisation process is not unproblematic in Europe either, the culture that it promotes grew out of the European context, whereas in Africa it is imposed. Through the marketplace that the whole sector approach is opening up, globalisation will be given an even greater impetus.

Different countries are trying in different ways to take account of some of these issues. Language policies in education are beginning slowly to change. Namibia has thirteen languages in education, and South Africa followed suit after democratisation. Mozambique and Zambia are entering on processes of acknowledging mother tongues in education. Zimbabwe will be taking greater account of mother tongues in its pending curriculum reform. Tanzania has long been looked up to for its Kiswahili policy, but that policy applies only to primary education. It has yet to change the language of examination, and hence of instruction, at 'O' level and 'A' level, from English to Kiswahili.
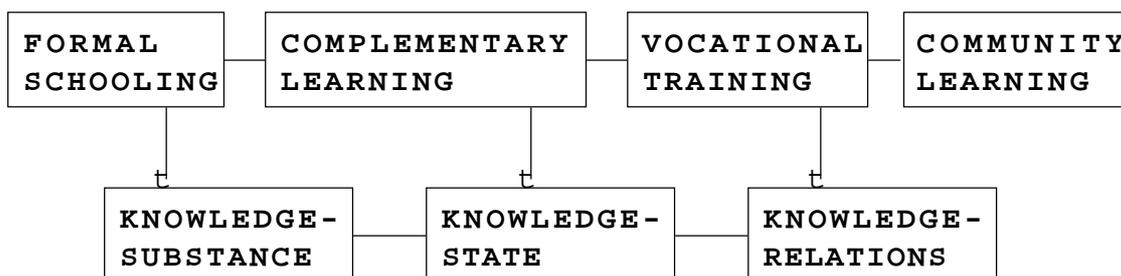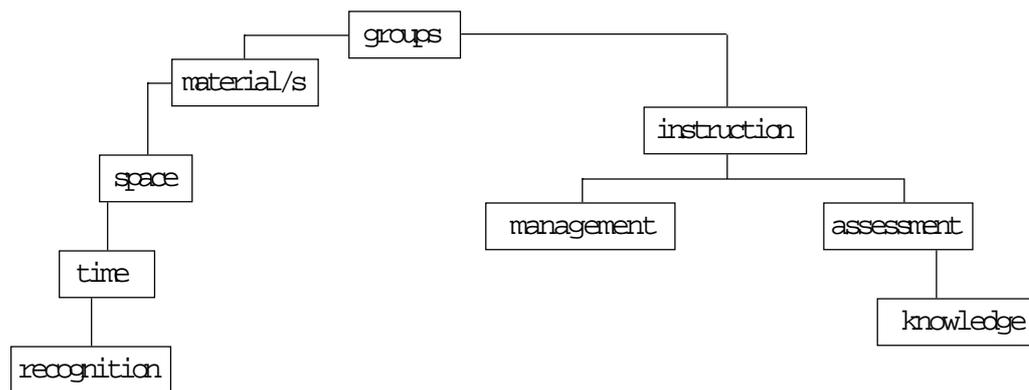
Some curriculum reforms are beginning to create space for local content (Avenstrup, 1997). In many countries, one hears that the national curriculum and syllabi are just a framework to be developed locally, but the overload of content and the lack of teacher training in curriculum development make it impossible. Mozambique is currently discussing whether the curriculum can be designed with an 80-20 weighting of national and local. South Africa has adopted and adapted the English/Australian curriculum model of outcomes-based education (and Zimbabwe will be doing the same way). The outcomes seem to be defined generically enough for a variety of contexts, but the curriculum begs the question of whose cultural capital and level of resources is presupposed for it to function optimally.

Dialogues are beginning between educators in formal and non-formal education, and the potential effectiveness of non-formal education raises many questions about which group of educators should learn from the other. One stage ahead will be the recognition of the worth of non-formal paths as equal to that of the formal track, and opening up of the possibility of movement between the two modes. Yet there are many issues to be explored. Can children learn better in non-formal modes, or do they need the formal grounding in order to be able to learn? If they need formal grounding, do they have to learn to learn because formal education is so contrived? Have the complex methodologies and organisational patterns of formal education been developed in order to invade and manipulate the child's world of time, space and wonder, and make it as palatable as possible? The psychological and structural violence needed to ensure control and surveillance in formal education is still very much in physical evidence in African classrooms.

In discussing the need for diversity in educational forms and for integrated diversity, we might miss some important opportunities if we only look at the relationship between formal and non-formal education. There are a variety of initiatives moving at the edges and sometimes nearer the core of formal education, non-formal education, and what is sometimes referred to as "indigenous education". The simple sum of the best of these put into one system is not likely to be the solution, even if it were possible. Diversity, even integrated diversity, will not in itself guarantee equity: it may even promote disparities. We are in need of tools for analysis if each context is to develop its own form of diversity, which has at the same time the potential for becoming equitable. The model on page 5 is suggested as one such tool for analysis towards transformation (Avenstrup, *in* Brock-Utne, 1999).

The diagram aims to illustrate that within the diversity of different types of education, there are some common features, and if one is to work towards equitable, integrated diversity, one must take the different levels of features as well as types of education in account.

At its root, education is only one of several types of learning as a human activity. It is not merely habitual or instinctive learning, initiated from within and by the learner. Instead, it is organised by society, outside the learner, and it is planned rather than purely coincidental. The deep structure of education has three main components. The first is **knowledge-substance**, in the broadest sense of the word: what education is about and what it contains.

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          ┌─────┴─────┐      │       │
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│  KNOWLEDGE-  │  │  KNOWLEDGE-  │  │  KNOWLEDGE-  │
│  SUBSTANCE   │──│    STATE     │──│  RELATIONS   │
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The second is the **knowledge-state**, which could be seen as a scale from the given to the new discovery. The third is **knowledge-relations**, the complementary role set of the educator and the educated (be it teacher and learner or whatever terms for these roles are used in a particular context).

From these three components, four types of education can be identified, each with its own rules for generating different meanings from the deep structure: **community learning**, **vocational training**, **complementary education**, and **formal education**. Definitions of these four main types of education do not produce consistently precise boundaries. Qu'ranic schools, for example, bear all the characteristics of formal education, but are a community venture to a greater degree than formal education. Many arts institutions, especially in the British tradition, have out-of-school educational programmes for young people in music, dance or theatre, which are very formally organised, taught and examined in the child's free time, and yet which are not part of the formal education system. In the rural African setting, the transmission of knowledge in *ngoma* (music, story, drama, song, dance) can also be very formalised. To the outside observer in rural Africa, training in cleaning grain, pounding millet or maize, basket weaving, tending cattle, or making dairy products, resembles low-technology vocational education. Yet the meaning of "vocational education" denotes a more formally organised system of training related to employment in a labour market in the formal economy, which involves other distinctive structural features at the surface level.

What all four types of education have in common is that they organise the same elements in identifiable structures at the surface level generated from deep structures of learning. What differentiates them from each other is how these structures are organised at the surface level, and the degree of uniformity or diversity. The greatest uniformity of structure is in formal education, where it is a function of control, i.e. through the nation state, or globalisation. The greatest diversity of organisation, on the other hand, is in community

education. The common elements of education, however it is structured, are: knowledge, time, space, management, grouping, instruction, assessment, and recognition.

If one were to compare formal schooling with community learning in rural Africa, one would observe some distinct differences. In formal schooling, knowledge is strictly classified, time is put into tables, space is strictly delineated and contained, management is formalised, children are grouped in set sizes of narrow age bands called classes, materials are pre-selected and approved, instruction is professionalised, assessment is formalised, and recognition is done through certification. In community learning, knowledge is weakly classified but more strongly framed, learning is sometimes divided into time compartments but usually corresponds to main stages of life and the working year, and sometimes (e.g. initiation) into confined space; it is flexibly managed, more by virtue of real competence than formal role, groups vary in size and spread from own age-groups to mixed-age groups, materials are what are available and appropriate to the task and do not need approval, instruction is in the hands of a range of community members from slightly older mentors to highly respected elders, assessment is based on demonstrated competence (seldom tested in artificially construed situations), and recognition is in the form of rewards, respect, status, and/or increased responsibility (Tedla, 1995).

Both forms of education coexist in many children's lives – community education through upbringing and formal education through schooling – but in African literature there are numerous descriptions of the particularly painful ways in which the contrast between them has created a divide in the minds of African children and young people.

Complementary education and vocational education have more flexible structures than formal education but not the degree of flexibility that community education has. Both respond to the shortcomings of formal education in meeting widely varying needs, age groups and circumstances. Vocational education also has some distant roots back to family-based apprenticeship within the same trade. Complementary education is largely the content and certification of formal education organised in a different way, although one should perhaps ask if that is what it really ought to be.

The point to be made here is that to move toward equitable diversity, one must clearly define the level of diversity to be reached, so that the discussion does not become superficial. If the full potential of the diversity illustrated above were to be realised, one would see a system of education recognising a variety of forms of knowledge and ways of organising learning in terms of time, space, grouping, assessment, and recognition. The changes in roles and in systems could be quite profound, and one must be aware that one cannot change one element at the surface level without implications at deeper levels. We will now discuss two examples from Namibia where the inadequacy of the formal system led to strategies for diversification. Following these examples, we will return to a discussion of some of the deeper implications.

The Namibian situation: a move towards equitable diversity

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened
Freedom Charter, South Africa.

Although the compelling goal of Education for All was adopted by Namibia, along with over 100 other countries in Jomtien, many attitudes, policies, practices and procedures still contribute to the maintenance of inequities. In this regard, Anderson (1992) states that there appear to be two main obstacles keeping education systems from reaching and teaching

everybody effectively – a lack of resources and a lack of ideas – resulting in the doors of learning remaining closed for many.

Since Independence, the Namibian government has devoted a substantial amount of its funds to the education sector and currently spends about 28% of its budget on education. However, the needs are so great that education appears to be 'chronically underfunded'. According to Anderson (1992), the lack of funds and the lack of ideas are related in many countries. When funds are not available, people do not devote attention to education. If good ideas are lacking and education seems to stagnate, funds are diverted to other enterprises. This situation has manifested itself in many African countries over the last decade.

In future years, a society that does not educate its people will be disabled in terms of the economic productivity and social welfare of its people. Education for All and the principle of lifelong learning therefore are very important goals to pursue. However, many people do not believe that Education for All is an achievable goal because of scarcity and need in many African countries. We would argue that Education for All is achievable, but not by pursuing policies and programmes of the past. What is needed are present-day educational innovations which offer new ideas and experiences and educational responses that are tailored to the requirements and needs of the groups they are designed to serve. Innovative and low-cost education programmes **can** improve access to and quality of education and, simultaneously, generate new sources of funds and support. Even small financial investments in education can release great creativity and energy (Anderson, 1992). It is within this context that two innovative alternative programmes in Namibia are described. Both these programmes are targeted towards those who have historically been disadvantaged and marginalised – the San (also referred to as Bushmen, but for this paper, as the Ju/'hoansi) and the Ovahimba.

The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project

The Bushmen/San are the oldest indigenous people of the sub-region. They have been treated brutally both by fellow Black Namibians and Europeans and have been driven off almost all their traditional lands. According to Swarts and Avenstrup (1994), 80 percent of Bushmen speakers in Namibia have never been in school. The way in which the formal education system treated Bushmen in the past, did not create confidence and trust in education.

The majority of the Ju/'hoan speaking Bushmen live in the Nyae Nyae area of north-eastern Namibia. According to Kann (1991), pre-independence education for black people in Namibia was characterised by very high dropout, repetition and failure rates. The situation among the Ju/'hoansi was even worse. The people had no control over their own schooling. The educational philosophy used in the schools was totally alien to the informal education children were exposed to at home. The curriculum was repressive and to a large extent irrelevant to the lives of the learners; it contained elements, like corporal punishment, which were unheard of in Ju/'hoan society. Teachers did not speak or understand Ju/'hoan and learners did not speak or understand Afrikaans (the medium of instruction). The result was that very few Ju/'hoan children started school (about 5 percent of 3 000). Virtually only a handful have completed school or have been to school long enough to become fully literate.

The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project (NNVSP) was initially a fully donor-funded project under the auspices of the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation (NNDF). The Namibian government now funds some components of the project, while some are still donor-funded. The project aims to bring lower primary education (Grades 1 – 3) to the children in the

area, instead of the children having to go away to a government school or not go to school at all. The education provided is meaningful, relevant, and culturally affirmative; it adheres to the national curriculum for lower primary, which provides a reasonable framework for local development. The medium of instruction is Ju/'hoan.

The Nyae Nyae Village schools consist of five small schools scattered across a relatively large area. Learners come from feeder villages and stay with relatives. The schools have a feeding programme where a member of the community does the cooking.

The teachers (five senior and six junior teachers) have been recruited from the ranks of the Ju/'hoan communities scattered across the Nyae Nyae area. The main requirements for recruitment are that candidates were Ju/'hoan speakers and acceptable to the community. Since only a very limited number of people already had some formal education, it was imperative to use them in creative and innovative ways to cover the three main professional components to be catered for by the project.

All concerned agreed that the most effective education for Ju/'hoansi would build on the educational strengths of their own society. According to Kann (1991), the intended aims of the NNVSP were:

- to increase the number of children who actually started school;

- to overcome the high dropout rate among children who started school in the government school at Tsumkwe;

- to facilitate the transition from village and family life to a life in a hostel away from family;

- to provide literacy skills in the Ju/'hoan language before the children had to start learning in a foreign language, English.

The project design therefore rested on the following three pillars: curriculum and materials development, language development, and teacher education.

Curriculum and Materials Development

The Ju/'hoan way of child rearing is much less authoritarian and more child-centred than most societies. The Ju/'hoan do not force children to go to school. If the education is not good enough and interesting enough, the children will just not go to school and the parents will not force them. The curriculum and materials therefore had to be developed to be relevant and interesting to the lives of Ju/'hoan children in order to maintain interest and engagement in school activities. In this regard, parents, learners and student teachers were involved in curriculum and language development. Language, folk-tales and stories received a lot of attention, and traditional skills like tracking, formed the basis for developing some science materials. One important guiding principle, however, was that the village school curriculum was to dovetail with the national curriculum to ensure that children could relatively easily make the transition to the government school.

The methodology adopted can very simply be summarised as 'learning by doing and observing,' with observing having been refined to a fine art and science by the Ju/'hoan and other hunter-gatherers. The methodology was aimed at instilling a positive attitude towards education and training, and great sensitivity was required from those assisting in that endeavour (Kann, 1991). In order to make their transition to the government school easier, the children were, however, required to know what other children their age knew, and preferably a bit more.

Language Development

Readers that relate to the immediate environment have been produced in the Ju/'hoan language based on oral folk tales well known to the learners. Tales have been collected, selected and modified for written transmission by the student teachers, in collaboration with community members and the teacher trainer. The illustrations of the readers were selected from drawings done by the learners themselves. Thus the community, learners and student teachers contributed to a large extent to language and curriculum development, a situation not widely found in schools in Namibia (Swarts and Avenstrup, 1994).

Teacher Education

The student teachers received an induction course and a pre-service teacher education course as well as in-service training. The induction course was intended to make student teachers well versed in the reading and writing of Ju/'hoan, to provide basic oral English skills and mathematical skills corresponding to Grade 5. The main aim of the pre-service course was to make the student teachers familiar with the Grade 1 curriculum and the materials developed for that curriculum. They had to understand and subscribe to the basic philosophy underlying the NNVSP and had to be acceptable to the community. The in-service course concentrated on the Grades 2 and 3 curriculum and materials. The student teachers, in collaboration with the teacher trainer, developed a simple and practical teacher's handbook for use during their training and while working in their schools.

Grade 10 Equivalence

The minimum requirements for employment as a teacher in Namibia is Grade 10 or equivalent, and the Instructional Skills Certificate (ISC). Since the training of the NNVSP student teachers had been specifically devised for their situation, they would have found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to write a general Grade 10 examination in nine different subjects. The National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) therefore advised the Permanent Secretary that it was *"theoretically possible to reach comparable knowledge, skills and attitudes partly or wholly through other means. In such cases, the knowledge, skills and attitudes would not be able to be validly assessed through the JSC examination. A valid means of assessment for the alternative acquisition of equivalent knowledge, skills and attitudes would have to take into account the results of both formal and non-formal learning, and experiential learning."* (NIED, 1997).

Four areas of learning were to be assessed: Linguistic and Literacy (English and Mother Tongue); Mathematical; Natural Scientific and Socio-Economic.

NIED recommended certain major assignments that would give evidence of a knowledge-based equivalent to Grade 10:
* a major assignment in Namibian history, and an in-depth project on one aspect of Namibian history, e.g. The Bushmen;

* a major assignment in Geography giving an overview of main geographical features of Namibia, and an in-depth project, e.g. on the Nyae Nyae area;

* a major assignment in Natural Science, e.g. Life Science, involving field work, experiments, and a theoretical part explaining various phenomena observed, based on the ecology of the Nyae Nyae area;

* a portfolio of work completed in Mathematics showing command of the four operations and their application to a variety of tasks of measurement, estimation and calculation. All examples were to be related to everyday life and the immediate environment;

- a collection of oral tradition (stories, oral history, songs) in the mother tongue, written down, and commented on for use in teaching;

- a portfolio of written work in English, including examples of letters, reports, summaries, notes, essays, etc. The content could all be related to issues in teaching and learning.

The English used in other assignments could also be assessed as part of English competency. Oral English could be assessed when visiting teachers, in their teaching of English, and in a discussion about their work.

In order to prepare them for the major assignments and the projects in each learning area, NIED supplied the teacher trainer with suitable reading lists and resource books, asking them to not only rely on the resource books and reading lists but also on the knowledge of the older people in their community. They were thus encouraged to consult their elders, as a large percentage of the information needed was based on oral traditions (History, Mother Tongue and even Geography and Mathematics). The following are examples of assignments given to the student teachers:

- Describe (tell us more about) the leadership system in your own society or group (Social History).

- Describe briefly the relations between your people and the other population groups in your region (Namibian history since independence).

- Were any of your people employed by the South African government? List the posts or jobs (if any) such people were assigned to (Pre-independence history).

- Draw a map of your immediate surroundings to a scale, e.g. ten steps to one cm. Devise your own way to indicate trees, houses, water points, roads, etc. on the map (Geography: Direction and Scale).

- Describe the weather at Tsumkwe/Baraka at 08:00 and again at 13:00 on a certain day (Geography: Weather and climate).

- Describe a very useful plant in your area. Why is it so useful? (Geography: Ecology).

- What are the environmental problems caused by over-utilisation of natural resources in the Nyae Nyae area? Suggest solutions to these problems (Life Science: Environment).

Outcome of Grade 10 Equivalence Assessment

The five senior student teachers completed their assignments under the guidance of their teacher trainer. As part of the moderation exercise, they were required to spend a residential period of a week at NIED in July 1998, during which they were given smaller projects as individuals and in groups. The moderators, NIED Education Officers and a Ju/'hoan language specialist, observed them in executing the projects and discussed the projects with them. All five of them completed assignments and could execute the projects well, demonstrating a surprisingly good grasp of relatively difficult and fairly advanced concepts across the learning areas. The moderators recommended that all of them receive Grade 10 equivalence and that they be enrolled for the ISC. In November 1999 they wrote the ISC examination and all of them passed with even better grades than many other candidates did in the formal system, some of whom even had Grade 12 certificates. They have now achieved partially qualified status and will be enrolled in the Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (BETD) In-Service Programme to obtain full qualification. This major achievement in the face of many obstacles.

The NAMAS/MBEC Kunene Project for Educationally Marginalised Children

The Ovahimba people live in northwest Namibia in the Kunene region. They are a nomadic and marginalised group still living a very traditional way of life. The ordinary formal education system does not cater for the real needs of the Ovahimba, who often move around during the school year in search of grazing for their cattle.

Providing education for all Namibians has proven to be a great challenge to the educational system, and unconventional and creative ways had to be found to accommodate the educational needs of widely diverse groups. Since schools in Namibia were designed for people with a more permanent settlement pattern, the traditional nomadic and semi-nomadic Himba way of life was not catered for in school organisation. This resulted in limited access for Ovahimba children, aggravated by a lack of emphasis on the socio-cultural context and life experiences of the Himba learner. In this respect, a Himba headman expressed himself in the following way:

> *We want education for our children, so we send them to school far away. There they stay without any parental care, which is not good for them. Then they come home and they do not respect their parents and the elders any longer. They show contempt for our traditional ways of living. This is not good.*
> (Hvidsten & Kavari, 1997).

The Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) (through The National Institute for Educational Development, *NIED*) commissioned a former Norwegian ambassador to Namibia to do a desk study on the educational situation of the children of the nomadic and semi-nomadic Himba. As a result of this study, NIED submitted a project proposal in 1996 and The Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) agreed to fund the *Education for Marginalised Children in the Kunene Project*. Project implementation started in 1997 and twelve mobile schools have been established since then.

The 'mobile school' concept is based on the recognition that the traditional ways of organising primary schools do not cater for the real needs of people like the Ovahimba (MBEC, 1999). Therefore the mobile school units had to adapt to the socio-cultural context and life experiences of the Ovahimba learners in an effort to make education more accessible (by moving around with the people) and the experience more relevant and meaningful (by incorporating life experiences and daily activities of the people) to the learners. The Himba have a deep knowledge and conscience of their environment, and they try to maintain the balance in nature necessary to survive in their harsh environment. This knowledge is being put into the curriculum to make the learning experiences of children both relevant and meaningful. This approach aims to achieve the following:

* to ensure the Ovahimba children access to education which is acceptable to them
* to motivate them to participate and not to drop out at an early stage
* to provide education that is culturally affirmative
* to provide education which will empower them to participate in modern life.

The mobile school are made of a strong, light canvas shade supported by light, strong poles of a tent pole type. They can be easily dissembled and transported when the community decides to move to another area. They are described in the following way:

> *The mobile units must be truly 'mobile' in order to be moved around without too much hassle and too heavy demands on transport. Many places where the units will need to be set up are without any roads or tracks negotiable even in the best 4x4 vehicle. In such places, transport by donkey's back would probably be the only viable solution. There is a need to think along*

untraditional lines when it comes to creating the mobile units. In the warm and dry climate of Kaokoland, a classroom could basically be a cool shade that gives protection against the scorching sun.

(Hvidsten & Kavari, 1997).

Each mobile school unit has an itinerant teacher who has to be acceptable to the community. The mobile school units are managed by a principal who is assisted by the advisory teachers and an inspector. The name *Ondao*, which refers to a root with medicinal and healing properties, was chosen by the Ovahimba headmen for the mobile school units. The name symbolises an attempt by the concerned parties to heal the educational wounds left by generations of educational neglect (MBEC 1999).

An evaluation of the project was carried out in October 1999. The findings as contained in the draft evaluation report indicate an "overwhelming positive impact of the project on the communities with regards to access to education, interest in education, progress of learners, acceptance by the community, and high levels of commitment among teachers" (some of whom are only now enrolled in upgrading programmes). The role of the principal is experienced as very supportive and effective and the headmen are positive about the project.

The two examples given here move to equitable diversity in different ways. In the case of the Ovahimba project, it is the reorganisation of time, space and grouping, and the implications those changes have for instruction, management and organisation. Further progress into development of the dialect to enrich the standard dialect Otjiherero has only begun, and progress in local curriculum development has been delayed owing to the loss of the project co-ordinator. The potential consequences for redefining knowledge, or changing the roles of the teacher, have yet to be seen. In the case of the Nyae Nyae, the consequence was not only the change in organisational features but also a wider recognition of knowledge, particularly experiential knowledge and knowledge acquired through community learning (e.g. language and culture). The project also piloted alternative ways of assessing achievement, but could give the same recognition.

It is important to note that both these examples are from marginalised groups: they do not at the moment threaten vested interests in the mainstream, but they do have considerable potential and significance if the lessons which can be learnt from them are applied in other contexts. How many different forms of knowledge, skills and competencies could be assessed and recognised, if diversity were not only recognised, but developed into an integrated, holistic system? One must also be aware that the formal education system is the one with the most firmly embedded power structures, not least the colonial inheritance of Examination Boards. In the opening sections of this paper, the way in which former systems are reproduced even as they are transformed (in what Giddens calls structuration, see Giddens *in* Cassell, 1993), was exemplified. Major institutional and legislative changes will be needed if integrated, equitable diversity is to be the path to follow, and one will have to see in what ways the interests of power elites will be reproduced in that transformation. The power interests behind formal education, not least played out in curriculum and examinations, may find new ways of entrenching themselves and turning flexibility, equity and diversity to their own advantage at the expense of others.

Conclusion

In view of the examples of what can be achieved with relatively small investments but big ideas and unconventional approaches, one should heed the words of a well-known African educator:

> Africa, more than any other continent in the world, needs to re-think its education systems in line with, on the one hand, the globalisation of the world economy, and on the other, the real situation. In addition, all too often, the inherited colonial systems of education have been preserved more or less intact, generally with the rationale of 'preserving standards' although these so-called standards were more illusory than real, with a very small elite enjoying exactly the same education as in the metropolitan country and the vast majority being deprived of any form of modern education at all.
> (Chung, 1996)

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Towards a Policy Agenda for Diversified Delivery in Formal Basic Education: the contribution of non-formal education

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This presentation is a follow-up to the discussions at the International Workshop on Diversifying Educational Delivery System, held in Gaborone, Botswana, 23–26 June 1999[1]. It intends to highlight the challenges of moving towards a more integrated system of education for children and youth in the light of the enhanced concerns about achieving quality Education for All (EFA) in the early part of the 21st century. In doing this, the paper addresses not only priorities for action at the systems level but also implications for action at the level of so-called "NFE provisions", given their need to become embedded within a wider and more diverse systemic framework.

Current concerns within formal primary education

The literature emerging in the run-up to the review of a ten-year effort to promote Education for All highlights serious deficiencies in the achievement of the goals set at the Jomtien Conference in 1990. As summarised in the Oxfam report:

- Today, 125 million primary school-age children are not in school; most of them are girls.

- Another 150 million children start primary school but drop out before they have completed four years of education, the vast majority before they have acquired basic literacy skills.

- In much of the developing world the education provided to children is of abysmal quality.

- The right of the world's children to an education remains one of the most widely and systematically violated of all human rights[2].

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[1] See R. Williams, Project Report: Diversifying Educational Delivery Systems; Reviving Discourse on the Formal / Non-formal Interface, draft, August 1999.

[2] Oxfam International, Education Now; Breaking the Cycle of Poverty, Oxfam, 1999.

The figures as regards sub-Saharan Africa are worse. The same report concludes that in this continent "on current trends, 54 million children will be out of school by 2015." By the same date the region will account for three-quarters of all children not enrolled in school. For Africa to get on track for a 2015 target of universal enrolment, it will have to raise enrolments by 22 million children over the next five years, over and above current trends.

While it can be appreciated that agencies have become extremely concerned about the limitations of the post-Jomtien efforts to achieve EFA, there is a danger that the discussion about educational development is reduced to the basic question of how do we get more "bums on seats" in conventional classrooms. For the sake of the future of millions of children, the debate must be as much on the nature and quality of the education that is provided as on access per se. In fact, a more pervasive discussion on what constitutes the essence of quality basic education for children and youngsters could also affect our efforts to promote participation in such education.

A "bums on seats" debate avoids the significance of the statistical presentation of "participation in primary education" as the number of children attending conventional primary schooling, as throughout the post-Jomtien years the primary school has been regarded as the main institution responsible for the provision of basic education for children. In the same vein, all the benefits usually associated with education have been assumed to apply only to this type of provision. This presentation has evaded thorough discussions on what "basic education" goes on outside the schools that may be worthy of recognition. Moreover, it tends to downplay questions about what goes on in these institutions and why it is that so many parents have difficulties in letting their children go to school.

It remains that in all likelihood large numbers of children will continue to be barred from primary education, in the standard definition, as they may:

• have the most basic resources necessary to acquire basic education through "normal" schooling, or

• have other essential social or economic obligations preventing them from spending a major, not part of the day, at school (or travelling to and from), or

• decide (or be told by their parents) that what is on offer is not relevant in relation to what is expected.

Beyond this problem of demand there is the issue of the extent to which countries and communities can afford to produce the kind of physical and human school environment that is considered standard. Foreign assistance cannot be the driving force upon which all plans are to be based – as is actually proposed.

The inability to provide quality education for all in accordance with established prescriptions compels us foremost to rethink the premise upon which the present education system is based and re-negotiate with learners and communities what basic education should be all about and how it should be provided. It constitutes a challenge to take the "expanded vision" of Jomtien further and explore systematically how the limitations of the existing formal school system can be transcended through explicit recognition of the environment in which education is to take place. This implies greater sensitivity both to the needs and interests of communities and to the conditions under which education for all can be ensured. In the process, an explicit distinction needs to be made between what is to be learned and how and where the learning is provided. It is in this context that the strengths and weaknesses of alternative opportunities for learning, including NFE provisions, can be re-examined.

Premise for a systemic approach

An expanded vision of the Jomtien agenda would now, more than at any other time, take cognisance of a number of premises that impact on what is to be offered, how, and under what conditions. The main premise can be presented as follows:

There is a diversity among learners, including among children in the school going age-group, in terms of:

- *social and economic circumstances*.
  There is an increasing number of children who have social and/or economic obligations – some of which are not new, some of which are new – such as children having to look after siblings as a result of HIV/AIDS.

- *learning needs*.
  This refers not only to children requiring "special education" provisions but also to those who need supplementary "life skills," vocational skills, remedial or additional language competencies.

- *cultural and religious traditions*.
  Many communities have not relinquished their assumed duty to provide learning that recognises their own traditions, even in the face of state resistance.

There are variations in the mix of inputs available for education: across countries and localities the inputs officially required for school education may not be available in the ratios and combinations or in the manner that may be desirable from a conventional perspective. These inputs concern:

- teaching staff with appropriate qualifications

- educational spaces

- resources for learning

- educational technologies

Poor availability of one input may need to be compensated through increased attention to others, such as lower qualified staff by high-quality learning materials. The interpretations of the very inputs themselves may need to be adjusted, such as the "quality" of teaching staff or what constitute appropriate "educational spaces."

There is much learning ongoing outside the conventional school system that is not officially recognised and may not be captured in official data collection. This involves:

- *childhood learning in homes and communities:* including much locally relevant knowledge and skills. Although children enter schooling with this wealth of prior learning outcomes, it is generally not used as a basis for new learning.

- *ongoing informal learning in social and work situations*: the relevance of informal learning and its relationship with school learning has still not been sufficiently explored and captured in more comprehensive methods for assessing learning achievement.

- *organised and structured forms of "non-formal" learning* involving private and community-based provisions such as community schools, Koranic schools, open and distance learning arrangements, and traditional apprenticeships.

The "demand-side" of education, constituting individual learners, parents and communities, with their ever stronger interest in the value of learning, its quality and notions of equity, can no longer be ignored.

It tends to be particularly expressed in concerns regarding:

- the social and economic value of outcomes in respect to improving quality of life *and* access to work;
- the quality of institutional provision for learning;
- attention to home languages as well as access to languages of power and economy;
- participation in learning as a lifelong possibility;
- equity as regards personal and social costs of education.

There is a *de facto* wide diversity in the resourcing of education:

- The state does not have a monopoly of subsidisation.
- Individuals and communities tend to be strongly interested in contributing towards what they regard as good education.
- There is an expanding interest of the private sector in playing a role: this tends to be reflected in physical facilities, in technological applications and learning resources, as well as in school-business linkages.

Towards a broad-based formal system

Although since the days of Coombs there is nothing new in recognising the important roles of different types of education, the insight required at the end of this century is that access to meaningful basic education for all can only be assured if there is wide recognition of the need for diversity in education provisioning. Given the continued relevance of social, economic, and political functions of education, such recognition of diversity is only possible in the context of maintaining essential parameters of a formal education system. Thus it has become necessary to argue for a transcendence of a *de facto* existence of separate systems and a move towards a unified but multi-form education system within which a variety of modalities for learning can exist side-by-side, but with visible equivalencies and identifiable linkages among them.

In the above frame of thinking, the *main* debate would not be about how to build more schools, or how to get rural children, girl-heads of households, nomadic children to adapt to a standard school regime, or how to enforce a unified national curriculum. It would be foremost about the nature of essential skills and competencies, the core characteristics of a quality learning environment for children wherever they are, and harmonising state interests to maintain a national frame of equitable and relevant formal education with individual and community demand for education that suits their needs and circumstances. Such debate could be galvanised by enhanced research that would produce profiles of categories of children and youth directly affected by the premise outlined above.

As discussed in the Gaborone workshop, a system of "integrated diversity" might need to adopt several key characteristics.

In pedagogical terms, the *system* would follow an outcomes-based approach, whereby learning outcomes are defined in terms of a basic knowledge and skills profile allowing for locally adapted teaching and learning strategies and content.

The common basic profile enables core achievement (not necessarily including *all* learning) to be assessed through standardised instruments leading to common certification.

Within such overarching framework it would be acceptable to promote a differentiated set of provisions for learning, within which the conventional school will probably be the main form but by no means the only one.

- A *support infrastructure* for administrative and professional services accessible to all provisions within the system.

- A *funding framework* that ensures acceptable equity in access to state subsidisation.

- An overall *quality assurance system* that enables diverse forms of provision to grow but within a frame of strict criteria for access and quality.

Within this context, the conventional distinction between formal and non-formal education would become largely irrelevant. If the "formal" essentially refers to a provision operating within the above systems framework, then many "non-formal" arrangements could become formal while preserving, if not enhancing, their non-conventional features. "Non-formal," in this case only remains relevant in respect to learning arrangements that have mainly an intrinsic value and need not align themselves to the formal system's umbrella (such as learning a language or picking up a technical skill). Whereas provisions for learning could be different with respect to a variety of inputs, they would develop equity where it matters most: in the outcomes and future value of the learning acquired.

The above notion of a formal system would provide for an overarching framework within which different premises, as outlined before, may get the attention they deserve. Most importantly, it would allow for the strait-jacket within which the conventional school system operates to be broken and for essential constraints in its provisioning to be addressed, since creative solutions are possible without affecting the essential "formal" dimensions of the learning. Formal recognition can more easily be provided to traditionally non-formal schools, so that their special features can be strengthened, at the same time their essential linkages with the formal framework can be ensured. There will be more space for a series of inputs from the demand-side as the framework would provide discretion in adaptation of curricula and teaching-learning strategies to local and individual circumstances. Space would also be created for mixed-form arrangements, whereby face-to-face learning in classrooms could be combined with access to multimedia facilities or community or work-based components of learning. In turn, this would promote part-time variants for the school part of the process as well as a re-visiting of how educational spaces in "schools" could be used.

The contribution of non-formal education to integrated diversity

It is argued here that a re-examination of the experiences of traditionally non-formal education programmes is necessary in order to establish their contribution towards a wider systems framework for formal basic education. This agenda goes beyond investigations into the specific experiences and successes of individual programmes but attempts to come to grips with the potential for non-conventional approaches to education as regards improving access, quality, relevance, and cost-effectiveness of formal basic education across the system.

In pursuing such an agenda a distinction needs to be made between non-formal education as a separate type of provision, on the one hand, and as an approach to learning or its provision in a generic sense, on the other hand. The former would examine the merits of specific adaptations for categories of learners with common socio-economic circumstances. The latter is likely to be much more challenging as it would seek to establish whether there are certain modalities of management, school-community linkages, or the organisation and methodology of the teaching-learning process that could have benefits across the system and allow all schools to adjust to the needs and circumstances of their clientele. This in turn could identify an agenda for a degree of deformalisation of schooling, or, within our new systems perspective, a degree of "loosening up the strait-jacket."

Within the context of a system's agenda for promoting improvements in formal basic education, attention would have to go towards what I have called elsewhere "compensatory" and "alternative" NFE provisions[3]. Compensatory programmes intend to compensate young people for lack of access, eviction or poor performance of the school system, while alternative programmes aim to create an alternative to the mainstream provision, one that is meant to be more relevant and better suited to the basic learning needs of young people. I do not include in this scheme the many NFE provisions that follow or supplement primary education. The former two types are the ones that have for years been trying to survive on the margins of the education system and still suffer, by and large, from lack of formal recognition and support.

Recent literature on NFE provisions in terms of compensatory and alternative programmes confirms that the key principles that characterise this effort are flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of learners and their contexts[4]. Thus community schools and related programmes have adjusted their timetables, their facilities, the provision of staff and materials to what makes sense under the circumstances, and they focus their curriculum on what appears to be the most pressing learning needs of their clientele. In the process they forge close links with the surrounding communities and achieve a degree of community participation. At the same time, we learn that NFE provisions have predominantly taken off in disadvantaged rural communities (and sometimes peri-urban communities) and that the instigators tend to be external NGOs interested in the contribution of education to poverty alleviation.

From a systemic perspective there are some questions which can be raised here:

- To what extent are the characteristics of flexibility and responsiveness mainly a response to efforts to provide formal education under conditions of poverty?

- To what extent have there been conscious efforts to implement adjustments in such a way that they provide cost-effective alternatives towards promoting learning that is at least of equal standard to the level of the state schools?

- Have there been successful efforts to create learning situations, which address more effectively the needs of learners than tend to be the case in conventional schools?

- Has the responsiveness to demand produced learning outcomes that effectively assisted disadvantaged youngsters to progress in the education system or to enter the world of work?

- Has the involvement of communities evoked a type of ownership and influence that has distinct advantages for the learners as well as for the communities themselves?

- Is there an emergence of a methodology for sensitising and preparing communities and ministries for assuming responsibilities for NFE programmes as part of a drive to expand and improve educational opportunities?

Although a fair bit of research into current seemingly successful programmes, such as community or village schools, has been ongoing, it seems still too early to provide conclusive answers to the above questions. However, some generalisable findings are emerging. For example, most community schools are clearly initiated in order to create additional school

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[3] Wim Hoppers, *A Good Place for All: Nonformal Education, Open Learning and the Restructuring of Schooling*, Paper presented at the WCCES, Cape Town, 1998.

[4] Some of this literature is summarised *in* Karin Hyde, *Expanding Educational Opportunities at Primary Level: Are Community Schools the Answer?* Paper presented at the Oxford International Conference on Education and Development, September 1999.

places in deprived areas for those children who for various reasons cannot attend formal schooling. As they mainly compensate for the inability of the state to expand access, they tend to adopt features of conventional schools.

It appears that core adjustments made to the conditions of poverty have a potential value of improving quality and effectiveness, though not necessarily at lower costs. Such adjustments include, for example, the utilisation of less qualified and untrained teachers (who are subsequently given induction courses), the reduction of the curriculum to core subjects or their condensation into a fast-track option, and the adherence to smaller class sizes. There is evidence that this combination, with the add-ons of induction training, provision of basic materials, and regular supervision can produce satisfactory results in terms of both sustained participation and learning achievements[5].

However, there is also evidence of problematic issues. These include the extent of the adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of learners in terms of background, age and gender; the extent of introducing alternative teaching/learning strategies; and the ensuring of effective community ownership, in terms of participation in management and in curriculum implementation. As regards efforts to adapt the curriculum and teaching/learning strategies, the adjustments appear to take their cues more from the circumstances of learners than from their specific learning needs. Thus they tend to deal more with organisational arrangements than pedagogical content and styles. At the same time, NFE efforts in West Africa appear to demonstrate greater awareness of the need to address the very nature of the curriculum for basic education[6]. Gender issues have been accepted as a key concern, as higher female enrolment seems easier to achieve than an improvement in girls' performance.

A particular vexing problem has been that NFE programmes tend to be introduced in poorer communities, with the result that the already disadvantaged end up contributing disproportionately to the cost of education. It is striking that the involvement of the donor tends to emphasise the provision of inputs that the state accepts as its normal responsibility but cannot provide. Thus the idea appears to be that community schools fill a void until the state can extend its accepted obligations. Where the state does get involved, as in Uganda, it effectively supports the emergence of an adapted form of the same conventional school system. Despite efforts at sensitisation, there is little indication as yet of attempts to promote a community perspective on the nature of basic education and its provision. This raises questions about the dynamics of community ownership and participation in a programme that appears to be compensatory and does not address the rules governing the provision of mainstream education themselves.

If we return to the earlier expressed concerns regarding the development of a systemic framework that would cater more adequately for the kind of premise as outlined, one would particularly look for innovative work in areas like the following:

- teacher recruitment and professional support services
- curriculum: content and methods, and classroom practices
- language in education
- school/teacher supervision
- development and utilisation of resource materials
- institutional decision-making and organisational culture

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[5] Hyde, Ibidem.

[6] Hyde, Ibidem; and Hamidou Boukary, *The Village Schools of Save the Children/USA in Mali: A Case Study of NGOs, Communities and the State's Emerging Role in the Provision of Basic Education in the Sahel,* Paper presented at the WCCES, Cape Town, July 1998.

- community ownership, management, and participation
- improved cost-effectiveness.

Innovations in NFE in these areas could be appraised for their possible introduction into the mainstream of a formal basic education system and thus produce a wider impact of NFE as an approach to education. However, in spite of the many experiences, sometimes over long periods, there appears as yet to be little clarity about what can be replicated. Provisional evidence points to some elements that have significant consequences for access or quality. These include a location for learning close to the home; the offering of reduced or condensed versions of a curriculum; the inclusion of home languages and local knowledge; community control over schools and teachers; the recruitment of local teachers, even if untrained; regular supervision of staff; small classes. So far, however, none of these elements constitute new insights, and several are not peculiar to NFE programmes. The exceptions may be the learning close to home, the reduced curriculum, and the recruitment of local teachers. In principle these three aspects do constitute an alternative provision, though they do not necessarily add up to a very different learning experience.

Within a systems perspective there are specific elements of NFE that deserve further scrutiny. Those that have special relevance in linking NFE to the mainstream are:

- curriculum and assessment
- accreditation of teachers
- supervision by the ministry of education
- access to state funding.

These elements would ensure that the NFE provision is covered by the systemic umbrella as outlined earlier. They would also determine formal recognition as well as the right of transfer to other parts of the education system. Not in the least, they are the basis for parity and viability, and thus address the basic issue of equity. In this respect, there is still an absence of actual evidence to what extent these links exist, how effective they are in reality, and what obstacles would need to be overcome.

An agenda for action

This paper makes a case for a more explicit systemic approach to formal basic education that allows for and promotes diversity in provisions for learning so as to cater for diverse circumstances and needs of children and their communities. It assumes that this is possible, provided there is greater clarity about what is essentially "formal" about the system and thus remains largely the responsibility of the state, and what spaces should be left for communities, however defined, and local authorities to develop their own visions about basic education and negotiate adjustments to mainstream provisions or push for modalities for learning that take cognisance of specific circumstances and needs.

As a general trend in education provisioning, the above approach can be considered necessary from an economic point of view (i.e. the financing and resourcing of basic education) as well as a social development point of view. That point of view is partly on the increased significance attached to the nature of demand for education – in line with children's and people's right to basic education as a foundation for lifelong learning – partly to the increasing significance in the context of globalisation of alternative pathways to learning associated with community traditions and resources.

The general agenda that the above approach entails can be seen foremost as a research and development one. It will inform further agendas related to advocacy and awareness as well

as institutional research and development. This research and development relates to the magnitude of the work to be done on desirable and effective learning outcomes in basic education. This would reach beyond the core skills of literacy and numeracy, moving into knowledge of the social and ecological environment, life skills and a variety of competencies associated with science and technology, and arts and culture. Further work would relate to forms of assessment that can effectively capture a wide variety of competencies and that are culturally sensitive. Probably the most critical work would be in the area of teaching and learning styles and in investigating the quality and effectiveness of different institutional and social arrangements for learning. It is in these fields that the implications of recognising diversity of circumstances and needs would require the highest attention of academics, policy-makers, and practitioners combined[7].

As regards NFE, some of the questions to be raised are fundamental. Given the very limited scope of NFE efforts at the level of basic education for children around the African continent, and given their often limited objectives by force of circumstances, can such provisions be expected to serve as hotbeds of educational innovation whose influences can ripple across the entire system? Is it possible to expect major lessons from provisions that cater largely to the poor and disadvantaged and that are more likely to regard adaptation as a deficit approach? If more systematic work in basic education is undertaken to promote viable forms of flexibility and effective modes of responsiveness, should it not be undertaken in those sections of the mainstream where minimal resources are present and communities are in a better position to fully participate on their own terms?

Answers probably lie in between, and it is possible to argue that NFE provisions, especially the current crop of community school initiatives across the continent are important nurseries for certain types of innovations, and could do more if systematic attention were given to their actual potential. Yet other parts of the diversification agenda might well need to be pursued elsewhere, where suitable conditions exist and where they may be merged with methodologies for innovation that stem from different sources such as distance education, open learning, adult education, and experiential learning in street and work situations. Moving towards a system for integrated diversity will probably require a coherent, integrated research and development agenda that cuts across different sub-systems and begins to synthesise from an African perspective the lessons to be learned and the directions in which to move.

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[7] Some of this work has started in West-Africa and has now been taken up in the plans for the OAU Decade for Education in Africa; see: CONFEMEN, _Basic Education: Toward a New School: Discussion and Policy Paper, Working Document_, Ottawa: CIDA, 1995.

Thinking Strategically about Non-formal Education

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This paper is intended to put forth some proposals on how to take into account those dynamics of non-formal education that make it challenging to plan and manage at a national level. The paper suggests considerations for thinking strategically about planning and managing non-formal education.

"Strategic thinking" and "strategic planning" are popular concepts throughout not only the corporate world, where they were first coined and where big business spends millions on such activities, but also among organisations in the developing world and even in the education sector of the developing world. But what is the value of strategic planning and strategic thinking for those of us working in non-formal education?

Strategic planning, simply put, is the process of setting goals and making the best use of resources to reach those goals. To be successful, strategic planning must include goals that are realistic in terms of resources available. It must also lead to a creative use of resources – finding them and employing them efficiently in view of the goal. What makes the strategic planning process challenging is its dynamic nature: goals and resources can and should change as time goes along, so strategic planning is not a one-time event. It is a constant process of adjustment.

Strategic thinking, then, is the mindset, attitude, skills and tools required for this constant process of strategic planning. It is asking the simple questions over and over again, What do we want to do? Why? How? The "why" question is important, because it takes us to deeper levels of understanding our ultimate goal, and it gives us more options for answering the "how" question.

Goals: Vision or problem-oriented?

Let us now apply these very general statements about strategic planning and strategic thinking to non-formal education at a national level. We will look at the fictitious case of Farland, which is actually a merger of two real cases in which departments of non-formal education have been planning to expand their programmes significantly.

Those who are engaged in strategic planning generally begin by stating goals, either in terms of a vision to be achieved or in terms of a problem to be solved. In Farland, the Department of Non-formal education, which is in the Ministry of Education, considered several alternative goals. Two of these alternatives were goals stated in terms of a vision of

the future. One envisioned a non-formal education system that served every man, woman and child who lacked a primary school education. The other vision was of a nation free of illiteracy. The department also considered some problem-oriented goals. One was to solve the problem of large numbers of young men who can/could not find employment because they lacked the basic skills needed for holding down a job in the modern sector of the economy. Another "problem" goal was to reduce the high dropout rate in primary schools by helping parents learn to read, write, and do math so they could support their young children in school. A broader, sort of "meta-problem" was to improve on the poor quality of services currently provided to school dropouts and to parents.

What kind of goal, vision-oriented or problem-oriented, is more "strategic" for a department of non-formal education? Vision goals are appropriate for an organisation that wants to strengthen its own accomplishments or position in the economy or society. An electronics company, for example, will set its vision in terms of gaining significant market share in its products, or earning a reputation as the manufacturer of the highest quality electronic appliances worldwide. A ministry of education will set a vision of building a school system that allows every child to acquire a good-quality primary education; a teachers college will aim to ensure that every teacher is well trained. For the electronics company, the ministry of education and the teachers college, these visions are suitable and may well be feasible.

Goals stated in terms of a vision, however, seem less appropriate for non-formal education. Even though non-formal education is often a unit of the Ministry of Education and therefore expected to function like a formal school system, in fact it is very different. A formal school system is intended to meet the common needs of all children to acquire accredited basic skills and to channel them through the system, with increasingly diverse – but very limited – options as they mature. Non-formal education, in contrast, picks up the pieces and looks for those whom formal education has missed. The clients, or beneficiaries, of non-formal education are no longer in the system. In fact, it is their "outsideness" or disadvantage that brings them into touch with non-formal education programmes. Thus, to set a goal of meeting the needs of all disadvantaged men, women and children is not likely to be feasible through a single, monolithic programme and therefore not very "strategic." Because non-formal education is aimed at different groups with different needs and requiring different approaches, strategic goals in non-formal education programmes are better conceived in terms of problems that must be solved.

Let us look more specifically at goals in the area of literacy. Farland officials were certain that they wanted to include literacy among the programmes of the expanded non-formal education department. They were midway into a nationwide campaign in basic literacy. Once the campaign had been completed, how should they define a new goal in the area of literacy? They considered two alternatives. One alternative was in terms of a vision: for example, making every youth and adult self-sufficient in literacy. This would entail a post-literacy campaign to follow up the basic literacy campaign, providing out-of-school youth and adults with training that would consolidate their literacy skills. In order to be rolled out efficiently, such a campaign would have to rely on a fairly standardised curriculum. Yet learners who have been given basic skills, come to a post-literacy course with different levels of competence, different needs, and different interests. A standardised course would be difficult to teach in these circumstances.

An alternative goal was in terms of a problem: breaking the barrier between out-of-school youth and opportunities for their participation in productive work, community involvement and family care. This would entail a variety of integrated literacy and practical skills training

programmes, each aimed at a specific group of adolescents or adults who had opportunities for immediate application of their new literacy skills.

Instead, the goal of a literacy programme should be set in terms of problem solving. For example: the goal of the organisation is to improve the management of crop pests by teaching farmers to read information on integrated pest management. Or, the goal is to reduce childhood illness by teaching mothers to read simple healthcare manuals; or, to improve civic responsibility by teaching community members to read locally published newsletters.

This kind of strategic thinking is certainly not new to leaders of effective non-formal education programmes, most of which have well-defined beneficiary groups and goals. What about more far-reaching goals of organisations with a broader mandate, such as the department of non-formal education in Farland? Officials there were reluctant to limit the Department's goal to one of helping to solve the problems of a few groups of people, such as crop farmers or young mothers, and recognised that a "vision" goal of every person applying literacy skills was well beyond their resources. To think strategically about goals for a national department of non-formal education, they needed to probe further into some organising principles of non-formal education.

Organising principles of NFE programmes

What principles guide the design of non-formal education programmes and thus should guide strategic thinking about non-formal education on a large scale? In formal education, policy-makers, teachers and administrators can more or less dictate what students must learn and even how they must learn, because they hold the keys to certification and advancement through the system. Educators in non-formal programmes do not have these incentives to offer. They can only attract people who want to learn something in order to improve their lives and/or to gain access to opportunities otherwise out of reach. In other words, people who choose to participate in non-formal education programmes are usually those who have taken responsibility for their own learning and achievement. An effective non-formal education programme recognises this important quality of its learners and keeps the learner in control of his or her learning[1]. So, one principle guiding non-formal education is that the learner must be allowed to take charge of his or her own learning. A corollary is that communities of learners must be encouraged to take responsibility for opportunities for their members to learn. A good non-formal education programme begins with activities that ensure that the community is in charge and that providers of education are following their lead.

A second principle, as we have discussed, is that non-formal education providers must be responsive to learners' needs and interests. One size does not fit all. This means that non-formal education providers must help create curricula and materials that respond to the specific needs of specific groups of learners. The provider must work with the group to clearly identify the problem to be solved and the resources needed to solve it.

A third principle is that, more often than not, those resources will entail more than just training. For example, women in a community who want some economic freedom may need credit, equipment, and supplies as well as skills training. The non-formal education provider may not furnish more than training, but it may need to help the women find the complements to the training that will make it useful.

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[1] An exception is non-formal education programmes for children that effectively supplement the formal primary school system. These offer the same incentives as formal schools.

These three principles – learners taking responsibility for their own learning, providers responding to learners' needs, and the need for resources that complement training – argue against nationwide campaigns or other programmes that put the government in the driver's seat and deliver a "one size fits all" package throughout the country. Unlike formal schools, with their uniform, nationwide curriculum – at least through the junior secondary level, each non-formal education programme is targeted to a small, difficult-to-reach group of learners, who learn only when they take responsibility for doing so.

Resources: How to stretch the limits?

In recognition of these principles, Farland wanted to help provide literacy skills to groups of people that urgently needed literacy skills, and they knew they might have to set some priorities among those groups. But they could not make these decisions without facing the other aspect of strategic planning: matching resources to goals.

Farland, like most African governments, had been putting a much larger portion of its national budget into primary education over the last decade. With its limited monetary resources and pressure for financing of higher and secondary education as well as primary education, the Ministry had little left for non-formal education. What limited role, then, could government play in the provision of non-formal education? Many non-formal education programmes had already been well established in Farland by non-governmental organisations and government agencies. None of them had large budgets, but about ten large ones were funded by international donors. Another hundred or so were new but eagerly seeking funding. About a dozen ministries had training activities that could be characterised as non-formal education, including agencies in the ministries of agriculture, health, labour and local government. What could an underfunded department of non-formal education do amidst this complex, variegated field of programmes for small, targeted groups of learners? How could government officials think strategically about non-formal education in this context?

Farland's first step was to discard formal education as a model for thinking strategically about non-formal education. Unlike the formal system, where the government's goal is to envision and build a system that accommodates all children and most youth, the government, in non-formal education can help those who have missed out on the formal school system – to incorporate training and education into the solution of their problems. Instead of helping teachers and administrators authorise students to move from one level of the system to the next, the non-formal education department can help non-formal education providers to authenticate courses that have practical, immediate application in learners' lives. Instead of a uniform formal curriculum, the non-formal education department can foster myriad curricula. Instead of maintaining professional support systems such as teacher training colleges, and administrative and infrastructure support systems such as payroll and construction, the non-formal education department must encourage disparate groups of learners to find their own support. These tasks are not easy, and they may explain why governments and funding agencies are much more willing to build large school formal systems than to support the non-formal education sector. Non-formal education does not lend itself to bureaucratic strategies.

Farland's next step was to invite the other providers of non-formal education – NGOs and government agencies – to participate in its strategic planning. This invitation resulted from the Department's thinking strategically about resources. Officials recognised that the Department's budget was unlikely to grow much more than its current level, which covered 20 government service officials and the cost of the one-time basic literacy campaign, which

was scheduled to end within four years and had no excess. They also recognised that by far the largest share of funding for non-formal education went through NGOs, and that a sizeable amount went through other government agencies.

The Department's *strategy*, they concluded, should continue to rely on NGOs and other government agencies to provide non-formal education in the country. This was not simply because government did not have the funds to replace NGOs or take over their programmes but because NGOs were better situated to provide non-formal education. They were small, flexible, and mobile. Thus, one NGO or agency could help address the problems of one or more limited groups of people. Among them, they could use a variety of methods to help solve a variety of problems. They could form alliances, including alliances with organisations and agencies that provided complements to education and training, such as credit, equipment, supplies and even work.

Government's role: What is strategic?

We have defined strategic planning as the process of setting goals and making the best use of resources to reach those goals. What makes planning *strategic* is creative thinking about choices among goals and among resource uses and among the dynamic interaction between goal choices and resource choices.

If the government adopts a problem-solving goal, and if it relies on NGOs and government agencies to provide resources to non-formal education, what then is government's role? Or, in terms of strategic thinking, how can government facilitate the use of available resources (mostly those of other organisations and agencies) in meeting its goals (problem solving)? In full consultation with *all* non-formal education providers, Farland has arrived at the useful role of government in this situation, and thus it has set its goal: to help non-formal education providers improve the quality of their services. To do this, the Department of non-formal education will work with providers to set standards, share information, and improve accessibility of services.

To set standards, the Department has considered several options. One is to write exemplary curricula in several courses, including literacy, that non-formal education providers could adopt or adapt to their own programmes. Another is to certify service providers to offer certain courses and perhaps to regulate providers, outlawing any that were not certified. A third is to prepare tests in literacy and math that would allow learners to certify their acquisition of skills equivalent to those taught in primary school. Farland is still considering these options and which is the best to pursue.

To share information, the Department established a sub-goal of offering workshops and forums at which non-formal education service providers within the country could keep informed about best practices and other developments. Forums would allow providers to regularly share with each other information about their programmes, challenges, successes and problems. Workshops would allow those with some expertise to train others; they would also allow providers to present particular challenges and ask for help, and they would bring in experts from outside the country. The Department would also help finance visits by providers to regional meetings and to other countries with strong non-formal education programmes.

To improve accessibility of services, the Department wants to convert the temporary centres it established for basic literacy training into more permanent village-based centres for non-formal education where non-formal providers could offer courses and information. This is a challenging goal, and officials are defining various options for reaching it. They are thinking

strategically about its feasibility, including the likely need to limit this programme to selected villages – at least in the near future. They are also looking for ways to mobilise local resources in establishing and operating village centres.

Farland officials recognise that in order to meet two of its three sub-goals, information sharing and service improvements, the Department should operate closer to the local level. Though the country is small, rivers, mountains, bad roads, and other barriers make it difficult for people to travel easily to the capital, where the department staff is located. Thus, they plan to open three or four offices at the regional level within the next year and have asked for new posts to be created. Officers at the regional level will have authority and discretionary budgets that allow them to hold information-sharing events and to help villages establish non-formal education centres.

Thus, Farland has worked with its partners in non-formal education to determine its strategy for improving the quality of services. It has thought strategically about goals, opting for addressing solvable problems rather than aiming at an unachievable vision. It has thought strategically about resources, opting for collaboration in mobilising a range of resources rather than building its own monolithic structure.

Farland has not yet finalised its strategy, and officials realise that they never will reach the end of the road. Non-formal education will never be a static field, with all the necessary structures in place and resources on track. As the country develops, its economic and social needs change continually, and the role of education and training in meeting those needs changes as well.

Summary

The Department of non-formal education in Farland has begun and will continue to think strategically about its goals and resources. The Department has found that the strategies best suited to supporting non-formal education are extremely different from those suited to supporting formal education. It has decided to frame its goals in terms of problems to be solved rather than visions to be achieved, and it has set goals in view of available resources. These resources are not limited to what the Ministry of Education budget can provide. Instead, they mobilise resources in the non-government sector, in other government agencies, and even in communities.

The Department has established good working relationships with NGOs and government agencies that provide non-formal education. It has set up mechanisms for continual dialogue with these organisations on problems that non-formal education can help to address. Working together, the Department, NGOs, and other non-formal education service providers will regularly assess how well they are doing at helping to solve priority problems. They will also consider together what new problems are arising, and what shifts in priorities they want to adopt.

Not every department of non-formal education would choose the same strategy that Farland has developed. But every department should think strategically about its choices. It should examine the differences between vision-oriented and problem-oriented goals. It should also take into account the differences between the sources and amount of resources available for formal and non-formal education. Finally, every department should think about the interaction between goals and resources – formulating goals that match resources and mobilising resources among all those who participate in non-formal education.

Management Issues for Integrated Diversity

Roy Williams

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Eastern and Southern Africa have over the years developed a wealth of ways of providing education. New forms of education have been provided by a diversity of organisations and supported by many different agencies. But we are still a long way from achieving Education for All (EFA), and some areas seem to be standing still, or even regressing.

This paper examines some of the issues and implications that we have to consider if we are to attempt to integrate all of these resources and maximise the effectiveness and responsiveness of EFA.

Goals

First of all, we need to clarify our goals. In broad terms, these would include quality, equity and relevance. If we focus on equity, we could consider "equity of provision," but this is unlikely to take us very far, as it will not account for diversity, and instead give us more of what we have, namely standardised education. We could, on the other hand, try a notion such as equity of opportunity, but that is not much of an improvement and has already been tried without resounding success. Perhaps we should move on to equity of outcomes, which means that we assure everyone that they will be able to progress through a system of well articulated options to reach the same basic goals. It might take one person longer than another, and it might be much more complicated for some, but everyone will be able to progress to similar goals, of similar value, if they persevere.

This is very different from saying that everyone will get the same services, or that everyone will get the same opportunities. It says that everyone will be able to achieve similar (not identical) goals by proceeding along different routes.

Reporting

It might be useful to look at an analysis of the key elements of a management system and then to put them together to give us some idea of what it would mean to manage integrated diversity of provision.

In broad terms, we would have to ask ourselves:

- What target groups do we want to serve?
- What modes of provision do we want to employ?
- How will elements of the system articulate with each other?
- How could we manage the resources at our disposal to achieve this?

We could then put the target groups across the top of a matrix, the modes of provision down the side of the matrix, and fill in the modes of provision we want to use for each target group.

Having done this, we could decide how to link and relate these different activities (in educational terms) and how to allocate resources to achieve them (in management terms). We could use this to determine the extent to which different target groups were being served and at what costs; then we could plan the extent to which integration, diversification, and co-ordination of these activities might help achieve EFA.

In other words, this could form an overall planning and reporting framework to review these issues and our performance on an annual basis, and to communicate to the public on our targets for our performance. This would allow us to assess and revise our strategy for EFA on a regular basis.

Managing change

A few years ago, in the midst of yet another meeting on consultation and transformation of education in South Africa, one particularly frustrated person asked, "When are we going to get back to normal?" To which the answer was: "Never. Normal is finished."

I think that's true, but what does it actually mean? In the late 1960s, education was 15 years ahead of its time, and now in the late 1990s, education is 15 years behind the times. We can try to understand this strange state of affairs if we take a look around us at what is happening in the rest of the economy.

In general terms, we have experienced major changes in the way in which the state and private sectors are defined and relate to each other, particularly since the dramatic demise of the command economies – more particularly in the late 1980s. "Managing" now means managing change – not for particular periods but pretty much on a permanent basis.

In general terms, this is the kind of change that has occurred in the state and private sectors, leading to an increasing overlap between the two, which often makes them nearly indistinguishable. As you will see in the table on the next page, the state and public sectors are quite clearly different in the "then" column. In the "now" column, the two sectors overlap more, and the distinction between the state and public sectors is blurred, and the remaining "state" and "public sector" functions are substantially changed.

Changes in the State and Private Sectors

Sector	Then	Now
State	• Supply-led provision of basic services • Controlled and standardised • No risk • Bureaucratically administered • Stable: services, careers, structures, institutions • Independent, different, competing states and state systems	• Some supply of services, with more balance with demand • Diversified services and goods • Medium risk • State regulated, locally managed • Shifting services, careers, institutions • Interdependent states with global safety nets
Overlap-ping Sectors		• Many services outsourced • More balance between supply and demand, with unprecedented levels of responsiveness. • Diversified services and goods • Diversified and overlapping providers of goods and services, across states. • Medium risk • State regulated, locally managed • Shifting products and services, careers, institutions. • Interdependent states with global safety nets. • Transnational corporations and superstates (IGO's)
Private	• Demand-led, but with massive (state) intervention by force • Uncontrolled, but standardised for mass production on long production lines • Very high risk • Entrepreneur/executive management • Unstable (bubble economies, depression, stock market crashes)	• Demand: within "Free" Trade • Agreements • Diversified services and goods, and customised production • Medium to high risk • Systems and team management • More global interdependence and safety nets

What does this mean for education? It means that many if not most of the services provided in a particular way by the state have changed dramatically, in most of the ways indicated above. Education has moved last and slowest, if at all. In many countries few of the changes have been applied to state education, resulting in inflexible, cumbersome, unresponsive, uncompetitive, and sometimes irrelevant provision in what remains the most supply-led

sector of all time. The state education sector has in many places attempted to remain "normal" in a world in which "normal is finished."

The challenge for education is not to throw out the formats and achievements of the past but to carefully assess which aspects of past provision are worth keeping, and which need to learn from and adapt to the multitude of changes affecting everything else in the economy.

AIDS

One of the consequences of an interconnected world, with personal mobility, both geographically and within relationships, is AIDS. Right at the bottom of an inside page of a recent edition of the *Star* in Johannesburg was a very small and insignificant report: "AIDS scourge hits Zimbabwe mortuaries." This report says that the mortuary is now forced to stay open 24 hours a day to cope with the increase in the death toll from AIDS. More than 60 percent of the people are dying from AIDS-related diseases.

In one mining area in South Africa about 50 percent of twenty-five-year-old women are HIV positive, and the average life expectancy in KwaZulu Natal is approaching 30 years.

Education must respond and manage changes brought about by AIDS. Twelve years of schooling are not much use to someone who might only graduate from school at age 25 and die two or three years later. A curriculum that teaches people how to look after their teeth instead of how to cope with opportunistic diseases and how to find good hospice care is unlikely to hold anyone's attention. A system that expects everyone – at least in the cities – to attend school for five or six hours each day at fixed times is likely to be untenable for at least 15 percent of the pupils. The projected figures of half a million AIDS orphans in each Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) country in the next few years means that education for institutionalised children will have to be a substantial part of the education system very soon. All these issues were tabled at the Inter-ministerial SADC Conference on AIDS in 1996. There has been little response.

Integrated Management of Education

If the provision of education must become executive management of change instead of bureaucratic administration of stability, what is required and what examples can we learn from, particularly in the non-formal sector, to contribute to an integrated open learning system?

In overall terms, the best non-formal education system provides a working model for education that:

- Is context sensitive
- Is flexible and responsive
- Balances short-term and long-term needs of learners
- Is responsive to micro-economic needs and issues and feeds into macro-economic development
- Deals with immediate problems and needs but relates them to general issues, knowledge and problem solving
- Includes some elements of the student becoming an independent learner
- Is largely demand-driven, which is to say, driven by internal motivation.

Here are some examples:

- The Department of Education in the UK recently decided to introduce a civic education programme for schools to teach children about civic life – how political systems work. But the Department first asked the children what they thought should be prioritised in the new programme. Practical life skills came in the top five places, and politics came close to the bottom of the list.

- In many traditional education systems the structure of the assessment, the curriculum and the learning programmes make it impossible to build in flexibility and responsiveness, and the systems lock all learners in to standardised programmes. Outcomes-based programmes are complex, but they can fulfil all these ideals.

There is no need to assume that because a knowledge-based skill is useful and crucial, everyone has to acquire it in a standardised format.

- Tax-reporting competence is essential, but most people outsource it to experts, and few people have any desire to become even moderately competent at it.

- In Kenya, a project on tsetse fly control provided the Masai community with the competence to manage the tsetse fly problem themselves, using sophisticated epidemiological statistics on a laptop computer. Only a few people on the ranch acquired the competence, and everyone else was quite happy with that.

Competition is essential

An integrated management of education means that competing modes of provision and competing programmes must be regulated and given the space to compete fairly. In South Africa, one level-five (grade 12) programme based on an adult education model was seen as such a threat to existing programmes, careers, and text-book and published royalties, that it has been banned. This is despite the fact that in the historically African schools (ex-DET) 50 percent of the pupils are 21 years old, and 25 percent of them are 25 years old. Clearly, students of this age should be allowed to choose an adult education programme if they so wish.

Shifts in institutional culture

Changes in the institutional culture in education are essential if education is to catch up with changes in the economy. First, education must use the strengths of its own sector, non-formal education, to respond to a rapidly changing world. Second, education must learn from changes in other sectors of the economy, many of which have already responded to changes in the world.

Many of the new ways of managing the economy are much closer to the way non-formal education is managed than the way formal education is administered. It is an historical irony that the largely marginalised non-formal education has much more to teach people who will have to drive educational change than its high profile counterpart, formal education.

A literate Environment and the Eradication of Illiteracy in Guinea

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Socio-educational data

In Guinea, as a result of the implementation of PASE (Sectoral Adjustment Programme for Education), a global co-operation framework established between the government and the main funding sources for education, including the World Bank, USAID and French bilateral aid, major objectives were achieved between 1990 and 1999.

Under PASE I (1990–1994):

- over 3,000 classrooms were built;

- more than 8,000 teachers were trained;

- over 400,000 textbooks and teachers guides were provided;

- the gross enrolment ratio was raised from 28% in 1990 to 44% in 1994.

PASE II brought about:

- a lessening of educational disparities between rural and urban areas, and between boys and girls;

- better management of the education system;

- a gross enrolment ratio of 53–54% at the start of the 1999 school year.

Primary pupil strength was put at 674,632, including 37% girls in 1998, and the mean book/pupil ratio at 1 to 3. Estimated overall illiteracy for the same period was 69%.

Programme of basic education for all

The Guinean Government adopted an *Educational Policy Declaration* on 19 September 1989, operationalised by three educational development letters. Reinforced by the recommendations of the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien in March 1990, this educational policy has constituted the foundation of all activities and initiatives launched under the general objective of Basic Education for All in Guinea.

As officially understood, the notion of basic education covers the following subsectors: elementary education, the first cycle of secondary education, literacy instruction, the *nafa** Centres, specialised education, and apprenticeship centres for the young.

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* nafa=benefits, gains, profit in the local language.

The non-formal education system

As in most African countries, it will be a long time before the vast social needs regarding basic education can be met through the traditional formal education system alone. In its awareness of this major constraint, the Ministry with responsibility for education, seeking alternatives that could contribute to an effective response to the fundamental educational needs of the population, organised a multi-sectoral meeting in November 1991 to interpret and adapt the Jomtien Declaration. The meeting gave rise in particular to the National Action Plan to counter illiteracy, which is in effect the National Non-Formal Education Programme designed to complete and extend the formal system.

The most successful outcome of this programme is undoubtedly the **nafa Centre** concept developed by the Ministry of Pre-University Education through the National Commission on Basic Education for All (CONEBAT) and UNICEF, aimed essentially at establishing a major objective of equity.

Situation of publications in national languages

The 1968-1978 decade corresponds to the most decisive phase in the promotion of national languages, with the advent of the "Socialist Cultural Revolution" which ratified the introduction of these languages as the medium of instruction at all levels of primary and the initial phase of secondary education.

That period, marked by a strong and manifest political will, saw the implementation of a sizeable package of supportive measures based on the production and dissemination in six national languages of a great many instructional aids: textbooks, literacy and post-literacy booklets, rural press, works of scientific popularisation and other civic and political education materials.

Since the change in the country's political direction dating from 1984 and the consequent 'banning' of education in the national languages, Guinea has definitely dropped behind in the drive to enhance the status of these languages as compared with its former leading role throughout the continent.

This situation has impaired the process of producing and circulating publications in national languages, with the actors and outlets suddenly reduced to a strict minimum. Only the National Literacy Service (SNA) has been able to continue the task of producing teaching aids in national languages, with considerably diminished human and material resources.

Where private publishing is concerned, apart from publications produced in co-operation with NGOs, the two existing publishers are doing their best to cover, albeit sporadically, the area of publication in national languages. Editions Ganndal is showing real resolve in the matter and its publications can be found in the bookshops.

Obstacles to the emergence of a literate environment

A score of languages are spoken in Guinea, including eight national languages spoken by a majority as the first or second language. They are Pulaar, Maninka, Soso, Kisiei, Kpelle, Löghöma, Wamey and Oneyan. These are also the main languages of literacy instruction.

Despite the highly significant results achieved by Guinea's first regime in the matter of using national languages as media of instruction, the loss of status of these languages is a major obstacle to the emergence of a literate environment, given that over 69% of the population cannot read or write.

The successive literacy campaigns undertaken in the country since its accession to independence in 1958 have not really produced any significant reduction in overall illiteracy, particularly in rural areas, and reading habits are still a distant goal in a context of increasing poverty.

All in all, the process of designing, producing and distributing books in national languages suffers from many impediments. They have to do with the lack of incentives to write in local languages, the lack of commitment of the private publishing sector, and the absence of a proper machinery to encourage the dissemination of printed material. Such shortcomings particularly affect the implementation of sound adult literacy programmes.

Given the added difficulty of the number of alphabets used in Guinea (harmonised, Adjami, Arabic, etc.), their low rate of assimilation by the public concerned and the shortage of quality reading materials, one can readily imagine the amount of ground needing to be recovered.

Another no less important factor is the institutional environment of publications in national languages. For what we are witnessing is a gradual cutback in the amount of public money earmarked for institutions engaged in research, production and training in national languages (National Literacy Service, Institute for Research and Applied Linguistics, National Institute of Educational Research and Action, etc.). The State's financial partners themselves do not regard this sector as a funding priority, which thus reduces the scope for involvement of the private sector, NGOs and other associations engaged in education and literacy work.

The idea of a draft national literacy policy, at present before the government for consideration, is a decisive step towards measures aimed at an overall upgrading of national languages and their official status.

New strategies and capacity-building

Implementation of the national programme of basic education for all has made it necessary to devise new strategies.

The above-mentioned draft national literacy policy has the following eight general objectives:

(a) to raise the overall literacy rate from 35% to 49% and female literacy from 20.84% to 36% between 1999 and 2003;

(b) to induce 41% of the newly literate to follow the post-literacy programmes;

(c) to create a literate environment;

(d) to build up capacity for managing, monitoring and evaluating literacy structures and operators;

(e) to develop a dynamic partnership with all operators involved in literacy activities;

(f) to mobilise internal and external resources;

(g) to develop a strategy for the use of national languages in official and public life;

(h) to monitor and evaluate literacy and post-literacy activities.

The new strategies

As stated above, one of the main innovations introduced as a means of strengthening non-formal education is the institutionalisation of the *nafa* Centres or 'second-chance schools', which are intended to cater for the educational needs of those excluded from the traditional system (dropouts or un-enrolled children from 10 to 16 years old).

The government is implementing the programme for the establishment of *nafa* Centres with technical and financial support from UNICEF. Its purpose is to give the 10 to 16 year-olds – both dropouts and un-enrolled – the practical skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) they need for greater proficiency in their day-to-day lives and to fit them harmoniously into their socio-economic environment.

The *nafa* Centres today represent an immense hope for a great many rural families in Guinea and the results achieved are very encouraging.

The national book policy

In the present context, the government is clearly conscious of the fact that only through a consistent and pro-active policy to promote books and a literate environment will the country succeed in creating a society of readers and a population capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Ministry of Culture, for instance, endorsing the preliminary efforts of the Guinean book trade under the auspices of REPROLIG, has taken the important decision to officially start framing a national book policy. This reflects a practical reflection of the political will of decision-makers to give the book and reading sector all the attention it deserves.

The basic situational analysis carried out on the occasion of the National Symposium on Culture held from 15 to 18 September 1999, in Conakry, indicates that the various partners in the book trade are motivated in this respect. An official request by the government has been submitted to UNESCO (UNESCO/DANIDA Initiative) for appropriate financial and technical assistance.

The expectation is that, once this national book policy has been formulated and adopted by the government, it will bolster a viable literate environment in Guinea.

In conclusion, it simply needs to be stated that for a long time to come non-formal education and the quest for a literate environment will occupy the energies of the various partners in basic education to make the aim of Education for All a living reality in Guinea.

The non-formal sector is scarcely studied in Guinea, which presents a major problem in terms of the availability of relevant information on the actual numbers of people involved, performance and the nature and quantity of existing educational materials in national languages. Effort is therefore needed to fill this gap.

The NFBEC in Burkina Faso: an educational alternative for the disadavantaged

T. François Niada

François Niada is consultant to International agencies (Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, UNICEF, UNESCO (IIEP)) on Non-Formal Basic Education, Basic Education and Alternative Approaches to Adult Education.

The Non Formal Basic Education Centres (NFBEC) was launched in Burkina Faso in January 1995, and to date there are 28 operating centres. The general philosophy of the NFBEC is to ensure equity of access to education through basic education for all, as well as to encourage effective participation of communities and individuals to their own empowerment.

Specific objectives are to:
- Increase the literacy rate in Burkina Faso;
- Encourage the professional insertion of trainees within society, through technical and civic training;
- Promote community participation in the implementation of education;
- Promote multi-resources and competencies;
- Develop educational bridges between the formal and the non-formal through diversified learning opportunities.
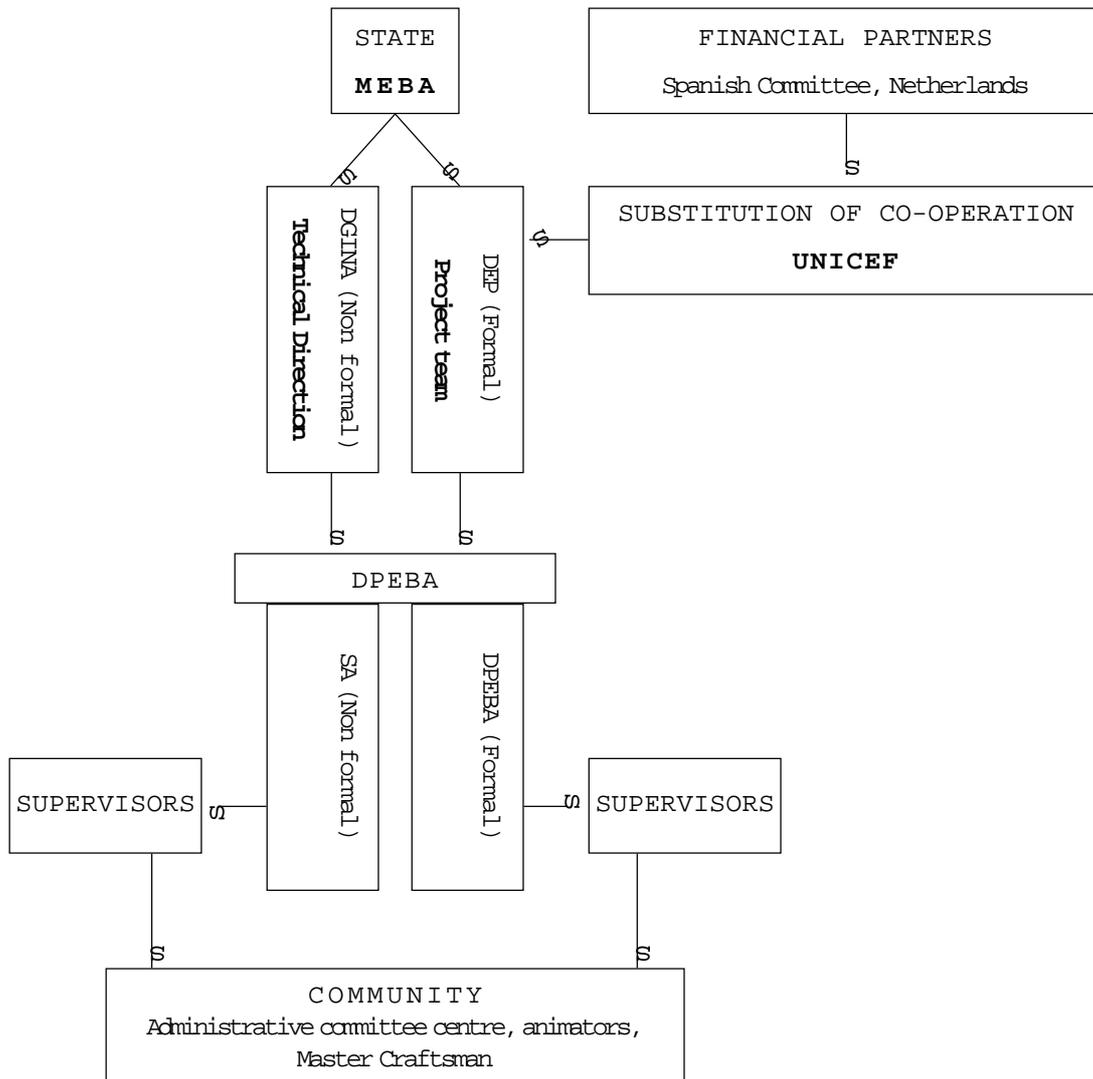
Presentation of Non Formal Basic Education Centres (NFBEC)
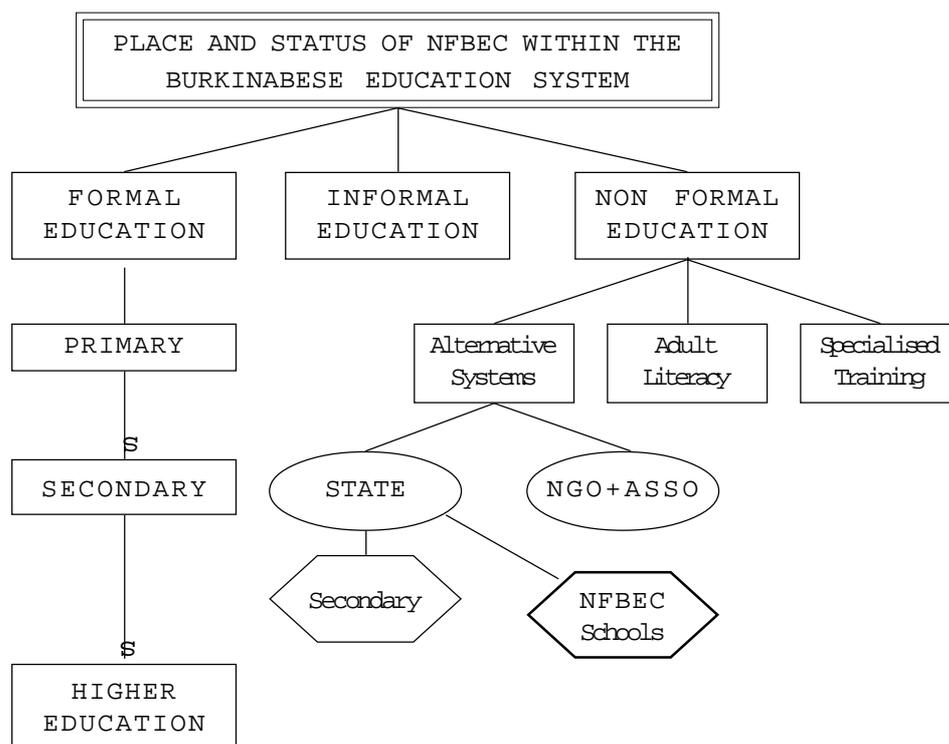
Research Objectives and Results

* Improve the comprehension of the NFBEC programmes;
* Emphasise the programme's outputs as well as difficulties encountered in its implementation;
* Identify elements which could further enhance its performance and impact ;
* Extract valid and replicable lessons for similar experiences.

Management Structure and Partnership of the NFBEC

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                ┌──────────┐              ┌────────────────────────────────┐
                │  STATE   │              │       FINANCIAL PARTNERS       │
                │  M E B A │              │  Spanish Committee, Netherlands│
                └──────────┘              └────────────────────────────────┘
                 ╱        ╲                              │
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      │ DGINA        │ │ DEP          │  │  SUBSTITUTION OF CO-OPERATION  │
      │ (Non formal) │ │ (Formal)     │  │          UNICEF                │
      │ Technical    │ │ Project team │  └────────────────────────────────┘
      │ Direction    │ │              │
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      │SUPERVISORS│ S│ SA       │ │ DPEBA    │ S│SUPERVISORS│
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            S        │ formal)  │ │          │        S
                     └──────────┘ └──────────┘
           ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
           │            C O M M U N I T Y          │
           │ Administrative committee centre,      │
           │ animators, Master Craftsman           │
           └──────────────────────────────────────┘
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The hierarchical structure of the NFBEC, as well as undercurrent conflicts between the formal and the non-formal system, have greatly hindered its functioning. Allocated funds are sometimes invested in the formal system to the detriment of NFBEC.

Organisation and Pedagogical Functioning

Learners are out-of-school rural youth aged between 9 and 14 years old, recruited in classes of 30. Each centre has four classrooms, one workshop and one polyvalent room.

The approach allows linkages between formal education and non-formal education, since participants of NFBEC can join the formal secondary schools and the professional training centres.

During the first years of training, national languages as well as pre-professional training are dispensed. The trainee acquires multiple competencies and is ready, once he completes the courses, to either join the 1st year of the formal secondary or technical schooling system, go for further technical training or join a professional training centre or a private enterprise.

These learning opportunities do not suffer from any lack of adhesion from the communities as they value the NFBEC more than the formal primary educational system due to the pre-professional training provided.

For the communities, the training provided goes beyond an initiation phase and offers full competency to practise an art or trade – which is not really the case with NFBEC or local apprenticeship. Courses run from nine to twelve months and take place four hours a day. Practical work takes place in the afternoons.

Bridges, including communities' perceptions
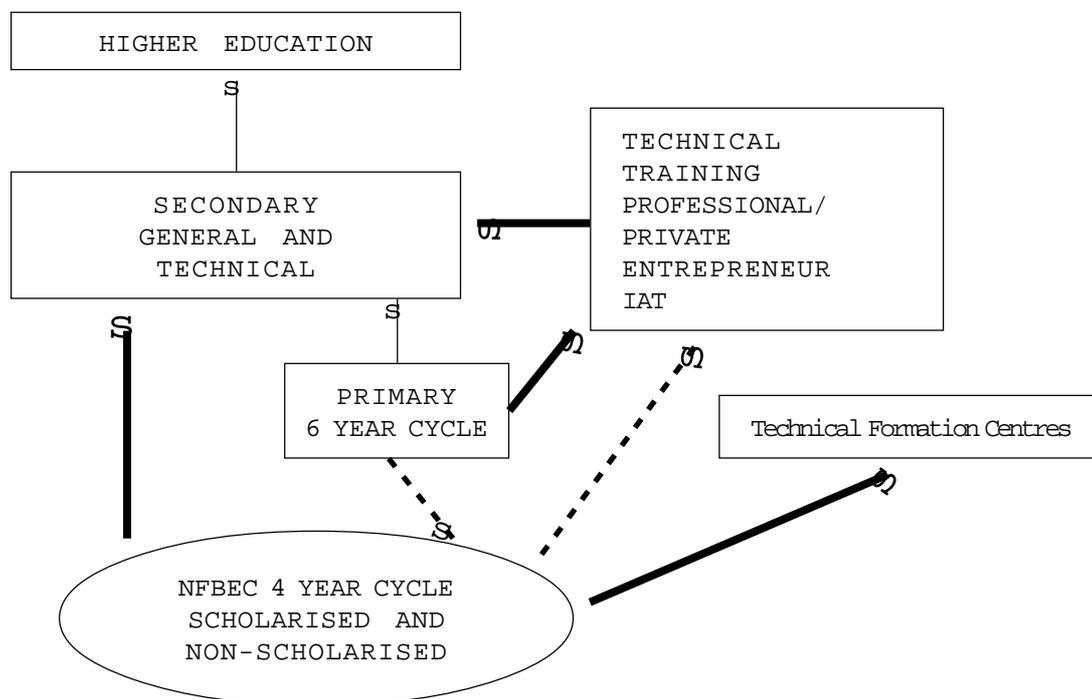
LEGEND

- - - - - - Opportunities requested but unplanned

———— Opportunities offered

———— Normal Flow (formal)

Abbreviations

DEP: Direction de l'Enseignement Primaire
DGINA: Direction Générale de l'Institut d'Alphabétisation
DPEBA: Direction Provinciale de l'Enseignement de Base et de l'Alphabétisation
MEBA: Ministère de l'Enseignement de Base et de l'Alphabétisation (Ministry of Literacy and Basic Education)

Recruitement and training of human resources

The trainers – holders of the BEPC (Brevet Elémentaire du Premier Cycle) are recruited at village level, and receive 4-8 weeks training. The State gives them a contract and remunerates 30000FCFA (US$50) per month. The overdue payment of their salaries discourages motivation. The supervisors are from the formal system not having received any specific training in the non-formal educational system.

Characteristics of the Monitoring and Evaluating Mechanism

The mechanism is based on the formal system.

The characteristics:
* Lack of working tools in some localities;
* Absence of a follow-up/monitoring culture (follow-up = assessment in the classroom of the animator's and learner's behaviour and responses; physical condition of the classroom);
* Total absence of any participatory analysis with the actors;
* Poor qualification of supervisors who possess no training for catering to the non-formal education system;
* No evaluation due to dysfunctional elements built in the implementation.

Dynamism of Community Participation

Community participation comes down to financial contribution, as well as participation of local management through management committees.

Community participation is partial and intervenes only at the moment of execution. The conceptual phase is the work of technicians. This perception translates, according to some parents, a non-valorisation of their conceptual capacities. However, the myth that knowledge and intellectuals come from the city, stands out in interviews, as well as the fact that illiteracy contributes to the helpless feelings of incapacity of the rural population.

Added difficulties are the unclear roles of the beneficiaries, the low income of the communities, the persisting perception of the NFBEC as a project. Therefore, there is a lack of anticipation regarding the management and functioning of these centres. In fact, the communities only meet when difficulties arise.

Social Legitimacy of the NFBEC

* The NFBEC are positively perceived because of the concluding experience related to the use of the national language as a medium of teaching during the first years of training.
* Contrary to formal schooling, the NFBEC are closer to the communities' values, expectations and aspirations. This perception is unfortunately not shared by actors of the formal system at local level, which jeopardises the coexistence of NFBEC and formal schools.

Difficulties and weaknesses of the NFBEC

- Partial or no functioning of the management organism at central and decentralised levels;
- Heavy hierarchy within the management;
- Absence of pedagogical training: weakness of the monitoring and evaluating system;
- Profile of out-of-school recruits which sometimes outnumber 51,45%;
- Lack of interest of the trainers: poor salary;
- Low status of NFE;
- Local institutionalisation of the project at the DEP instead of the DGINA;
- No clear indication of what the NFBEC lead to.

Lessons Common to the three countries (Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso)

- The target population is heterogeneous and does not respect the selection criteria. This implies that not only is the demand not satisfied but also, that psychological and pedagogical problems impair the centre's management;
- Insufficient training of technical personnel, including animators and supervisors;
- Low appropriation of the NFBEC experienced by the communities due to lack of information;
- The budget allocated to Basic Education has either increased or remained constant. However, with regard to NFE, the budget only amounts to 1% of the State budget;
- The weakness of the monitoring and evaluating system inspired from the formal system, limits the availability of complete and accurate information on the functioning of the centres (rate of enrolment, flow, dropouts, pedagogical practices, etc.);
- A weak institutional capacity due to the commissioning of the steering role to NGOs (Mali) and to the functional lethargy of the management structures (Burkina Faso);
- The unclear status of NFE within the educational system of the three countries. Despite the fact that the laws of orientation exist in some countries like Burkina Faso, the status of NFE would benefit if it were better defined with regard to formal education, and the plans of development of the countries.

Organisation of Community Learning Centres for Lifelong Learning and Community Development

Ehsanur Rahman

Ehsanur Rahman *is Director of Programmes, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh.*

Lifelong learning is a process that involves purposive and directed learning. Each individual sets a series of learning objectives and then pursues these by the means available. In a learning society everybody learns and also teaches others throughout life. In such a society, schools and colleges as well as other organisations such as factories, businesses and social agencies work as education providers. All agencies provide opportunity for learning toward empowerment of the people, so that they can contribute to community development.

In a country like Bangladesh, with its low literacy rate and widespread poverty, it is a big challenge to make a visible impact through non-formal education on the life of the neo-literate. Without opportunities to retain newly acquired literacy skills, the new literate is in danger of losing much of the impact of the skills. One of the devices to retain the literacy of the neo-literate, particularly adolescents and adults who do not intend to enter into the formal system of education, is organising multi-purpose community learning centres at their doorsteps. Again, to offer opportunities to those who are difficult to reach for education and continuous updating of knowledge and lifelong learning, there is need for institutionalised education and information support services in the society. DAM's Ganokendra (community learning centre) programme started functioning to meet these needs.

Objectives

The general objective of organising the Ganokendra is to provide learning opportunities to the people through institutionalised information support services for improvement of quality of life. The more specific objectives are the following:

- To organise an institution through which non-formal education and training can be provided to those who remained out-of-school or have completed basic literacy courses;
- To organise a community library stocked with easy-to-read materials, wall magazines and newspapers, making available to remote communities information that is relevant, practical, and can be understood by people who have limited literacy skills;
- To build up an institution that brings people of a community together, enabling them to network with non-government and government agencies and to access services that are available to them.

Features of the programme

Ganokendra are locally managed institutions, and, as such, each Ganokendra can be developed differently according to local needs and expectations.

Essentially, Ganokendra

- provides services to neo-literates and other learners who are not in schools that help them increase literacy and life skills;
- arranges for basic education of illiterates;
- promotes schooling of out-of-school children;
- arranges skills training for members;
- promotes a reading habit for increasing knowledge and skills;
- creates opportunities for further training and retraining in activities that are needed by the community or individual members;
- promotes community development activities;
- creates leadership in solving local problems.

Each of these objectives reinforces the others. Teaching basic literacy skills promotes the use of materials on issues such as health and hygiene. The availability of useful and attractive materials facilitates the retention of literacy skills and promotes lifelong learning. The availability of reading materials in the Ganokendra brings the community together. The provision of development services encourages the community to ensure that library services are maintained.

How it works

Ganokendra in its most simple form is a community library. The booklets provided to the Ganokendra are simply designed as follow-up materials to suit the difficulty levels of the new learners. There are also books and materials for advanced learners.

Promoting basic education for out-of-school children and illiterate adults

Ganokendra works not only for post-literacy and continuing education; it also plays a significant role in promoting basic education to illiterates and out-of-school children. Campaign programmes are arranged for enrolment of children in primary schools. Literacy courses are organised for out-of-school children and illiterate adults and adolescents in the Ganokendra. Follow-up courses are organised for the semi-literate and people with limited reading skills. A brief synopsis of these three programmes is presented below.

Adult Literacy programme: The Adult Literacy Programme is run for illiterate adults between the ages of 15 and 35; it provides functional literacy so that they can solve their day-to-day problems by themselves. This is a centre-based programme organised in a Ganokendra, having 25 learners in a centre. The duration of the programme is nine months, divided into two packages. The first package covers a set curriculum frame with three levels, basic, mid-level and self-learning, within a period of six months. The second package is for follow-up education, covering a period of three months. Two primers with four major functional areas relevant to the needs of the learners cover the three levels of literacy under the first package. The functional areas are family life, economics and income, organisation building, and civic consciousness. The second three months are used for consolidation of literacy skills acquired during the first six-months. During the follow-up period, graded follow-up books or easy-to-read materials are supplied to the learners for guided study. Monthly newsletters supplement these. The learners in adult literacy programmes are simultaneously linked with Ganokendra activities for literacy practice and lifelong learning.

Literacy programme for adolescents: The objective of the adolescents' literacy programme is to prepare illiterate boys and girls between 11-15 years with necessary education, skill training, and awareness of various socio-economic fields for their lives ahead. The children of this

age group have their own needs and desires. Taking this into consideration, DAM developed a curriculum for this age group and reading materials based on that curriculum. The duration of the adolescents' literacy programme organised in a Ganokendra is also nine months, divided into two packages. The first package covering the set curriculum frame has three levels within six months. The second package covers three months, which is essentially for follow-up education to consolidate the literacy skills acquired during the first six-month period. During this period follow-up graded books and easy-to-read materials are provided, supplemented by monthly newsletters and wall magazines, where local news of interest to the neo-literates concerning family life, social and legal issues, income generation activities, and so on, are included.

Non-formal primary education for children: The Non-formal Primary Education programme has been designed to cover unschooled children of six to ten years and dropouts of primary school. The duration of the course is four years and covers the primary education cycle (i.e. Grade I to V of the formal primary schools). While the national primary education curriculum is followed in this programme, DAM-produced primers up to class III are used to shorten the course duration. From class IV onward the national textbooks are used. The main purpose of this programme is to provide a second chance for children to re-enter the formal system. Children who do not desire to go for further formal education are attached to the Ganokendra so they can retain their newly acquired literacy skill.

Promoting a reading habit: As a resource centre in the village, Ganokendra initiates activities to promote a reading habit among the people, dissemination of information, and counselling services toward the development of life skills. The means of arranging the information, counselling, and resource services vary from Ganokendra to Ganokendra. They include, for example, arranging study circles, inviting local experts (a local craftsman) to facilitate discussion groups, getting assistance of outside resource persons (such as government health workers), collecting information from local branches of national organisations (such as on methods to detect arsenic poisoning).

Arranging skill-training programmes for the members: At the initiative of the Ganokendra, vocational training courses are organised to increase income-generating skills of members. Courses are organised either in the Ganokendra or in other convenient venues. Local-level resource persons for government and non-government agencies are invited to facilitate the training sessions.

Promoting community development activities: A number of community development issues are addressed in the Ganokendra. These include gender sensitisation, environment conservation, income generation, health awareness, water and sanitation, early childhood development, and socio-cultural development. DAM provides training support to the facilitator, who in turn orients the members. All such training courses are organised at the fieldlevel and, where appropriate, local resource persons (from government or other NGOs) are invited.

Facilitating Networking Functions: An important function of the Ganokendra is that they can link up with other service providers. Gradual strengthening of the Ganokendra fully realises their potential for accessing services that are already available to the community. Examples of current networking functions of the Ganokendra are its use as an immunisation centre, availing veterinary services from the government, collecting educational materials and organising local events on national days, availing micro-credit to members, and networking for primary health care services.

Implementation, supervision and management

Organisational steps of Ganokendra include a survey, organisation of the learner-community group, formation and orientation of the management committee, training of facilitators, finalisation of Ganokendra infrastructure (landscaping), physical construction or renovation of the centre house, and supply of materials, equipment and books to the centre.

The Ganokendra is organised and managed by the groups of neo-literates with back-up support from DAM, in collaboration with the local community. One facilitator is recruited from the community who works as the community worker. She initiates the activities and looks after the smooth functioning of the Ganokendra.

The overall management of the Ganokendra is the responsibility of the Management Committee, formed by people of the locality. Local people, actual and potential users of the Ganokendra are consulted in the process of the formation of the Management Committee. The Committee is equipped to develop plans for the activities that the centre is to undertake (training courses, networking activities, community library, and so on) and to ensure that the activities are implemented satisfactorily.

DAM equips all Ganokendra with basic furniture, including benches, news boards and bookshelves. Each Ganokendra is supplied with booklets that have been designed as follow-up materials to the literacy courses and other easy-to-read materials (all in Bangla). There is regular communication between the facilitators, management committee, and DAM field staff, all of whom attend monthly management meetings at the Ganokendra. DAM's supervision personnel supervises the functioning of the Ganokendra and maintains close liaison with the Ganokendra committee. DAM's technical, material, and financial support is provided during the initial year(s) of its operation. Ganokendra members raise funds for undertaking activities at local level. Gradually DAM's support is phased out.

Innovative aspects of Ganokendra

- It is organised and run by the community.
- Its post-literacy learning support is not time-bound. It addresses learning needs of the neo-literates for an indefinite period.
- An advanced literacy level beyond the highest level (level three) of the national adult literacy curriculum is targeted by the users of Ganokendra.
- It is accessible to all people in the area, not limited to the neo-literates from literacy centres. Out-of-school children, people with limited reading skills, local school students and youths attend Ganokendra for reading newspapers and playing games.
- It is used as a training and issue-based discussion centre.
- Socio-economic and environmental programmes are linked with Ganokendra activities.
- It works as an information centre where daily/periodical newspapers, newsletters, and information-communication materials of other agencies are available.
- It is used as a platform to provide educational and financial services both by DAM alone or in co-operation with other NGOs.
- It is used as a service delivery centre by other agencies, including government extension departments.

Lessons learned

- There are demands among the adults and adolescents in the rural communities for learning life skills. These need to be delivered in flexible modes and using simple language.
- Learning materials should always be suitable to the difficulty level of the users.
- It is not only books that attract learners to the community libraries. People enjoy joining in recreational programmes, and learning can be integrated into those activities.
- Neo-literates have the potential to produce an information bulletin for the community.
- Literacy and community development activities can be integrated at any point of delivery of the service package of the organisation.

Limitations and challenges

- Finding a permanent venue for Ganokendra that suits everyone is not easy.
- Facilitators often face difficulty in management of multi-sector activities.
- Absence of scope for professional development of facilitators threatens the quality of operation of such centres.
- An irregular flow of information materials, particularly in remote areas, affects smooth running of Ganokendra. The supply of a daily newspaper becomes a big challenge where roads are poor and travel is difficult.

Education, Skill and Livelihood Practices: The Integrated Approach of CMES, Bangladesh

Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim

Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim is Executive Director and Founder of The Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), an NGO in Bangladesh. CMES's major focus is on education and empowerment of disadvantaged adolescents and youth through alternative education integrated with life-skills and income generating facilities. Dr Ibrahim is also Professor of Physics at The University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, with interests in Solar Energy, Non formal Education, Appropriate Technology, Gender and Development and Popularisation of Science.

The opportunity-cost of education created by poverty among many rural families in Bangladesh causes a high rate of adolescent dropouts from school. School's lack of relevance to the realities of their lives is an additional cause of the high dropout rate. Gender discrimination makes things worse.

CMES has developed its Basic School System (BSS) to address these problems. CMES arranges an integrated package of life-oriented education, a profitable practice of appropriate technology, and home-to-home interventions in health and the environment. Two decades of experiences show that this integration not only offers a second chance for education to adolescents, it also enriches and adds quality to both their education and their livelihood skills.

The rate of enrolment in primary school has substantially increased in recent years in Bangladesh. But the dropout rate remains very high. When we consider the circumstances under which so many adolescents drop out, we may not be surprised by the situation. The common reason is the opportunity-cost of remaining in school. For many poor families, a boy or a girl is already economically indispensable as soon as he or she is seven or eight years old. Enrolment at a late age and frequent repetition of classes make them even older and therefore even more indispensable at home, while they are still in school. A long, patient endurance for many years without any tangible effects is not worth the labour lost by their families.

There is a crisis of relevance in education. Many students, because of their family circumstances, come to feel that there is no gain for them in continuing through primary school. In over-crowded classes, they lose confidence in their ability to learn, receive little individual attention, and fail to achieve much. Many boys and girls feel more and more that school is only for those who can continue through to secondary school and beyond and that he or she is not one of them. It is never emphasised that primary education may be useful in its own right and contain its own value. Young people would rather try to prove their worth outside school.

Gender discrimination in society is another reason for adolescent dropouts. On many occasions, we have come across girls who have dropped out so that their brothers could

continue. It is still common to treat schoolgirls differently as soon as they reach puberty. Many parents simply feel that they should discontinue going to school.

In CMES's long experience with primary school dropouts, certain needs have been manifested quite commonly:

- Opportunities to continue and improve upon income-generating activities, which are essential to the family.

- Immediate opportunities for use of improved literacy and numeracy, particularly in skill development and income-generating efforts.

- An atmosphere of quality education where the adolescent can bring in his or her own life-issues and fully participate, attaining competencies quickly and effectively.

- A school that provides guidance and assistance in real life, including an improved quality of life and employment.

CMES has developed the Basic School System (BSS) over a period of two decades, mainly to address the needs of adolescents who have never enrolled in school or who have dropped out. As income-generating is imperative for this group, our innovation has focused mainly on the integration of education with simultaneous, technically competent livelihood practices. BSS arranges for a life-oriented education, a profitable practice of appropriate technology, and home-to-home interventions in health and environment, keeping the package compatible with the national curriculum. Our experience shows that this is not only a feasible integration, but it also enriches and adds quality to both the student's general education and livelihood skills. And, of course, to overcome the severe opportunity-cost of education for the disadvantaged adolescents, it is an excellent strategy.

There are clear advantages in this integrated approach in respect to the relevance and quality of education. Much of the improvement in analytic and problem-solving skills – so valued in a quality education – can come in a natural way here. Students themselves can approach problems in their own practical activities and solve them within the framework of their literacy, mathematics, and essential-knowledge-based education.

The school-day environment is divided into inner-campus and outer-campus time. The former provides the classroom education, while the latter offers opportunities to practise some of the skills developed. These switchovers provide a lot of variety and joy. The outer-campus activities include the learning of technology skills and home-work. The integration is effected by the ample opportunities these components have to interact among themselves. For example, the general education curriculum may draw its topics and exercises from real life practices and skills. Thus, there is a lot of basic science and mathematics to learn through the making of soaps, candles, wood and metal crafts and through working with the sapling nursery, poultry-raising and bee-keeping, the likes of which are the usual BSS practices. On the other hand, the addition of a "classroom" education to these activities transforms the latter from mere labouring skills to joyful educative exercises in learning useful technology.

The integrated approach extends to the task of marketing too. Marketing activities encourage students to develop a very active interaction between the community and the trades in the locality. These interactions also help teachers succeed with hard-to-reach adolescents. In fact, the interaction between parents and the community is intensive and multifaceted, taking care of enrolment and retention of the students, their education and activities within the school, and their employment or self-employment after school.

Present Situation:

Non enrolment rate: 10%

Non-completion of primary: 40%

CMES's enrolment efforts:

Major Problem: Opportunity-cost
- Economically indispensable for boys and girls
- Tangible effect of education comes too late
- Every one has a story to tell

Typical Reasons for Dropping out:
- Parents need assistance
- Dependence on adolescents for income
- High cost of education
- For girls, too far to travel safely
- Some tempting local opportunities for income

Other More subtle Reasons:
- Crisis of relevance
- Lose confidence, because of non-achievement
- Education valued only in long-term perspective
- Gender discrimination

CMES's model tries to address all these and the task is not easy.

Quality Education Requires:
- Over and above efficient teaching, effective aids and class-room practices
- Relevance with students' present problems, pursuits and ambitions
- Integration with life-struggle
- Emphasis on practicality and usefulness

Education-Work Interaction:
- Division does not help
- Gender stereotypes should be addressed
- Reduce barrier between educational world and working world
- CMES lets its graduates continue work-programme
- Prospect of self-employment

The whole thing needs unconventional and innovative solutions.

CMES is trying some.

CMES's experience shows:
- Adolescent dropouts need a second chance, but in their diverse ways
- A standardised curriculum, only dealing with literacy, is not enough

Some of the diverse needs:
- Creation and enhancement of income generation
- Immediate use of education
- Quality education bringing in their life-issues
- Practical guidance into life-quality and employment

CMES's Basic School System:

17 units (clusters), each consisting of 25 Basic Schools (BS), 3 Advanced Basic Schools (ABS), 1 Rural Technology Centre (RTC).

Between them they cover:
- Primary and early secondary education
- Skill training and income-generating
- Practical work at home-level for life-quality

All fully integrated.

Diversity comes as:
- Type and mode of technology
- BSS students learning part-time in the Technology Centre
- Lateral enrolment according to competencies
- Extra-school (income-generating) in late hours
- Graduate-work for income
- Continuing education for graduates (late-afternoon)

Adolescent Girls' Programme (AGP):
- Gender problems are addressed
- Empowerment of girls
- 'Agrani classes' for continued education
- Skills, technology, income, credit

Ways of Integration:
- Switch-overs each day between inner-campus and outer-campus
- General education draws from technology practices
- Labour becomes educative
- Practices are at market level
- Income-generating creates motivation
- Home-work enhances quality of life

Teachers' Team Work:
- Generalist teachers trained in technology
- Specialist technology teachers
- Teachers work together as a unit
- Team work extends to marketing
- Multifaceted interaction with the community

Future CMES's Plans
Rural polytechnics, for diverse needs, combine secondary level courses with useful technology, commensurate with Government's Technical secondary stream. These may feed Vocational and Technical Institutes and the likes with well-prepared and motivated students.

Mainstream may adapt these too:
- Education integrated with real-life practices e.g. secondary education with Practical skills
- Will give an immediate edge to livelihood skills
- A good strategy for total human resource development.

From Literacy to a Learning Society:
An African Perspective

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Literacy and the pains of its lessons

Literacy has been a crucial aspect of the discourse, practice, and policies in education and the world at large.

Over the years, large and small-scale campaigns involving the introduction of the alphabet has been carried out in many countries on this continent.

This much can be said: the problem of illiteracy has been recognised by governments to the extent that the right to literacy is felt to be the first point in the Right to Learn, and a pre-requisite for the exercise of the other Human Rights[1].

Its definition and the slant in emphasis has, however, varied over time, and today. It can be said that the field has reached some form of maturity in terms of the meaning and expectations given to literacy.

Just recall the manner in which we pursued, traced and exposed the illiterate, liquidated and purged them of the disease? Recall the righteousness we felt them to be besieged by this monstrous, scandalous scourge, and how we sung hymns in literacy campaigns, and called these hymns machetes to eradicate illiteracy with one blow[2]?

Well, Africa's response has varied in intensity from a desire to rid its society at once of this evil once and for all, to more *laissez faire* attitudes and functionalist approaches.

Either way, we succeeded in getting several millions of people to go through literacy initiatives in some countries, even entire masses of the population.

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[1]Hautecoeur J-P., 1997, *A Political Review of International Literacy Meetings in Industrialised Countries*, 1981-1994. In Hautecoeur J-P. ed. 1997. *Alpha 97: Basic Education and Institutional Environments*. UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, Germany & Culture Concept Publishers, pp.11.
[2]Takala T., 1992, *On the Implications of the Literacy Rhetoric for the Education and Development Debate*. Paper Presented at the NASEDEC Annual Conference on *Education and Development Revisited*. Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, Stockholm.

Women seized the opportunities that the literacy efforts brought along and against many odds, did come, even though to drop out fairly quickly. For their part, men were often troubled by the idea of admitting relative vulnerability.

But in many other respects, we scored these successes at great cost to our very societies.

Because instead of looking at literacy as a continuum in different modes of communication from the oral to the written, we equated being ignorant of especially the western alphabet with **total ignorance**. We had no qualms in pitting what is not written as thoughtless, as a weakness, and at its limit, as primitivism[3].

Instead of putting literacy as the service of a complex range of African knowledge in botany, crop and animal husbandry, climatology, medicine and midwifery, philosophy and pedagogy, architecture and metallurgy – knowledge that we KNOW has been subjugated by the processes of colonialism and modernity – we arraigned literacy as a new supreme force, standing there aloft, talking to itself, on its lonely hill, unable to connect its objects with anything else – i.e. neither reconnect them with their umbilical selves, nor with their new alien selves.

Instead of letting literacy serve an organic function to enable our societies to engage in the critical but active re-appropriation and authentication of our cultures and knowledge (i.e. to strengthen what we HAVE), it was our absolute conviction that learning the alphabet was not a cultural matter.

You learnt literacy or went to school, but it was never enough to make you white enough to become part of that happy global family we are seeking to become, the inevitable enculturation poised in a seemingly permanent standoff with the expression of original culture.

We forgot that behind the statistical charts that year after year, show decreased illiteracy rates, there are unmeasurable, ungraphed events of pain and love[4].

We so boldly wanted to eradicate illiteracy; to vaccinate, purge, or scrub our people clean of something we had clearly equated with illness, that we did not bother to listen to ourselves. Nor to the distinct echoes of social Darwinism in our impatient voices as we waved carrots and sticks in the bid to attain rapid modernisation and get just the right quantitative numbers on our billboards to secure places around various banquet tables.

We forgot that it was the same social Darwinism embedded deep in the groins of development practice that had, in the first place, belittled us non-western peoples, and sent us to the back of the queue[5].

We forgot that part of our obligation as the class that had proven that we could read and write, was that we were to turn this pressure on its head, and make it our goal-post to return humanity to the centre, to drown the jingles of individualism with an overwhelming chorus of human solidarity and ethics of responsibility to the Other, which is OUR gift of heritage from this continent, to be brought out as a contribution to globalisation.

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[3] Hountondji P., 1997, *Introduction* in *Endogenous Knowledge. Research Trails.* (ed. 1997). CODESRIA.
[4] Torres R.M., 1995, Adult Literacy: No One Should Be Amazed at the Results. Unpublished notes. UNESCO/ UNICEF.
[5] Esteva G., 1992. *Development* in Sachs W., *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (ed. 1992), London Zed Books Ltd. pp.6–25.

We forgot that it was part of our responsibility and obligation to our people to consistently but resolutely invite the West to abandon its superiority complex, abandon its intolerant and exclusive assumptions about the gross ignorance and backwardness of all others[6].

We forgot that we were to become crucial links in re-contextualising global processes; to create globally oriented yet indigenously rooted futures; to return to the roots with a future oriented point of view.

We forgot that the objectives of basic education, or literacy for that matter, is *minimally* not to worsen the life situation of anyone; *maximally*, that it should consist of recreating links that have been destroyed; and the prevention of school failure, intensifying social action among the disadvantaged, as well as protection of the rights of the excluded[7].

Instead, when we finally realised that literacy was not something hanging from a ceiling on its own, we shifted focus to the link between literacy and societal development, but in a narrow functionalist paradigm, and found great cognitive difficulties when we were to link the goals of literacy and societal development in the organic sense.

We found ourselves tongue-tied whenever we had to find conceptions of learning that **did not stigmatise**, that **enhances**, and that grows from **what is there**... because we had been taught, and learnt well, that **there is nothing there**.

For years, we helped make deeper the ravine between the oral and the literate, and now, challenged by new trends in thinking globally, we are trying to find a bridge between the two, because the search is now, to **create learning societies**.

In search for a vision of Africa as a learning society

At the end of the twentieth century, Africa stands at crossroads, with bitter memories of its colonial past. It faces awesome challenges in its efforts to overcome its experiences of history, and search for a way forward.

Through the four development decades, it has been difficult to crystallise a vision of Africa that is progressive and generative, from a platform of denial of the continent's heritage and knowledge.

This has become more and more obvious as globalisation rears its head, and seeks to deny existence to the local – in our case, a submerged local.

The concept of learning societies now dares us construct new premises upon which we move to dialogue with others in the 21st Century.

It dares us to think of the complete learning processes, on lifelong motivation and readiness to learn, not only from books, but also from whichever source the learning can be availed.

In our process of making Africa, like many countries of Europe a learning continent, we have to make a resolute commitment never again to cast African people who are not literate as a self-defeating otherness: **pre-**this, **un-**that, **non-**this, or the other.

We will remember that our first task is to ensure that never again shall we wilfully sell our people cheap, or facilitate the systematic process of making them lose their life spaces and their word, the parameters for interpretation, their domestication, and their truth.

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[6] Luyckx M., *The Transmodern Hypothesis: towards a dialogue of cultures* in *Futures*. Volume 31, Numbers 9/10. November/December 1999. pp.971–983.
[7] Hautecoeur J-P., Ibid.

We shall endeavour to make literacy socially, culturally and economically useful, by defining *well before the fact,* precisely what aspects of culture, knowledge and latent resources literacy is going to help unearth and how it is going to help recast African societies as legitimate locations of human imagination[8].

Making literacy serve the goals of human development, and especially of the African Renaissance, requires that functional literacy is interrogated from the perspective of to what extent it has consciously taken on the vision of Africa in the coming *millennium,* or whether that is still left to whom it may concern.

We also would have to ask the question: at what stage exactly is the literacy empowerment supposed to occur? Is this a question for posterity, or is it an issue of implementation design and strategy?

We would have to link literacy efforts closely with such processes and frameworks as the *Recognition of Prior Learning* process so that its utility is immediately realisable in legitimate contexts.

The Golden Riches in the Nordic Grass

When the Nordic Council of Ministers prepared its vision of Lifelong Learning for All, they took from Nordic mythology, The Prophecy of Sibyl as their guiding light[9].

> *Today the skies are dark and people are suffering; we cannot ignore their plight. We hope that they will live to see a new greening path, and we hope that our Nordic skies will not turn black ... We must assume responsibility for ensuring that this does not happen...*

From this, they drew ideas about the human condition which reminded them that intellect without feelings is fatally flawed; that visions and substance, spirituality and intellect must be assigned an equal value.

It was from this that they drew the conclusion that the education for the future should encompass international understanding, linguistic skills, the ability to interpret symbols, a spirit of co-operation and participation, the ability to use both sides of the brain... in other words, it is a learning that is rooted in upbringing, family ties, respect, self esteem and inner strength.

It must unite the ring and the arrow, fusing them together to form a creative spiral.

Having laid this basis, they proceeded to devise strategies by which the competence of the entire population could be raised, with a high priority placed on the promotion and development of local initiatives and a recognition of the fact that the most effective learning instruments consist of human qualities, qualities which every individual can continue to develop – throughout his/her life.

They contested the rule by the regime of experts, and named the risk of technocratic dehumanisation as a distinct threat to the development of lifelong learning.

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[8] Dias P., 1993, *Democratisation and Education as a Political Challenge to Social Authoritarianism in India.* In Nord-Sud Aktuell-Themen. 2 Quartal 1993.
[9] *The Golden Riches in the Grass. Lifelong Learning for All.* Report from a think tank issued by The Nordic Council of Ministers. February 1995.

Africa's manifesto for a learning society

Africa's manifesto for lifelong learning and the making of Africa as a learning society must include a statement in capital letters that begin with the assertion that Africa says YES to itself, and thus allows itself to heal from the injuries caused by centuries of denial and denigration.

The learning continent we must commit to building is one that seeks to join and compete with the rest of the world, but on terms it can understand and can determine.

It is one in which we can accept the local as a force for sustainable human development, and not an inverted mirror of western identity.

The literacy to service such a manifesto will be explicit and fearless in specifying precisely how knowledge of the western alphabet should contribute to the renewal of a continent subjugated in part by the very discourses of literacy itself.

It is one that shall recognise that literacy involves ideological contest over meaning and power[10]; that it is definitely not an a-political, individual academic activity separate from community development and movements working towards human rights and justice.

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[10] Hautecoeur, Ibid.

Literate Environments

Ekundayo J.D. Thompson

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Over thirty years, a considerable amount of time has been spent deliberating on a number of critical issues with regard to literacy, post-literacy, and continuing education. The debate has shed light on both conceptual and operational issues, thus providing a vital link between theory and practice, ideas and action.

The dialectical relationship between action and reflection at the operational level has resulted in a generation of valuable lessons on what works and for whom, and what doesn't work. The debate continues, given the dynamics of the non-formal education field of study the practice that provides its context, and the forces that have an impact on it.

The theme of the ADEA Working Group on Non-formal Education forum, "The Dynamics of Non-formal Education," provides another opportunity for reflection on the dynamics of development and the pivotal role of education – non-formal education – in facilitating and accelerating development. It is the development context which provides the rationale for non-formal education and the *raison d'être* for our interaction in it. This presentation assumes that there are many interrelated environments and literacies. Literacies impact on the environments, and the environments dictate the literacies that ought to be acquired.

The problem of illiteracy has persisted and appears to defy solution. Illiteracy persists among children, especially girls and adults, especially women. It is on record that a billion adults, two-thirds of whom are women, do not have access to the written word. Of those who are literate, functional illiteracy prevents them from fully utilising the power of the word. Consequently, they fail to access opportunities and to grapple with the many challenges the world offers. Illiteracy has been positively correlated with poverty, low life expectancy, high infant mortality and high birth rate. The illiterates who are the majority of the world's poor tend to have many children they can ill afford to care for.

There are different environments requiring different literacies. The political environment requires political literacy to foster good governance. Good governance is fostered by the intense involvement of the citizenry in the political process. It is expected to contribute to a peaceful socio-economic and political environment.

Creating a literate environment therefore, is an exercise in creating an enabling political environment, which in turn contributes to creating an empowering social and economic environment. To this end, knowledge of the political, social, and economic dynamics is essential for active citizen participation. Active citizen participation requires mobilisation of all available material and conceptual resources, including indigenous knowledge and culture.

Some Reference Points

The Fourth International conference on Adult Education (Paris: 19th – 29th March 1985) reaffirmed the importance of the right to learn. The right to learn is the right to:

- read and write
- question and analyse
- imagine and create
- read one's own world and to write history
- have access to educational resource
- develop individual and collective skills (UIE 1997 p.70).

Learning needs expressed and transformed into learning opportunities provide a basis for the exercise of the right to learn.

According to the World Declaration on Education for All, basic learning needs are comprised of essential learning tools, namely, literacy, numeracy, oral expression, problem solving, and the basic learning content, which comprises knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (p. 3).

Both essential learning tools and the basic learning content are expected to contribute towards fulfillment of the objectives and purposes of learning.

The Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century emphasised four fundamental purposes of learning, namely: to Know, to Be, to Do, to Live Together.

The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning views the objectives of youth and adult education as a lifelong process aimed at developing "autonomy and a sense of responsibility of people and communities, to reinforce the capacity to deal with the transformations taking place..." (p.11).

Literacy has been viewed variously as a fundamental right, the keystone for sustainable democracy, development, human rights, and peace (UNESCO).

Literacy facilitates access to knowledge, enhances the quality of life for the newly literate. It also facilitates social transformation, conscientisation (Freire), and provides the capacity to read the world and the word.

Addressing social issues is at the core of literacy objectives. But given the rate of technological change, social issues cannot and will not be adequately addressed without knowledge of scientific literacy. Scientific literacy has been described as "the basic understanding of science and its application in society by everyone, in order to make informed decisions in their daily lives and to function effectively as a citizen" (Rao, 1998).

Imperatives of change and implications for learning

The continent of Africa is in the throes of calamitous change, resulting in social disintegration, physical destruction, and death at an unprecedented scale. The current contradictions in African societies demand that people are creative, to enable them live and fulfill their potential. To this end, development of a variety of competencies could be a response to the social, economic, and political change in Africa.

Creating a Literate Environment: whose responsibility? Why? How?

Responsibility for creating a literate environment is shared by the individual, the community and the state. Individual responsibility refers to the opportunity available or ability to act

on one's own volition. It also refers to an obligation, a requirement, a duty-moral, legal, communal, or otherwise.

Individual responsibility can be derived from individual motivation – the source of interest, need, stimulus. Individual responsibility assumes commitment to and ownership of the process of learning.

In an article entitled "Why should I learn to read? Motivations for literacy acquisition in a rural education programme," Gfeller examines motivation as one of the key factors for literacy acquisition, noting its political, economic, and religious complexity. It is important to take account of various motivations in the process of creating a sustainable literate environment. Do non-literates, potential learners feel the need to be literate? Why do they need literacy?

A literate environment comes about as a result of the conscious action by individuals to be literate. Conscious action is borne of an inclination to fulfill felt needs. One can describe this type of motivation as intrinsic or endogenous, in contrast to extrinsic or exogenous motivation.

Community responsibility is also a critical factor in creating a literate environment. However, one cannot divorce community responsibility from that of the individual, because individuals constitute communities.

The responsibility of the state should be examined in relation to the "social contract" between the individual and the state. The individual's rights, obligations and duties constitute the basis of the contract. Creating an enabling environment for the fulfillment of the potentialities of the individual is the state's moral and legal obligation.

The mass literacy campaigns in the 1960s had as one of their objectives to bring about popular participation in the political processes. Participation by the people was part of the strategy to solve the problem of underdevelopment. The pros and cons of the campaigns are not the subject of this presentation. What needs to be emphasised however, is the responsibility and capacity of the state to genuinely create an enabling environment. Creating an enabling political, social, legal, and economic framework could do this.

Rationale for a Literate Environment

A literate environment guarantees the exercise of both the right to be literate and the right to learn. It offers opportunities for individuals to realise their potentials in the political, economic and social spheres and to fully and freely exercise their social, legal, and moral obligations.

Following is an illustration of the interrelationship among the environments in which literacy should be acquired. They interrelate within policy and legal conditions that ensure their relevance.

Figure 1: Interrelationship of Literate Environments

Political

Social

Physical

Economic

Work

Cultural

Spiritual

Rights

Legal
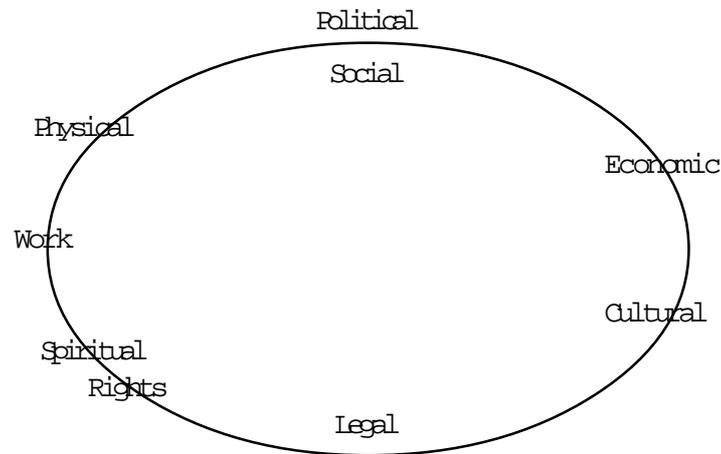
Literacy is environment-specific. The needs addressed are as interrelated as the environments in which they are located. Action to meet the needs therefore should be multi-pronged and integrated. Objectives, contents, and processes of literacy should reflect the diversity of the situation in which learning takes place.

Conclusion

Creating a literate environment is creating a learning environment. The desire to learn throughout life should be sustained by creating opportunities and frameworks for learning and making available the required resources. This can be done through the design and implementation of projects and programmes that arise from and address the needs of those who need literacy.

Functional Literacy and Numeracy in Northern Mozambique: A Case Study Involving Community-Based Producer Associations

Co-operative League of the USA (CLUSA)

November 1999

The promotion of rural producer associations in the northern Mozambican provinces of Nampula and Zambezia has been a joint effort of Co-operative League of the USA (CLUSA), as the implementing organisation, and The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Netherlands Embassy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, as funding partners.

CLUSA has a long history of working with rural groups around the world, particularly in Africa. The CLUSA programme in Mozambique is aimed at promoting the emergence of a private network of economically viable and democratically controlled rural group enterprises in the provinces of Nampula and Zambezia in order to improve productivity and rural income.

This process, which started in early 1996 involves:

Creating a producer organisation business capability in Mozambique. CLUSA employees train local personnel and establish a value-based organisation, which is transferred to local ownership for carrying on the project work.

Developing a sense of ownership, control and responsibility among the association members for their organisations, by having them assume decision-making authority, which is then discharged in a democratic, participatory manner.

Initiating the processes leading to sustainability:

- self-management – transferring skills: literacy/numeracy, operational, organisational, financial, and managerial to the association leaders, employees, and general members.

- economic strengthening – helping the associations develop a series of profitable business activities that address the members' economic and social needs.

- financing – securing a direct relationship between the associations and reliable sources of credit for financing their business activities.

- networking – accessing the technology and information needed to establish and operate competitive businesses.

Over a period of 3½ years the programme has assisted in the development of 370 Producer Organisations (POs) in eight districts of Nampula Province and five districts of Zambezia Province. These POs, representing a total of 12,000 members, have helped rural producers improve their access to input and output markets and to other important services such as savings and credit, agriculture extension, and training in functional literacy and numeracy. An important service provided to the POs has been the establishment of functional literacy

and numeracy training systems at the village level. In CLUSA's experience, the key to preparing PO members for management of their own associations is functional literacy. Without the ability to read, write and perform basic mathematical calculations, the PO will always be dependent on others for information and unable to make informed decisions on their own behalf. While acquisition of these skills by the leadership is necessary for self-management, extending these skills to the general membership assures that the management will be honest and undertaken in the best interest of all. The approach is to tie literacy and numeracy training directly to whatever economic activity has been chosen by a particular association.

In northern Mozambique, over 80 percent of the farmers contacted during the design phase of the programme claimed they could not read and write. In some cases that number was as high as 90 per cent, and even higher among women.

Functional literacy and numeracy services were introduced in the POs in 1996 at the end of the programmes first year, when the first POs were demonstrating a minimum of organisation. Initially, the programme sought local partners who would be able to take the lead in functional literacy and numeracy activities in rural communities. But a thorough analysis of the capabilities of potential partners revealed that none could guarantee adequate programme implementation by themselves. CLUSA decided instead to subcontract two literacy trainers from an adult education training centre (Mutauanha) in Nampula, who would focus their attention on developing literacy initiatives within the CLUSA programme and train literacy facilitators in the associations.

CLUSA's intention has always been to disengage itself from playing a direct role in adult literacy. However, despite the hard work of national literacy trainers, local institutions are still struggling to provide substantive literacy programmes without external assistance. So for the time being, CLUSA continues to support literacy trainers and activities directly, as functionally literacy skills are fundamental to the success of POs and other rural group enterprise activities.

The literacy training process presented here was developed by trial and error over a three-year period. An adult literacy consultant from outside Mozambique was contracted to help the two trainers from the Mutauanha Centre design a programme to train literacy facilitators selected by community associations and rural group enterprises in Nampula. With an ever-increasing demand for functional literacy and numeracy activities, three additional trainers have been recruited in the last year, with co-financing from the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation.

Since the start of the initiative, 91 POs have been involved in functional literacy and numeracy activities. Some 200 village literacy facilitators have been trained, who in turn, have trained over 1,700 PO members in basic literacy and numeracy.

Functional literacy and numeracy: The model

Defining the literacy facilitator profile and facilitator training

All groups participating in literacy activities must first demonstrate their desire and willingness to become literate. The decision to request programme assistance originates with the association or group itself.

Before starting work with the groups, the trainer's first task is to outline the attributes of an ideal literacy facilitator. The community or group can then use these attributes to define for

itself the profile of a literacy facilitator and to identify potential candidates. The group makes the final selection of the facilitator.

Normally, more facilitator candidates are trained than the number that will be needed, so that only the best qualified individuals will be selected at the end of training. All candidates are involved in the process of establishing selection criteria and are aware that only those best fitting the facilitator profile will be selected.

The facilitators participate in a vigorous two-week training programme covering these themes:

- What defines an adult? What are the characteristics of an adult? What motivates an adult?
- Creating a climate conducive to learning;
- The difference between the "banking" concept of education and a concept that emphasises problem solving;
- The role of the literacy facilitator;
- Literacy training methodology;
- Objectives and methods per theme.

After getting this information under their belts, the facilitators focus their attention on producing their own materials.

Implementation of facilitator activities: Continued support to the facilitator

Once trained, facilitators have the task of organising their own "training centres." The most important aspects of getting organised are:

- Agreeing with the trainers on training objectives, themes and materials
- Deciding together how much time will be needed to fulfil the training objectives
- Establish the frequency and duration of training sessions
- Setting up a personal system for keeping track of days present and absent
- Deciding together on a system for evaluating trainers' progress.

The programme trainers establish a contract with the association, which stipulates the responsibilities of the trainers and the facilitators, as well as the literacy training objectives. Terms of payment or reimbursement of the facilitators by the associations can also be included in the contract.

This initial contract is important because it helps establish principles of self-management and assumption of personal responsibility for the process.

Programme quality control and monitoring

Taking into consideration that the majority of literacy facilitators are farmers with only the most rudimentary education, the secret to their success as facilitators is not only in the content and methodology transmitted by the trainers but also in the capacity of the programme to accompany and monitor the facilitators as they carry out their tasks.

In order to assure that the facilitators are playing their role well, CLUSA has adopted the monitoring system, SAP, used in adult literacy initiatives in Cabo Verde. It has also created a network of Literacy Co-ordinators (LCs), elected from among the literacy facilitators, who co-ordinate a group of Literacy Centres. These co-ordinators work directly with the facilitators and maintain links with the literacy team – a central CLUSA team. The co-ordinators are also part of the FORUM of Associations, which represent association by region and provide a platform for associations to exchange information, make decisions, and evaluate the services they provide.

The CLUSA-Literacy team is a mobile team, formed and trained specifically to monitor the literacy training process. The monitoring process is taken seriously by the programme. The literacy (ALFA) team has four members who circulate in the field, using various monitoring instruments, such as checklists and questions for trainers, to gauge difficulties and take note of strong points that can later be used to promote synergy among the facilitators.

If a literacy group is having difficulties, in-service training sessions are held. If the difficulties are dispersed among facilitators, individual counselling is arranged. ALFA team members exchange information among themselves when they return to their base in Nampula, thus providing mutual support.

In addition to monitoring and training, the team's tasks include:

• Keeping a library of literature in the Emakhua language
• Disseminating monthly bulletins for the newly literate
• Keeping up with the training centre and preparing educational materials.

Other important aspects of the literacy training experience

An issue that all trainers must confront is what language to teach. The best language in which to begin reading and writing is one's mother tongue. However, many rural farmers want to learn to read and write in Portuguese rather than in Macua because they know that it is the language of business, and they do not want to waste time. It is an enormous struggle to convince participants to acquire literacy first in their own language. Groups generally reach a compromise: they begin learning to read and write in Macua and then move on to include Portuguese.

Another important aspect of the programme is to take stock of the human resources in the areas where the programme operates and to enlist the collaboration of many others. This begins the process of establishing synergy among organisations and activities. A list is compiled of potential collaborators, according to the themes that will be included in course discussions. In this way, other individuals are invited to participate in the training of the literacy facilitators. For example, outside participants were involved in discussions of the new land law adopted in Mozambique.

During the training sessions, creating a positive learning dynamic is promoted through the use of small groups, assigning tasks, and creating challenges. For example, one group invents a task for another group, which tries to complete the task and return it to the first group. In these situations, participants develop their skills of inventing, resolving, returning, analysing, adapting and reformulating.

Participants are not given manuals at the outset of Phase I of the training. Rather, they construct their own manuals as the course activities unfold.

The most interesting aspect of this programme experience has been the way in which the methodology of Paulo Freire has been combined with some of the Reflect methodology. In the Freire methodology, the challenge for trainees is to analyse and debate a selected subject or to make a decision and act on it. But the challenge ends there – with a conversation about an abstract idea. Topics are discussed but not seen, unless the facilitator introduces an image evoking the subject of discussion.

This programme's goal is to make the experience more dynamic, involving and stimulating. To do this, it uses a technique from the Reflect methodology: making maps on the floor. This association of methodologies – debate and map making – is especially useful for helping

mathematics become more accessible and operational, because participants take data straight off the maps and work with questions originating with the maps.

Abstract themes, such as decision-making processes, human resources and workload based on gender, land tenure, etc., and how to produce maps around these topics are presented in the "Facilitator's Manual," which is written in Portuguese. The themes themselves are the result of identifying topics central to CLUSA programme activities.

Teaching techniques

Introducing Portuguese

The introduction of Portuguese requires a great deal of persistence and patience on the part of trainers and those being trained. Learners confront two difficulties simultaneously: learning to speak a language that is familiar only to a limited extent, and learning to read and write in this language. The method used for teaching reading and writing in Macua must be fine tuned, so as to minimise this problem. When they teach literacy skills in Macua, learners have a strong vocabulary, which allows them to rely on their memories and own knowledge, making use of their imagination and creativity to construct new words, based on those they already know.

With Portuguese, however, personal knowledge is a weak resource because people cannot rely on their own vocabularies. Thus the possibility of creating new words based on ones already known is much more limited. Consequently, new techniques must be introduced to permit groups to continue learning in a creative and participative manner.

Just as with Macua, the facilitators start teaching in Portuguese with a two-syllable word, each syllable having two letters, such as *VIDA* (life). After that, the facilitators introduce three-syllable words, for example, *PRODUTO* (product). Continuing on, they teach two or three-syllable words in which each syllable has three letters. They use some Portuguese syllables, which they have already introduced in teaching Macua: the learners' familiarity with these words greatly facilitates the process.

When starting in Portuguese it is better to be too ambitious. Taking small but sure steps rather than aiming too high can help prevent participants from becoming discouraged and dropping out. As soon as participants feel comfortable with simple Portuguese words that they can construct themselves, they can move more easily to more complex words and pass to Phase 2 of the training.

Facilitators are given room to invent other learning sequences, as long as they follow the principle of starting with the most simple and then moving to the more complex.

Specific techniques

(1)   Early on in the first phases of teaching in Macua, facilitators seek ways to promote associations, at least to provide information, using corresponding words in Macua and Portuguese.

(2)   During discussions in which participants are speaking freely in Macua, they are encouraged to use one or two words in Portuguese that *fall* within the theme under discussion.

(3)   A databank of words is compiled and written on small cards. A corresponding image of the word is added at the word's side or on the other side of the card. These are just a few additional examples of learning exercises. Each literacy facilitator is invited to arrange dozens and dozens of small cards, all cut to the same size. Based on the syllables being introduced,

words are written on the cards alongside with illustrations, which are made by hand or glued on. In this way facilitators can use corresponding images to familiarise participants with the meaning of written words. In addition to syllable cards made for Macua words, a set of cards for Portuguese words is also used. The more cards, the better.

When participants are constructing new Portuguese words and have exhausted their own vocabulary, they can go to the word bank and, by visual association, look for additional words. A participant can read and immediately know what the new word is by the image on the card.

For example, when using the root word, **VIDA** (life), the participants look for words that use the syllables **VI DA** in the word bank, such as:

VIVI; DÁVIDA; **DEDO**; **VOVÓ**; **VOVÔ**; VIRTUDE; VONTADE; **DUDA**; VETO; DEDICADO; **VIDA**; DATA; **DADO**; **DADA**; DAMA; DANADO; DANO; DATA; **DEDADA**; DELA; **DEVE**; **DEVIDO**; DIA; **DÍVIDA**; **DITO**; VALA; VALE; **VEDADO**; VELA; **VIDE**; VILA; VALETA….

In the box above, the words written in heavier type are those most likely to be correct and those that use the syllables learned when studying the word VIDA (life).

Of course, this is all hard work. A lot is demanded of literacy facilitators and of the ALFA team. The rewards though are evident when trainees are able to learn with greater success. By the time participants are working on their second or third root word, more and more words can be introduced to the group.

Literacy facilitators are advised to build a dictionary of the most frequently used words in Portuguese by consulting other literacy facilitators and individuals in their community, such as priests and nuns, teachers and nurses. Facilitators are advised to involve as many people as possible in transforming their work into a collective cultural activity. It can end up actually being fun!

Syllable cards are frequently used as a deck of cards. When the groups are playing with the cards in order to form new words, each person in the group has a certain number of new word cards, which may or may not use the syllables the group is currently learning. One at a time, each person in the group will place in the centre of the table a card with a word that appears to use the syllables that have just been learned. If the player is certain and the rest of the group agrees, he or she wins a point. The game continues with each person having several turns. The person with the most points at the game's end wins.

(4) A fourth technique is to use syllable cards with word lists written legibly on a sheet of paper. The word lists are selected by the facilitators according to a chosen theme, using words with known and some unknown syllables. The game proceeds by each person trying to find among the word lists, a new word that uses the syllables that are currently being learned. Each person takes a turn with the word list. Once the player has found a new word, he or she looks among the stack of syllable cards for syllables that describe the new word.

Those selecting the correct syllables earn a point. The player with the most points wins the game.

Another version of the game is for each group to try and construct as many new words as possible in a set period of time marked by the facilitator. The team constructing the most new words wins the game.

After playing the games, participants try in their small groups to write in their notebooks the newly constructed words.

(5)   This technique follows the same steps as one used to teach in Macua: participants are asked to circle in a newspaper article or text the syllables they have learned. In a slightly more complex activity, participants can circle entire words that use known syllables.

Another technique is to put in the correct order, syllables that have been mixed up to form a word that makes sense. For example, TATABA for BATATA (potato), LAVE for VELA (candle), or VIDÁDA for DÁVIDA. This last technique can only be used when people know more spoken words and have developed a good Portuguese vocabulary.

To teach numeracy, the programme employs a series of games and activities known as "alternative mathematics." These activities help the participants learn numeracy skills that are related to "real life."

IMPACT DATA

Initial phase – functional literacy in Portuguese: 1996–1998

No. of Associations	No. of Literacy Facilitators Trained			No. of Enrolees			No. of Successful Completers						
	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	%	W	%	T	%
35	94	3	97	512	380	892	412	80	234	62	646	72

Second phase – functional literacy in Emakhua: 1998–1999

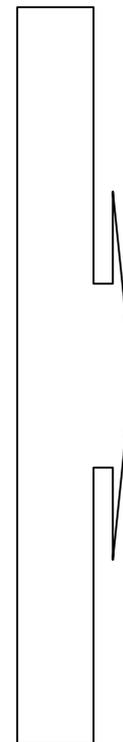| No. of Associations | No. of Literacy Facilitators Trained | | | No. of Enrolees | | | No. of Successful Completers | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | W | T | M | W | T | M | % | W | % | T | % |
| 21 | 38 | – | 38 | 250 | 267 | 517 | 201 | 80 | 195 | 73 | 396 | 77 |

Third phase – functional literacy in Emakhua: 1999 (Reflect method)

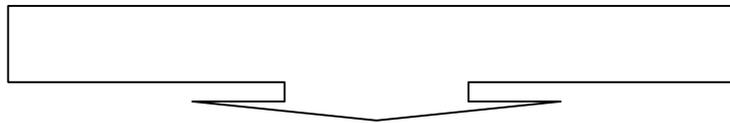| No. of Associations | No. of Literacy Facilitators Trained | | | No. of Enrolees | | | No. of Successful Completers | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | W | T | M | W | T | M | % | W | % | T | % |
| 35 | 59 | 1 | 60 | 456 | 401 | 857 | 409 | 90 | 320 | 80 | 729 | 85 |

Annex I

Summary table of first phase of literacy course – teaching in Macua

Theme	Root Word	Objectives	Family of Syllables	Mathematics
E N V I R O N M E N T	M U R O	Discuss the reality of the community, linking this reality with the resources WATER/RIVER. Natural Resources. Reflect on the importance of rivers, and how to keep them clean. Reflect on the community's water needs and solutions. Reflect on other natural resources in the community, their importance, how to conserve and develop them. Identify ways to keep water clean for consumption.	ma ra me re mi ri mo ro mu ru	Numbers 1 to 5
LAND AND INCOME	M U T E K O	Reflect on and discuss on the potential of local human resources and the division of work according to gender in the community and in the family. Reflect on how to alleviate and simplify some work processes, in particular women's work.	Ma ta ka Me te ke Mi ti ki Mo to ko Mu tu ku	Numbers 6 to 9

Theme	Root Word	Objectives	Representation of the family of syllables	Mathematics
LAND AND INCOME	M U K A S U	Reflect on the development of ideas about the ownership of cashew trees and forests. Reflect on the reasons cashew trees don't produce as well as in the past. How to improve production. Discuss prevention of uncontrolled burnings and their dangers. Identify other fruit trees cultivated in the region. Discuss the care of cashew trees. Discuss the problems associated with marketing cashews.	ma ka sa me ke se mi ki si mo ko so mu ku su	Number 10 Reading of 0 and its value Notion of tens
LAND AND INCOME	M A T T U V I	Classify crops according to importance, according to knowledge of crop, and according to income value.	Ma tta va me tte ve mi tti vi mo tto vo mu ttu vu	Numbers up to 30 Notion of a dozen Notion of half a dozen

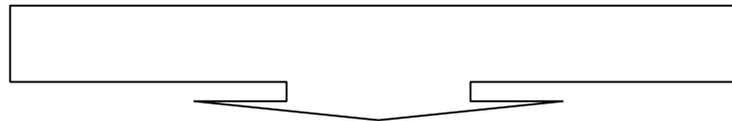| Theme	Root Word	Objectives	*Representation of the family of syllables*	*Mathematics*
LAND AND INCOME	N X O T T E	Reflect on the phases of cotton production and what is involved in terms of care and tasks during each phase. Discuss the problems in the buying and selling of cotton. Reflect on the periods when food availability and income are highest according to the agricultural calendar, to determine ways of better control allowing for improved quality of life of the family.	nxa tta nxe tte nxi ttiof nxo tto nxu ttu	Graphic notion of weight (kg)
LAND AND INCOME	N A K H U W O	Reflect on the role of cash crops and subsistence crops in the household economy and how to improve this relationship.	Na kha wa ne khe we ni khi wi no kho wo nu khu wu	Addition
LAND AND INCOME	E T T H A Y A	Reflect and discuss the map "land ownership." The question of land distribution and land use. Discuss the causes of land conflicts. Talk about the new Land Law.	a ttha ya e tthe ye i tthi yi o ttho yo u tthu yu	Numbers up to 50

Theme	Root Word	**Objectives**	*Representation of the family of syllables*	*Mathematics*
M A R K E T I N G	E P A S A R I	Reflect on the relationship of market prices and basic purchases. Reflect on which months prices are low and in which they are highest. Discuss the best time to sell surpluses. Identify the products that are bought in outside markets and those that are produced locally.	a pa sa ra e pe se re i pi si ri o po so ro u pu su ru	Numbers up to 70 Continue with addition
M A R K E T I N G	O K O P H A	Reflect on the relation between income and expenses. Reflect and learn simple forms of planning the use of loans. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of loans.	a ka pha e ke phe I ki phi o ko pho u ku phu	Numbers up to 100
M A R K E T I N G	E K O O F I R I	Reflect on the system of household economies. Discuss the best ways of keeping money and talk about the advantages and disadvantages of each.	a ka a fa ra e ke e fe re i ki i fi ri o ko o fo ro u ku u fu ru	Subtraction

Summary table of first phase of literacy course – teaching in Portuguese

Theme	Root Word	**Objectives**	*Representation of family of syllables*	*Mathematics*
ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLES	VIDA (Life)	Reflect on why an association exists. Reflect on what we expect from our association Reflect on the advantages of being a member of an association.	va da ve de vi di vo do vu du	
ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLES	DONO (Owner)	Reflect and deepen understanding of association structure. Reflect on association principles. Define more precisely and develop knowledge of rights, duties and tasks of each key figure in the association.	da na de ne di ni do no du nu	

Theme	Root Word	Objectives	Representation of family of syllables	Mathematics
ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLES	V O T O (Vote)	Reflect on and develop greater understanding of the proceedings of a General Assembly. Reflect on and develop greater understanding of decision-making processes. Reflect on and develop greater understanding of making a decision regarding a problem.	va ta ve te vi ti vo to vu tu	
ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLES	R O D A (Rotation)	Reflect and discuss rotation in an organisation. Reasons for. Advantages and disadvantages.	ra da re de ri di ro do ru du	

Theme	Root Word	Objectives	Representation of family of syllables	Mathematics
LAND AND INCOME	M U D A (Change)	Reflect on traditional crops. Advantages and disadvantages. Reflect on new cultures. Advantages and disadvantages. Implications. Reflect on the risks and solutions regarding the introduction of new crops. Reflect on the relationship between quick decisions and greater opportunities. Reflect on the effects of this rapidity in the economy of the farmers. Reflect on slowness in decision-making and the effects on the economy of the farmer. Reflect on what rapid change requires.	ma da me de mi di mo do mu du	
LAND AND INCOME	F O M E (Hunger)	Reflect on and discuss the factors that help in the fight against hunger. Reflect on and discuss the factors that contribute to hunger.	fa ma fe me fi mi fo mo fu mu	

Theme	Root Word	**Objectives**	*Representation of family of syllables*	*Mathematics*
MARKETING	FICHA (Forms)	Reflect on the registration files that are used in an association. Reflect on the files that are still needed in the opinion of the trainers. Discuss the importance of registration.	fa cha fe che fi chi fo cho fu chu	
MARKETING	PRODUTO	Develop knowledge of market analysis, how to contact buyers and negotiate sales. Develop knowledge of and discuss the advantages of making contracts with buyers.	pra da ta pre de te pri di ti pro do to pru du tu	

Programme Profile

Key Dates: February 1996:   Producer organisation development started in Nampula

March 1996:   Functional literacy strategy defined

April 1996:   Agreement signed with the Mutauanha Adult Education Centre

May 1996:   Training of literacy trainers

September 1996:   Training of 1st Literacy Facilitators in the associations

November 1996:   Literacy activities started in 9 associations

Lead Organisation: Co-operative League of the USA (CLUSA)

Supporting Agencies: Funding: USAID, Netherlands Embassy, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation.

Other: Mutauanha Adult Education Centre in Nampula

Technical Consultant: Maria José Nóvoa

No. National Trainers: 4

No. Associations Involved in Literacy Activities to Date: 91

No. Literacy Facilitators Trained: 195

No. Successfully Completing Literacy Course: 1,770 farmers

Success Rate: 78% of participants passed the course

Success Rate using newly introduced Reflect Method: 85% of participants passed the course

Length of Initial Literacy Training for Association Facilitators: 80 hours

Length of In-service/Refresher Courses for Facilitators: 40 hours

Literacy Course Length: 1st level: 3 months Macua; 2 months Portuguese

2nd level: 8 months Portuguese

Contact: Alexandre Serrano or Maria Jose Nóvoa, CLUSA, P.O. Box 423, Nampula, Mozambique
Ph: (258) 6-215825,
Fax: 6-215826,
Email: aserrano@teledata.mz, mnovoa@icon.co.za

Capacity Development of Non-Government Organisations for Basic and Continuing Education

Kazi Rafiqul Alam

Kazi Rafiqul Alam *is Executive Director of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission, an NGO in Bangladesh working at the grass roots level as well as at national and international levels in the fields of non-formal and formal education, poverty alleviation, health, environment, gender development, etc. Beginning as a philanthropic organisation, DAM expanded its programme to various development sectors.*

The development of functional capacities in an education organisation depends on at least three vital factors. These are the professional development of the educators, need-based educational resource development, and the enhancement of organisational capacity. We shall discuss the experience of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, a national level non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Bangladesh, from these three perspectives.

Organisational capacity development

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), simultaneous to implementing its own programmes, encourages small organisations at the grass roots level to be activated and strengthened so that they can also successfully and effectively deliver services for basic education. From this perspective, DAM operates a programme of support to local level NGOs (LNGO), helping them build capacity to provide services in literacy and continuing education.

This support is provided through both hardware and software. Software support includes training of management-level personnel and education programme supervisors, organising study visits, supervising and monitoring programmes, and offering consultation. Hardware support covers supplying of literacy materials for running the centres and seed money for programme operations. Three types of interventions are currently offered for capacity development. These are support of (a) enhancement of management capacity, (b) implementation of basic education programmes, and (c) organisation of continuing education programmes. The support is aimed at helping the partner NGOs successfully undertake a high-quality project independently. The degree of support takes into account the existing capacity of the concerned NGO.

The following list of support activities gives an idea of the nature of technical interventions:

- Assessment of organisational, supervisory, evaluation and monitoring needs and potential;
- Development of action plans for participating NGOs and development and production of training materials;
- Development of separate supervision, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;

- Provision of training to senior staff, covering areas such as organisational management, accounting and financial management, budgeting, project supervision and gender development.
- Organisation of study cum observation visits for senior staff to provide them an opportunity to study operational systems of successful NGOs.
- Organisation of training courses in micro-management, supervision and monitoring techniques, gender issues and leadership development.

To enhance the capacity of the local organisations in the field of continuing education, DAM also provides supplementary support in terms of training and material development. LNGOs are provided technical support for launching continuing education centre-based programmes for promotion of environment, gender development and economic empowerment. Examples of activities being undertaken by LNGOs in the field of continuing education include:

- Enriching continuing education centres through a supply of information materials;
- Organising training on gender and development for community workers, volunteers and group members;
- Organisation of socio-cultural programmes at the community centre;
- Organisation of environment awareness training for community workers, volunteers and group members;
- Supply of saplings for planting;
- Organisation of training programmes on smokeless ovens for community workers and volunteers.

The activities are planned jointly by DAM and concerned LNGOs, based on the needs of the organisation relating to capacity development. DAM field officials remain in constant touch with the LNGOs to provide logistics and technical support. Monthly progress review meetings are organised jointly by DAM and LNGO personnel.

The results of these interventions are manifold. The organisations have increased confidence in their ability to run quality literacy programmes. In launching national literacy programmes, the participation of experienced local organisations is ensured. Programmes become more community oriented. Continuing education becomes essentially the follow-up agenda of basic literacy programmes run by the LNGOs.

Professional development of various level literacy personnel

DAM's programmes for the professional development of literacy personnel include:

- Development of training courses and resource materials;
- Organisation of pre-service and in-service courses, both institution-based and work-place based;
- Organisation of short- and medium-term courses for various level personnel;
- Arrangement of attachment and internship programmes;
- Jointly managed courses through inter-agency collaboration.

DAM runs two specialised institutes for the professional development of NFE personnel. These are the Institute of Literacy and Adult Education (ILAE) and the Institute of Primary and Non-formal Education (IPNE). The ILAE offers short-term training programmes for various levels of NFE personnel, while the IPNE offers post-graduate medium and long-term academic programmes for the professional development of mid-level personnel working in primary and non-formal education.

The IPNE works under the Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, a DAM sponsored private university. Courses offered by IPNE include a B. Ed. in non-formal education, a B. Ed. in primary education, an M. Ed. in primary education, and an M. Ed. in non-formal education. Tailor-made courses are offered in education management, training, academic supervision, curriculum and materials development, continuing education, monitoring and evaluation.

The ILAE offers a variety of courses for different level clientele, including basic education centre facilitators, education programme supervisors and co-ordinators, women's group members, NGO representatives, continuing education centre facilitators, dropout girl students and community workers. The ILAE also organises national, regional, and international training workshops for mid-level and senior level programme managers and planners. Examples of such programmes organised last year include national workshops on women's empowerment, continuing education for development, and the development of literacy materials for primary school children in rural areas; regional workshops on community learning centres and capacity-building of literacy resource centres for girls and women and of INGOs; and local workshops on planning post-literacy programmes and the development of continuing education materials.

The ILAE and the IPNE also organise study programmes for expatriate visitors and students to provide them with the opportunity to get exposure to innovative model programmes in Bangladesh.

In order to act as a resource base for information support for capacity-building of the relevant agencies involved in NFE programmes DAM runs the Bangladesh Literacy Resource Centre (BLRC). The centre serves as a documentation centre for literacy activities and as a clearinghouse of literacy materials. At the centre, information related to literacy activities is collected, preserved, and disseminated; training courses are organised; resource-sharing exchanges are arranged; support services on mass media and documentation services are provided; and communication networks are established at different levels.

Curriculum and learning materials to suit learners' needs

DAM provides technical support for enhancing organisations' capacity for development or the adaptation of learning materials to suit needs of particular groups of learners. Programmes are designed for improvement of skills at all levels. This support contributes to the overall capacity of the organisation to promote the use of needs-based learning materials.

In preparing courses for materials development, DAM largely follows approaches recommended in UNESCO's APPEAL Training Materials for Literacy Personnel (ATLP). ATLP provides a scientific basis for designing literacy programmes and materials, following some widely accepted principles and guidelines. ALTP contains guidelines for developing literacy programmes by designing the entire training system, starting with curriculum development and proceeding through learning materials development, training of personnel, supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

In line with ATLP, the courses developed are based on the following conceptual framework:

- Levels of literacy skills with clear demarcation of achievement at each level in terms of the 3Rs;
- Determination of the functional content of a literacy curriculum based on a needs survey of the beneficiaries;
- Integration of functionality and literacy skills;

- Division of instructional times over literacy levels;
- Preparation of a curriculum grid representing the minimum requirement in terms of functionality and literacy skills and also flexibility in the curriculum design;
- The systems model of teaching and a systems approach to the design of learning materials with simultaneous development of teachers' guides and learners' workbooks.

At the request of UNESCO, DAM organises courses in other countries. The ATLP series are widely used in the courses offered by DAM institutes.

Besides implementing direct programmes for capacity development of NGOs, DAM helps to develop resources in this field. Under a recent UNESCO project, DAM has conducted a baseline study to identify the capacity development needs of the local organisations for more effective implementation of basic and continuing education programmes. On the basis of the needs assessment findings, DAM is now developing three manuals in the identified fields for training of INGO literacy personnel. Three specific themes identified for the manuals are community participation in basic education, participatory planning and management of basic education, and participatory assessment of learning achievement.