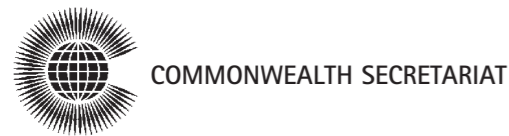# Achieving Education for All: The Case for Non-Formal Education

Report of a Symposium on the Implementation of Alternative Approaches in the Context of Quality Education for All

Edited by Amina Osman

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

ADEA

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Foreword

The Working Group on Non-Formal Education, in its constant advocacy for non-formal education, has never suggested that there is any conflict between non-formal and formal education. On the contrary, its aim has always been to win recognition for the fact that the two approaches are necessarily complementary and that it is essential to develop synergy between them with a view to identifying and developing effective strategies to achieve Education for All.

The Working Group held its first symposium in Johannesburg in 1999 to analyse and discuss the dynamics of non-formal education and to highlight promising experiences in the field.

At the ADEA Biennial Meeting in Arusha in 2001, the objective was to show the necessity of mainstreaming non-formal education into the education system as a whole, thus enlarging the scope for initiatives. Nonetheless, the priority remained to ensure that the majority has access to basic education for all.

At the symposium held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in 2003, the Working Group went a step further. With the presentation and qualitative analysis of innovative experiences, it widened the debate to cover not only the facilitation of access to basic education, but also how to ensure the quality of that education. Definitions of quality were not confined to the internal performance of education systems. Guidelines for discussion were provided by research on the indicators of the right to education conducted in Burkina Faso by the Association for Non-Formal Education, taking account of the four capacities of accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and availability (provision of resources).

The meeting in Ouagadougou was important not only because of the quality of the discussion which followed the presentations, but also because of the diversity of the participants, their strong commitment and the variety of experiences reported. Ministers of Education from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Liberia, Mali and Senegal played an active part in the discussions, together with representatives of development agencies, promoters of innovative education methods and experts.

We face a huge challenge: how to develop the innovative alternative approaches presented during the symposium so that they can be more widely used, and how to integrate them into overall strategies for ensuring that the majority have access to quality basic education for all.

The recommendations made by symposium participants to Ministers and development agencies suggest avenues for reflection and action. The Working Group will take them into account when it designs its mid-term strategy and its plan of action for the coming period.

Jean-Marie Byll Cataria
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Leader of the ADEA Working Group on Non-Formal Education

Acronyms

ABED   Adult Basic Education and Development
ABET   Adult Basic Education and Training
ABLE   Adult Basic Learning and Education/Adult Basic and Literacy
            Education
ADEA   Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AEIP   Adult Education Integrated Programme (Senegal)
ALADIN   Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network
APENF   Association for the Promotion of Non Formal Education
ASAL   Arid and semi-arid lands
AU   African Union
BREDA   Bureau Régional pour l'Éducation en Afrique (Regional Bureau for
            Education in Africa) (UNESCO)
BUCO   Bureau of Co-operation (Switzerland)
CBO   Community-based organisation
CEDEAO   Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
            (Economic Community of West African States)
CESCR   Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN)
CIDA   Canadian International Development Agency
COBET   Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania
CONFEMEN   Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking Countries
CSO   Civil society organisation
DFID   Department for International Development (UK)
ECD   Early Child Development
EETP   Ethiopian Education and Training Policy
EFA   Education for All
ESDP   Education Sector Development Programme (Ethiopia)
ETP   Education and training policies
EWLP   Experimental World Literacy Programme
FAL   Functional Adult Literacy
FAWE   Forum for African Women Educationalists
GER   Gross enrolment ratio
GTZ   German Technical Cooperation
HIGCSE   Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICAE   International Council for Adult Education
ICBAE   Integrated Community Based Adult Education
ICESCR   International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICTs   Information and communications technologies
IDRC   International Development Research Centre
IGCSE   International General Certificate of Secondary Education
KCPE   Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE   Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KIE   Kenya Institute of Education
LC   Learning communities
LLL   Lifelong learning
LPPW   Literacy Project Prioritising Women (Senegal)
MBESC   Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (Namibia)

MDGs   Millennium Development Goals
MHETEC   Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation
            (Namibia)
MINEDAF   Ministers of Education of African Member States
NAMCOL   Namibian College of Open Learning
NARC   National Rainbow Coalition (Kenya)
NCCE   National Commission for Colleges of Education (Nigeria)
NCNE   National Commission for Nomadic Education (Nigeria)
NEPAD   New Partnership for Africa's Development
NER   Net enrolment rate
NERDC   Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
NETC   National Education Technology Centre (Nigeria)
NFE   Non-formal education
NGO   Non-governmental organisation
NMEC   National Commission for Mass Literacy and Non-Formal Education
NPEC   National Primary Education Commission (Nigeria)
NTI   National Teachers' Institute (Nigeria)
NVRI   National Veterinary Research Institute (Nigeria)
ODA   Overseas Development Administration (UK)
PASEC   Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN
            (Programme for the Analysis of the Educational Systems of the
            CONFEMEN Countries)
PDEF   Plan Decennal de l'Education et de la Formation (Ten-year Plan for
            Education and Training (Senegal))
PEDP   Primary Education Development Plan (Tanzania)
REFLECT   Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Techniques
SADC   Southern African Development Community
SAP   Structural Adjustment Programme
SETA   Sectoral Education and Training Authority (South Africa)
SIDA   Swedish International Development Agency
SWAps   Sector-Wide Approaches
TRC   Teachers Service Commission (Kenya)
UBEC   Universal Basic Education Commission (Nigeria)
UBEP   Undugu Basic Education Programme
UDHR   Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UIS   UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNDP   United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPE   Universal Primary Education
UNFPA   United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund
UWC   University of the Western Cape (South Africa)
WCEFA   World Conference on Education for All
WGNFE   Working Group on Non-Formal Education
WHO   World Health Organisation

1 The Symposium: An Overview

Amina Osman

'The Implementation of Alternative Approaches in the Context of Quality Education for All' was the theme of a symposium organised by the Working Group on Non-Formal Education (WGNFE) of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 12–15 May 2003. The meeting was attended by 120 decision-makers, including ministers of education, specialists, technicians, planners, administrators and researchers. It enabled the WGNFE and the participants to discuss non-formal education (NFE) projects and their implementation. It also provided a base for the enlargement of the WGNFE and for advocacy by its local and sub-regional partners for the various aspects of non-formal education. This introductory chapter attempts to provide a summary of the themes discussed at the symposium, without developing all the issues and elaborating upon all the case studies presented, but summarising their content and the results of group discussions, and setting out steps for future action. It is not meant to be an exhaustive report, but an overview of the rich debate and the key issues discussed at the symposium.

The symposium was a follow-up of the plenary session held during ADEA's biennial meeting held in Arusha, Tanzania in October 2001 on 'Mainstreaming NFE: Moving from the margin and going to scale – towards a grounded theory'. The plenary proposed the setting up of a panel to make a critical analysis of case studies, which resulted in policy proposals for the development and strengthening of alternative modes of learning. The documents and presentations provided an overview of successful or promising innovative programmes and projects conducted by partners in the field, and analysed experiences and practices in Africa and other regions of the developing world, particularly Latin America. The session also included a conceptual analysis of the integration of NFE in the formal system as a whole, in the context of concerns related to Education for All (EFA) national strategies.

Introduction

Participants in the symposium came mainly, but not exclusively, from West Africa. Fifteen countries were represented by high-level delegations: South Africa, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, Switzerland and Tanzania. The meeting was also attended by representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in education at regional and sub-regional levels.

The perspective was one of further debate and critical thinking on the following issues:

- Definition of concepts related to formal, non-formal and alternative approaches to education, and their interrelationships, with the aim of promoting sustainable and diverse education systems;

- Identifying the factors and determining the conditions necessary for policy development, planning and implementation of dynamic education systems which are able to adapt to changing needs;

The [symposium's] *perspective was one of ... debate and critical thinking on the ... definition of concepts related to formal, non-formal and alternative approaches to education ...*

- Designing a mid-term strategy for the WGNFE and considering the roles, responsibilities and involvement of actors and partners in non-formal education.

Objectives of the Symposium

The objectives of the symposium were defined in a spirit of dialogue and exchange with different partners and actors in order to address the issues. The meeting was facilitated by various participants, including Ministers and Working Group members, and was designed to have a balance between plenary sessions and group discussions so as to maximise participation and draw out the essential lessons to be learnt from quality education and apply them to national strategies.
The objectives were:

- To initiate a process of sharing knowledge and experiences of non-conventional education systems in Africa, in order to identify implementation strategies for a diversified and integrated quality education for all.

- To promote reflection[1] and exchange ideas and experiences on practices, measures and policies enabling the effectiveness of the right to education[2] – accessibility, acceptability,[3] adaptability and availability (provision of resources),[4] in the framework of a non-conventional education system.

Organisation of the Symposium

The symposium was organised around five interdependent themes closely linked to the design and implementation of quality education for all strategies:

1 The right to education: this right was analysed according to various criteria, its indivisibility and its universality;

2 Alternative approaches: an approach to the right involving institutional considerations;

3 Education strategies for those ignored by the system: related to the principles themselves (the right to non-discrimination, indivisibility of human rights and implementation of the right to education);

4 Provision of education meeting the right to education (effectiveness of the right to education, structural and governance conditions);

5 Policies relating to the right to education.

The various experiences presented during the symposium revealed common themes and principles, together with a variety and complexity of experiences of non-formal education. The themes were selected in consultation with the national teams/working groups on non-formal education, and with partners, experts and technicians involved in the implementation of basic education policies and programmes.
The first two days of the symposium were devoted to discussion of different experiences which were examined in order to provide the basis for an analysis of strategies and plans to achieve quality education for all through an integrated education system. The symposium working groups then discussed some of the issues more extensively, and made observations and recommendations for future action.

The discussions in the working groups concentrated on:

- The notion of complementarity and integration between formal and non-formal education systems;

- Concepts relating to non-formal education;

- Links between non-formal education and local development (the practical usefulness of training in relation to social, economic and organisational issues, culture and insertion in society);

- Partnership within the different strategies – among experts, civil society, communities, and regional and sub-regional partnerships;

- Monitoring and evaluation.

Background Documents and Papers

The right to education is normally classified as an economic, social and cultural right.
Amartya Sen in his book *Development as Freedom* (1999) underscores the central role of education in economic and social development, thereby providing a strong case and foundation for investment in EFA. Sen identifies several roles that education can play in furthering individual and social goals; it can contribute to the full development of the human personality and collective identity, as well as strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
Deriving inspiration from Sen's work on freedom, development and poverty, a team composed of educationists from the University of Fribourg and stakeholders from Burkina Faso, the Association for the Promotion of Non Formal Education (APENF), Ministry of Education executives and representatives of development agencies, researched the indicators of the right to education. This right is seen here as the measurement of a cultural right and a factor for development. However, the implementation of the right to education should not depend solely on resources available from governments, even though governments have obligations: it should be the responsibility of all the actors in the field. The individual components of the right to education, the state's obligations and the translation of the requirements for the fulfilment of the right into reality are therefore interrelated. Whilst the degree of translation can be measured through indicators, these need to be defined as a measurable or observable parameter, variable or value within a structured framework.
The team attempted to develop a conceptual framework for the defininition and mapping out of indicators for the right to education based on the four 'A's identified by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR): education needs to be accessible, acceptable, adaptable and available (Meyer-Bisch; Friboulet).

- **Accessibility** includes three overlapping dimensions:
  – non-discriminatory access to education;
  – physical accessibility, e.g. the elimination of obstacles to learning such as distance and school fees;
  – accessibility from an economic point of view, e.g. affordability of school fees.

- **Acceptability,** which involves the form and content of education.

- **Adaptability,** which concerns the needs of societies and communities in the process of change.

The effectiveness of the right to education is ... a qualitative matter linked to the real benefit that people receive from basic education and literacy tools ...

• **Availability** implies the adequate provision of various resources such as education programmes and facilities, safe water, trained and paid teachers and pedagogical materials.

In this perspective, indicators developed would, for instance, measure the performance of the 'system' in fulfilling the right to education. The degree of interaction between actors is a performance indicator as it shows that institutions are able to complement each other in order to fulfil a common responsibility.

Papers presented during the symposium illustrated the degree of implementation and the effectiveness of the right to education through case studies and promising strategies. They also stressed the intrinsic value of education, in particular of basic education, as set out in Article 4 of the Declaration of Jomtien (1990) which states that the educational objective of developing the individual or society should result in effective learning (knowledge, reasoning capacity, know-how and useful values).

The effectiveness of the right to education is not only a quantitative matter of the enrolment rate, but also a qualitative issue linked to the real benefit that people receive from basic education and literacy tools, as well as their freedom to choose their mode of living (Sen, 1999). Basic education is essential to create minimum capacities, both individual and institutional.

Indicators should therefore be defined according to the three priority themes of the Jomtien Declaration:

• **Access to basic education:** the effectiveness of free basic education; compulsory education; child labour; the number of working children with or without pay – relating back to fundamental human freedoms (ICESCR, Article 13; Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 26).

• **The results of learning processes:** competencies related to know-how and knowledge, transmitted in particular by the non-formal system (definition, delimitation of content, scope and mode of transmission). Indicators of capacity must bring to light both already acquired competencies (for example the degree of basic knowledge with indicators which measure not only instrumental competencies – reading, writing, numeracy – but also social, economic and cultural knowledge) and efforts already achieved (for example indicators of progress, the dynamics of non-formal education and the cluster of connections of already existing capacities, such as the indicators on the existence of a framework of dialogue and co-ordination among actors, the assessment of current policies and the diversity of training).

• **The building of cultural identities:** enabling societal (from nation to community), interpersonal and psychological empowerment, participation in development and lifelong education (indicators must integrate the dimensions of cultural diversity).

Several points were made in support of the definition of the right to education as the right to choose one's own culture and to have it respected in the interrelationship with other cultures.

The multidimensional character of the right to education was stressed, with aspects such as equity, plurality of actors, cultural diversity and the acquisition of real knowledge (behaviour, know-how and knowing how to live together). In this way, human resources can be identified in the perspective of the creation of wealth.

Masai woman from the Marsabit District, Northern Kenya. In the Masai community women do all the day-to-day work, including building houses, while men tend the cattle and make communal decisions.

Main Discussion Points

Recognition of the diversity of actors, structures, places and channels of basic education

Diversity is a key characteristic of non-formal education and makes any attempt at classification difficult to achieve. The diversity of communities and needs is not only the result of the existence of different target groups and programmes, but also of various objectives, modalities of action and types of organisation.

The diversity of basic education channels must also be taken into account; in addition to primary schools, to which basic education is sometimes thought to be limited, there are alternative providers outside the formal system, for instance adult literacy programmes, craft apprenticeships and groups promoting respect for local culture. This diversity of response is more and more recognised as a key factor in the efficiency of an education system and it is crucial to the achievement of the objectives of Jomtien.

Corresponding to the different structures and forms of education (some of them, such as confessional schools and distance education, largely overlooked), there are three types of interest: public, private and civil. This implies that the interactions among actors have to be taken into consideration: for example, teachers in basic education and/or bilingual teaching who speak the local language can constitute indicators of interaction (see the case of Burkina Faso).

It also involves recognition of the actors in NFE (NGOs, churches, associations) and their connections with the actors in formal education. This raises the issue of

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the recognition of capacities acquired outside the formal education system, of the need to create bridges and of integration between formal education and other varied forms of education and training, as well as analysis of the degree of ownership of the school by the concerned populations and especially by parents.

The meeting highlighted the great demand for schooling, education and training, and the limited resources which governments have in attempting to meet it, as well as the weak absorption capacity of the formal system in its present form.

The attempts which have been made to meet this high demand have created a diversity of actors and interventions (see the experiences of Tanzania and Nigeria). It was also noted that potential beneficiaries have sometimes rejected the educational provision that is currently available, and that partners are willing to support or even initiate new strategies in an attempt to achieve education for all.

Terminology and Concepts

Complementarity and bridges: basic education for children and adults

During many sessions of the symposium, there were discussions about the terminology 'non-formal', the different definitions of NFE and the problematic related to any integration of non-formal education and its management in a diversified education system.

Concepts related to non-formal education

In order to determine reference points for strategic orientations of the development of basic education, the workshop explored the conceptual framework related to:

- the notion of integration;
- the relationships between formal and non-formal education; and by extension
- the consequences for a non-formal quality education within the general context of basic education.

It was noted that the basic difference between the various forms of integration lies in the gap between the different sub-systems, and that the degree of rigidity of this gap makes possible the development of transversally common elements and thus greater diversity. Nevertheless, many countries still consider that the existence of two different education sectors causes problems: on the one hand, the classic public system, and on the other, the various provisions of non-formal education. There are huge differences between these sectors – not only in size, but also in terms of objectives and the capacity to provide children with an education equivalent to primary education.

It was suggested, therefore, that it might be necessary to define and design a transversal common core for all forms of education to ensure a core set of minimum requirements in terms of learning achievements, results, quality of the process and quality of educational content. How this core set of learning requirements is defined is a political decision; some countries might set minimum standards at a very low level, while others set them at a high level. The first priority in all countries should be for government to reach a consensus with its partners in the provision of basic education on a core set of minimum objectives, making explicit the minimum standards that children should attain. These objectives

should be realistic and within reach, because both formal and non-formal systems have very high drop-out and repetition rates; many children leave primary school without achieving the current minimum objectives. It is essential to guarantee the quality of curricula. If bridges, complementarity and integration are taken into account, it must be ensured that all students learn the same core. The same standards should be set for students in the NFE sector as for those in the formal system.

The symposium also insisted on the fact that the classic system was not questioned, and that the formal and non-formal systems should have the same objectives in the context of the right to education and of development – individual, community and national. It is the level where 'diversity' is at stake: diversity so that every child is prepared to play a part in global and local development.

Governments have an important role to play in setting up a framework for education policies, choosing the indicators of quality and regulating assessment; they should also be responsible for ensuring the provision of the services and support necessary for this to be effective. If such a framework is lacking, diversity will remain problematic and a source of division.

In the case of school-age children, the tension between the desire to integrate and to ensure that every child enjoys the right to education was noted. It was observed that if the integration process is developed, the label 'non-formal' should be abandoned because otherwise the rest of the education system would be perceived as formal. If the non-formal label is retained, so is the formal, therefore maintaining an inequitable system.

Confusion concerning basic education for adults (see Chapter 5) should be avoided. Thus, participants insisted that the concept of non-formal education should be broken down, to make it clear that the issues of integration, equivalences and bridges concern only school-age children and youth, and that adult literacy is not a matter of equivalences or integration.

It was also noted that the bulk of the public resources spent on education is allocated to the formal sector, while the various components of non-formal education receive only 1–3 per cent. Participants concluded that choices and criteria for the levels of learning or training which were acceptable for children and adults, and the distribution of resources, should be established in order to guarantee

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equity. Therefore, a framework for partnership and responsibility of actors in basic education should be set up.

Partnership, participation and responsibility in NFE to ensure the achievement of the right to quality education quality for all

This aspect concerns the role of public authorities, according to general comment 13 of CESCR (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 8 December 1999) Article 13 on the right to education, in relation to educational criteria: the provision of resources, accessibility, adaptability and acceptability. If these criteria are to be met, it is essential to set up relations based on complementarity, solidarity, transparency and mutual trust.

Framework for dialogue

The urgency of setting up a partnership between governments and providers of basic education in order to achieve the objective of education for all was stressed. It is therefore essential to explore the links between the official education system, managed by the government, and other educational structures and there must be a framework for dialogue and co-ordination among the different actors. The ministry in charge of NFE should be the major co-ordinator; it should define the objectives, organise the participation of all actors, and ensure the fulfilment of responsibilities, monitoring and assessment of national objectives validated by all.

The participants therefore suggested strengthening the capacity of NGOs, improving the quality of their participation and mobilisation and increasing their commitment at the level of decision-making and culture, for example through the implementation of decentralisation policies. Local authorities should also be involved in NFE implementation strategies; to this end, national decision-makers

should strengthen the capacities of local authorities and review the resources allocated to them.

Within the objectives of Education for All, greater resources should be given to non-governmental actors, for example through the creation of special mechanisms for additional funding which should ensure an equitable and transparent disbursement of resources in the selection of the organisations involved in non-formal education. Transparency is also required in the letting of contracts and implementation of programmes.

Structure and mechanisms required for partnership and participation

The symposium also highlighted decentralisation issues: education must be a priority in the process of decentralisation in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in order to avoid a situation where non-formal education and education in general are neglected because the big decisions are made at central level. Frameworks for dialogue, technical support and exchange at different levels (central, regional and local) should be created so that individuals and communities can use their freedom of speech to promote the development of common plans with bilateral and multilateral organisations.

It may be therefore appropriate to produce manuals and guidelines so that stakeholders know their rights, responsibilities and duties, and how to fulfil them.

Lastly, partnership means promoting and encouraging networks of exchange and expertise at national, regional and international levels, in order to benefit from current experiences through visits and exchanges. Thus it was recommended that the WGNFE should facilitate meetings of ministries in order to discuss experiences and to establish partnership between the formal and non-formal education sectors.

Key action points are to:

- Involve local and national actors in the provision of basic education (including NFE);

- Develop the negotiation capacity of all those involved;

- Share responsibilities between the government, local authorities and families;

- Take better account of the costs of the different learning modes so as to promote sustainable mechanisms to finance education and training;

- Strengthen local, national and regional partnerships and partnerships between civil society and public authorities in the field of education;

- Encourage dialogue among partners through greater consultation with communities about their vision and goals of education and the relevance of vocational training to the local labour market.

- Strengthen international exchanges and partnerships (through networks specialising in vocational training and non-formal education);

- Render operational, at regional level, decisions on education reached by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

- Initiate a framework at the level of the African Union (AU).

- Activate existing sub-regional and regional structures, such as the Karanta

... partnership means promoting and encouraging networks of exchange and expertise at national, regional and international levels ...

Partnership and Participation

Partnership: Partnership also means a sharing of responsibilities among the different partners and actors, with government as the facilitator and co-ordinator. It is the government's role to define clear, precise plans and programmes, commonly agreed by all the stakeholders.

Within the partnership framework it is possible to develop education strategies to address demand, if supply is inadequate (see the experience of Senegal). This can make possible the involvement of communities that have been neglected by the formal system . Participants argued that communities have a responsibility to ensure social mobilisation, with the support of NGOs, civil society organisations, management committees, PTAs and teachers unions.

Lastly, partnership means that all actors are equal: the government must prepare itself properly for negotiations with donors, so that the country does not commit itself without a realistic assessment of its means and possibilities – or levels of acceptability and adaptability.

Participation: Adaptability determines the participation of all actors with a view to optimising means and results. Participation plays a major role in ensuring better commitment, assimilation, acceptability and efficiency of programmes. If everyone is involved, the programmes will be valued more highly and the objectives are more likely to be achieved. Participation can also be a means of communication and dialogue between the grassroots and higher echelons; it can help to ensure mutual comprehension and overcome resistances.

... it is vital to ensure ownership and valorisation of training programmes by local people, as well as the involvement of beneficiaries who then become active in the provision of education programmes.

Foundation, CEDEAO (Economic Community of West African States), the EFA Observatory and groups in CEDEAO ministries of education and the African parliament.

- Develop political and operational partnerships among all the actors in the field of education/training (public authorities, multilateral aid agencies and non-governmental actors) in order to increase synergy and complementarity of inter-ventions, reinforce the capacities of capitalisation and disseminate experience.

All this means a change of approach and the promotion of a culture of partner-ship with authorities, institutions and community activists. Work with regional non-governmental structures, local NGOs and community organisations at village level (for example parents associations and education centres) is essential in the promotion of education and local development; it is vital to ensure ownership and valorisation of training programmes by local people, as well as the involvement of beneficiaries who then become active in the provision of education programmes.

Links between NFE and local development

Having defined non-formal education as any form of organised and structured education taking place outside formal schools, the discussion groups explored the links between NFE and development. NFE is flexible and diverse. Development is a conscious historical process aiming at transforming reality to achieve a better quality of life at all levels: social, economic, cultural, spiritual and ethical.

Participants noted the important role of NFE in economic, social and cultural development – in encouraging women to exercise their right of free speech and claim equal rights and access to land and property, and in personal development, fulfilment and the improvement of labour conditions and girls' enrolment at school.

The international context is now favourable to local initiatives for the right to education, and the exigencies of development and democracy. At local level, bene-ficiaries and partners are also becoming involved in democratic decision-making.

Participants recommended the use of local languages and neighbouring coun-try resources; this should foster regional integration and consolidate partnership. Partnership and participation are necessary to achieve the right to education. The use of local languages enables greater participation by local people in the demo-cratic debate, and so helps them achieve their rights and fulfil their responsibili-ties as citizens.

Follow-up – evaluating quality

The stage of follow-up and evaluation should provide information on the real and potential achievements of any projects and should also provide information about possible problems, so that prompt measures can be taken and the necessary adjustments made to correct or solve the problems; this is true for achieving proj-ect goals and agreed objectives and in planning to ensure the effectiveness of a project. When education for all is discussed, however, the issue of quality is often omitted.

The development and implementation of non-formal education projects can be strengthened through follow-up and evaluation, and partnerships can be estab-lished. Participants identified five main components of follow-up and evaluation:

1 Measurable objectives;

2 Collection, treatment and analysis of data;

3 Setting up an efficient institutional mechanism to exploit and analyse the data;

4 Strengthening the capacity of ministries in data collection to make them easily accessible and useful to those wishing to consult them.

The following recommendations were made:

- Follow-up and evaluation of non-formal education should be the main respon-sibility of the government;

- Each government should articulate the guidelines and minimum criteria for various forms of NFE in the country. It should also ensure co-ordination, evalu-ation and monitoring in order to establish a good NFE network;

- NFE should be included in the national sector analysis so as to provide reliable information covering the whole education sector.

Conclusion

The symposium reiterated the major role which non-formal education can play because of its capacity to adapt and design specific approaches to meet needs in basic education and solve the crisis of education systems.

Thus, in the education sector, non-governmental actors are mainly mobilised for access to basic education and vocational training, either to increase enrolment capacity and to improve formal education supply, or to diversify provision through NFE and adapt it to audiences that were previously excluded.

Interventions and actions have been increasingly built around approaches marked by:

- The will of ownership and involvement of beneficiaries who become actors in the education programmes;

- An approach to education which is integrated into social and economic devel-opment, adapted to the environment, and prepares children, youth and adults to transform this environment;

- Increasing consideration for institutional work, in order to focus analyses on the problems of education systems, and to create the synergy necessary to change and traditional systems which are in crisis.

The symposium again criticised the general approach which too often reduces the attempt to achieve education for all to the sole issue of primary school enrolment, neglecting the issues of vocational training, youth integration, literacy and adult education.

There is a need to look again at Article 5 of the World Declaration which artic-ulates a broad vision of education for all, declaring:

... the basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems. Literacy programs are indispensable because literacy is a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of life skills. Literacy in the mother tongue strengthens cultural identity and heritage. Other needs can be served by: skills training, apprenticeships, and formal

The symposium ... criticised the general approach which too often reduces the attempt to achieve education for all to the sole issue of primary school enrolment, neglecting the issues of vocational training, youth integration, literacy and adult education.

... public authorities in the South, together with donors, must show greater interest in providing sufficient resources for non-formal education, literacy campaigns and vocational training ...

and non-formal education programs in health, nutrition, population, agri-cultural techniques, the environment, science, technology, family life, including fertility, awareness and societal issues. (WCEFA, 1990)

It is also appropriate to express concern about insufficient and poorly managed public resources for basic education and training, reductions in social expenditure, negligible budgets for vocational training and literacy campaigns, and the fall in official development aid.

Respect for the right to education means that public authorities in the South, together with donors, must show greater interest in providing sufficient resources for non-formal education, literacy campaigns and vocational training, because they often constitute the only educational opportunity for children, youth and adults who have been ignored by the formal school system.

Analysis focused on several essential issues on which it was considered necessary to act if NFE is to be promoted within the EFA context. They included:

- Integration of efforts to extend formal primary education into a wider strategy, including non-formal education;

- Taking fully into account the local determinants of schooling and learning, particularly the way in which families view the future and distribute their 'investment in education' among different forms of education;

- A new approach to vocational training, and especially an attempt to adapt it to the realities of the local traditional economy (both urban and rural);

- The formal system should look more carefully at examples of promising or good practices offered by the non-formal system. This does not mean that the non-formal system necessarily involves better or worse teaching. It must be remembered that good practice is difficult to apply on a large scale.

The WGNFE has a special role to play, for instance in assisting countries to define the minimum objectives to be reached by formal and non-formal education systems; by highlighting examples of good practice (initial objectives, results, lessons learnt in implementation, both achievements and errors); and by building an information network on human resources, methods and experiences in different countries. At a regional level, the WGNFE could facilitate the creation of a non-formal education database and develop a network linking all African countries.

Notes

1 The guidelines for this reflection are the indicators of the right to education for all, on which APENF has been conducting research in Burkina Faso since 2002, with a stress on the capacities of the education system, namely: accessibility, acceptability, adaptability, and availability (provision of resources).

2 See United Nations, CESRC, General Observation 13 on the right to education, as regards Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee declares that education is both a basic right in itself and one of the keys to the exercise of the other human rights; as a right fostering self-reliance, education is the main tool which enables economically and socially marginalised adults and children to get out of poverty and to find a way to fully participate in community life (Geneva, November 1999).

3 Acceptability and adaptability refer to the relationships between the system and its environment. Acceptability determines democratic legitimacy: the right to education, in the whole of human rights, is the development of values that actors have to constantly control and own within a public space in which they can all participate. It is generally agreed that the state exerts control over education, especially by setting the norms and ensuring that they are respected, while, at the same time, respecting the rights of parents to have their children educated according to their religious, moral or philosophical convictions. Adaptability determines the participation of all actors in the optimisation of means and results.

4 Provision of resources and accessibility refer to the availability of resources and the interaction between supply and demand. Accessibility describes the real availability of resources according to the diversity of learners.

References

Inter-Agency Commission, WCEFA (1990). *Final Report: World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs*, 5–9 March 1990, Jomtien, Thailand.

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**Non-Formal Education:
The Issues**

2 Measuring a Cultural Right: The Effectiveness of the Right to Education

Jean-Jacques Friboulet

Background, Objectives and Methodology of the Research

Background

Education must enable the building of a personal and a collective identity. The right to education is the right to choose and to make one's own culture respected in interrelationships with other cultures. The effectiveness of the right to education involves the building of capacities.

Yet education systems, especially in countries where access to basic education for all does not exist, are inefficient and inadequate. Thus, the right to education is ineffective.

It is useful to recall that the objectives of basic education for all are not only quantitative but also concern qualitative issues which relate to the adaptation of education systems to demand. Drawing up guidelines to try and measure the inadequacy of supply in relation to demand is therefore crucial.

Objectives

The objectives are:

- To build a set of relevant indicators to measure the effectiveness of the right to education, in the understanding that to measure the effectiveness of a right means to capture it in its social dynamics from the achievement of the right for each individual to the capacity of institutions to guarantee its sustainable effectiveness for all.

- To define a methodology of indication, including clearly defined principles proceeding from the logic of human rights. Among these principles are the study in partnership or, preliminary to its measurement, the definition of the interdisciplinary field of the right, taking into account connections between the different human rights.

Methodology

Two sources of inspiration

A Amartya Sen highlights the issue of building personal and institutional capacities (capabilities) for development:

- What is capacity or capability? It is 'the liberty to lead different kinds of life, a set of different combinations of human functioning among which a person can choose his own life. The "capability" of the individual depends on many elements,

... capability ... is 'the liberty to lead different kinds of life, a set of different combinations of human functioning among which a person can choose his own life'
– Amartya Sen

including his personal characteristics as well as the social organisation.' (Sen, 1999: 64)

- Link with the freedoms: not only the freedoms themselves, but also the means to exercise them, and their achievement.

  In the evaluation of justice based on 'capability', the requirements of individuals are not evaluated according to the resources or the properties they own, but according to their freedom to choose among different ways of life they may value. (…) Thus, there is an important distinction between: 1. freedom and the means to freedom and 2. freedom and achievement. (Nussbaum and Sen, 1993)

- Notion of access: to build the capacities of an individual does not always mean to accumulate, but to increase his possibilities of choice, i.e. to have rights to access.

The issue of rights involves:

- The distribution of capacities: the principle of non-discrimination and equal access to education, i.e. quality basic education for all (Jomtien Declaration, 1990; Dakar, 2000).

- The systemic character of capacities: when one capacity is strengthened, the other also is. It is thus necessary to build a coherent set of indicators.

- Institutional capacities are as important as personal ones. For example, in relation to famines, political and cultural rights are both important.

B. General Comment 13 on Article 13 on the right to education of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The right has a framework of four essential interdependent features that must be considered for all forms and levels of education: accessibility; acceptability; adaptability; and availability.

These four criteria constitute a system. The typology, if understood in terms of capacities, is adequate to evaluate the degree to which an education system is adapted – the whole system, including formal and non-formal education, i.e. adult literacy programmes and all other alternative forms of learning and training.

1 Accessibility

Access to the system should be based on the principle of equal opportunity, with no socio-cultural, geographical or economic discrimination. Whether or not this opportunity is made use of is a matter of individual capacity. In other words, it involves the capacity of each and every individual to exercise the right. So two indicators will relate to the health and nutrition of learners.

2 Acceptability

The acceptability and adaptability of the education system are two capacities referring to the relationships between the education system and its environment. The first corresponds particularly to democratic legitimacy. In other words, how does the education system contribute *to the fulfilment of human personality and of the sense of dignity, to the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms?*[1] What educational forms and contents – including curricula and ways of teaching[2] – give individuals the capacity *to play a useful part in a free society?*[3] Do the structures and forms of the system, made up of institutions, associations, communities and individuals, constitute a real means of achieving this objective?

Acceptability can be broken down into three values:

i   The objectives of the system according to which a set of institutional rules are defined;

ii   The recognition of a diversity of actors and their interaction;

iii   The exercise of individual freedoms in relation to cultural and social diversity.

3 Adaptability

The second capacity of the system is its adaptability. It corresponds to the functional dynamics of the system, i.e. its capacity to optimise means and results.

Its evaluation is subject to a double constraint: the complexity of the system and its dynamics. Adaptability not only concerns the way the system works, but also the capacity of individuals – trainers and learners – to play their parts in the achievement of the objectives. A linear approach which considers the relationship between human and financial resources on one hand and the results on the other, would not, *a priori*, account for the interrelations and interconnections that participate in the effectiveness of the right. Yet our objective here is to show the system effects, emerging effects and dysfunctions which either enable or obstruct access to the right. These effects can be apprehended especially by analyses of quantitative trajectories or through temporal qualitative data. The adaptability of the system is thus based on four values: the capacity of institutions and trainers to adapt to the constraints on the system; the capacity to adapt means and objectives; the system's efficiency, i.e. its capacity to optimise results according to the means; and the dissemination of adequate information.

4 Adequate provision of resources

The education system needs both human and non-human resources.

The methodology needed to collect the most adequate information on the right to education runs contrary to some current practice. One cannot start from a given initial provision of resources, and then observe that access to and adaptability of the right are limited, its acceptability questionable and conclude that the situation is very poor. If this methodology is used, the outcome is limited to the evaluation of equity in the distribution of shortages, a negative approach which gives no encouragement to move forward. It is necessary to respect the multidimensional character of the right and to integrate such aspects as equity, plurality of actors, cultural diversity and learning of real knowledge (behaviour, know-how and knowing how to live together).

In contrast, priority should be given to the identification of human and institutional resources in the perspective of wealth creation. Indicators of capacity must highlight both competencies that have already been acquired (for example, the level of basic knowledge, including not only basic learning competencies, reading, writing, numeracy, but also social, economic and cultural knowledge); efforts already made (e.g. indicators of progress); the dynamics of non-formal education; and the cluster of existing capacities (e.g. acceptability, indicators on the existence of dialogue and co-ordination structures, assessment indicators of current policies – here PPDBE – adaptability and the diversity of training subjects).

They must also illustrate the main obstacles to the building of these capacities (e.g. indicators of the constraints on the system; adaptability; percentage of effective teaching hours per year; proportion of children who have ever attended school; accessibility; the health of the learners).

Access to the system should be based on the principle of equal opportunity, with no socio-cultural, geographical or economic discrimination.

In consequence, the table of indicators is not limited to a list of criteria to be considered from a planning perspective: it is a set of relevant information which must bring to light the systemic effects that have to be introduced in a strategy discussed among the various actors.

Notes

1 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13, paragraph 1.
2 Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Commission, Comment on Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, November 1999, Geneva.
3 Ibid.

References

Inter-Agency Commission, WCEFA (1990). *Final Report: World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs*, 5–9 March 1990, Jomtien, Thailand.

Sen, Amartya (1993). 'Capability and well-being', in Nussbaum, M. and Sen, A. (eds), *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sen, Amartya (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

3 Observing and Collecting 'Social Intelligence'

Patrice Meyer-Bisch[1]

To observe is to build a permanent 'social school'[1]

I would first like to express my thanks to our partners in the Association for the Promotion of Non Formal Education in Burkina Faso (APENF/ADEA Working Group on Non-Formal Education) and to the Alpha programme of the Swiss Bureau of Co-operation (BUCO) for this opportunity to reaffirm our common objective: to observe that a human right is a joint action of social construction. It means a coming together of those who are deprived of the full enjoyment of their rights and those who share responsibility; it also means recognition of the great potential of individuals, noting where the social and institutional fabric is either torn or non-existent and planning its democratic 'mending'.

To measure capacities in order to better evaluate and strengthen them is the appropriate attitude towards the attempt to measure a human right. If each human right refers to a capacity inherent in human dignity, the right to education does this even more so, as it means 'bringing out', revealing buried capabilities. *'Capabilities'* is the word used by Amartya Sen to refer to a cluster of capacities. A systemic approach to individual capacities, as well as to the four institutional capacities, is driven by the principle of the indivisibility of human rights, which is to be seen in the interdependence of the capacities. On its own, a capacity is nothing; education consists in revealing and linking affective, intellectual, physical, social, artistic, technical and spiritual capacities.

It is extraordinary to observe the extent to which the democratic 'action' of measuring a human right involves much more than the use of the right to adequate information: it corresponds to the exercise of the right itself, because the right to information and the right to education go hand in hand. Thus, the process of evaluation, in which all the relevant actors should be involved, is a kind of 'social education' for all the participants, who are at the same time observers and observed: the process should reveal the *capabilities* buried within society. The implementation of the right to education cannot be separated from the implementation of the right to adequate information – or social education – revealing the values at stake and the capacities available to realise them. The process to which we want to contribute is itself a 'social school' or a school for democratisation.

In fact, we are in harmony with the rich meanings of the verb *'to observe'*, both:

- *to watch*, while at the same time maintaining a certain distance in order to grasp the complexity of what we are observing;

- *to respect* values and the rights which give them expression in a permanent process of interpretation and ownership (considering views and exchanging points of view).

A systemic approach to individual capacities … is driven by the principle of the indivisibility of human rights … alone, a capacity is nothing, education consists in revealing and linking affective, intellectual, physical, social, artistic, technical and spiritual capacities.

The education system must be able to observe its own complexity and to realise itself as a democratic system through implementing the right to adequate information by all and for all.

So to observe a human right is to start restoring or implementing it immediately in two ways:

- by watching it, respecting its complexity and collecting the painful evidences of its violations and their serious consequences;

- by achieving it, weaving a social fabric ensuring a human 'security' and responding to suffering.

These two aspects of the action of observation are to be found in the great Jewish prayer *Schema Israel*. The Hebrew verb means at the same time 'listen' (to the Lord) and 'observe' (his commands). Reflection is the appropriate attitude towards the observation of a human right as one has, in the first place, to collect evidence of violations. Without this, one cannot have an idea of the complexity, the depth, and also the resistance of the human capacities at stake. We have to 'give evidence of the evidence'[2] of those whose rights are being trampled.

During our research and – once again – thanks to the commitment of our partners, we were able to link up the observation of human rights in principle with our observation of the practical situation and the collection of data – not just abstract statistics but evidence about men and women who are counted and who count.

So, in the right to education, as in the process of observation, which uses the right to adequate information, there is not, on the one hand, someone who knows (the teacher, policy-maker or statistician) and, on the other, someone who does not know (the student or he mass of the people). The educator must reflect upon the capacities of the student, even if he/she fails, especially if he/she fails, in order to reveal them. In the same way, the policy-maker must uncover social capacities, even and especially if the education system seems inaccessible or ineffective for the majority of people. And yet, as nobody knows from birth, either in education or in policy-making, pedagogy and political sciences are needed so that the capacities hidden behind failures can be discovered. The teacher, as well as the policy-maker, needs the most precious knowledge: to know how to observe is to respect suffering and to reveal values.

The teacher cannot know everything; he/she needs to consider the views of their students, their students' parents and their peers. School is democratic in so far as it enables them to participate. The political level is more complex; a policy-maker cannot have the illusion that they alone can understand everything; so their first responsibility must be to initiate and maintain not only a process of consultation, but a permanent process of observation among the relevant actors. The education system must be able to observe its own complexity and to realise itself as a democratic system through implementing the right to adequate information by all and for all.

To observe – to give evidence and to be aware of suffering – is to lay the foundation stone of another social or democratic structure: a social school where values are mutually revealed through the observation of sufferings and capacities. The poor individual, the one who is rejected by all the builders of dominating political orders, is, for the democrat, the cornerstone. The problem is that this poor person is very reserved and silent. It is only in the complexity of research in the field that it is possible to reveal and assemble the links which constitute, or should constitute, the restoration of his dignity.

Collating social intelligence

All the indicators refer to individuals. We could play on words and say that our research consists of searching not only for *what* the relevant indicators of the right to basic education effectiveness are, but also for *who* they are, namely the individuals themselves, actors and promoters of their own rights – whose rights consist precisely in their ability to become responsible for themselves and not merely to be beneficiaries. In fact, we are witnessing a huge wastage, a deficit of 'social intelligence'. Social intelligence articulates social links and is secreted by them; it enables the self-determination of a community at the level of families, villages, regions and a whole people. Social intelligence is the basis of any democratic culture, yet it is systematically neglected. It is assumed that its periodic expression in elections is enough for it to be taken into account by the legitimated power. This concept does not take complexity into account but demeans, and then captures and diverts, the permanent production of social intelligence. Yet it is only social intelligence that can constitute the political link according to the rule of law: individuals are linked by their common rights and not by an imposed administrative framework. Our survey teams observed profound social intelligence everywhere, but they also observed great deficiencies in the collection and stimulation of this intelligence by the system. This is an overall problem, which is not specific to Burkina Faso, and it is a key issue in the research on indicators to measure the effectiveness of a human right.

To reveal the rights is to reveal the links, *links that should exist and be maintained* for individuals to be free and responsible, and for communities to be capable of self-determination. For example, illiterate parents are more capable of assessing the adequacy of their children's school than the system which, all the same, determines and sets the conditions for the way in which the school functions. They are more perceptive because they can see the links between the family, the child, writing, learning how to read the time, school meals, multilingualism, health and domestic chores, as well as the link between different generations. In other words, this is the 'intelligence of the field'. However, this expression is inadequate because it seems to imply that the field only provides the complexity that theory – and the programmes it allows – cannot embrace.

Social intelligence, which is generated by the different perspectives of those who suffer, revolt or forgive, who commit themselves and make mutual promises, who bear witness to each other, fragmentary indicators of the right, does not only provide a 'complicated' vision of issues. Through complexity, it teaches the awareness of the fundamental right, the awareness of the social link – in this case, the awareness of the link between learners and teachers of any kind. *To teach* is to give signs, and in the indicators we try to identify these signs which can transmit the social intelligence to all the actors in the education system (and not only to the 'decision-makers'). These signs are precisely indications of the links between the individual and other people, between the individual and other living creatures, between the individual and objects, and finally between the individual and his own self. There is, for example, the teaching of the transition from speech to writing and to books, from the writer to the reader, from events mentioned to duration materialised in writing and in the transmission from generation to generation. It means both collecting social intelligence – awareness of the links – and teaching it to learners, teachers and institutions.

This is why the effectiveness of the right to basic education, of the right to

Social intelligence ... is the very basis of any democratic culture ...

master the fundamental signs of the links with the world, translates into a multiple capacity of integration: we try to respect the right to an integrated education (multidimensional), and the effectiveness of the right is only possible if the education system itself is integrated. So individual and institutional capacities correspond: this correspondence is the key to development. This capacity for integration of individuals and institutions is here broken down into four dimensions. The four capacities mentioned in 'General Comment 13'[3] have been systematically exploited (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Integrated Education as Seen Through Four Capacities
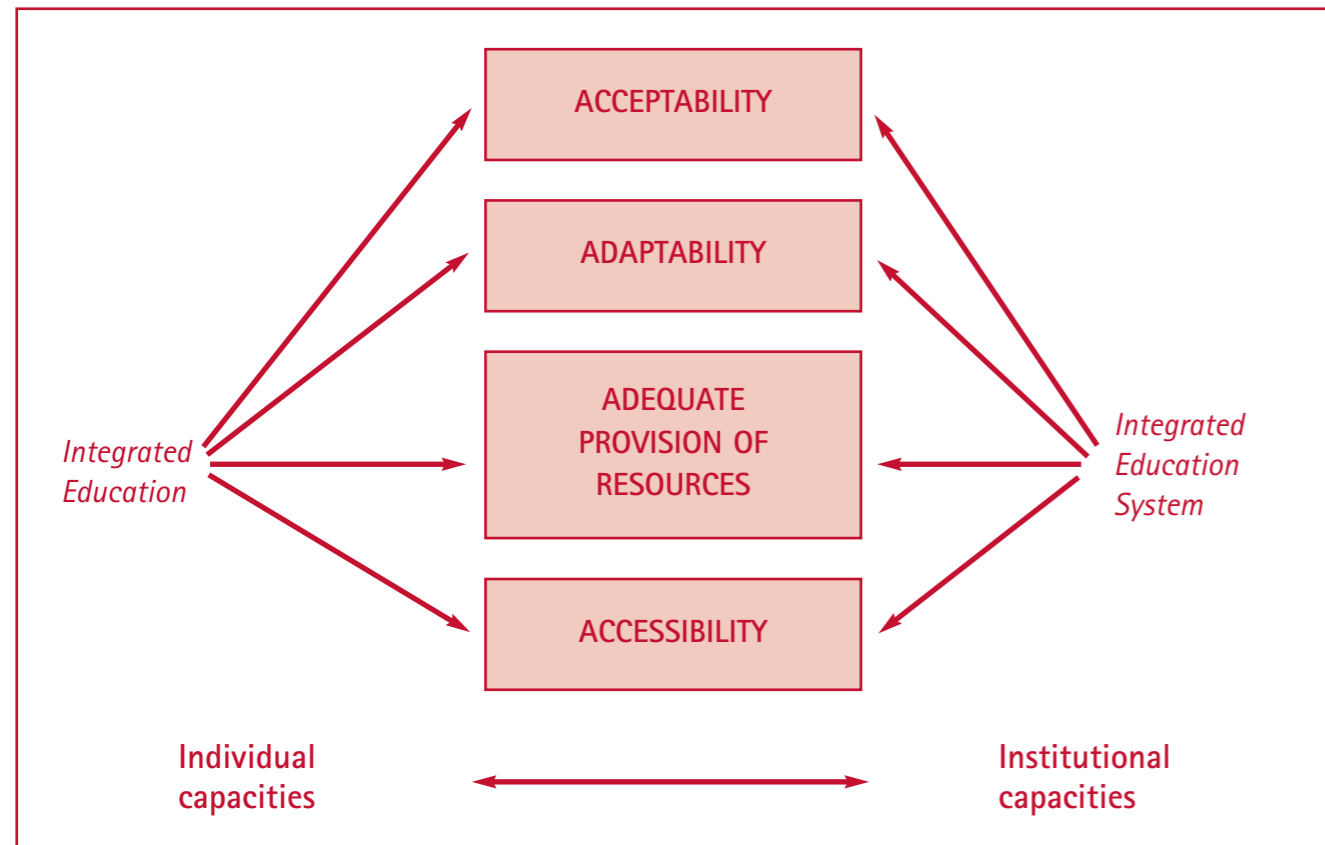
Is it possible to have a hierarchy among these four capacities? As the logic is systemic, it is unnecessary. And all the more so as a hierarchy of priorities would contradict this approach. In instrumentalist logic, the stress is first on the provision of resources and accessibility: it is thought that, to begin with, one must 'have the means' of one's policy. But knowledge and graduates are not produced like objects: it is trainees themselves who use the means of training. Because of this instrumentalist logic, the two capacities related to ethical values are often neglected, even though they are essential: acceptability to the subjects (and not beneficiaries) of the right, and adaptability to their needs, their rights, their socio-cultural integration, adaptability serving their links (Figure 3.2).

It is clear that, by its nature, social intelligence disturbs all institutions, for it extends beyond them. It is as if what is concrete in the field (links between quality and quantity, quality of teaching, health of learners, school meals, existence of toilets for girls, balls for schools, etc.) causes confusion in the institutions. They have to compartmentalise their responsibilities to make them correspond to their

Figure 3.2 Four Capacities in System, Articulating Individuals, Objects and Institutions
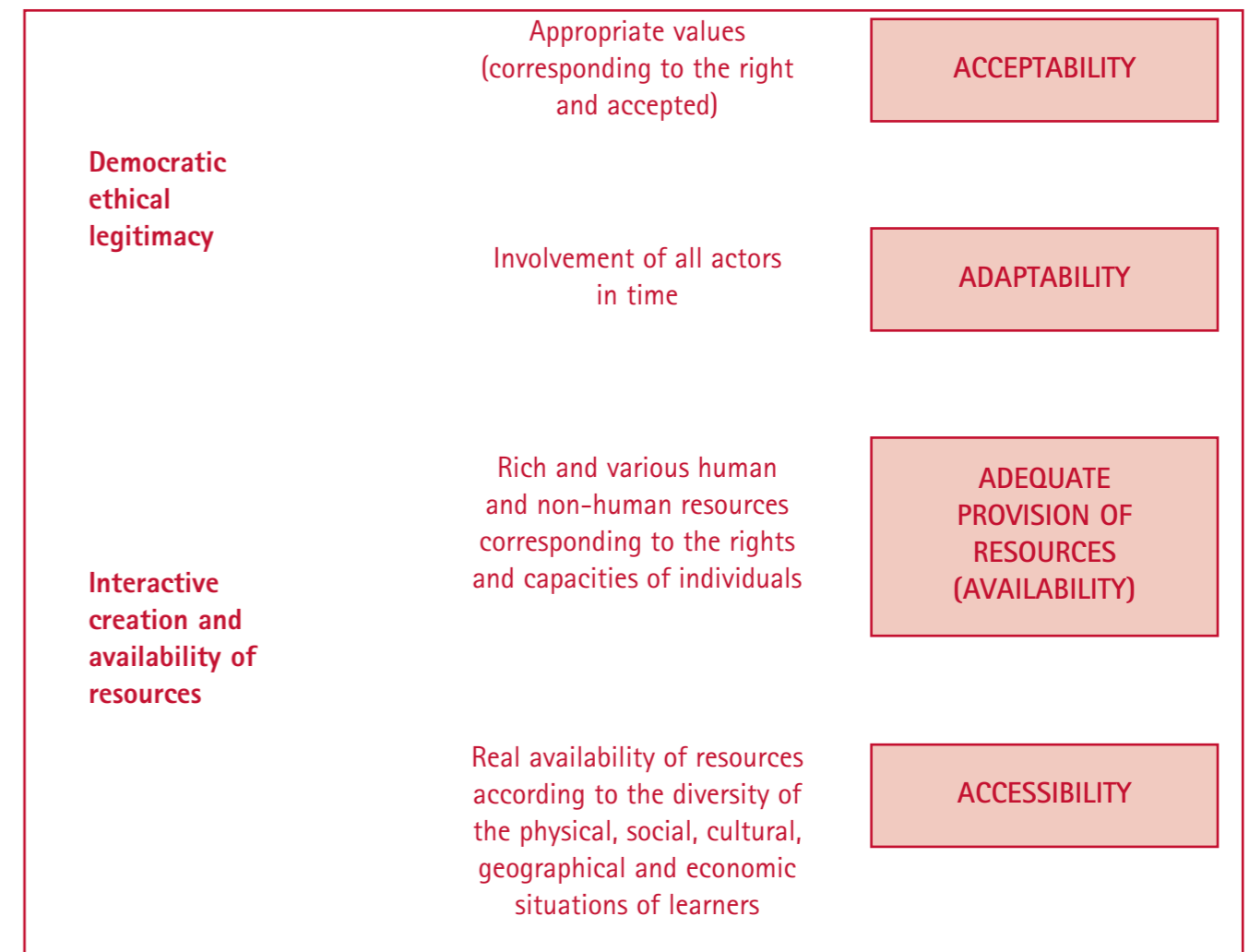
budgets and administration: then, what is clear for institutions is something abstract considered from the field, because it is disconnected. This is the institutional obstacle that faces our systemic approach which reviews the interdependence between the heterogeneous dimensions of the right and its indicators. 'The mixed nature of information causes anxiety', the survey team in the province of Tapoa noted. And this is precisely the point: *the mixed nature of information is the key point in the right to adequate information*, this human right whose effectiveness measures the authenticity of any governance. Information and training are like two sides of the same right, and this is why the mixed nature of information causes as much anxiety as the mixed character of education. The classical compartmentalisation of the formal and non-formal sectors of a unique and multidimensional education system cannot be explained only by a competition between institutions, different ways of thinking and acting, but by the fundamental and mutual questioning entailed in interaction. Systematic research and comprehension of this mixed nature can prevent biased interpretation. It is probably in the link between quantity and quality that the mixed nature is the most fertile and also the most embarrassing. It forbids the use of statistics as pure data; they must be considered in context and in relation to each other. It forbids taking statistics as a final product, as instruments to be used as they are in the for-

It is never too late to learn – this 84-year-old former Kenyan freedom fighter is now getting the education denied to him as a child.

PICTURE: LEILA AMANPOUR/2004
COMMONWEALTH PHOTOGRAPHIC AWARDS
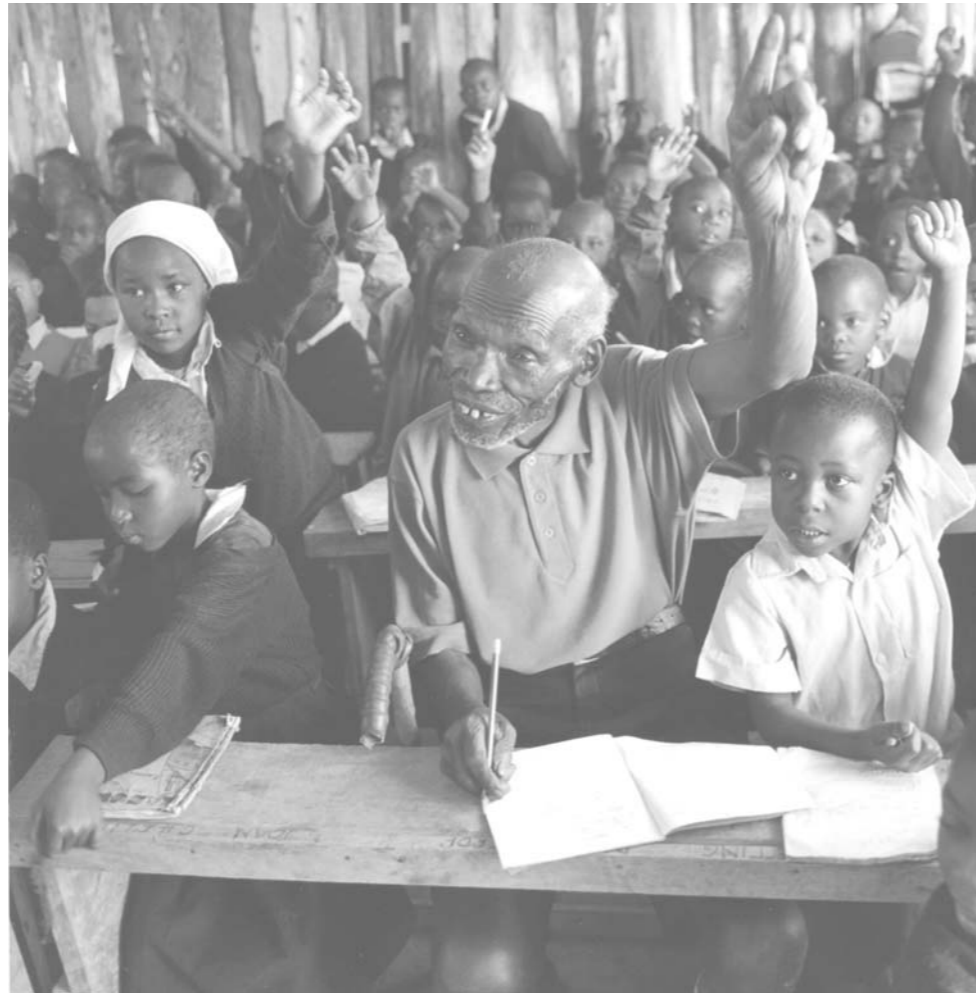
mulation of policies, budgets and expected outcomes, for it refers measurements to the complexity and the multidimensionality of the freedoms of those who have been counted.

The survey team in the province of Comoé therefore suggests that the social dimension of basic education should be taken into account. Reading, writing and numeracy are not enough to constitute a basic social education. What is concrete and urgent for the individual is complex. In this respect, the relationship between knowledge and objects is also at stake: what does learning how to read the time on a paper clock, how to weigh without scales, mean, other than just abstract knowledge, which is ineffective and unsustainable? Even worse, for the poor it is another humiliation, the proof that they cannot have access to knowledge and the necessary commodities. They are no longer only ignorant, they have become incapable: they have lost what they were given, knowledge was displayed to them in the showcase of discrimination for which they now feel partly responsible. This is why the report on the province of Oudalan highlights a crucial issue which should be obvious: to what extent are learners, parents and teachers satisfied with the way the system works, and with its values and outcomes?

The right to basic education is the principle of education for all. EFA does not consider – or should not consider – different age-groups, genders or cultural communities as different beneficiaries of remedial measures, different 'target-groups'. EFA is education for all and by all, linking individuals together, whatever their condition. We have especially noticed in the field how social intelligence is

revealed in the links between different generations. The child who told how, every morning for several years, he gave up playing with his friends in the village and instead went to a school (without any playground and with corporal punishment), and then, later, made the opposite choice, so that he now regretted being illiterate, is an unfortunate indicator of the importance of duration. Parents understand the importance of duration for their children, referring to their own experience of failure and success. In the same way, communities have a collective intelligence – found in their language, customs and values – and this heritage is often wasted although it is a major source of education. The right to basic education, closely linked with the right to adequate information, basis of the right to any education, is the first factor in social and political links, and in sustainability – because it is cultural. Social intelligence, missing in institutions, runs through family and fellowship links. Institutions are often satisfied with abstract equality which, in fact, justifies the most sordid inequalities. Education for all is also education by all. But first all this knowledge must be valorised, together with those who have produced it and those in whom it is kept.

Putting this into practice implies a minimum of recollection and tenacity in front of such rich, yet so wasted and often abused human dignity. We wish to contribute together to the development of a tool for *social communication*, for the communication of social intelligence, a tool which could drive action towards the fundamental objectives of the right owned by all the actors, and with which efficient alarm systems could be built.

Notes

1 This presentation uses the conclusion of IIEDH Working Document No. 7 and the introduction of Working Document No. 9, *Mesurer un droit de l'homme? L'effectivité du droit à l'éducation I et III*. The documents are available at *www.unifr.ch/iiedh*

2 The expression is quoted from the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, *Ce qui reste d'Auschwitz*, Paris, 1999, Rivages.

3 Cf. United Nations, CESC (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), General Comment 13 adopted at the April/May 1999 session on the right of everyone to education. The first paragraph of General Comment 13 states that education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realising other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty, and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities.
Availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability are interrelated, and have been deemed by the Committee to apply to other forms and levels of education as well.
Availability refers to the requirement that functioning educational institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of a State. What is required for these institutions and programmes to function differs from country to country, depending on culture, climate, and developmental context. In general, however, it can be said that having schools available means that there should be sufficient of them to allow all students to enjoy education, including in remote areas, and that the facilities should comply with at least the basic requirements of sanitation, drinking water and teaching materials. .
Accessibility implies that educational institutions and programmes should be accessible to all. This requirement entails that schools should be accessible to everyone without discrimination, in law and in fact, especially with regard to the vulnerable groups, in terms of both economic and physical accessibility. An example of an obstacle to economic accessibility is the raising of school fees for forms of primary or basic education, and a possible obstacle of physical accessibility is the absence of alternative schooling for children living in remote areas.
Acceptability of education requires that the form and substance of education, including curricula and teaching methods, have to be relevant to the needs of the specific context in which students will have to work and live, they have to be culturally appropriate, and they should equip students with the skills and knowledge to function and contribute as full members of society.
Adaptability of education: the fourth criterion requires educational institutions and programmes to be flexible to adapt to the exigencies of changing communities and societies.

4 Diversifying Basic Education for All: Can Non-Formal Education Make a Difference?

Wim Hoppers

Introduction

This paper focuses on the significant role that non-formal education can play in an attempt to reconstruct the meaning and provision of basic education for children. It argues that such reconstruction is necessary to make quality education available to all and to give meaning to education as a human right within the context of changing socio-economic and cultural realities in Africa. The paper will also explore the difficult problem of the current state of non-formal provision of basic education for children in much of the continent, and outline an agenda for research and policy work that could enable NFE to make a more significant contribution to education for all.

The paper examines the case for creating a holistic framework in the context of providing education for all, and the problems of NFE provision and the challenges it raises for the general development of basic education. It goes on to set out a research and development agenda for basic education in general and for NFE in particular. The paper concludes with some pointers to an inclusive and participatory process for moving towards the reconstruction of basic education systems.

A Holistic Response to Basic Education Needs

The case for a holistic response to the need for basic education in the African context can be made from three different perspectives: a strategic perspective pointing to the need for diversity; a human rights perspective underscoring the need for coherence and integration; and an African development perspective which draws attention to the need for education to have relevance to the society in which children live.

The strategic perspective

The need for diversity stems directly from the imperatives of the 'vision of Jomtien'. Article 2 of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) states unequivocally:

> *... what is needed is an 'expanded vision' that surpasses present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices.* (WCEFA, 1990)

There is a widespread acknowledgement that, in spite of many efforts, this expanded vision is still a long way from coherent articulation and implementation.

The case for a holistic response to the need for basic education in the African context can be made from three perspectives: a strategic perspective; a human rights perspective; and an African development perspective ...

In the world as a whole, the number of out-of-school children is declining, but in sub-Saharan Africa it has continued to rise ...

But the need for it is apparent in the subsequent record of attempts to provide EFA, in which sub-Saharan Africa lags behind. Sub-Saharan Africa, together with the Arab states and North Africa, is an area where low gross enrolment ratios showed little change during the 1990s. As the World Education Forum has observed: 'The ratio of ... 75% in SSA reflects continuing difficulties in responding to potential demand for education which is driven by rapid population growth' (World Education Forum, 2000a: 28–30). In the world as a whole, the number of out-of-school children is declining, but in sub-Saharan Africa it has continued to rise, reaching 42 million in 1998 (ibid: 20). In at least 12 African countries the number of children of school age who do not attend school still exceeds the number who are enrolled (ibid: 31), while in 17 African countries enrolment rates actually declined during the 1990s (DFID, 2001). However, the actual number of children out of school (i.e. those periodically not attending and those having dropped out prematurely without this having been recorded) is likely to be significantly higher. Moreover, the aggregate national figures do not capture the often very wide variations in enrolment within countries.

Of serious concern is the fact that several of the countries that lag far behind also have the lowest survival rates between Grade 1 and Grade 5 (EFA Assessment: 37), thus demonstrating enormous difficulty in offering even a small percentage of children any meaningful education. It is frequently asserted that massive extra investment is needed to improve the quality of inputs, notably teachers, learner resources and basic facilities. It has been argued that unless the overall quality of primary education improves very significantly, the demand for education will not be sufficient for universal primary education (UPE) to become a reality (Bennell, 1999: 6–7).

A 2002 DFID analysis concluded that to achieve UPE by 2015, sub-Saharan African countries would need to enable an additional 88 million children (over and above the 1998 enrolment figure of 75 million) to enrol over this period. This would require a three-fold increase in the rate of expansion achieved between 1990 and 1997 (DFID, 2001:3).

Not surprisingly, the 2002 *EFA Monitoring Report* concluded that out of the 30 sample countries only three had a good chance of reaching the 2015 UPE goal, while 12 were at serious risk of not achieving it and 13 countries, although 'making progress', were unlikely to achieve the goal. Finally, even two educationally strong countries – Botswana and Mauritius – were reported as being 'at risk' of failing to achieve the goal (EFA, 2003: 37).

While the data referred to above emphasise the deficiencies of current progress towards UPE, rather than the rapid improvements that are also taking place, they do illustrate the gargantuan task that has been set. At the same time, they may point to fundamental structural issues regarding the very nature of educational provision within the context of the overall macro socio-economic framework of many countries. Many of the countries 'at serious risk' are also among those which over the last decades have undergone major social, economic and political upheavals – associated with structural adjustment or internal strife – after they had made huge progress in the expansion of basic education during the 1970s or 1980s. In subsequent years it became evident that the costs associated with expanding and improving the quality of the metropolitan system of education was huge in relation to the resources available, and that these costs had significantly increased countries' dependence on external funding. Even if, with massive external inputs, the targets could be reached at the present time, the question

must be asked: what will be the medium- to longer-term social and economic implications of such dependence?

Thus, after decades of efforts to promote the standard metropolitan version of school education, there is merit in reviewing the basic parameters for EFA planning and in considering a strategic reorientation of the way in which basic education is provided – thus heeding the vision of Jomtien. In this context, the experience and provision of NFE could find a place in the wider system and constitute a source of innovation across the entire spectrum of provision.

The human rights perspective

Increasingly, the extended provision of basic education is also driven by human rights concerns. Not only does this perspective provide a moral (and in many countries also a constitutional) imperative for giving a high priority to education, but it also leads to robust debates about what such a right actually entails and how it is to be delivered. Even when governments are genuinely constrained in putting into practice their obligation to ensure fulfilment of the right to education, a rights-based approach can inform the articulation of norms and standards for basic education provision, and in particular help to define actual entitlements.

A Policy and Planning Agenda

Katarina Tomasevski's criteria for the institutional provision of education are helpful in setting an agenda for policy and planning. They are:

- **Availability:** Schools should be established with competent educators and be funded by the state.
- **Accessibility:** Schooling should be compulsory and parents should be able to choose a school.
- **Acceptability:** Education should be at least of a minimum standard. Institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient numbers and should have trained teachers, teaching materials and sanitation facilities, among other factors. Schools should also foster diversity.
- **Adaptability:** Education should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to societal changes and respond to the needs of learners from diverse social and cultural settings, including children of refugees and children with disabilities (Tomasevski, 2001:13–15).

These criteria are especially important in the African context as they set minimum requirements for educational provision. Moreover, they invite further analysis of the interrelationships among the criteria, such as those between acceptability and adaptability on the one hand, and availability and accessibility on the other. Together, they provide a baseline which, if applied, would probably mean that large numbers of schools would be condemned as inadequate.

Source: Katarina Tomasevski, *Right to Education Primer*, No. 3

Yet, apart from the establishment of a baseline for provision there is also the question of how much and what substance of elementary education constitutes this human right. Prudently, the Dakar Framework for Action left such details to individual countries to decide:

> *... all children must have the opportunity to fulfil their right to quality education in schools or alternative programmes at whatever level of education is considered 'basic'.*

... the Dakar Conference missed an opportunity to set general reference points for the definition of a basic entitlement ... [There are] heavily unequal de facto entitlements in most African countries, where [some] children ... enjoy access to the public education system ... other children have to put up with possible access to non-formal ... provision, which generally does not have equivalent value.

The Framework also recommended the removal of barriers – for example, the elimination of all direct and indirect costs to children and their families – and a commitment to flexible responses to the needs of marginalised and excluded groups in terms both of provision and content (World Education Forum, 2000b: 5–6). However, by not committing itself to core parameters as to what constitutes basic education, the Dakar Conference missed an opportunity to set general reference points for the definition of a basic entitlement within and across national education systems.

The relevance of the above lies in the heavily unequal *de facto* entitlements in most African countries, where smaller or larger percentages of school-age children, largely because of preferential access to power and/or resources, enjoy access to the public education system. In contrast, other children – with a preponderance of girls, children from rural areas and children in difficult circumstances – have to put up with possible access to non-formal or distance education provision, which generally does not have equivalent value.

This is where the interface between the right to education and wider economic, social and cultural rights takes on great significance. On the one hand, the general right to education can be met in different and not necessarily equal ways, so that it leads to better provision of basic needs like health, nutrition and livelihood. On the other hand, it can be posited that equality of opportunity to compete for positions of value in the wider society requires a meaningful set of equivalent learning outcomes to which every child or young person is entitled. In the current deteriorating socio-historical conditions in Africa, the right of access to education as such is unlikely to significantly enhance the opening of a path towards changing life conditions and emancipation. Thus, without a right to a basic level of learning attainment (and thus to the further opportunities which this will open up), the right to education will not be enough to unlock the right to full participation in economic, social and political life. While the basic level of attainment may vary from country to country, it should be acknowledged that with increasing globalisation the socio-political and economic structures of countries are converging to such an extent that common parameters for basic attainment become justifiable, if not essential, if human rights are to be protected.

A move from what is essentially a basic needs approach to one that recognises a right to equivalent learning attainments would be particularly helpful in ensuring that compensatory effort is made to assist girls to overcome social subjugation and patriarchy, and that in general poor and marginalised children are given extra help to overcome structural, social and economic deprivation. Thus, the pursuit of basic levels of attainment across all modes of provision of basic education would constitute the centrepiece of a holistic framework and would inform the setting of minimum standards of provision and achievement. It would also serve as a key vehicle through which selected and appropriate NFE provision could be integrated into a basic education system.

The African development perspective

The third perspective that has a strong bearing on initiatives to review the nature and structure of basic education provision takes an African development agenda as its principal reference point. This explores the place and role of education in the context of socio-economic development. Here, education is not only about the acquisition of basic competencies and exposure to modern science and tech-

nology, but also about giving children a grounding in society and culture at both a local and national level. A central issue determining the poor quality of formal basic education is the cultural and social gap between the school and the community, and the resulting one-sided expectations regarding educational benefits (CONFEMEN, 1995: 21). In the process of schooling as it is currently practised, the metabolism of African social systems is destroyed, thus affecting the capacity for social reproduction and renewal which is essential for progress (Ki-Zerbo, 1990:4). In this context, the issue of language, and whether children are taught in their mother tongue, has come to loom large (CONFEMEN, 1995).

These concerns have fed into a long-standing interest, shared by many policy-makers and educationists across the continent, in ensuring that education develops a shape, philosophy and substance that is capable of responding to the needs of African children. This implies, for example, a recognition that children grow up in rapidly changing social and economic conditions, many of which are detrimental to sustainable development perspectives at local and national levels. It also invites responsiveness to a situation where many children are straddled between a continuously subverted African identity and an aggressively extending Western identity to which they need to adapt in order to survive.

With an expectation that education has a role in bridging these gaps and in integrating elements from different worlds, some educationists look at forms of indigenous and community education not only as systems in themselves which are complementary to school education, but also as sources of inspiration across the public education system. There is a willingness to recognise that learning occurs in settings outside the classroom and that local knowledge continues to have value and require attention in basic education (Odora Hoppers, 1996; Avenstrup, 1999). This requires complementarities and linkages between the different forms of learning. It also requires greater involvement of different actors in education so as to link the school to its environment (Segou Perspectives, 1995). It is within this context that in several countries, notably in West Africa, NFE initiatives have already become part of national efforts to reconstruct basic education.

Challenges of the Non–Formal Education Experience

Non-formal education in Africa has a chequered history. Emerging from a widespread disillusion with developments in the formal system and its growing inability to prepare children and young people adequately for society in the 1970s, it produced a plethora of education and training initiatives varying from very tiny local schemes run by churches or NGOs to substantive sub-systems with close involvement of the state. While they have addressed themselves to all age groups, NFE initiatives have had particular importance for young adolescents as alternative options to basic education and/or training where, for a wide variety of reasons, schools have been inaccessible or attendance has had to be terminated. This paper concentrates on the essential characteristics of NFE provision for young people where such provision has served as a vehicle for basic education. We look at the apparent strengths and weaknesses of such initiatives and the challenges they pose for the reconstruction of basic education as a system.

Characteristics of non–formal education provision

A key characteristic of NFE is that, in contrast to the formal system, it has invariably adopted a demand-side approach. By taking the needs and circumstances of

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their clients as a starting point, NFE initiatives have attempted to construct learning experiences which appeared to assist young people in achieving short-term goals, whether in terms of functional literacy, life skills or vocational skills, or entry into small-scale self-employment. This basic needs orientation has been in sharp contrast to the longer-term promise of formal school education which could ultimately benefit only the few.

At the level of basic education for children and young people three categories of NFE can be distinguished (Hoppers, 2000: 9–10).

Supplementary provision: here NFE consists of a series of learning arrangements that either add on to formal education (for example 'enrichment' activities) or follow it (for example skills development and other forms of continuing education).

Compensatory provision: this includes programmes that are meant to compensate young people for lack of access to, eviction from or poor performance in the school system. Much effort has been put in here, often in very difficult circumstances, with little or no support from the state.

Alternative provision: programmes in this category aim to create a provision that is different from the formal school in both form and content, and that is more relevant and better suited to clients' basic educational needs.

The relevant distinction is between compensatory and alternative provision. Whereas programmes in the first category mirror the regular public system and attempt to duplicate it with the scarce resources available, while making some concessions to the circumstances of their students, those in the second category are distinguished mainly by their understanding of the role of education in the lives of children and their communities and their efforts to change core aspects of the learning experience. The organisers regard these changes as models for transforming the mainstream education system.

In Africa, the history of NFE is full of initiatives which have, in some way, managed to draw in a wide variety of local and national stakeholders, have mobilised unexpectedly high levels of resources and have been, in modest ways, reasonably successful. Nevertheless, the same initiatives have generally been regarded by the clients – and often also by the organisers – as 'emergency' solutions, providing temporary relief until such time that the state could step in and make the arrangements unnecessary or absorb them into the public system. These perceptions, together with the involvement of NGOs usually backed up by foreign donors, have seriously affected the sustainability of the initiatives.

The state has tended to remain aloof from this effort and has generally refrained from giving recognition and public support. This lack of interest has not only further eroded the viability of the schemes, but has also hampered wider public attention to the potential importance of home-grown approaches to basic education reform. In fact, to the extent that they have been known outside the locality, most initiatives have never been thoroughly documented and analysed from a systems perspective (Hoppers, 2000:11).

During the last decade, the most significant NFE initiatives have been a new generation of community or village schools which have sprung up in a wide variety of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. 'Community schools' are defined as schools established, run and largely supported by their local communities, whether they are geographic communities (villages or urban townships), religious groups or non-profit educational trusts (Hoppers, 2002). Although Africa has a rich tradi-

Working in the fields is a priority for these young people. They need flexible educational provision which fits in with their patterns of work.

PICTURE: AMINA OSMAN

tion of community schools, the current generation has commonly been a product of social policy reform which restricted state involvement and made communities adopt a much greater responsibility for the running and financing of schools where these would not otherwise be available.

In many countries, such initiatives have led to the establishment of wider programmes ranging from a few dozen schools (in Malawi and Uganda) to several hundred (in Senegal, Togo, Chad and Zambia), often linked to common support provisions. In some countries, the initiative was taken by major NGOs, sometimes in collaboration with the state (as in Senegal), and in others they were largely community based.[1] Preliminary analysis shows that with only a few exceptions such community and village school programmes can be classified as 'compensatory' rather than 'alternative' provision, under the definition given above (Hoppers, 2002).

Strengths and weaknesses of NFE

The available literature shows that in many ways NFE initiatives, especially those providing community or village schools, have provided essential basic education services. Moreover, they have done so for ever larger numbers of children, for example (on a conservative estimate) providing for at least 10 per cent of total enrolment in Mali and Togo, 16 per cent in Chad and 5 per cent in Zambia, involving tens of thousands of learners in each country. They have shown that communities, if they are given sufficient assistance, can make a substantial contribution to the provision of basic education (Hoppers, 2002). Furthermore, there is some evidence that many programmes have displayed the relative advantages that were once regarded as hallmarks of non-formal education (Coombs, 1973).

Based on tentative findings the following overview of strengths can be given:

Participatory school management: There is evidence that communities can organise themselves and work with Ministry of Education officials and NGOs in initiating and managing small village schools. However, communities need help in building capacity to do so adequately.

Flexible admission: NFE initiatives cater for a wide variety of age mixtures – as wide as 5–15 years old. Children tend to enter at a later age and classes tend to be multi-age and multi-grade. In spite of the low qualifications of teachers, there

is evidence of such situations being used to the advantage of the learners. Multi-age composition is not necessarily a hindrance to effective learning.

Flexible school organisation: Schools are quite able to agree, individually or collectively, on an adjusted school calendar and times of attendance, while ensuring sufficient total annual contact time. In this way schools respond to agricultural calendars and the work responsibilities of the learners.

Greater participation by girls: Community schools' programmes tend to set targets for the admission of girls. Survival rates of girls tend to be higher than they are in regular schools. This appears to be due to more girl-friendly learning environments and adjusted school organisations.

Curricular adaptation: In many NFE programmes the regular primary school curriculum is condensed into shorter cycles, sometimes with fewer conventional subjects, but with added attention to life skills and sometimes to pre-vocational skills.

Use of para-professional staff: NFE initiatives tend to recruit local volunteers, sometimes former teachers who are usually identified and appointed by the management committees. Though they are poorly trained and paid, they often appear to be highly motivated.

Teacher development and support: The strength here is that in some cases professional support services are provided by an NGO and/or the district education office. In addition, there is evidence of effective social and moral supervision by (usually female) members of the management committees or other parents.

Instruction in the local language: There is evidence that this significantly improves active learner participation and general comprehension of what is taught.

Conducive learning environment: The combination of local teachers, community supervision and use of mother tongue helps to produce a more inclusive and stimulating learning environment. Its impact on actual learner-centredness is unclear.

Equal learning achievement: Where comparative assessment has been undertaken (in Mali and Malawi) learners were found to perform as well or better than their counterparts in local public schools in reading, writing and arithmetic. Girls tended to score lower than boys, but better than girls in public schools.

Low costs: This is difficult to ascertain as many initial and some recurrent costs tend to be borne by supporting agencies. However, while recurrent costs in general tend to be comparable to those of public schools, most of the costs are borne by the local communities (see below) (Hyde, 1999).

Partnerships: Village schools shift the locus of control from the state to a partnership of communities, NGOs and the government, leaving more autonomy for local decision-making.

The above strengths need to be set against the weaknesses of NFE-initiated basic education. Some of these weaknesses clearly constitute the flipside of strengths mentioned above, most notably that community involvement comes with a relatively high cost burden to those who are least in a position to carry it. Other weaknesses relate to the apparent difficulty that NFE programmes have in accepting their autonomous status as a possibility rather than a threat.

The following weaknesses have been identified (Hoppers, 2002):

Low level of (central) state involvement: The state seems insufficiently involved in driving innovative work in education. The main factor here is lack of formal recognition, which could open the possibility of negotiating for state support (professionally and financially) and accompanying quality promotion.

Low salaries: Teachers are badly paid and sometimes not paid at all. Their exclusion from the national teaching service and poor access to opportunities for training and development leaves a highly problematic bifurcation in the system.

Lack of de facto articulation with the regular system: Usually programmes do not lead to completion of primary schooling; bridging arrangements are often absent, making transfer ineffective. Ironically, in this respect the non-formal features of the schools and the use of the local language become serious stumbling blocks.

Inefficiencies: There appears to be a greater problem with inefficiencies resulting from the incompleteness of the primary cycle than from repetition *per se*. There is no evidence as yet of the latter being directly associated with pupils being over age.

Community participation: While there is much community participation, there is little evidence of direct community involvement in planning and decision-making about the curriculum framework, the substance of learning and learning organisation (except in Senegal and Mali). Where opportunities are provided, they do not necessarily lead to an exploration by the community of alternative options.

Village schools as centres of community life: There is so far little evidence of such schools becoming focal points of community learning and action for community development.

Curriculum and empowerment: There is also no evidence of emerging pedagogical approaches (initiated by supporting agencies or community action groups), whereby rural girls or young people affected by poverty and marginalisation are guided towards empowerment, enabling them to effectively overcome socio-cultural and economic constraints.[2]

Going to scale: Most NFE programmes remain small-scale, fragmented and *ad hoc*, and dependent on local initiative. Where more systematic programme expansion has been attempted (as in Mali and Senegal) there is as yet no clarity about the effectiveness of strategies for increasing the scale of the programmes.

While the above generalisations must remain tentative pending further investigation, they offer points of attention that have consequences for the further development of NFE initiatives as 'sub-systems' within basic education, as well as for innovative work across the system. In the context of the need for the extensive reconstruction of basic education systems discussed above they inform a set of challenges for the system as a whole.

Challenges for the Reconstruction of Basic Education Systems

The challenges emerging from the NFE experiences in the first instance concern the immediate stakeholders at national and local level, such as Ministries of Education, universities, colleges and research units, NGOs and community organisations. Beyond these, there is the wider array of technical and funding agencies, several of which are in a position to facilitate and mediate further work.

The right to basic education … must be given to children in [difficult] circumstances, thus challenging governments and educationists to design provisions that respond effectively … to the needs of such children.

The main challenges are the following:

- *How to develop parameters for what are the minimum conditions for good basic education in relation to wider developmental needs and to the personal development of children.*

This would lay the basis for identifying the basic learning attainments applicable to every child and every adult (following the human rights argument). Moreover, it would set equitable criteria for acceptable indicators of quality of provision, both as regards inputs and process, regardless of which organisation manages delivery and how resources are mobilised. It would enable an 'expanded vision' to be elaborated, against which present efforts can be assessed.

- *The need to assess the range of circumstances and special needs across the relevant age groups of children and young people, and to explore the implications for the nature and substance of provision.*

Among other things this requires a breakdown of the characteristics of the out-of-school population. Available information indicates that the following factors would need to be mapped out and their ramifications properly understood (see also DFID, 2001):

Poverty: Children who do not attend school or who drop out at an early stage are overwhelmingly from poor households. There is now a greater insight into the different dimensions of poverty covering distinct aspects of human capabilities. These vary from lack of income to a range of deprivations in social, cultural, political and protective terms (Sen, 1999; DAC, 2001).

Deprived locations: While income poverty is especially a rural phenomenon, this and other forms of poverty are also part of wider deprivation in urban areas. The issue of distance from schools and social constraints predominant in rural areas can be set against the more urban phenomenon of children not being part of conventional households or communities, and thus being deprived of the network support that these can provide.

Disabilities: Most children with disabilities are out of school because there is no inclusion of those with physical, emotional or learning impairments within the education system (DFID, 2001:5). The World Health Organisation estimates that one in ten children in developing countries has special educational needs and that large numbers of those not yet in school are children with disabilities.

Living with conflict: In Africa, ten of the 17 countries with declining or low enrolment rates are affected by or recovering from conflict (DFID, 2001:2). Many children in these countries are suffering from displacement and/or severe trauma as a result of their experiences.

Living with HIV/AIDS: The number of children infected with HIV/Aids or directly affected by it continues to rise rapidly across the continent. Children tend to withdraw from school to care for parents or relatives. Many have become AIDS orphans with responsibilities for looking after their siblings. Figures show that such children are less likely to attend school or do so erratically.

Work or family responsibilities: While in many parts of Africa children are expected to carry out duties in the household, in the fields and in family workshops, poverty and deprivation mean that many are forced to go out and earn an

income to provide for themselves or their families. Increasing numbers of children live on the streets.

The right to basic education, including the right to equivalent basic learning attainments, must be given to children in these circumstances, thus challenging governments and educationists to design provisions that respond effectively, both in terms of opportunity to participate and in terms of special pedagogical attention, to the needs of such children. The above variations of conditions, affecting large numbers of children across the different countries, constitute the strongest motivation for promoting diversity in basic education provision, content and pedagogical practice. Governments need to acknowledge that such conditions are unlikely to disappear soon and that they must therefore be accepted as central reference points in policy development and planning.

- *The need to engage in extensive and systematic stocktaking of the multiple forms of basic learning that exist in one's own country, whether labelled as community learning, non-formal education, community or village school systems, religious schools or forms of open and distance learning.*

In the context of developing adequate and effective responses to these challenges, learning from existing and past NFE experiences may yield positive results. This is bearing in mind – as is evident from the earlier discussion – that many of these experiences are deficient and that extra effort will be needed to build upon them to improve quality and effectiveness. It is necessary to understand what purposes such forms of education have been serving and to what extent and why they have been able to succeed. Furthermore, it is important to understand the factors that have caused some initiatives to fail or to be only partially successful, and to analyse such experiences within the socio-cultural and economic context in which they were developed (Wright, 2001).

- *How to reconstruct basic education for children in such way that as a system it can incorporate a diversity of alternative provisions and provide equitable supportive services across the full range of options.*

With a vision of basic quality and equivalent attainment, room can be created within the system to include other forms of basic education, ranging from village or community schools, through religious schools to part-time, itinerant, distance or other open learning forms of delivery. Such systems can cater for recognition, support services and subsidy in relation to needs within a broader framework of criteria and regulatory provision. In this effort, the state has four essential responsibilities – apart from administering parts of the system itself:

- To provide overall policy co-ordination, and planning and development services;

- To develop and implement an overall framework for quality assurance through registration and monitoring;

- To provide supportive and supervisory services across the system according to need – administrative, teacher education, professional and financial;

- To maintain a national framework for assessment and qualification.

- *The need to make a special effort to upgrade and expand segments of the system that are insufficiently responsive to the special circumstances and*

… it is important to understand the factors that have caused some initiatives to fail … and to analyse such experiences within the socio-cultural and economic context in which they were developed.

needs of defined categories of learners, and to make the entire system more responsive to African development needs.

From the arguments outlined above it follows that much planning and developmental work needs to be done. Once it is accepted that the format of provision of 'school' education can to a certain degree be 'deregulated' (while adhering to essential quality criteria), attention can be given to other existing or potential forms of delivery which can be taken to a desirable scale. Clearly special attention needs to be given to curriculum reform across the system, setting benchmarks for attention to special needs and to achieving an appropriate mix of international science and technology and local knowledge, as well as to national cultural identity. National frameworks can be adapted to the varying contexts across the country.

Towards an Agenda for Research and Development Work in Basic Education

In the final section of this paper implications will be drawn for the investigation of policy and practice and subsequent development work. First, attention will be drawn to key issues involved in the development of a holistic and inclusive approach to basic education in general, and then to a variety of pertinent aspects of NFE experiences in particular. The section will conclude with pointers relevant to the process of engaging in such investigative and developmental activities.

Research and development work related to basic education as a system

The following are areas where further investigative work could make a significant contribution to the reconstruction work needed in basic education as a whole:

• **The political economy of alternative forms of learning and education**
There is a great need for an understanding of the wider dynamics of the rise and fall of alternatives in basic education provision, whether in terms of older forms that have persisted or new ones that are of more recent origin. Some of the questions are: what drives the development of such provision? what are the external and internal factors that enable them to survive? how is their place within the broader array of opportunities negotiated? and what are the threats to their existence?

• **The relationship between basic education and development**
This requires further work on the social and economic benefits that accrue from education, going beyond the standard methodology of rates of return. Other kinds of indicators are required to understand what it is about education that secures certain benefits. In particular, what differences do curriculum content and pedagogical practice make with regard to the impact of basic education? It would also be useful to further investigate the interface between education and poverty alleviation at school and community level, and the relative significance of distinctive forms of deprivation.

• **The nature of an integrated, yet diversified, basic education system**
What are the ramifications of widening the existing 'formal' education system by incorporating other forms of education? This requires examination of basic parameters for an inclusive system: defining the core elements of a regulatory framework as against optional parts where diversity could manifest itself. In this context, deeper analysis is needed of the range of bifurcation that cuts across

current school provisions, leading to differentiation of participation, pedagogical responses and educational outcomes, for example in terms of gender, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, language, age, ill-health and disability. Such analysis would have far-reaching policy implications across the system, since teenage mothers, AIDS orphans and working children also attend 'normal' schools. It would inform the revisiting of principles for equitable distribution of support services and resource allocations to the different parts of the system.

• **The role of the state and the possibilities for effective partnership**
More work is needed to explore the role of the state in basic education in relation to the role of civil society, the private sector and communities. The contradictions between the interests of the state as the dominant actor, on the one hand, and those of other actors who claim a stake in the decision-making process needs to be better understood. How much space should be given to communities to effectively participate in educational development, without detracting from the core public responsibility for equitable provision and support that the state must maintain? Under what conditions can the state, particularly at national level, provide effective leadership of fundamental education reform that reflects an expanded vision of education?

• **The balance between quality and equity**
This issue remains a vexing one and is highly pertinent in the current attempts to ensure Education for All. In the rush towards the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, not only may full access itself not be reached, but also quality may become seriously compromised. In order to free recurrent funds, teachers' salaries are under heavy pressure and communities face heavy costs that they often cannot afford. In such contexts extra state resources to expand non-formal provision may be hard to obtain. Yet there are strong arguments for minimum standards of educational quality, to ensure that the system does not collapse under its own weight. Reducing costs to poor households for basic education may lead to higher private costs in further and higher education.

• **The development of national frameworks for quality assurance, assessment and qualifications**
Much has been written about such frameworks as the umbrella under which a diversified, yet integrated and equitable, system of education can function. Considerable experience has already been gained in several African countries (South Africa, Namibia and Mauritius), and joint work on a Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional qualifications framework is underway. Systems for assessment are key to any effort to set basic learning attainments and to ensure that visions about curriculum reforms are effectively implemented at the level of the classroom.

• **Research and development work with regard to developments in NFE initiatives**
Specifically in the domain of NFE itself, much work still needs to be done in mapping out the full range of education and learning opportunities available to children and young people. This stocktaking needs to go beyond the impressionistic descriptions of NFE experiences that currently abound. Basic data need to be systematically collected for a wide variety of characteristics which enable initiatives to be placed within an overall national framework of basic education provision.

Work on basic data collection has started through the ADEA Working Group on NFE, with technical support from the Working Group on Education Statistics.

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In the light of the pressure to expand basic education provision and the possibilities for upgrading NFE initiatives, cost issues become very important.

Its purpose is to begin making NFE participation visible to policy-makers and planners, and to map the overall resource situation of NFE in relation to the rest of the system. Follow-up work needs to categorise NFE provision in relation to appropriate age groups and their stated purposes, in order to identify those that may be incorporated within the wider national system. In addition, work is essential on indicators of quality and relevance in relation to the learners the provisions aim to serve. The latter, in turn, can feed into more qualitative research about actual processes of decision-making, community participation, pedagogical practices, language use and school-community interaction.

Specific issues that may require in-depth analysis include the following:

• **The actual processes and dynamics related to the design and establishment of non-formal initiatives**

This includes understanding the nature and extent of community mobilisation and perceptions of how such education is positioned within the local social, economic and cultural context.

• **The construction of the curriculum, learning organisation and the broader pedagogical regime**

This relates to the nature and scope of the dialogues among different stakeholders on the substance of programmes, the purposes they should serve for which types of children and how such learning should be facilitated.

• **Actual learning outcomes and achievement in comparative perspective**

While there is some evidence about achievement, there is a need to assess NFE learners particularly in relation to what the provision itself sets out to do, and in relation to other relevant, though perhaps unintended, outcomes. This will yield clearer insight into the relative advantages of different pedagogical settings compared with those in regular schools.

• **The actual experience of how learning relates to the reduction of poverty and social inequalities, including gender**

This requires exploration of the learning process, the significance of how content and special needs are addressed (if at all) and assessment of the impact of such learning on children's lives. To what extent is there a relationship between pedagogical practice and girls' empowerment in their family and community settings? What are the critical factors impacting on emancipatory action in the environment of children who grow up in difficult circumstances?

• **The status and roles of teachers and supervisory staff**

This refers to the factors (status, pay and support) that frame teachers' self-perceptions and those that define their actual role in the pedagogic process. It includes the interaction between teachers and school heads as well as interaction with members of the community involved with the school. How can teachers' roles be redefined in a context where children tend to be older and more mature and experienced, classes are multi-age and multi-grade and communities are willing to get involved? What would this imply for teacher education, and how does it relate to developments in teacher education in the mainstream? Is there scope for a broader recognition of the role and value of para-professional teachers, possibly in conjunction with fully qualified key teachers?

• **Experiences regarding articulation with the wider education system**

Apart from the actual evidence of transfer, there are various experiential aspects that merit attention. These include the contrasts between the rhetoric about progression and transfer and the actual realities, and how the discourse regarding articulation is conducted. The latter refers, for example, to how the different understandings and perceptions of stakeholders are framed and decision-making takes place. There is also a need to explore the different curricular options, their actual prospects for further learning (with or without bridging arrangements) and to what extent and on what grounds choices are made. Some of this is part of an old discussion about vocationalisation, but this needs to be re-opened in the context of NFE initiatives with their potential for greater flexibility and multi-site learning.

• **The resourcing and costing of NFE initiatives**

In the light of the pressure to expand basic education provision and the possibilities for upgrading NFE initiatives, cost issues become very important. Thus it is relevant to examine in greater depth the investment and recurrent cost patterns of such initiatives, and the various ways in which these costs are covered. This includes the actual burden to the communities and individual households. The cost patterns need to be set against estimates of improved and upgraded versions of such NFE provision. On this basis, more equitable approaches to resource needs and their coverage can be explored, working with different formulas for state subsidy and community contributions. Altogether such investigations would provide an insight into the total bill for expanding basic education by incorporating and building upon non-conventional alternatives.

The process of establishing an integrated system

All the above clearly generates a huge agenda for the reform of the basic education system. This will take much effort and time. Above all, it requires extensive reflection and dialogue among the immediate stakeholders at country level so as to establish what kind of system is wanted and how diversity can be included and extended.

In terms of process, therefore, the following issues may need R&D attention:

• How research and development work can be undertaken in a participatory manner, leading to a more inclusive understanding of what basic education should be about and what part of it constitutes a human right within the African development context;

• How to use research and development work on relevant issues in basic education as an input into policy dialogue at national and local level;

• How to create space at school and community level for extensive debate about basic education, its nature, purposes and delivery; for greater participation in decision-making; and for greater scope for mobilising community resources towards educational development and implementation;

• How to create frameworks, procedures and partnerships for joint and integrated planning of diversified basic education provision, responding to the needs and circumstances of a wider diversity of learners across localities and regions;

• How to approach the tasks of improving or upgrading NFE initiatives to meet criteria of quality and outcomes within a human rights and African development framework;

• How to take successful innovations or programmes to a larger scale without

... How to take successful innovations or programmes to a larger scale without damaging the essential factors that contributed to their success or imposing rigid prescriptions on other communities and partners ...

damaging the essential factors that contributed to their success or imposing rigid prescriptions on other communities and partners;

- How to mobilise African experience and expertise across (sub-) regions so as to participate in research and development work and increase quality and effectiveness through extensive collaboration;

- How to bring in external support agencies (international NGOs, technical agencies and donor agencies) in a manner that respects local ownership and enhances the quality and success of the process.

It is hoped that this paper has shown that there is a strong case to be made for reviewing the premises on the basis of which education for all is being planned, targets are set and strategies designed. The expanded vision of the Jomtien Declaration is more relevant than ever in the context of deteriorating social and economic conditions in Africa, and the many questions about the nature, purpose and provision of basic education – in terms of needs and of basic rights – that are increasingly being posed. There is a wealth of forms of learning that are being used by large numbers of children across the continent which provide basic education of some sort and which require further scrutiny in the light of the need for expansion and improvement of the quality of education provision. This creates a huge agenda for work to be done and for efforts to be made to mobilise the wide range of intellectual and material resources which are available on the continent.

Notes

1 Data on community or village schools programmes reported here are taken from a variety of sources: see Boukary, 1998; Doreba and Abdias, 1999; Durston, 1996; Fall et al., 1999; Diarra et al., 1999; Heinen et al.,1998; Hyde et al., 1996; Hyde et al., 1997; Kpeglo et al., 1999; Muskin, 1996; Velis, 1994.
2 This interpretation is based on the helpful distinction made by Stromquist (1990) between education resulting in the consolidation of girls' inequality and education contributing to empowerment.

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3 ABLE Policies in an International Perspective[1]

Agneta Lind[2]

Introduction

ABLE (Adult Basic and Literacy Education or Adult Basic Learning and Education) has become more acceptable among international policy-makers, and thus more legitimate among national policy-makers in the South, than it was a decade ago after the Jomtien Conference on Education for All.

This paper tries to analyse why this is so and how to take advantage of the present momentum and opportunity to revitalise ABLE strategies in the Southern African Development Community region. The analysis will also attempt to identify major challenges and tensions in the international agenda over the past decades and to discuss policy implications at national and local levels.

The paper will present major findings and proposals made in a recent state-of-the-art study commissioned by SIDA's Education Division and prepared by Rosa Maria Torres, *Lifelong Learning: A New Momentum and a new Opportunity for Adult Basic Learning and Education in Developing Countries.*[3]

What Are We Talking About?

First, it would be useful to establish the meaning of some basic concepts and terminology.

Just like out-of-school youth, **adults** who need and wish to engage in organised basic learning and education have often missed out on formal basic education. The reason for this is often linked to poverty, i.e. family problems in earning a living. The approaches and factors that need to be taken into account in making it possible for youth and adults to take advantage of learning opportunities and basic literacy and education programmes are often very similar. It is therefore suggested that youth and young adults should be included when we refer to ABLE, and that they should not be treated as a separate area. It is, nevertheless, always necessary to consider the specific needs and motivations of different programme beneficiaries or potential ABLE participants, taking into account gender, age, language, occupation, family relations and other socio-cultural characteristics.

In the ABLE concept, **basic** should, according to Torres (2002), be interpreted broadly as referring to meeting *and expanding* basic learning needs, including formal, non-formal and informal education. It does not cover more specialised further education and training. 'Basic education' is nowadays often used as meaning just primary education, but sometimes it includes both primary and secondary education. This is unfortunate and confusing, and implies a step backwards in relation to the expanded vision of the Jomtien declaration:

> Every person – child, youth, adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs com-

... basic [education] should ... be interpreted broadly as referring to meeting and expanding basic learning needs, including formal, non-formal and informal education.

Poverty causes illiteracy, so literacy must be promoted through multi-sectoral interventions in a context of development, education reform and poverty alleviation.

prise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numer-acy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning ... . (WCEFA, 1990)

The 'L' in ABLE stands for **learning** because we want to ensure that education does not take place without meaningful learning and we recognise that learning also takes place in *informal* ways, where an important role is played by the family, media, books, friends and experience. The lifelong learning (LLL) concept takes account of this. The 'E' stands for all **formal and non-formal education**, i.e. organised learning programmes.

Literacy is at the heart of ABLE, because it is a fundamental human right, a basic learning need and the key to learning to learn. So it is good that at this conference the 'L' of ABLE stands for literacy. We must accept that *learning* is the point and *literacy* is at the heart of ABLE – literacy in the sense of a basic need and learning tool. Literacy is about learning to read and write (text and numbers), reading and writing to learn, and developing and using these skills to meet basic needs. This takes place in school and out of school and involves children, youth and adults. Literacy is related to written language (script, print, digital), and also to oral communication – listening and speaking. Literacy must be both functional and sustainable. Functional literacy is more than a work-oriented skill, as it was defined in the 1960s: it can also be used for economic, political, social, cultural, family and personal purposes.

'Post-literacy' used to mean the following up and sustaining of the initial acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills, including practical life skill training programmes, the creation of literate environments, learning a second language, etc. There is certainly a need to design programmes in stages, and to address different needs and levels of literacy. This is not only a challenge in designing ABLE programmes, but is also true within every adult learning group. However, the term 'post-literacy' is misleading in that it disguises the fact that literacy is a continuum without a fixed end. It is easier to motivate people to take part in basic literacy programmes in places where there are ongoing education opportunities than it is in deprived and illiterate environments. Opportunities which offer first-time learners the chance to use and develop their literacy skills should preferably be in place before they start their basic literacy course – and not just introduced afterwards.

Illiteracy is also relative, depending on context, language and uses of literacy. The problems of illiteracy cannot be addressed through an adult literacy programme alone. Universalising primary education is a necessary condition for reducing illiteracy, and has historically been the main factor which has contributed to high national literacy rates. Poverty causes illiteracy, so literacy must be promoted through multi-sectoral interventions in a context of development, education reform and poverty alleviation. In Europe and other parts of the North, *functional illiteracy* has been identified as a problem, both for the society and for the many individuals who complete their compulsory schooling without being able to cope with the demands of the workplace or their daily lives. *Illiterate* women and men are adults with valuable knowledge, life skills and interesting work and family experiences; they should not, therefore, be treated as ignorant.

Local and traditional knowledge should be valued and taken advantage of in a learning society.

Non-formal education is the overarching term used by UNESCO and other organisations, such as ADEA, to cover a wide range of alternative educational activities related to second chance primary education, the teaching of literacy and vocational training for children, youth and adults. Flexible and responsive non-formal approaches are indeed important and should be encouraged, especially for addressing the diversity of youth and adult learning needs.

The problem is that the term NFE is used so broadly (to refer to any level, theme, skill and age group) that the common denominator becomes unclear. At the same time, NFE does not cover the whole field of adult basic education, since by definition it does not include informal and formal modes. Moreover, the 'non' in NFE has an unfortunate connotation, in that it may reinforce impressions or images of non-importance, non-professionalism, non-governmental (only), non-funded or non-certificated.

ABLE is a preferable term, because it is both more precise and broader. While ABLE requires expertise in adult education, alternative and flexible approaches to pre-primary and primary education for children should be the responsibility of the departments and agencies implementing the mainstream general education system, and require expertise in child development and primary education curricula.

ABET and ABED are other terms used, for example, in South Africa. The 'T' in ABET stands for **training** and is associated with workplace and occupational training. There has been some tension and debate around the implications of this for people such as the unemployed and women in rural areas who often represent the poorest and most marginalised segments of society, and who are in most need of the first levels of adult basic education, including initial literacy. ABE and Development – ABED – has been proposed in response to this by adult educators and NGOs as a complement to ABET (*ABET Journal*, 1997). Adult basic education certainly needs to be linked to development in other sectors and thematic areas, such as democracy and human rights. However, ABED as a general term seems excessively broad. There is, obviously, a need for a new global glossary to sort out terminological confusion in the field of basic education and LLL (Torres, 2002).

Why ABLE?

The international recognition that education is a right requires ABLE as a necessary part of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is seen as a prerequisite for human development and for dealing with the globalised economy and with changing labour market demands. ABLE in itself will not solve the problems of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, human rights violations, HIV/AIDS or exclusion. It is only a means to cope with the basic learning needs of adults. But ABLE has the potential to enable creative and democratic citizenship, giving a voice to people living in poverty and providing them with tools for improving their lives. ABLE should, however, go beyond addressing poverty. The Declaration of the International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg in 1997 (CONFINTEA V) stated:

The informed and effective participation of men and women in every sphere of life is needed if humanity is to survive and meet the challenges of the future.

[Adult basic literacy education] in itself will not solve the problems of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, human rights violations, HIV/AIDS or exclusion. ... But [it] has the potential to enable creative and democratic citizenship, giving a voice to people living in poverty and providing them with tools for improving their lives.

Children with literate and self-confident parents – mothers in particular – have a better chance of becoming good learners.

Many adults, especially women, who have benefited from ABLE have testified to their feeling of personal empowerment. The health, nutrition, fertility, child school enrolment and retention outcomes of ABLE are often mentioned as justifications for adult basic education programmes for women. There are many reasons for extending and renewing efforts towards ABLE, not least that children with literate and self-confident parents – mothers in particular – have a better chance of becoming good learners. In short, ABLE is necessary for human development and is a basic building block of Education for All.

ABLE Dynamics and Commitments before Jomtien

Internationally adopted concepts and trends related to ABLE as expressed by UN agencies and other education and development agencies over the past 50 years can be described as waves of beliefs or non-beliefs in the impacts of different ABLE strategies on economic development, productivity, citizenship, political and social transformation, income-generation, self-employment, personal and econ-

Critical Factors for Achieving Results in Adult Basic Literacy Projects

Some of the critical factors for achieving tangible results identified in a review (Lind and Johnston, 1990) prepared for the 1990 Jomtien Conference on EFA (WCEFA, 1990) were:

- The role of the state as the prime mover;

- The need for political will or national commitment;

- A favourable development context;

- Continuous mobilisation aiming at sustaining motivation;

- A broad conception of literacy;

- A broad collaborative involvement and resource contribution from all sectors of the state and civil society;

- Co-ordination at central level combined with local responsibility and flexibility;

- Follow-up opportunities, including the development of literate environments;

- A dual strategy combining universal primary education and adult literacy.

Other key issues identified were:

- The timing and duration of instruction;

- The choice of language of literacy instruction;

- Mobilisation and support at local level through community participation and committed local leaders;

- Motivation and training of teachers, including in-service pedagogical and organisational support;

- A curriculum adapted to a realistic learning process, avoiding too many and technical themes;

- Methods easily understood by the teachers and which treated adult learners with respect and patience;

- Sufficient resource allocation to minimise the common problems of inefficiency, such as a high drop-out rate among teachers and learners and unrealistic expectations about progress towards literacy.

omic empowerment and poverty reduction. The kind of wave has depended on political ideologies, global and local contexts and conjunctures of the period in question. For example:

- **'Fundamental education'** was a UN response to the emerging needs of decolonisation in the 1950s, especially in Asia. UNESCO adopted the term in 1946 to describe a broad field of community development activities, one of which was non-formal literacy programmes for children and adults. The programmes stressed practical development. At the same time, little was done to reform schools to make them more responsive to practical needs 'while adult education has been either neglected altogether or turned into something so "practical" that it no longer encompasses any serious attempt to make people literate' (Myrdal, 1968:1687).

- **The work-oriented 'functional literacy' approach** launched by UNDP and UNESCO was piloted in 11 countries in the period 1967–1972 as the

The World Bank became the major player in education policy-making in countries undergoing structural adjustment and removed ABLE from the area of state responsibility. Sometimes this meant that existing budgets and education ministry departments of non-formal adult education and literacy were dismantled ...

Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP). It was based on the human capital theory which believed there was a correlation between economic growth, productivity and investment in education and technical and vocational training. UNESCO's own evaluation concluded that: 'the concept of functionality must be extended to include all its dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural' (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976:191).

- **Mass literacy campaigns**, many of them related to revolutionary processes and liberation struggles and the attainment of independence, showed the importance of political momentum and national commitment, as well as the difficulties of sustaining momentum, putting in place professional supervision and support and developing a literate environment.

- **The popular adult education movement** inspired by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire wanted political action for social change and contributed to innovatory and participatory approaches to education, especially in Latin America in the 1970s and in resistance movement contexts such as the anti-apartheid struggle (Walters, 1989).

- Many other more development-oriented, small- and large-scale adult basic education and literacy programmes dealing with health, nutrition, legal rights and other survival skills have been sponsored by states, NGOs, churches and other institutions addressing poverty and oppression.

The rich experience and commitment associated with adult education was translated into energy, action and hopes around the International Literacy Year and the Jomtien Conference in 1990. For example, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and its regional branches facilitated the creation of an International Task Force on Literacy bringing together practitioners and advocates from NGOs, governments and international agencies to step up action for ABLE.

The Erosion of ABLE

Interest in and space for such ABLE initiatives began to be eroded in the mid-1980s in the context of the Cold War, economic crisis, growing national debt, structural adjustment programmes, deteriorating social services, globalisation of markets and technology, privatisation, decentralisation with meagre budgets, poverty and growing unemployment. The new globalised ideology argued that the state should limit its services to the provision of formal education. Governments became even less interested in ABLE than before.

The World Bank became the major player in education policy-making in countries undergoing structural adjustment and removed ABLE from the area of state responsibility. Sometimes this meant that existing budgets and education ministry departments of non-formal adult education and literacy were dismantled – this was the case, for example, in Mozambique, Ethiopia and Mali.

The capacity of NGOs and civil society to adapt to local circumstances, initiate decentralised programmes and address poverty was exaggerated. Past programmes of adult education, referring basically to a stereotypical idea of mass literacy campaigns, if discussed at all, were pronounced to be inefficient. The World Bank 1995 education policy document stated:

... programs of adult education are necessary, but such programs have a poor track record. One study showed an effectiveness rate of just 13 percent[4] of

adult literacy campaigns conducted over the past thirty years (Abadzi 1994) and there has been little research into the benefits and costs of literacy programs'. (World Bank, 1995:89–90)

The study referred to was commissioned by the World Bank and used the findings of the EWLP evaluation of selective, intensive work-oriented adult literacy programmes (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976:174), but it did not look at any studies on campaigns.

In reporting on the pilots of REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Techniques) in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador (funded by ODA and the World Bank), ActionAid used the same World Bank source to launch REFLECT as the answer to the general 'failures' and so-called bogus claims of past adult literacy approaches (Archer and Cottingham, 1996:4). In the 'Mother Manual' of REFLECT,[5] the same false statement was repeated, to explain: 'why is there so little investment in adult literacy? A recent World Bank discussion paper provides clear reason. Helen Abadzi, on reviewing literacy programmes worldwide over the past 30 years estimates an average effectiveness rate of less than 12,5%.'

The World Bank discussion paper (Abadzi, 1994) ignored a body of literature reviews[6] representing a wide range of documented ABLE experiences from the post-1972 period. It seemed to have little interest in making any serious analysis of literacy campaigns in revolutionary contexts or of the popular education of the past. In addition, more recent literacy campaigns and large programmes put in place in non-revolutionary contexts, for example those in Ecuador (1988) and India (the Total Literacy Campaigns initiated in 1988),[7] have hardly been taken into account by international reviews, in spite of abundant information.

The world conference held in Jomtien in 1990 was a response by international agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank) to the crisis and deterioration of the education sector which accompanied economic decline. The World Bank presented the case for giving priority to quality primary education because of its economic rates of return.

The 'NGO-isation' of ABE, and of NFE in general, that developed during the 1990s in countries undergoing structural adjustment under IMF and World Bank conditions where the role of the state was eroding, was a result of this narrow interpretation of the Jomtien EFA commitment. *'All'* was reduced to *children*, *'basic'* education to *primary* education and *'Universal Primary Education'* to *enrolment* (Torres, 2002:24).

While literacy for children through formal primary education, and to some extent non-formal primary education, was boosted by the Jomtien conference, ABLE programmes were in practice set back by the EFA context and agenda.

There are no bases to sustain that child (school) literacy does better than adult (out-of-school) literacy. Evidence consistently indicates ... the poor performance of schooling in literacy acquisition, retention and use. ... Budgets and efforts involved in trying to expand and improve primary education have no comparison with the meagre resources and efforts invested in ABE. And yet, ABE is requested to show 'cost-efficiency'. (Torres, 2002:19)

The questioning of the value of ABLE and of past experiences has unfortunately caused damage to adult literacy initiatives and to the campaign for literacy by influencing a whole range of policy-makers and funding and implementing agencies, including NGOs, researchers and adult educators themselves.[8]

The decentralised and low priority given to adult literacy in the new South

However, other more powerful and overriding global agendas, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the G8-initiated and World Bank-driven 'Fast Track Initiative' on EFA, have contributed to limiting the agenda by focusing on five years of primary education, in particular for girls.

Africa, in spite of expectations to the contrary, could be seen as a result of the 'failure' and 'wastage' paradigm. This issue has been the subject of heated debate, but many people regard it as having been a sad loss of initiative and a failure to make use of the momentum of the times. At the same time South Africa has introduced impressive systems and reforms to make sure that the necessary mechanisms are in place for a lifelong learning system. These include a qualification framework, with a system for recognition of prior learning, and the Skills Development Act, which involves the Ministry of Labour, employers and trade unions.

The Revival of ABLE in a Lifelong Learning Perspective – Contradictory Trends

Globalisation in economic, technological and socio-political terms has led to a new education paradigm for the twenty-first century – the need to enhance lifelong learning and to promote learning and knowledge societies. In order to be able to understand and cope with these changing and contradictory realities, new competencies are required. This is why **Learning to learn** or **Learning to know** was identified by the *Delors Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century* (UNESCO, 1996) as one of four pillars of education. The others were **Learning to do** – work-oriented and problem solving skills; **Learning to be** – personal development, autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility; and **Learning to live together** – respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace. But there should also be a fifth pillar: **Learning to transform** (Torres, 2002).

The origin of the renewed focus on lifelong learning, ABLE and NFE can be traced to contexts and initiatives in the North, where the demand and supply of organised learning for the adult population has increased tremendously, mainly because of the need for skills related to new developments in the labour market.

A number of international declarations have reinforced the renewed interest in adult education and NFE.

While the Delors Commission focused on the formal education system for children and youth and neglected non-formal adult education,[9] CONFINTEA, the UNESCO Conference held in Hamburg in 1997, formulated an 'enlarged vision of adult learning'. Follow-up is currently on the agenda, but seems to have had little impact in countries where the Dakar (2000) EFA framework is the overarching international platform for basic education in developing countries until 2015:

The weak articulation between EFA and CONFINTEA and their respective follow-ups has contributed to debilitate the already weak ABLE agenda within the EFA framework. (Torres, 2002:40)

Importantly, the conference held in Dakar in 2002 re-affirmed the Jomtien expanded vision of basic education and included ABLE in two of its six goals:

- ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills; and

- achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially among women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for adults.

However, other more powerful and overriding global agendas, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the G8-initiated and World Bank-driven 'Fast Track Initiative' on EFA, have contributed to limiting the agenda by focusing on five years of primary education, in particular for girls.

The UN Literacy Decade (2003–2013), approved by the UN General Assembly in December 2001, offers an excellent cross-cutting platform for reviving ABLE. It presents a renewed vision of literacy, which aims to create literate environments and literate societies.

The 'New Vision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training' adopted in Seoul in 1999 is also directly related to ABLE and lifelong learning, and provides another opportunity for revival.

Nonetheless, as we know, declarations and commitments have little impact on decision and action unless they are continuously reiterated and acted upon. There is a serious risk that a dual educational agenda is developing at a global scale: lifelong learning for the North and a narrow concept of basic education for the South.

Why Must there be a New Momentum and New Opportunity for ABLE in the South?

In spite of these contradictory trends, there are reasons to believe that there are new opportunities and a potential new momentum for revitalising ABE in 'developing' countries. New, wider and more complex competencies are required to understand and deal with the contradictory and changing realities brought by globalisation in the context of growing problems related to poverty and unemployment.

Specific factors contributing towards revival and renewal of ABLE in the South include:

- *the difficulties and insufficiencies of primary school reforms;*

- *the poor attention given to adult-related EFA goals over the 1990s;*

- *a better information and knowledge base in relation to ABE;*

- *the renewed 'cost-effectiveness' argument;*

- *the activation of lifelong learning as a paradigm;*

- *the spread of ICT; and*

- *the continuing presence and pressure of the adult education community and movement.* (Torres, 2002:23)

To this one could add the opportunities to integrate ABLE into mainstream development agendas, the framework of Dakar, Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAps) (the new modality of development assistance), and poverty reduction and human resource development strategies, involving all economic and social sectors. Implicit in the way in which these frameworks prioritise gender equality, women and the problems of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the need, in principle, for space to be made for attention to the basic learning needs of adult women and men.

The dual strategy of combining the extension and reorganisation of primary education with adult literacy projects is again being advocated by major stakeholders and policy-makers at global, regional and national levels as a way of attaining the adult literacy goals formulated at Dakar.

The major shift, which will be important for many poor countries in Africa, is the reassessment by the World Bank of its position on adult literacy as part of adult basic and continuing education.

More English-language studies, reviews and evaluations of ABLE are now available – but what really matters is how and for what purpose information and knowledge are used to impact on policies and action. The major shift, which will be important for many poor countries in Africa, is the reassessment by the World Bank of its position on adult literacy as part of adult basic and continuing education. Since 1998 the Bank's sub-Saharan Africa region has undertaken reviews and studies 'to re-examine policies regarding this sub-sector' (Lauglo, 2001: Foreword). The World Bank has published a number of studies and has a website[10] on ABE, including links to other relevant sites. In practice, the World Bank has moved from discouraging to promoting ABE, and seems to be in a position to influence the approach of new programmes.

The point that is now being made is that ABE is 'cost-effective' and necessary for poverty alleviation and for achieving EFA. The evidence is said to be recent, i.e. to have been previously unavailable. In practice, there seems to have been a decision to recognise the findings of studies that were previously considered to be of little interest or were probably too politically controversial. The recognition that there is no need for further 'evidence' on the critical importance and multifaceted impact of ABE is a positive turning point which provides new opportunities. It re-establishes the legitimacy of the eroded commitments to ABLE by governments, international agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs).

A more nuanced version of the black and white picture of state versus local community/NGO-promoted ABLE has emerged, reinforced by the findings of a World Bank-sponsored comprehensive evaluation of adult literacy programmes in Uganda (Carr-Hill, 2001). The government Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programme outcomes were compared with those of NGO programmes such as REFLECT. One of the conclusions was that:

Participants in the REFLECT circles perform no better than participants in the FAL classes on either the test or the functional scales, after controlling for the level of prior primary schooling, even though the REFLECT facilitators are better qualified, better trained, better paid, and better supported. (Carr-Hill, 2001:xx)

Nowadays the state is expected to play a strategic role, at least in guiding and planning ABLE policies, staff development, resource allocations and quality assurance. Local government authorities and CSOs are expected to be partners by providing resources or implementing programme activities in different ways. The challenge of developing dynamic and functional partnerships between different government sectors, and between the state and CSOs, is complex and sensitive, and varies according to country and context. The World Bank is actively promoting the *'outsourcing'* of the provision of ABE to NGOs in many countries, and refers to the government-run adult literacy programme experience in Senegal as a model. It is described as 'a market of provisions: the government buys a certain volume of services from NGO or CSO suppliers. The better the price offered by the government, the greater the supply of provisions will be. In Senegal, the terms have sufficed to attract a great number of new suppliers … ' (Lauglo, 2001:35).[11] Although this seems excessively market oriented, the recognition of the need for both the state and civil society to engage in and take responsibility for ABLE is important.

The activation of lifelong learning, together with the rapid expansion and use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in the South as well as the North, provides an excellent platform for strengthening the historical struggle for ABLE. Literacy needs are enhanced, because digital technologies require literate users. Digital literacy has, in fact, been recognised as a basic learning need for all (for example in the UNESCO/UN Literacy Decade, 2001). ICT use for ABLE is limited compared to its use for more advanced adult education and training purposes. Distance education has been boosted and has a renewed potential for reaching adult educators and adult learners. At national, regional and international levels, networks and specialised agencies are communicating via websites and e-mail.[12] Together with TV and radio, this provides further opportunities to share ABLE resources and information, necessary for capacity development and for learning lessons from each other, and for avoiding the repetition of mistakes.

Challenges in Revitalising ABLE in a Lifelong Learning Perspective

'Promoting adult education in the context of lifelong learning' was one of the themes of the eighth conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF), organised by UNESCO, which took place in Dar-es-Salaam at the same time as the ADEA conference. A key conference document states that this:

… entails the creation of literate societies, the valuing of local knowledge, talent and wisdom, the promotion of learning through formal and non-formal education, and taking the best advantage of the new information and communication technologies and the dividends of globalisation.

The questions proposed for the panel discussion were:

1 The place and resource allocations accorded to 'literacy' and lifelong learning in country plans for EFA;

2 Alternative strategies for including and empowering marginalised groups;

3 Linkages between formal and non-formal adult learning;

4 Specific strategies to meet the learning needs of women and to promote 'gender justice'.

These are major challenges. It is encouraging that ministries of education are discussing these questions, because this places ABLE, in a lifelong learning perspective, clearly on the agenda of the education sector in Africa. However, the even greater challenges and opportunities of ABE and lifelong learning go beyond the education sector and must be taken up by both the public and private sectors, as well as by civil society.

The risks facing both the international and regional ABLE agendas are related to oversimplifying and adopting uniform approaches without taking adequate account of specific contexts and diverse needs and motivations. The following are some examples:

Addressing gender imbalance: The most common response is to 'target' women, even though in many countries adult basic and literacy programmes already attract mainly women (Lind, 1995; 1996; 1997). It is also often taken for granted that women are less literate than men, because international and regional literacy rates show this. In many parts of Southern Africa the opposite is true.[13] ABLE has an important role in promoting gender equality, but must take account of the context and not just focus on women.

Literacy and poverty reduction: Poverty causes illiteracy and prevents children and adults from taking part in education and literacy programmes. Obviously, unless the causes of poverty are addressed, illiteracy will not disappear. This, together with poor people's own motivation to make a living and improve their lives, has led many advocates of adult education and development to recommend and promote 'integrated' programmes of basic learning skills and 'livelihood' or 'income-generation' skills. This is very rarely achieved because of a tension between priorities, and the complex resource requirements. The 'tentative' findings of a recent World Bank review (World Bank, 2002) of experiences of 'integrating' literacy and livelihood skill training programmes indicated that there were very few integrated programmes. It has rather been a matter of what comes first and how to find the best mix. The availability of facilitators and instructors in poor communities and their ability to handle several skills, themes and methods has been an obvious critical factor. A tentative recommendation of the study is that there should ideally be different 'instructors' for literacy and for livelihood training within the same programme. A more feasible alternative may be to have parallel programmes linked to different sectors, organised by a variety of development agents, not necessarily with the same learners.

It is also often taken for granted that women are less literate than men, because international and regional literacy rates show this. In many parts of Southern Africa the opposite is true.

PICTURE: AMINA OSMAN
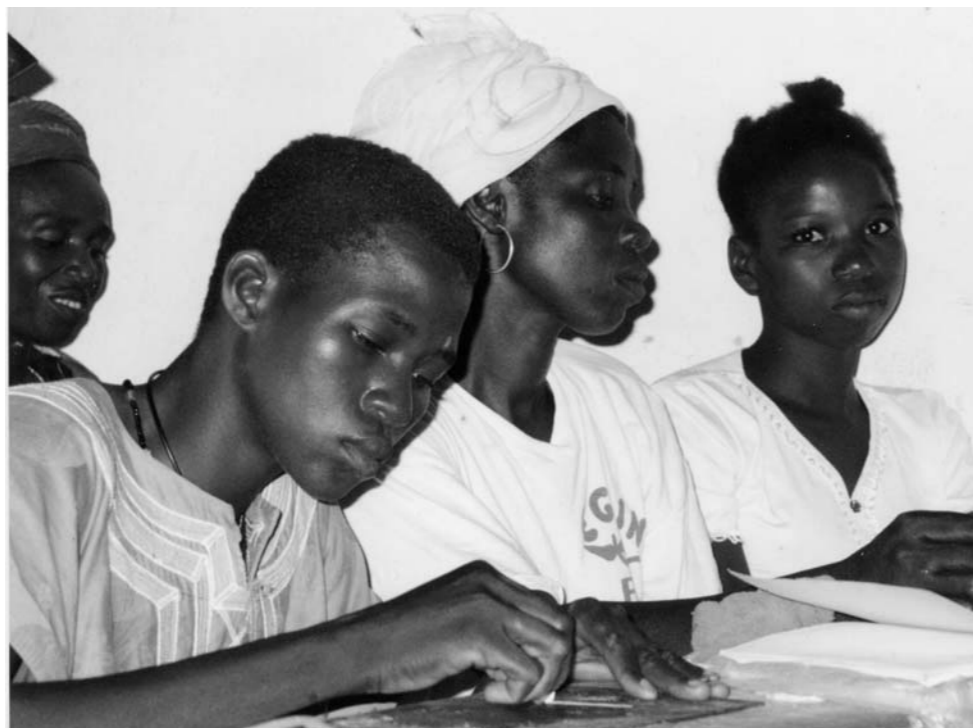
Literacy and empowerment: Many literacy learners have testified to their feelings of empowerment, even when they have achieved only very basic literacy and numeracy skills, and even when the content and method have not been geared towards empowerment (Lind, 1996). However, too vague objectives or over-high expectations about outcomes by organisers frequently create difficulties in achieving and evaluating realistic results. For example, a recent review of 13 evaluations of REFLECT (Ridell, 2001) found that REFLECT's

> *... 'renewed' definition[14] is full of ideals of potential achievements. It presents an evaluation challenge that goes considerably beyond testing the*

achievement of basic literacy and numeracy. It also crosses disciplinary boundaries that package different types of outcomes such as literacy, numeracy, empowerment, development, democratisation, poverty alleviation, etc.

The review found the tension between the relative priority given to literacy or empowerment to be the most fundamental issue raised in a number of the evaluations. This tension has been identified by several other studies (for example Stromquist, 1994), and exists not just between literacy and empowerment, but in general between 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn'.

Objectives of learners versus objectives of organisers of ABLE programmes: Disjunction between learners' motivations and organisers' objectives is a typical dilemma of committed adult education organisers who want to achieve too much in too short a time with too few resources in a context that is too isolated from other relevant development programmes. An in-depth qualitative study over three years of the experience of women participating in a Freirean literacy programme in Brazil concluded:

> *The knowledge needed by program designers is not the mere understanding of demographic features of the population to be served but how these interact with one another to produce particular life experiences. Essential questions that need to be understood about participants include the objectives they seek from literacy classes, the types of problems they face in program attendance and literacy acquisition, how they link program content to their immediate reality ... .* (Stromquist, 1997:219–20)

Mobilising and enABLing – 'demand-driven' supply: The new World Bank paradigm on ABE emphasises that programmes should be 'demand' and not 'supply' driven. The dilemma is that the poorest of the poor, often illiterate, have less voice and power to demand than those who are better off. It is therefore often necessary to help people to articulate their needs and to enable sustained participation (Lind and Johnston, 1990:59–67). Otherwise the most disadvantaged people will continue to be excluded.

The evaluation of adult literacy programmes in Uganda (Carr-Hill, 2001) illustrated and confirmed findings from some comprehensive evaluations and studies in other countries (Mozambique: Lind, 1988; Namibia: Lind, 1996; India: Saldanha, 1995) that the most powerful variable influencing differences in learner performance was location within the country (districts or regions) related to the historical and cultural context and the level of local commitment to the programme. Carefully developed relevant contents and participatory methods cannot compensate for or replace an enabling environment as shaped by the socio-cultural context and political commitment to sustained participation in ABLE programmes.

Towards Learning Societies: A Vision of Learning Communities

The response to these challenges and to the new opportunities described in Torres's analysis (2002) is a policy proposal to develop Learning Communities (LCs) as a strategy for education and learning for economic and social development and transformation at local level. The concept is:

> *... based on the notion of community-territory: an organised urban or rural human community that constitutes itself as a 'learning community', defines*

Disjunction between learners' motivations and organisers' objectives is a typical dilemma of committed adult education organisers who want to achieve too much in too short a time with too few resources in a context that is too isolated from other relevant development programmes.

The Learning Cape Festival 2002: The Launch of the Western Cape as a Premier Learning Region

The idea for the Festival came from discussions between the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Department of Business Promotions. The aim was to popularise the idea of the Learning Cape which is a key pillar in the Western Cape's economic development strategy. Public meetings were hosted by the Department and a steering committee was established made up of representatives from government, higher education, early childhood development programmes, adult literacy programmes, NGOs, trade unions, general and further education institutions, libraries and SETAs (Sectoral Education and Training Authorities). By showcasing learning opportunities in the province and celebrating learners' achievements, the month-long festival aims to promote a culture of lifelong learning which emphasises three themes:

• **Learning is for jobs and social empowerment;**

• **Learning is for everyone (womb to tomb);** and

• **Learning is for fun and personal development.**

There are currently over 300 learning events planned throughout the province during the month. The Festival highlights different areas – for example, the importance of science and maths, IT, ECD, women's empowerment, information and counselling, skills development, reading and adult learning.

(Quoted from the launch introduction by Professor Shirley Walters, UWC)

and implements its own collective learning strategy to meet and expand the BLN of all its members – children, young people and adults – in order to ensure personal, family and community development. (Torres, 2002:50)

The concept is about articulating efforts to meet the basic learning needs of all people in a given area-based community, involving existing learning resources and the agents, institutions and networks, including the state, which must play a key supporting role in enhancing education and learning. A learning community encourages diversity, consultation and experimentation 'rather than the adoption of ready-to-use models'; it focuses on learning in groups and institutions, such as the family, the school, the women's club and the community library; it is holistic and bottom-up. Learning communities are about life-wide learning and must be part of a system for lifelong learning.

The recent Learning Cape Festival in South Africa (see Box) provides a promising and creative example of a learning community approach where economic development was the entry point. Identifying strategic entry points and partnerships for creating learning communities as a platform for ABLE and lifelong learning is a future challenge for debating and developing a shared vision.

Notes

1 This paper was originally presented as the keynote paper at the international conference on 'Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) in the SADC Region', held at the University of Natal, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 3–5 December 2002.

2 The author is SIDA Regional Education Adviser in Africa, based in Maputo, Mozambique. She is also Professor of Adult Education at the Faculty of Education, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo and Extraordinary Professor at the Division of Lifelong Learning at the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa.

3 The draft report served as a background document for an online debate on ABLE organised by SIDA between May and June 2002 (see *www.fronesis.org*).

4 This figure is derived from the incomplete findings of the evaluations of the EWLP pilots in 11 countries between 1967 and 1972 (Lind and Johnston, 1990:73). A recent World Bank publication on literacy and livelihoods (2002) makes little use of the lessons from EWLP due to insufficient recording of experiences and outcomes.

5 Available in November 2002 at *www.reflect-action.org*

6 For example, those by Bhola (1984), Lind and Johnston (1990), Jones (1990) and Rassekh (1990).

7 See, for example, Lind (1997).

8 In recent publications the World Bank has rectified some of its previous simplistic and generalised assertions about past failures.

9 See Bhola (2000).

10 *www.worldbank.org/education/adultoutreach/*

11 The page number refers to a draft (April 2000) of the 2001 publication.

12 For example, UNESCO's specialised adult education and Lifelong Learning Institute in Hamburg, UIE, has a documentation network called ALADIN, the Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network (see *www.unesco.org/education/aladin*).

13 Literacy statistics from the year 2000 (see Appendix) indicate that in Botswana and Lesotho adult men have lower literacy rates than women. In the 15–24 age group, men have a lower literacy rate than women in Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana. Other education statistics from these countries, and for South Africa and southern Mozambique, indicate a similar tendency, with more boys than girls dropping out before completing basic education.

14 ' ... a structured participatory learning process which facilitates people's critical analysis of their environment, placing empowerment at the heart of sustainable and equitable development. Through the creation of democratic spaces and the construction and interpretation of locally-generated texts, people build their own multi-dimensional analysis of local and global reality, challenging dominant development paradigms ..... people empower themselves to work for a more just and equitable society' (quoted in Ridell, 2001).

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ALECSO: *http://www.slis.uwm.edu/ALECSO/*

APPEAL: *http://www.unescobkk.org/education/appeal/index.htm*

ASPBAE: *http://www.aspbae.org/*

BREDA: *http://www.dakar.unesco.org/bureau_reg_en/breda.shtml*

CEAAL: *http://www.ceaal.org*

FRONESIS: *http://www.fronesis.org*

ICAE: *http://www.web.net/icae/index.html*

IIZ/DVV: *http://www.iiz-dvv.de*

ILI (International Literacy Institute): *http://literacy.org/index.html*

IRA (International Reading Association): *http://www.reading.org/*

Learning Cape: *http://www.LEARNINGCAPE.org.za*

Millennium Goals: A Better World for All: *http://www.paris21.org/betterworld/*

REFLECT: *http://www.reflect-action.org*

SIDA: *http://www.sida.se/*

UIE-UNESCO Institute for Education: *http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/*

UNESCO: *http://www.unesco.org*

World Bank/Adult Outreach Education: *http://www.worldbank.org/education/ adultoutreach/*

Appendix

Estimated Illiteracy Rate and Illiterate Population Aged 15 Years and Over, and 15–24 Years, in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2000

| | Population aged 15 years and over | | | | | | Population aged 15 years to 24 | | | | | |
| | Illiteracy rate (%) | | | Illiterate population (000) | | | Illiteracy rate (%) | | | Illiterate population (000) | | |
Country	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
Niger	84	77	92	4688	2083	2605	78	69	87	1583	695	888
Burkino Faso	77	67	87	4845	2081	2763	67	56	79	1598	664	933
Gambia	64	56	70	494	214	279	43	35	51	99	40	59
Sierra Leone	64	49	77	1732	650	1082						
Benin	63	48	76	2066	766	1299	47	30	64	582	181	400
Guinea Bissau	63	47	79	440	159	280	46	30	61	102	32	69
Senegal	63	53	72	3290	1368	1921	50	41	58	932	385	547
Ethiopia	61	56	67	20664	9497	11166	46	45	46	5426	2703	2722
Mali	60	52	67	3604	1532	2072	36	30	42	828	338	489
Mauritania	60	49	71	910	367	542	52	43	61	276	115	161
Guinea	59	45	73	2186	816	1370						
Mozambique	56	40	72	6101	2126	3974	40	25	55	1497	470	1027
CAR	54	40	66	1113	399	713	34	25	43	244	87	157
Côte d'Ivoire	53	45	62	4457	1952	2505	35	30	41	1119	473	646
Burundi	52	44	60	1867	754	1112	36	34	38	470	219	250
Djibouti	49	35	62	180	62	118						
Liberia	47	30	63	849	276	572	31	16	47	239	59	180
Chad	46	33	59	1937	675	1262						
Comoros	44	37	51	175	72	102	41	34	47	61	25	35
Sudan	43	32	54	7675	2820	4855	23	17	29	1407	534	873
Togo	43	28	57	1073	341	732	24	13	36	224	59	164
Malawi	40	26	53	2296	718	1577	29	19	39	625	207	417
Nigeria	36	28	44	22803	8639	14163	13	10	16	2936	1168	1767
Rwanda	33	26	39	1394	543	851	16	15	18	270	119	151
Uganda	33	22	43	3565	1203	2361	21	14	27	919	314	605
Ghana	30	21	39	3426	1166	2260	11	7	14	428	149	278
Gabon	29	20	38	214	72	142						
Cape Verde	27	16	35	68	17	50	13	9	16	11	4	7
Cameroon	25	18	31	2099	764	1335	7	6	7	209	96	113
Tanzania	25	16	33	4551	1431	3120	9	7	12	638	225	412
Botswana	23	26	20	213	115	98	12	16	8	42	27	14
Zambia	22	15	29	1065	347	718	12	9	15	250	94	155
Swaziland	20	19	21	116	51	65	9	10	9	19	10	9
Congo	19	13	26	305	94	210	3	2	3	15	5	9
Kenya	18	11	24	3015	946	2068	5	4	6	341	140	201
Namibia	18	17	19	181	85	95	8	10	7	28	17	11
Eqt. Guinea	17	8	26	42	9	33	3	2	5	2	0	1
Lesotho	16	26	6	208	165	42	9	16	2	38	34	3
Mauritius	16	12	19	136	53	83	7	7	7	14	7	6
South Africa	15	14	16	3916	1814	2102	9	9	9	728	360	367
Zimbabwe	7	5	10	504	153	350	1	0	1	16	2	13

Source: UNESCO's Statistical Year Book 1999-2000. Literate: "being able to read and write with understanding a short simple statement of his/her everyday life." Estimates based on census data, which in turn is based on informant's declaration, and on other sources when relevant census data are not available

Country Studies

6 Educators for a Basic Education Programme: The Gambian Experience

Babucarr Alieu Suwareh

The Department of Education of the Republic of Gambia has developed a training programme for basic education with the aim of maximising the use of human resources to attain quality education. The programme articulates and harmonises all aspects of teacher education, focusing on the mastery of multiple skills in an integrated approach, resulting in the differentiation of tasks and the multi-skilling of teachers.

In this context, the Gambia College, which focuses on the training of teachers, nurses, agricultural extension workers and public health officers, is developing unit accreditation which will enable all its students to be multi-skilled; it includes the teaching of adult and non-formal education, local languages in the formal school system and early childhood development. The College will select people with high educational profiles (five GCSEs including English) who have a variety of qualifications or equivalent experience.

The Gambia College's Basic Education Training Programme

The Gambia College's programme includes the following:

- The rationale for adult and non-formal education in the Gambia;

- The sociological, historical, philosophical and psychological foundation of adult and non-formal education;

- Adult learning: the elements affecting the design of a learning structure for adults and adolescents;

- National languages: the orthography of selected languages and the conception and development of teaching/learning materials;

- Methods: techniques and devices for teaching children, adolescents and adults;

- Community study: the sociology of rural and urban communities;

- Monitoring and evaluation skills: to determine quality and relevance;

- Teaching practice: gaining experience in informal, formal and non-formal education.

Non-formal education stands to gain from the organisational skills of the formal sector, as well as from its infrastructure and the high calibre of its personnel, especially at the post-literacy levels where empowerment is critical. But the formal sector can also learn from NFE in areas such how to prepare learner-centred materials and adopt a participatory methodology which will go a long way towards deformalising the teaching methods of the formal system and help it to achieve its goals of relevance and quality.

The goals of the project are to train teachers who will be responsive to the diverse experiences of Gambians of different ages ... and to contribute to the integration of training for basic educators working in the formal and non-formal sectors.

The most significant aspect of this move is that it can provide a common course for all those involved in human development. The Gambia College trains not only teachers, but also agriculturalists, nurses and health personnel and people working with livestock, so the initiative will increase the number of trained personnel in basic education. It will also develop close contacts among different services which pursue similar aims and use of resources, and make basic education an inexpensive service. Since the strategy is to train teachers who will have adequate command of local languages, and who can work with local communities and teach both children and adults, the pre-service training programme will be supported by outreach activities. This will modify the existing theoretical and methodological aspects of the teacher training programme to promote participatory pedagogy. The programme will link theoretical knowledge with practical experience and include the study of the environment and the possibility of transforming it. The examination system will also be geared towards the understanding and transformation of the environment.

The goals of the project are to train teachers who will be responsive to the diverse experiences of Gambians of different ages – pre-school, school pupils and adults – and to contribute to the integration of training for basic educators working in the formal and non-formal sectors. In more specific terms, the project will enable the Gambia College to provide training for basic educators so that they can teach in informal, non-formal and formal settings.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- produce qualified teachers capable of teaching both children and adults effectively within three years through a pre-service course;

- train 1,800 teachers in the teaching of young children, adolescents and adults through in-service courses;

- produce two teaching manuals and three teachers' guides to support the Educators for Basic Education Programme;

- establish resource centres in The Gambia's six educational regions that are stocked with relevant materials, case study reports, films and reprographics;

- establish an outreach programme to encourage the immediate application of the new skills in a practical way and to re-enforce the techniques that have been learnt.

The justification for training nurses, agriculturalists and public health personnel in the methods and techniques of adult and non-formal education and in early childhood development is the fact that the quality of basic education is part of a large body of survival needs which cannot be looked at in isolation. Workers in one sector will be much more effective if they collaborate with people working in other sectors. The work of nurses, agriculturalists and public health officials is all relevant to early childhood development and to education and training for adolescents and adults.

The Directorate of Basic Education, in collaboration with the regional multi-sectoral working groups, has retrained 200 teachers to pilot the programme. Given the grassroots nature of adult and non-formal education and of early childhood development, the programme is located in schools, delivered by teachers and co-ordinated by the Adult and NFE Services of the Department for Education.

The target groups include food vendors, housewives, street children, maids,

out-of-school youths and mothers' clubs. Two hundred schools are already hosting the programme with a total enrolment of 6,000 learners.

The programme uses textual materials which emphasise practical work to be done by the learner, and the material encourages reflection on the practical application of knowledge. Other materials used are generated by the learners themselves. These can be used both inside and outside the classes. At the non-formal stage, materials prepared by learners have been found to be useful, since adult learners have a variety of experience that can enrich the teaching and learning process. Non-textual materials in common use include role play, drama, field visits and demonstrations of skills such as soap-making, food processing, tie-dye and batik.

In accordance with the orientation of the teaching and learning materials, the programme uses socio-psycho methodology that moves learners from naïve consciousness to critical consciousness through participatory techniques which enable them to be both the object and subject of the learning process. This also allows peer learning – learners learning from each other and the teacher learning from the learners.

The teaching and learning materials used are selected according to criteria such as age, aptitude and experience. In this context, the programme teaches not only the three 'R's but also creates and improves life skills. Systematic monitoring results have confirmed that the programme is producing the intended results. About 50 per cent of the participants have completed the intermediate level and 30 per cent the advanced level; 20 per cent are pursuing post-literacy activities. This is helping communities to mobilise and develop structures for socialisation and the nurturing of skills and talents. It also provides opportunities for continued learning, self-improvement and education in areas (nutrition, hygiene, childcare and nurture) vital for children's survival and for early childhood stimulation and meaningful socialisation. In practical terms, it helps homes to play their primary role of cultural transmission and lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Parents are helped to understand the educational needs of their growing children and are enabled to create and sustain stimulating environments in the form of nursery schools which teach basic literacy, numeracy and operational skills. This means that schools become centrifugal and centripetal forces extending into communities and drawing communities towards them, thus changing people's perceptions of schools as cultural islands whose only function is to perpetuate their own culture.

The constraints on giving concrete expression to this programme nationwide include financial restrictions and the need to change people's thinking. To turn the programme into a system-wide intervention requires the retraining of all existing teachers and new ways of conceiving and developing teaching and learning materials, as well as devising vibrant outreach activities by the Gambia College for the pre-service programme.

The key recommendations are therefore:

1 The provision of resources for the establishment of a national resource centre and community resource centres nationwide;

2 The provision of resources for the establishment of a community outreach programme by the Gambia College;

3 Capacity-building of NFE personnel and those of partner agencies;

4 The provision of resources for enhancing the capacity of adult and NFE services

... schools become centrifugal and centripetal forces extending into communities and drawing communities towards them, thus changing people's perceptions of schools as cultural islands whose only function is to perpetuate their own culture.

to produce relevant teaching and learning materials, mobility for evaluation and monitoring and for research.

In conclusion, the innovation which this programme represents implies a complete rethinking of our national educational system as an integral system instead of making piecemeal changes which, in our experience, tend to create more problems than they solve.

7 Factors Contributing to the Success or Failure of Non-Formal Education Initiatives in Kenya

Magdallen N. Juma

Introduction

The dynamics of the non-formal education (out-of-school) situation in Kenya cannot be fully understood without an in-depth understanding of the formal basic education subsector which has had to grapple with a number of challenges that have impacted negatively on the provision of social services, including education. These challenges are a consequence of low economic growth and the Structural Adjustment Programme which has necessitated reduction of expenditure on education and other social services. As a result, parents and households have had to assume more responsibility for the education of their children.

This additional responsibility has come at a time of escalating costs, reduced incomes and widespread poverty. The alarmingly high drop-out rate from both primary and secondary schools and lack of access to basic education can be explained in part by parents' inability to meet the high, often prohibitive, cost of educating their children. Physical and other socio-cultural constraints, such as cultural attitudes and gender bias in relation to the education of girls, are further reasons for lack of access, low retention and low completion rates. Gross enrolment ratios (GER) fell from 95 per cent in 1989 to 75.9 per cent in 1998 (6–14 cohort); completion rates were less than 50 per cent. It is estimated that approximately 55 per cent of the 5.8 million primary school pupils in Kenya drop out before completing the eight-year primary cycle (Yildiz, 1999). As a consequence of the high drop-out and low retention rates, transition rates declined, with less than 45 per cent of students who completed primary school going on to secondary school.

The arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL), where people are already marginalised and where poverty is prevalent, are badly affected by this situation. This is a bad scenario, with completion rates falling to between 12 and 35 per cent (Yildiz, 1999) and with an acute under-participation of girls. The problems are compounded by critical issues such as low quality provision and the questionable relevance of much of the curriculum, given the cultural ethos of the ASAL.

According to the 1999 Population and Housing Census, 4.2 million Kenyans have not attended school. This has huge implications for non-formal education.

Following the announcement of free education in Kenya by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government which came to power in December 2002, large numbers of children enrolled in primary school. Although there is as yet no accurate head count of these children, it is projected that the Standard 1 intake will rise to 1.5–2 million from the previous one million.

Kenyan Primary Education Key Statistics

At the end of 2002, the statistics on primary education in Kenya were as follows:

- Pupil enrolment: 5,874,255

- Public primary schools: 17,754

- Classes: 196,935

- Number of teachers: 172,406

As of the end of 2002, it was estimated that three million eligible children were not attending school. Of that number, only a fraction is enrolling in Standard 1; most are re-enrolling in the standard they had reached when they left school. Many children have been orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and cannot return to school due to social hardship.

Other children, like street children, cannot go back to school because of social problems.

Twenty-one year old Peninah Njambi is typical:

I am a mother of a four-year-old. It is impossible to me to go back to St. Briggit's Primary School, Eastleigh, where I was a pupil up to standard five. I would have loved to finish my education but I dropped out because of school fees. Although education is free, I will not go back to school because I have a child to care for and house rent to pay. I would prefer undertaking a technical course to going back to sit for the KCPE examination.

(Free Primary Task Force, 2003)

Non-Formal Education

It is against this background that individuals, communities and organisations have taken action to respond to the education needs of out-of-school children and young people. Over the decade 1990–2000 there was a phenomenal increase in the number of informal schools, schools without uniforms and slum schools. But information on this subsector is scarce.

In this paper, non-formal education is used to mean all those organised educational activities (literacy and skills training programmes) carried on outside the framework of the formal school system. Such activities aim to provide disadvantaged school-age children with basic education and survival skills. Some of the characteristics of these initiatives include:

- Rehabilitating street children and providing them with basic education which enables them to re-route to formal conventional schools;

- Giving a second chance to poor children to have access to education through alternative school arrangements;

- Providing disadvantaged children and youths with the practical/vocational skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for survival as normal individuals in society.

In general, non-formal education is taken to include the rehabilitation of historic-

Pupils at an NFE school in Nairobi – rehabilitating street children and providing them with basic education enables them to re-route to conventional schools.

PICTURE: AMINA OSMAN

ally, socially and economically disadvantaged school-age children and the routing of successful children into regular schools to resume formal learning. Those who do not join regular schooling are given the opportunity to make use of the skills and knowledge acquired from the NFE centres. These initiatives are called non-formal education simply because they offer basic education and training outside the conventional formal schools. They cater for disadvantaged children who have missed out on formal schooling.

Non-formal programmes are established to provide disadvantaged children with a second chance to have access to basic education. There is a wide recognition among those who run NFE programmes that:

- Basic education is a fundamental right for all children, girls and boys, whether they are rich, poor or destitute;

- Basic education and training is an important vehicle for personal and social development;

- Basic education and training is fundamental to reading and achieving in higher levels of education and training; and

- Disadvantaged children and young people also need love, care, health and education if they are to grow up to become responsible people.

The non-formal education initiatives discussed in this paper include those that target out-of-school children in ASAL districts and in poor residential areas of the major cities of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu.

Non-formal education initiatives pay particular attention to school-age girls and boys who have been socially and economically disadvantaged in shelter, health and educational provision. They include street children and youth, poor

Non-formal education initiatives pay particular attention to school-age girls and boys who have been socially and economically disadvantaged in shelter, health and educational provision.

urban and rural children, pregnant teenage girls, nomads and pastoralist children and youth. Two of the centres target street children, while one targets poor street children in an ASAL district.

Organisational structures

The centres are non-profit-making initiatives operating with little bureaucratic machinery in order to offer non-formal education and training to disadvantaged school-age children and youth. They are run by a director or programme co-ordinator who is assisted in the day-to-day running of the programme by social workers and teachers. Some of the programmes are co-ordinated by primary school heads. Activities in the centres are tailored to the lifestyle of the local community.

The centres have the following components:

1 Rehabilitation programmes which deal with settling street and other disadvantaged children. The programmes provide shelter, meals, health, and guidance and counselling.

2 An educational programme which teaches academic subjects. The 8-4-4 syllabus is used in the same way as in formal schools.

3 A skills training programme which provides practical and vocational training – for example in knitting, carpentry, metal work, home science and moral instruction.

4 A socialisation programme which inculcates socio-cultural and moral values, norms and attitudes.

The centres are guided by the principle of 'self-reliance'. Children learn by doing. The older children, for example, clean their rooms and wash their own clothes. The teaching/learning process is also pupil centred. Children are given the opportunity to be innovative and to practise what they learn. The centres are sensitive to the conditions of the disadvantaged, and there are good and warm relationships between the centres and their clients.

Achievements

The achievement of NFE projects is measured against their main objective of providing school-age children with an alternative route to basic education after they have missed out on their first chance of schooling. The pertinent issue is whether the children are rehabilitated and are going through a learning process. Are the children happy and healthy? Have they been re-routed to formal schools? Are demands for such centres increasing or decreasing?

The survey indicated that despite financial problems, all the centres are achieving their objectives in one way or another. Destitute and street children and pregnant teenage girls have been provided with shelter, food, clothing, and medical and counselling services. More important, they are being provided with basic education as a foundation for helping others re-route to formal schools. For example, in the case of the Undugu Basic Education Programme (UBEP), 810 learners have benefited since 1979. Pumwani UBEP had an enrolment of 173 students (97 boys and 74 girls) at the time this study was undertaken.

Beneficiaries of the NFE programmes in these centres express their deep feelings about what they have gained from the programmes. The centres have not only turned them into responsible children, but have also given them the oppor-

tunity to complete and excel in formal schooling. Many pupils from the centres have become committed to and aim high in education and the world of work. What the beneficiaries themselves say is a good indication of what the centres have achieved.

The amount of resources and time invested in the programmes indicates how committed they are to improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups, both female and male. In the Undugu Society, for example, the centres spend 70 per cent of their budgets on the provision of education and training, and the care of children. In 1999, the total budget was approximately Ksh. 90 million. The approximate figures for different budgets were given as follows: social services Ksh. 10 million; school sponsorship Ksh. 4 million; UBEP schools Ksh. 4 million; vehicles and fuel Ksh. 50 million.

Although the centres are small and cater for few disadvantaged children in their respective districts, what they have achieved is remarkable. They have in their own way, through non-formal education, improved access and retention of disadvantaged children in primary education. Bendera Centre has already been replicated in the district. Two other centres have already been started at Nachola and Ngilai (Republic of Kenya, 1995).

Factors accounting for the success of the initiatives

The first factor behind the success of these initiatives is their focus on serving disadvantaged children, especially girls. Most of the projects have very clear objectives related to uplifting the condition of poor children. In spite of a shortage of cash, many projects have been able to provide such basic needs as shelter, food, clothing, and medical and counselling services for poor and destitute children.

Secondly, the projects allow poor children in non-formal educational programmes to be re-routed back to formal education where they perform well. Other children from NFE projects who, for one reason or another, cannot be admitted to formal schools have been admitted into vocational centres or skills training for the world of work.

Projects which have been particularly successful in retaining disadvantaged children are those with low charges, especially for education. Most such initiatives charge low fees or arrange for pupils' fees to be paid by specific sponsors. In some cases, the parents or guardians of pupils are allowed to pay in kind, for example through contributing materials or labour, rather than cash, which many cannot afford. Because of the reduced fee burden, many parents and guardians are willing to send children to formal or non-formal schools.

The successful projects also have sound management practices which keep operating costs low. Much of this sound management has taken the form of collaboration with partners who are interested in promoting the goals of the project. Sponsors have co-operated with government ministries, NGOs and other groups in the provision of services. Cost-sharing sometimes means that each partner pays less than they would have done if they had not come together and collaborated. For instance, in some of the educational initiatives, the Ministry of Education provided trained teachers, while other partners provided desks, chairs, textbooks and other learning materials. Such initiatives have also regularly monitored the use of these facilities and resources. The provision and maintenance of resources and facilities through effective sponsorship has opened up access to education for many disadvantaged children.

Initiatives which involve members of the local community from the very start and which maintain a consultative working relationship with them are more likely to be successful.

In addition, the involvement of parents and communities in their activities has contributed to the success of some of the projects. Initiatives which involve members of the local community from the very start and which maintain a consultative working relationship with them are more likely to be successful.

Factors contributing to the lack of impact of some initiatives

A careful examination of the case studies of projects that were not altogether successful revealed a number of common weaknesses. Essentially, these weaknesses centred around inadequate involvement by members of local communities, insufficient resources and physical facilities, poor management of the affected initiatives, heavy dependence on donor resources and an inability to retain beneficiaries such as street and slum children.

Less successful projects tended to be those which were initially started without adequate consultation with local communities. This often meant that the objectives were not clearly explained and the communities were not sufficiently sensitised before the initiatives were launched. Sometimes community members were not aware of the initiatives and were therefore not involved. Due to lack of adequate publicity, particularly sensitisation, some members of the community were not reached in terms of educational benefits.

The problem was sometimes exacerbated by lack of transparency on the part of the organisers. In some cases this contributed to the initiatives failing to benefit the targeted groups.

In other cases only a few pupils in the schools surveyed participated in the programme because of hardship. Sometimes the cost of fuel, which was added to the fees paid by each pupil, made the programme very expensive and only accessible to the few students who could afford it.

Lack of trained personnel also appeared to be a common problem for many of the weaker initiatives. Some projects not only lacked resources such as books, but also sufficient numbers of trained teachers. In some, the children were grouped into four groups and taught at the same time by a few teachers despite their different levels of ability. Often the teacher-pupil ratio was high. With the exception of projects run by the Undugu Society, many schemes employed teachers who were untrained.

Management appeared to be another common problem in the weaker initiatives. Some community representatives alleged that key officers were dishonest in the management of project funds.

A related problem was that some community members were reluctant to work on a voluntary basis; people also had competing economic and social priorities which led to fluctuations in the amount of time they could afford to give to education projects. In Baringo, for example, the involvement of members of the community is lowest during the planting and harvesting seasons; most women have to balance participation in activities with their family roles.

Some of the initiatives face the problem of inadequate physical facilities and resources. Inadequate space is a serious handicap, particularly for NFE schemes. The projects have limited amounts of land and the facilities are usually temporary. The classrooms are overcrowded and teachers find it hard to give the necessary individual attention to pupils.

Another serious problem that besets most of the initiatives is poor sensitisation of communities to be self-reliant and sustain the initiatives. Poor co-ordination between the sponsors and the community contributes to lack of information about the operation and means that many of the initiatives have limited sustainability.

In the case of some NFE projects, it was observed that there is a tendency to copy the way in which learning programmes are run in conventional schools. Children who have been used to roaming the streets often find it difficult to adjust to a fixed routine and timetable.

Finally, there is a lack of formal evaluation of the initiatives and the programmes they offer so as to establish their strengths and weaknesses and help them to plan for the future. The effectiveness of many of the initiatives is not formally monitored.

The initiatives targeting slum and street children encounter some particular problems. Children who have been on the streets for a long time find it hard to adjust to school schedules. Consequently they find it hard to break street habits and norms like drug abuse and smoking. Because these children are used to handling money, which is not readily available at the centres, some of them run back to the streets whenever the opportunity arises. Teachers report frustrating experiences in teaching these children. It is possible that in their adverse reactions to these frustrating experiences, teachers themselves contribute to the children dropping out.

Some children also drop out because their parents move to a place far away from the centre and they cannot afford the transport costs. The high mobility of slum dwellers also affects some of the initiatives because of lack of continuity with members already sensitised about the importance of a particular initiative.

A major weakness with many of the initiatives, including some which have been rated relatively successful, is their heavy reliance on donor support. Many are successful when they are measured against outcome factors such as the numbers of students they attract, increasing access, retention, improving academic performance and cost-effectiveness, but score badly on issues of reliance on donor agencies for management and operational costs. They are, therefore, unsustainable without donor funding. Many of the initiatives which are heavily dependent on donor support target the more marginalised groups such as street and slum children.

Lessons from the Initiatives

Important insights can be gained from the way in which many of the projects were initiated, managed and operated. These insights are useful for the various parties involved in the provision of primary education. In this section we discuss lessons that the various partners can learn from the experience of initiatives and projects which have uindergone evaluation in order to better promote expanded and effective provision of primary education. We examine lessons that can benefit the projects themselves, and those that can benefit sponsors or donors, the Ministry of Education and other ministries. The lessons revolve around matters related to the cost-effectiveness of projects, and their operational efficiency, sustainability and replicability.

One of the lessons for projects is that initiatives in which the community was involved from the very beginning, and which maintained a consultative working relationship with them, stood a better chance of success than those which did not fully involve the local community. It is therefore clear that any project which is meant to benefit a community must involve members of that community fully in its setting up, planning and administration.

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... successful projects were more likely to have simultaneously addressed the diverse needs of intended beneficiaries, such as education, health, feeding, shelter, financial support for small business and skills training.

The second lesson is that the successful management of projects often depends heavily on the dedication and vision of one or more staff members. The commitment of a project's officers to its goals and objectives is a key ingredient in efficient management and success. For instance, where project staff are dedicated, tolerant and friendly in serving intended beneficiaries of projects, the latter feel enthusiastic and are keen to participate fully in the project's activities. It is therefore important for project officers to recognise that the success or failure of a project depends heavily on the degree of their own dedication and approach to the job.

The third lesson is that projects stand a better prospect of continued success where their officers have trained local staff to sustain them when sponsorship ends. This is a need that projects should pay a great deal of attention to, mainly by training members of the local community to continue project activities at the end of the sponsorship.

Lessons for sponsors and donors

The first lesson for sponsors concerns the importance of an integrated approach in initiating, planning and managing projects. The study found that successful projects were more likely to have simultaneously addressed the diverse needs of intended beneficiaries, such as education, health, feeding, shelter, financial support for small business and skills training. In this respect, as far as possible, projects should address several basic needs of the intended beneficiaries.

A further lesson is the need for sponsors to co-ordinate their support for projects in order to minimise duplication of effort and possible conflict. In a number of cases the study found that lack of co-ordination among sponsors left some beneficiaries without support when they still needed it. In other cases sponsors were wary of expanding their projects in areas where other sponsors were already present for fear of clashes. There is a need to co-ordinate and streamline what the sponsors can do best and for which types of beneficiaries.

Many donors and sponsors are, for example, devoted to improving access and retention of disadvantaged children in basic education programmes. Donors would do well to seek out counterparts who share their vision, goals and objectives, with the aim of setting up partnerships. In this way they can enhance collaboration in their efforts for better services for their common target groups.

For the majority of the projects which were studied, there were no sponsorship deadlines, which meant that community members assumed that the sponsors were there to stay. This made it difficult to envisage sustainability of projects should sponsorship be withdrawn or terminated. It is important for donors to make sustainability a core objective from the very start of the project, and for them to inform intended beneficiaries about the planned duration of the sponsorship and train members of the community so that they can sustain the project.

Honest and accountable use of resources by project officers promoted greater success for a number of initiatives. It is important for sponsors to closely monitor and supervise the use of project resources to ensure maximum benefit to intended beneficiaries.

Lessons for the Ministry of Education

Contrary to the popular view, the children of marginalised groups and their par-

ents have high educational aspirations provided they can afford to meet the costs of education. Education policy-makers and planners need, therefore, to take this into account in their approach to marginalised groups, especially the pastoralist and slum communities.

In the management of centres for street and slum children it is apparent that tolerance and dedication are some of the key virtues needed by the organisers. Teachers in such initiatives, for example, were found to be tolerant, dedicated and even loving when handling pupils' problems. Teachers appointed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to serve in such centres must be retained for a long time, rather than transferred frequently, if they are to have a lasting impact on vulnerable and needy children.

As has been pointed out above, although many of the initiatives appear to be doing a commendable job, those that register only limited success do so due to lack of sufficient facilities and resources. In order to achieve their stated goals, these initiatives need support from the Ministry of Education. For example, the provision of trained teachers by the TSC for some of the initiatives is a move in the right direction.

It was reported that some of pupils at NFE projects who have passed the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) experience considerable difficulties in securing places in Form 1 in good secondary schools despite their high scores. This is undoubtedly frustrating for the pupils and their communities, as well as for project managers. It can encourage students to drop out of school as they see their efforts as being a waste of time. The Ministry of Education needs to address this issue by opening up admission to good secondary schools for all children who perform well in the KCPE.

Some of the initiatives surveyed were flexible in levying charges for their services. They allowed for other forms of payment where there were problems in securing cash. For educational projects in particular, some parents may be better able to pay through the contribution of their labour, in the form of food items or materials required by schools. The Ministry of Education should look seriously into these possibilities for specific groups of learners and their parents or guardians.

The availability of school feeding (lunches) improved attendance, retention and performance of children in educational programmes. The Ministry of Education, through its various organs, should encourage schools to have feeding programmes of one kind or another as a priority.

Lessons for other ministries and agencies

From many of the initiatives surveyed, it is apparent that their success is to a great extent limited by the economic problems of the communities they serve. There is a need to include income-generating activities which can contribute to improved living standards in the communities which in turn will help them to invest in the education of their children.

It was also noted that initiatives which involved communities in determining development priorities and in the implementation process were on the whole more successful in attaining their objectives than projects which failed to do so. Where the participatory approach was working well, a sense of common ownership was instigated among all those involved. On the other hand where there was a non-participatory approach in the management of initiatives, success was minimal. A participatory approach also has the advantage of sensistising communities

Nomads, like this girl from a migrant community in Nigeria are excluded from formal education. Educating girls is a way of empowering women in their homes and communities and in the country at large.

PICTURE: AMINA OSMAN

towards sustainability of the initiatives through management, securing of funds and capacity building by training the necessary personnel.

The presence of projects in different communities raised awareness of the importance of such programmes as pre-school and primary school education. Girls, in particular, benefited from increased community awareness. In this respect other ministries and sponsoring agencies need to be aware that their bold and dedicated involvement in a community is likely to lead to other benefits which were not at first anticipated.

It is also clear that learners followed educational programmes more enthusiastically where the curriculum integrated activities of importance and relevance to the community. Integration of Islamic education with secular education is a good example. To guarantee more widespread success in promoting effective learning, other ministries and donor agencies should integrate local activities and values into their educational programmes.

Most of the projects evaluated in this study were sponsored by committed individuals (foster parents) from outside Kenya. These sponsors have demonstrated a sense of vision and dedication in supporting the less fortunate among our citizens. The lesson which everyone concerned should learn from this is that the time has come for able Kenyans to also become sponsors of useful projects which help disadvantaged citizens.

Non-formal education plays a pivotal role in enhancing the provision for basic education which is the key to the eradication of poverty, disease and ignorance; hence the realisation of education as a human right.

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8 Namibia: Towards Education for All*

Frances J. Mensah

Country, People and Society

Namibia is a semi-arid country covering an area of 825,000 square kilometres in Southern Africa. It obtained independence on 21 March 1990 after a protracted war of liberation. The preliminary report of the 2001 Population and Housing Census recorded the total Namibian population at 1.8 million, 51 per cent of whom are women. Namibia's annual population growth rate stands at 2.6 per cent. The country is divided into 13 political regions, characterised by differing stages of development, which gives rise to inequities. As is the case in many other developing countries, there is a tendency for people to move from rural areas to the urban settlements in search of better living standards and life-sustaining opportunities.

Pre-independence Namibia was characterised by the effects of apartheid policies and these continue to have consequences for present-day Namibia. Before independence, the country was divided into 11 semi-autonomous political entities. Each had responsibility for various issues, including the administration of education. There was an extremely skewed and unequal allocation of resources between these different ethnic authorities. This meant that:

- Education was fragmented along racial and ethnic lines;

- There was unequal access to education and training at all levels of the education system;

- There was inefficiency in terms of low progression and achievement rates and a high wastage rate;

- The curriculum and teacher education programmes were often irrelevant to the needs and aspirations of individuals and the nation as a whole;

- There was a lack of participation within the education and training system.[1]

Namibia and Education

For the Namibian nation education and socio-economic development are inextricably linked. Independence meant that the long-standing aspirations of Namibians for an efficient education system premised on access, equity, quality, democracy and lifelong learning could be developed. Sweeping educational reforms were implemented. The many different education authorities were amalgamated into one unified national structure with its headquarters in Windhoek. There are currently seven education regions: Katima Mulilo, Keetmanshoop,

Khorixas, Ondangwa East and West, Rundu and Windhoek. The education sector now falls under two ministries: the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation (MHETEC). Education reform in Namibia was initiated through a variety of policy documents and position papers. The most important of these were *Towards Education for All, A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training* (1993), *The National Development Plans* (1996 and 2002), the *Report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training* (1999) and the *Strategic Plan 2001–2006* of the MBESC. These are discussed briefly below.

These broad policy statements reflect policy-making and planning since independence. They incorporate the basic principles and goals of Education for All expressed in Namibian policies and were affirmed in Article 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, adopted in 1990.

Article 20 states:

All persons have the right to education. Primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge.

This makes full provision and access to free quality education for children up to 16 years of age a right; it predates the *World Declaration on Education for All* (Jomtien, 1990) to which Namibia is a signatory. The commitment of the people of Namibia to education for all was strengthened when the government re-committed itself to achieving the six Dakar goals, with emphasis on universal, equitable access to quality education, democracy and lifelong learning, early childhood development, and the education of girls, women, the marginalised and people living with disabilities.

It was noted in the *Education For All Year 2000 Assessment* that:

Namibia was thus able to identify fully with the Jomtien goal of education for all because it fitted perfectly with the broad goals which had already been set for the reform of education in the newly independent country. No special mechanism was required to address the goal of education for all, since the achievement of this goal was already the core around which the ministry's activities were being structured.

Towards Education for All

Education for all is an important goal, guaranteed in the constitution and central to the national development strategy.[2]

The centrality of education to national development is at the heart of the policy document, *Towards Education For All, A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training.* This seminal document, published in 1993, summarised the major goals of education as:

- Access

- Equity

- Quality

- Democracy

The goal of 'quality' includes a provision that education should be a lifelong activity. The importance of this has been emphasised in subsequent policy documents. The centrality of efficiency in delivery and expenditure is also foregrounded in subsequent policy documents and plans. *Toward Education For All, A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training* outlined in detail various aspects of Namibia's education policy, as well as the philosophy and ideals that underpin both the policy and national development objectives. This document remains the benchmark against which subsequent policy documents and achievements are measured, assessed and adjusted. The *Education For All National Plan of Action* will be implemented within the framework of a human rights approach to education, from early childhood education and care to lifelong learning.

The Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training

In March 1999, the President of the Republic of Namibia promulgated a wide-ranging Commission on Education, Culture and Training. After a process of extensive consultation, the Commission concluded in its report that great strides had been made towards achieving the goals of access, equity, democracy and efficiency outlined in the policy document, *Towards Education for All.* The Commission found, however, that the only goal that had been largely met was access.

The Commission summarised its findings by:

… calling for a revitalisation and reorganisation of the whole sector of education, culture and training, so that Namibia can confidently face and take advantage of the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century. Failure to act decisively now is likely to result in Namibia falling victim to the intense competition that will ensue from globalisation and its new patterns of international competition and trade.

The importance of lifelong learning for Namibia's development was emphasised, and the Commission stressed the need for Namibia to become a 'learning nation'. The challenges of youth unemployment and the devastation wreaked by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, among other factors, prompted the Commission to note:

… schools on their own cannot provide 'Education for All'. Even in a country like Namibia that has invested heavily in compulsory education, there are always some who are not reached.

However the enduring strength of Namibia's education policy should be noted:

In becoming a learning nation, Namibia will not have to depart from the goals that were set out in our basic policy document, Towards Education For All. The goals of access, equity, quality, democracy and efficiency remain as relevant as ever. In fact it is noteworthy that Towards Education For All already recognised the importance of lifelong learning for future development policy.[3]

The MBESC Strategic Plan, 2001–2006

The two Ministries of Education have drawn up strategic plans. The intention of the MBESC plan is:

To deal with the fundamental problems and challenges described here and in the Presidential Commission's Report (1999), as well as in other reports.[4]

The importance of lifelong learning for Namibia's development was emphasised, and the Commission stressed the need for Namibia to become a 'learning nation'.

The objectives of the Plan continue to emphasise the goals of access, equity, quality, democracy, efficiency and effectiveness, and lifelong learning. Of central importance too are skills, development for economic empowerment, democracy and the reduction of adult illiteracy as key elements of national policy. The proposed support of the education sector by international donor agencies is rooted in the priorities and outcomes that have been articulated in this strategic plan. The MBESC's National Priority Areas for 2001 to 2006, not listed in order of importance, are:

- Equitable access;
- Teacher quality;
- Teacher education and support;
- Physical facilities;
- Efficiency and effectiveness;
- Action on HIV/AIDS;
- Lifelong learning;
- Sport, arts and cultural heritage.

The MHETEC Strategic Plan

The MHETEC will work with government to attain its goal of advancing socio-economic development and nation building through strengthening the national human resource capacity, research, science and technology application, quality control and assurance in education and training, youth development, employment creation and international co-operation. The vision of the MHETEC is to launch Namibia into an industrial emerging market through application of knowledge and technology to socio-economic development. The Ministry's priorities are to:

- Promote human resource development;
- Enhance national technical capacity;
- Enhance research, science and technology;
- Strengthen youth development programmes;
- Promote employment creation initiatives;
- Strengthen co-operation between Namibia and UNESCO;
- Provide a framework for accreditation, quality assurance and control of training institutions and programmes.

Current Status of National Educational Policy in Namibia

The Education Act of 2001 was promulgated in December 2001. The Education Act's primary objective is:

To provide for the provision of an accessible, equitable, qualitative and democratic national education service; to provide for the establishment of the

National Advisory Council on Education, National Examination Assessment and Certification Board, Regional Education Forums, School Boards, Education Development Fund; to provide for the establishment of schools and hostels; to provide for the establishment of the Teaching Service and the Teaching Service Committee; and to provide for incidental matters.

Related policy and legislation of importance to Education for All

National gender policy

It is noteworthy that both the second National Development Plan and the Education for All document mention that gender equity is not a major issue in primary education in Namibia due to the considerable efforts made since independence to ensure equal access. But there are barriers to the study by girls of subjects traditionally considered to be masculine. Staffing ratios are also unbalanced with far fewer women than men in senior teaching and management positions and a disproportionate number of women teachers at lower primary level. The National Gender Policy specifically states that 'gender balance in education and training' is an area of concern within the wider gender policy framework.

Namibia's National Gender Policy

Namibia's *National Gender Policy* outlines the framework within which implementation of constitutional issues can be encouraged, supported and sustained. More specifically, the National Gender Policy outlines a framework and sets out principles for the implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of gender-sensitive issues which will enhance effectiveness in the continued management and planning of developmental processes in the different cultural, social and economic sectors of the Namibian nation.

National policy options for educationally marginalised children

The *Poverty Reduction Strategic Action Plan* highlights gender, marginalised and vulnerable children, and the reduction of disparities as key issues in poverty reduction. Building on this base, the *National Policy for Educationally Marginalised Children* is comprehensive and clear in defining categories of educationally marginalised children and the main reasons for marginalisation in education, including special learning needs. The policy sets out an implementation framework and defines the roles of NGOs and foreign donors as partners in this area.

National early childhood development policy

Early childhood development is vital for Namibia's future prosperity and for the success of formal basic education. Namibia joined with more than 70 other countries to adopt the *World Summit Declaration for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children* and the *Plan of Action* to implement that Declaration in New York in 1990. The emphasis in Namibia's early childhood development policy is on the centrality of parental and community involvement in young children's overall development as this is greatly influenced by their immediate environment. The policy also places emphasis on the issue of gender-linked disparities both in attitudes and expectations in early childhood education and care, and encourages a change in attitudes to and awareness of the rights of the child.

Providing an education for children orphaned by AIDS, like this girl from South Africa's Limpopo province, is a big challenge for the education sector

PICTURE BY JOHAN BOTHA/CPU

HIV and AIDS draft policy

HIV and AIDS present a big challenge to access and quality, as well as to the actual management of the educational sector. The rising number of orphans and children caring for terminally ill parents, coupled with depletion of family resources, will in the long run make it difficult for those children to enrol and remain in school. Even if they access education, its quality is likely to be affected by the psychological impact and the roles they will have to assume in support of the family. Namibia's teachers are at high risk of HIV infection. Projections suggest that around one in seven educators was HIV-positive in 2002. This will have a major impact on the quality of education as the efficiency of these teachers is affected. The MBESC and the MHETEC are both committed to minimising the social, economic and developmental consequences of HIV/AIDS for the education system and for learners, students and educators, and to providing leadership in the implementation of an HIV/AIDS policy. The MBESC strategic plan states:

The Ministry is to deal urgently and purposefully with the HIV/AIDS pandemic in and through the education sector, in cooperation with other ministries and agencies.[5]

Health policy

The Ministry of Health and Social Services is also a vital link in the success of Education for All. An important contribution lies with the FRESH (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) initiative which was launched by UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank at the Dakar Education Forum, in collaboration with Education International. Several other agencies have joined the initiative since its launch. The FRESH initiative:

Favours comprehensive approaches to school health, stressing school policies, a health supportive school environment, skill-based health education and school health problems, including HIV/AIDS, that affect education, schooling and the learning environment. The FRESH framework is based on an agreement among the collaborating agencies that there is a core group of cost effective activities which, implemented together, provide a sound basis and point of departure for intensified and joint action to make schools more healthy for children, children more able to learn, and Education for All more likely to be achieved.[6]

FRESH comprises four core components that slot into the Education for All goals. These are:

- Health-related school policies;
- Provision of safe water and sanitation – first steps toward a healthy learning environment;
- Skills-based health education;
- School-based health and nutrition services.

The Namibian Education System

The reform process in the education ministries was immediately followed by the introduction of a standardised curriculum in the secondary phase, followed by the reform of primary education. The promulgation of Education Act 16 of 2001 takes democracy and school governance a step further by setting up national educational advisory councils and formalising the role of the school boards and the regional education forums. Below is an outline of the structure of the Namibian education system within which Education for All will be implemented.

The Structure of the Education System

Early childhood education and development is provided outside the formal education system and is taken care of by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare. The Ministry has responsibility for overseeing the development of various aspects of early childhood development, care and education, as well as looking after the issues of orphans, children with disabilities and other vulnerable children. Early childhood education and development covers the period from birth to six years old. Communities, NGOs, churches and individuals run the majority of early childhood development centres. A National Early Childhood Development Policy was launched in 1996. The policy clearly spells out the responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the provision of early childhood education in Namibia. However, there are a number of private schools which offer early childhood education within their formal education system that are not included in the Education Management Information System statistics. These are usually very expensive and cannot be afforded by ordinary citizens.

Figure 8.1 Structure of the Education System in Namibia
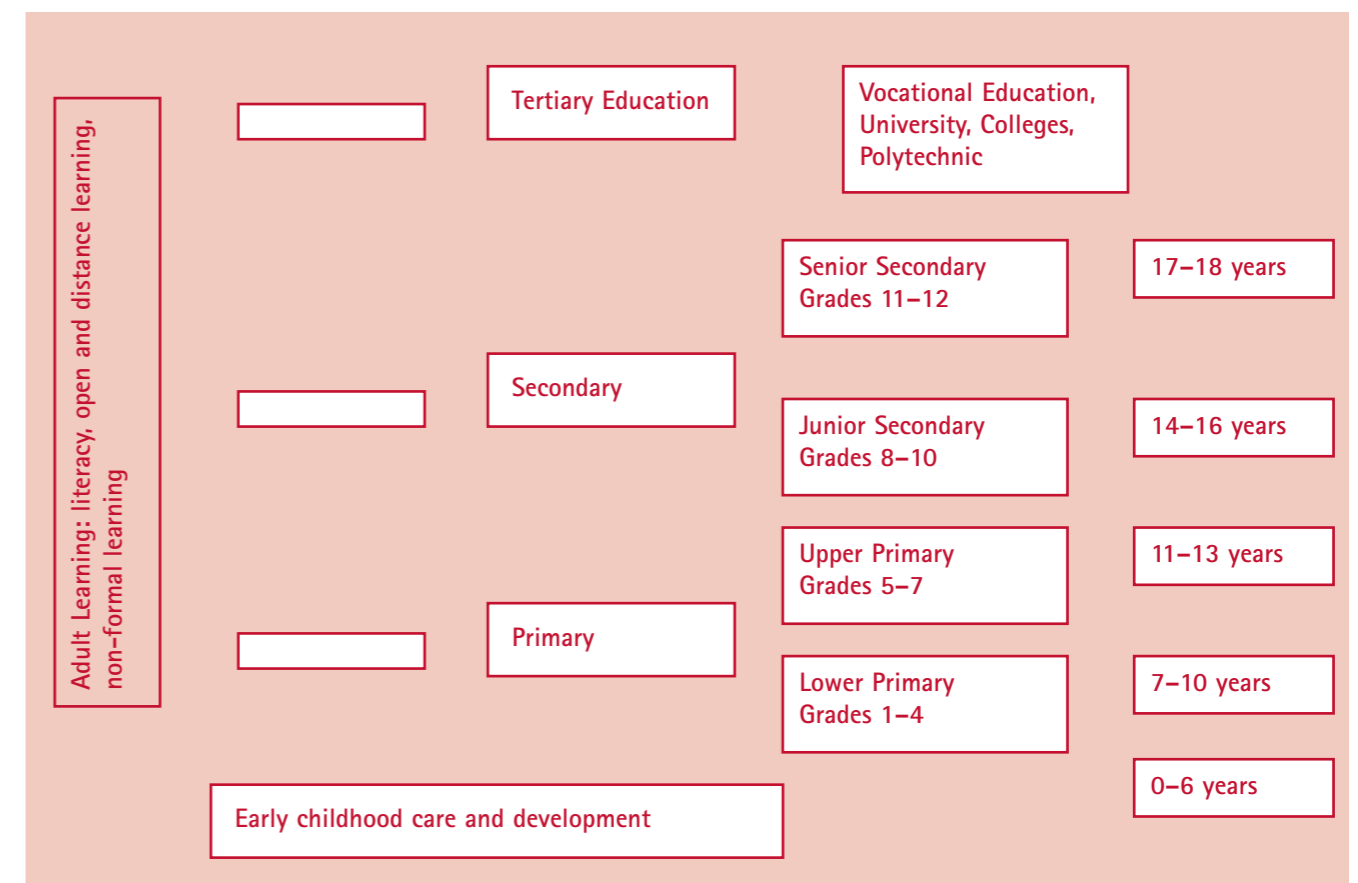
Attempts are being made to encourage increased male participation. Further programmes for an adult upper primary curriculum have been developed to consolidate the skills of the newly literate and to provide opportunities for them to extend their newly acquired competence.

The formal education system comprises of seven years of free compulsory primary education, three years of junior secondary education and two years of senior secondary education, from the age of six to 16 years old. It should be noted, however, that free education does not mean completely free. There are certain costs that may hinder children from attending school. In the Namibian context, even though parents are not forced to pay for children through contributions to school development funds, they must pay for school uniforms, food and transport. However, the policy states clearly that learners cannot be barred from attending school because they cannot afford to pay towards the school development fund. Mechanisms have been put in place to exempt those who cannot contribute towards the school fund or pay the prescribed hostel fees.

Formal education is divided into four phases: Lower Primary (Grades 1–4), Upper Primary (Grades 5–7), Junior Secondary (Grades 8–10) and Senior Secondary (Grades 11–12). At the end of the primary education cycle (Grade 7), learners have to sit a semi-external examination as a transition to junior secondary education. Learners at junior secondary education school level write the Junior Secondary Certificate Examinations, while senior secondary education learners write the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE), respectively, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge. It is important to note that substantial progress has been made towards the localisation of IGCSE/HIGCSE examinations, which will bring about a big reduction in examination costs.

Namibian youth and adults also have access to a range of non-formal, part-time and distance education programmes at both secondary and tertiary levels. The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) offers opportunities to learners at Junior Secondary (Grade 10) and Senior Secondary (Grade 12) levels under its programmes of alternative secondary education. In addition to this, the college offers pre-tertiary level programmes to learners through distance education. NAMCOL is currently the largest educational institution in Namibia with more than 27,000 students. Furthermore, the University of Namibia (Centre of External Studies) and the Polytechnic of Namibia (Centre of Open and Lifelong Learning) promote a range of tertiary level programmes to students through distance education methods. Namibian students, therefore, have access to a multitude of study opportunities outside the formal education system.

The National Literacy Programme is central to the reduction of the adult illiteracy rate. Policy is determined at MBESC head office, which is also responsible for curriculum development, the preparation of teaching and training materials, training and monitoring. Regional literacy officers facilitate implementation in the respective regions. Attempts are being made to encourage increased male participation. Further programmes for an adult upper primary curriculum have been developed to consolidate the skills of the newly literate and to provide opportunities for them to extend their newly acquired competence.

Other major policy issues in education

The Namibian Government places specific responsibilities on the ministries of education to ensure that children and adults with disabilities are integrated into mainstream education. The National Policy on Disability states:

The government shall ensure that children and youth with disabilities have the same right to education as children without disabilities.

In order to realise this right for all children with disabilities and learning difficulties, the MBESC is currently examining the *Policy on Inclusive Education* with a view to implementing it. At present the needs of children with disabilities and learning difficulties are met through special classes and special schools, and provision is limited due to the shortage of places. It is suspected that the educational needs of a significant number of children with disabilities and special learning needs are not being addressed. This is especially true for girls with special needs.

The language policy in education recommends the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grades 1–3. English is used as the medium of instruction in Grades 4–12. National languages are taught as subjects from Grade 4 onwards. The San languages are the only ones for which materials are not yet fully developed for use in schools in all grades.

Major programme elements in education

Programme elements in the formal education system in Namibia are manifested in the following goals: access, equity, quality, efficiency, lifelong learning and democracy.

The MBESC National Strategic Plan, 2001–2006

National Priority Area 1: Equitable Access

Education system goal: The Ministry is to provide equitable access to education, sport, arts and culture opportunities

- Develop a fair, transparent and equitable system for allocating all financial and human resources to the Ministry's education units by 2002

- Accommodate all learners in the primary school age group seeking admission to school and enable them to progress to and complete Grade 7 by the time they are 15 years old by 2006

- Expand access to secondary school for the target age group by 2006

- Introduce new and maintain existing programmes aimed at empowering Namibians of all ages to contribute to their own wellbeing and aimed at the artistic, cultural and economic development of Namibia by 2005

- Ensure that learners and school communities have access to, and use, modern information and communications technology and relevant sources of information by 2005

National Priority Area 2: Education Quality

Education system goal: All learners are to receive appropriate support enabling them to achieve knowledge, skills, values and competencies promoting self-development, responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive and meaningful life

- Ensure that all six year olds have sufficient skills to allow them to succeed in lower primary school by 2003

- Ensure that all learners completing Grades 4, 7, 10 and 12, respectively, have achieved basic competencies in the required subjects of the curriculum by 2005

The language policy in education recommends the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grades 1–3. English is used as the medium of instruction in Grades 4–12. National languages are taught as subjects from Grade 4 onwards. The San languages are the only ones for which materials are not yet fully developed for use in schools in all grades.

- Improve teaching and learning of English, mathematics, science and skills-related subjects at all levels, and improve the teaching and learning of entrepreneurial skills at secondary level by 2006

- Ensure that all learners with special needs receive quality education that meets their requirements by 2006

- Ensure that all learners with special interests, talents or potential have access to different areas of specialisation by 2005

- Ensure that all teaching and learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment by 2004

National Priority Area 3: Teacher Education and Support

Education system goal: The Ministry is to support the development of teacher education and provide continuous support for teachers to improve teaching and learning in schools

- Put an effective teacher demand and supply system in place by 2006

- Establish a planning and management system for teacher development by 2002

- Determine the minimum and maximum qualifications recognised for purposes of employment, salary determination and career progression by 2003

- Allow all teachers, teacher educators and education managers continuous access to opportunities for acquiring any additional knowledge and skills they need by 2003

- Ensure that all teachers demonstrate the understanding, knowledge, competencies and attitudes required of professionals in their field by 2003

National Priority Area 4: Physical Facilities

Education system goal: The Ministry is to provide and maintain an appropriate infrastructure and environment that supports teaching, learning and development of skills

- Provide and maintain the necessary physical facilities that create an environment conducive to learning by 2006

- Provide all schools with drinking water and electricity where the necessary infrastructure exists or will be constructed by 2006

- Equip all schools with school furniture by 2006

National Priority Area 5: Efficiency and Effectiveness

Education system goal: The Ministry is to be converted into a high-performance organisation, focused on results and service

- Ensure that school management is participatory and focused on learner achievement by 2004

- Ensure that school hostels are managed in a cost-effective manner by 2004

- Build and maintain all Ministry support systems to ensure that all member

units collaborate and perform at optimum levels by 2006

- Ensure that Ministry employees possess the required skills and competence to properly perform their duties and responsibilities by 2006

- Manage and use modern information technology to communicate and share information by 2006

National Priority Area 6: HIV/AIDS

Education system goal: The Ministry is to deal urgently and purposefully with the HIV/AIDS pandemic in and through the education sector in co-operation with other ministries and agencies

- Minimise the spread of HIV/AIDS and address the demographic and financial impact it has on the education sector

- Help and support those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS

National Priority Area 7: Lifelong Learning

Education system goal: Namibian out-of-school youth and adults – especially the disadvantaged and people with disabilities – will acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them to continuously improve the quality of their lives and their communities, and exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a free country

- Encourage the development of lifelong learning in Namibia through institutional and staff development by 2006

- Ensure that adequate, appropriate and relevant information resources are available to learners throughout the country by 2005

- Provide opportunities for adults to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to participate in socio-economic activities by 2006

- Ensure that learners in all education programmes progress between institutions with their prior knowledge and skills recognised by 2006

- Help parents become their children's first teacher and lay strong foundations for future learning by 2003

- Provide those who live with disabilities with access to lifelong learning by 2003

National Priority Area 8: Sport, Arts and Cultural Heritage

Education system goal: The Ministry is to help Namibians preserve and promote their cultural and spiritual heritage by encouraging them to engage in creative, artistic, cultural and physical activities to discover and develop individual talents, and to contribute to social and economic development as well as national unity

- Ensure that Namibian youth and adults are physically fit and able to participate in their sport of choice by 2005

- Create conditions and opportunities needed for Namibian athletes to compete for gold medals in the international arena by 2004

- Ensure that Namibian forms of artistic expression are identified and promoted – regionally, nationally and internationally – and that those with artistic talent and skill are recognised and their development similarly promoted by 2005

- Encourage Namibians from all cultural backgrounds to take part in nation building activities and show mutual respect and understanding for each other by 2006

- Establish the processes and networks required to develop Namibia's material and spiritual culture by 2005

- Establish and maintain cultural links beyond Namibia's borders in order to contribute towards human culture and international understanding by 2003

The National Priority Objectives and the EFA Goals

1 **EFA Goal I** Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

2 **EFA Goal II** Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

3 **EFA Goal III** Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

4 **EFA Goal IV** Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

5 **EFA Goal V** Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, focusing on ensuring that girls have full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

6 **EFA Goal VI** Improving every aspect of the quality of education and ensuring excellence so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Notes

1 Government of Namibia, *First National Development Plan*, Vol. 1, p. 329.
2 Ministry of Education and Culture, *Towards Education For All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training*, p. 2, 1993.
3 Government of Namibia, *Report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training*, Vol. 1, Windhoek, 1999. All quotations in this section are taken from this document.
4 MBESC: *Strategic Plan 2001–2006*, Windhoek, 2001.
5 MBESC, Ibid., p. 11.
6 UNESCO, FRESH Update.

9 Managing Diversity in an Integrated System of Educational Provision: Nomadic Education in Nigeria

Gidado Tahir and Nafisatu D. Muhammad

Introduction

In recent years the provision of education to disadvantaged groups, in the broadest sense, has been one of the major preoccupations of educators and policy-makers in developing nations. Unlike in Europe and to a certain extent the United States, where concern for the plight of disadvantaged social groups was the outcome of the so-called liberal consensus that brought about the birth of the welfare state after World War II, concern about disadvantaged groups in less developed countries is the result of a complex mix of national and international factors.

At the national level, developing countries have sought to harness the human resources within their territories so as to ensure that all social groups participate effectively in the development process. This commitment to capacity building has, in turn, led to the design and implementation of social and educational programmes that are intended to promote equality of educational opportunity, eradicate illiteracy, enhance access to education for all social groups and raise the level of participation of disadvantaged communities which, until now, have had little or no access to education. Raising the level of educational participation has been conceptualised in terms of setting up special educational programmes for disadvantaged groups such as girls, nomads and street children in developing countries, and putting in place compensatory programmes for ethnic minorities such as Blacks, Asians and traveller groups in the Western industrialised countries. In both cases, the underlying assumption is the same: the disadvantaged should be integrated into the mainstream.

At the international level, there has been deep concern on the part of agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP that in spite of the progress made in the expansion of education in the 1960s and 1970s, a significant proportion of the citizens of less developed countries do not benefit from existing educational services. Added to this is the disastrous effect of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) implemented by most developing countries on the provision of social services, particularly health and education. In most countries SAPs have led to serious reversals in the modest progress made in the equalisation of educational opportunities, and have further exacerbated the crisis in the education sector. Governments and international agencies have realised that more vigorous attempts have to be made to ensure that education for all becomes a reality, particularly for disadvantaged groups whose level of participation in education has been very low.

Scope of the paper

The major concerns of this paper are to:

- Briefly discuss the nomadic education programme in Nigeria, its underlying assumptions, goals and *modus operandi*, and the policy framework within which the programme was launched;

- Identify and discuss the management strategies that facilitated the modest achievements recorded so far, as well as the problems encountered; and

- Outline the valuable lessons learned in the implementation of the programme for nomadic education in Nigeria and its implications for the resolution of key issues raised at this conference which border on matters of policy, organisation and management, as well as roles and role relationships in the execution of a diverse and yet integrated programme of education for one of the hard-to-reach and acutely disadvantaged groups in Nigeria today.

Nomadic Education in Nigeria

Justification for Federal intervention

The establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) constituted an important attempt to promote equality of educational opportunity among Nigeria's migrant communities. It was consistent with the provisions of the *National Policy on Education* (1977, 1982 and 1998), which stipulated that every Nigerian would have access to education irrespective of social class, ethnicity, gender, region, religion or occupation. The NCNE is charged with responsibility for implementing the Nomadic Education Programme, the goals of which are to:

- Provide nomads with a relevant and functional basic education; and

- Improve the survival skills of nomadic communities by providing them with knowledge and skills that will enable them raise their productivity and levels of income, and also participate effectively in the nation's socio-economic and political affairs.

In order to attain the goals of the programme, the NCNE has focused on three key activities:

- The provision of primary education to children of nomadic pastoralists and migrant fishing communities;

- The provision of extension education to adults in nomadic pastoralist communities; and

- The establishment of linkages with state and local governments, national and international NGOs and donor agencies for collaboration and partnership in the implementation of the Nomadic Education Programme.

There are two major categories of nomads in Nigeria: pastoralists and artisan migrant fishermen. This paper focuses on the nomadic pastoralists. This is largely because this group presents more serious educational challenges than the migrant fishermen. The pastoralists are made up of the Fulbe or Fula (5.3 million), the Shuwa (1.01 million), the Koyam (32,000), the Badawi (20,000), the Buduma (10,000) and the Dark Buzzu (15,000). The Fulbe are found in 31 of the Federation's 36 states, while the other pastoralists are found mainly in the Borno plains and on the shores of Lake Chad.

Of the estimated population of nearly 10 million nomads in Nigeria, more than 3 million are children of school age. The participation of the nomads in existing formal and non-formal education programmes is abysmally low, with a literacy rate estimated to range between 0.2–1.5 per cent in 1995 (Tahir, 1998).

Major Constraints in Nigerian Nomads' Participation in Educational Provision

The major constraints in nomads' participation in formal and non-formal education are:

- Their constant migration in search of water and pasture;

- The centrality of child labour in their production system, making it extremely difficult for their children to participate in conventional formal schooling;

- The irrelevance of the school curriculum which is tailored to meet the needs of sedentary groups and ignores the educational needs of nomadic people;

- Their physical isolation, since they operate in inaccessible physical environments; and

- A land tenure system that makes it difficult for nomads to acquire land and settle in one place.

Nomadic education policy

It was clear that unless special educational provision was made for the nomads, they would have little or no access to formal or non-formal education. In accordance with the provisions of the National Policy on Education, which urges all three tiers of government to provide equal educational opportunities to all Nigerians, and in order to ensure that nomads have proper access to basic education, the federal government promulgated Decree 41 of 1989, which established the NCNE.

The formulation and implementation of nomadic education policy in Nigeria was informed by the following assumptions:

- Education, if properly planned and implemented, can be one of the most important forces for change;

- Education can be used to develop the intellectual capacities of nomads through the teaching of literacy, numeracy and vocational and social coping skills so that they can contribute more effectively to national development;

- The knowledge and skills acquired by nomads should be used to improve themselves and their communities;

- Education is the most potent force for integrating the nomads into the mainstream and will eventually enable them settle down in one place, i.e. to 'abandon' their migratory mode of existence.

The implementation of nomadic policy is supposed to be a collaborative enterprise among federal, state and local governments, on the one hand, and local communities, national and international NGOs and CBOs on the other. The roles and responsibilities of each of them are clearly spelt out in Decree 41 of 1989 and in the approved *Guidelines on the Operation of Nomadic Education Programme*

in Nigeria (NCNE, 1996). The nomadic education programme is therefore not the exclusive responsibility of the federal government. As will be shown later, one of the major challenges confronting the programme is the unwillingness of state and local government to fulfil their statutory roles in the provision of education to nomads.

Programme Implementation and Outcomes

School-based programme

The provision of primary education for the children of pastoralists is one of the major preoccupations of the NCNE. Much time and resources have been expended on the adaptation and production of appropriate curricula, based on the national curriculum, using the culture of the target group as a cultural filter, on the development of pupils' texts and the provision of instructional materials, and on faster means of mobility, such as bicycles and motorcycles for teachers and supervisors.

In 1990, there were 329 schools with 886 teachers; by 1999 the number of schools had risen to 1,369 and the number of teachers to 4,353. However, there has been a slight decline in teacher quality as the percentage of teachers with the minimum teaching qualification fell from 54.8 per cent in 1990 to 46.6 per cent in 1997 and 44.2 per cent in 1999 (NCNE, 1999; Tahir, Umar and Buti, 2000).

Girls like these constitute more than 40 per cent of students in nomadic schools in Nigeria

PICTURE: AMINA OSMAN

This is understandable considering the higher rate of increase in enrolment and the number of schools, which necessitated the recruitment of more teachers, many of whom do not possess the minimum teaching qualification.

Total enrolments in nomadic schools rose from 18,831 in 1990 to 92,510 in 1995, 163,361 in 1999 and 229,944 in 2002. Female enrolment increased from 5,068 in 1990 to 15,253 in 1993 to 65,837 in 1999. Girls now constitute more than 40.3 per cent of total enrolments in the nomadic schools. The transition rate into junior secondary schools has also increased from 45 per cent in 1992 to 53 per cent in 1998. The annual number of school-leavers trebled from 2,077 in 1994 to 7,632 in 1998 (NCNE, 1999). The total number of school-leavers during the period 1992–2002 stood at 40,417 (NCNE, 2002).

Non-formal education programme

The NCNE's capacity-building project, which started in 1996, has two important components:

1 Building and/or strengthening the capacities of adult nomadic pastoralists for self and community improvement; and

2 Mobilising nomadic pastoralists for the sustainability of the Nomadic Education Programme.

The project was initiated in response to the perceived likelihood that the federal government would discontinue the Nomadic Education Programme as a result of political and economic pressures. Politically, it is perceived by many as a special education programme which favours the Fulani ethnic group. In the face of dwindling resources and consequent budget cuts, nomadic education has become an easy target. It was also thought that unless the nomadic communities' production systems were strengthened and their incomes improved through the dissemination of relevant knowledge and skills, they would be less receptive to the programme and were unlikely to support it; hence the provision of *adult extension education.*

As mentioned above, one of the Commission's main activities is the provision of primary education to the children of nomadic pastoralists. However, given the NCNE's commitment to the improvement of the practical living conditions of its clientele, the provision of extension services to adults in nomadic pastoral communities has become an important area of concern. There are at least two benefits from this. The first is that the Nomadic Education Programme will become more acceptable to nomadic pastoralists, since the extension services provided are based on their needs, interests and immediate problems. Secondly, the effective provision of extension services will expand their intellectual horizons, improve their occupational skills and enable them to raise their productivity and income levels and contribute more meaningfully to national development (NCNE, 1999).

Even though the capacity-building project is fairly new, some modest achievements have been recorded. These include:

● The formation of 95 nomadic co-operative societies with links to micro-credit institutions so that they can benefit from loans and other grants;

● The treatment and vaccination of animals by collecting money to purchase drugs and employ veterinary assistants;

● The establishment of adult literacy classes for men and women;

... one of the major challenges confronting the programme is the unwillingness of state and local government to fulfil their statutory roles in the provision of education to nomads.

- The formation of radio listening groups in order to increase listenership of the Commission's sponsored radio programme *Don Makiyaya a Ruga* (*For the pastoralists in the homestead*) and also to attract a large audience for the interactive radio distance learning scheme for adults which was started on a pilot basis on 9 May 2000;

- An increase in awareness of and support for the Commission's activities by the nomads generally;

- The establishment of community schools which are built and managed by the nomads; and

- The formation of effective parent-teacher associations, which serve as an engine for effective school and literacy management and ownership.

However, a number of problems were encountered in the process of implementing the capacity-building project. They range from unsuitable radio transmission times, the unwillingness of some agencies to play their counterpart roles and under-funding, to the government's perception of the Commission's extension services programme as merely a secondary activity which should be self-financing.

Collaboration and partnership

In view of the Commission's limited institutional capacity and limited funds, it has attempted to create linkage relationships with sister parastatals, NGOs, CBOs, and national and international agencies with an interest in basic education. These include the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), now the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), the National Educational Technology Centre (NETC), the National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI), the National Commission for Mass Literacy and Non-formal Education (NMEC), AFRICARE, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the British Council, DFID and the World Bank.

As a result of these linkages, collaborative programming and delivery mechanisms have been put in place for the improvement of the Nomadic Education Programme. Some of the achievements recorded so far are:

- Joint literacy programmes with the support of AFRICARE, UNICEF and NMEC;

- Training by the NETC of 12 NCNE staff in radio production and scripting;

- The co-sponsorship of seminars, conferences and workshops with UNESCO-BREDA (Regional Bureau for Education in Africa), the British Council, UNICEF, NTI and NVRI;

- The co-sponsorship of a workshop with UNESCO and DFID on the development of curricula guides in English, mathematics, primary science and social studies;

- The training of 60 head teachers and supervisors and 100 teachers from nomadic schools in supervisory techniques and curriculum implementation, as well as pre-service training of would-be nomadic education teachers by DFID and the Federal Colleges of Education, Yola;

- Sponsorship by DFID of five staff from the Nomadic Education Centre, University of Maiduguri, and two staff each from the Federal College of Education, Yola and the NCNE for training in the UK;

- Sponsorship by UNFPA of a female member of staff from the NCNE for a nine-month diploma course in India;

- The Association for the Promotion of Livestock Development in the Sahel and Savannah Eastern Zone, located in Garoua, Cameroon, trained two senior officers and six extension agents of the NCNE and 12 nomadic pastoralists from Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba and Bauchi States under its Fodder Bank Development Programme;

- The NVRI, Vom has trained 144 secondary school leavers who come from a nomadic pastoral background who now serve in their communities as the NCNE's extension agents;

- The co-sponsorship with UNICEF Zone C and nine of the zone's state primary education boards of a train-the-trainers workshop for non-formal education, Arabic and Islamic teachers in nomadic primary schools;

- Twenty-two staff of the NCNE have benefited from a workshop on distance education jointly organised with UNESCO;

- The NCNE has also collaborated with UNICEF in organising a nationwide workshop for teenage mothers of nomadic pastoral background on: (a) exclusive breast-feeding; (b) introduction of complementary foods; and (c) the immunisation of children against child-killer diseases. More than 500,000 nomadic pastoralist teenage mothers have benefited from these workshops;

- The Commission has begun to draw from the World Bank Primary Education Project II credits worth nearly N250 million for the improvement and expansion of its Radio Distance Learning Programme;

- Collaboration between NCNE, the Taraba and Adamawa states' primary education boards and the Federal College of Education, Yola to continue the pre-service teacher training programme after the expiration of the three-year DFID intervention in this area.

Problems in Managing the Process

The Nomadic Education Programme faces serious problems that need to be tackled to facilitate the speedy attainment of its goals. These include the inadequate supply of teachers, insufficient supply of instructional materials, inadequate funding and a hostile political climate.

The supply and quality of teachers

The number of teachers in nomadic schools is grossly inadequate. This inadequacy is most glaring when it is viewed in the context of the poor quality of the teachers – in 1998 up to 54.4 per cent of them lacked the nationally prescribed minimum teaching qualification. Added to this is the indiscriminate transfer of teachers from nomadic to conventional schools without any replacement and the difficulty of retaining teachers posted to facilitate work in nomadic schools.

In order to enhance teacher quality, the Commission organises refresher courses for teachers on an annual basis. The courses are intended to raise their knowledge and update their teaching skills. In addition, the pre-service and in-service courses for the Nomadic Education Programme organised by some

Colleges of Education, notably the Federal College of Education, Yola, will in the long run enhance both teacher quality and quantity. This programme has a lot of possibilities for the future. Similarly, incentives such as the provision of motor-cycles and bicycles to teachers in order to improve teacher retention levels are being put in place. In March 1999, the National Council on Education directed state and local governments to stop the indiscriminate transfer of teachers from nomadic to conventional schools without replacement.

In the non-formal sector, volunteers, who are not readily available, are being engaged as instructors. Primary school teachers are sometimes employed on a part-time basis to provide tuition in the adult education centres. The extension agents who live amongst the nomads provide leadership and training in special-ised skills acquisition, but are in very short supply.

Instructional materials

There is a general lack of adequate instructional materials, particularly pupils' texts in the nomadic schools. The Commission has completed the development of pupils' texts for all levels of primary schooling and has produced 24,000 copies each of English language, mathematics, primary science, social studies, health education and handicrafts textbooks. These numbers fall far short of the total number of children in the schools who require textbooks; the same is true of the teachers' guides.

Other materials, such as exercise books and drawing books, are also in short supply, mainly because most state and local governments have been unwilling to provide them to the nomadic schools as required by law. Thus, only the NCNE provides instructional materials to most nomadic primary schools and it cannot adequately meet the need due to its weak revenue base.

In order to deal with the problem of the lack of specially developed pupils' texts, the nomadic schools now use the textbooks produced for conventional schools and the adult literacy primers designed for sedentary people, approved by the National Commission for Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education. To ensure that state and local governments carry out their responsibilities in the provision of instructional materials, the NCNE persuaded the National Council on Education in March 1999 to compel state governments to make special financial allocations to nomadic education in their annual budgets. However, this has not as yet been implemented.

Funding

The funds released to the Commission are very inadequate in relation to the range of tasks it is expected to accomplish. It receives less than 30 per cent of its budget request and has been forced to spread its meagre resources too thinly. To make matters worse, government does not wholly fund the NCNE's extension pro-grammes, leaving the Commission to look for alternative sources which more often than not are not readily available.

To overcome this problem, nomadic communities have been mobilised to make a material contribution to the implementation of the programme by setting up schools, building classrooms and providing teaching/learning materials. Some assistance has also been received from agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank.

Hostile political environment

As a result of the population explosion, land that is available for farming and grazing has shrunk by 33.2 per cent and 43.3 per cent respectively. This has given rise to a destructive competition for land, leading to violent clashes between farmers and nomadic pastoralists. These have sapped people's energies and diverted their attention from participating in educational programmes. In the absence of peace, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the NCNE to implement its programmes effectively. Paradoxically, these clashes have been exacerbated during the era of democratic civilian government in Nigeria and no serious attempts have been made to curb them. Many pastoralists have fled to safer areas in Cameroon, Central Africa and the Benin Republic.

Destructive competition for land leads to clashes between farmers and nomadic pastoralists
PICTURE: AMINA OSMAN

Nomadic education, like everything else, requires peace and order if it is to be effective. The incessant violent clashes have adversely affected the programme since nomadic adults and children find it difficult to settle down peacefully and participate in it. Such clashes usually lead to the destruction of teaching/learning facilities and the forced migration of the nomads, thus disrupting programme delivery at least temporarily and possibly for many years to come.

It should be noted that this is a structural problem and not an educational one. The NCNE lacks the capacity to solve it and the law which established it does not expect it to do so. Perhaps the only viable solution to this intractable problem is good governance which ensures fairness, justice and equity for Nigeria's nomadic populations.

To deal with this problem at an institutional level, the Commission uses radio and television to sensitise the nomads and their sedentary neighbours on the need for peaceful coexistence. It has also set up several peace committees to assist in conflict resolution and has requested community leaders to help it find a durable solution to the problem.

Valuable Lessons

Nomadic education is now an important component of the educational systems of several African countries. It is therefore pertinent to identify the lessons that

The detailed analysis of the problems, educational needs and culture of the nomads prior to the development of curricular and delivery systems was ... the most important guarantor of success ...

can be drawn from Nigeria's experiences for the benefit of other African countries that have similar programmes. Some of the lessons are:

- The importance of a clear diagnosis of the problems, culture and educational needs of the target group;

- The need for continuous mobilisation and sensitisation of the clientele;

- The provision of opportunities for participating in decision-making processes by all stakeholders;

- Political will and institution building;

- Linking schooling to non-formal education;

- Policy reform.

Diagnostic study of the target group

The detailed analysis of the problems, educational needs and culture of the nomads prior to the development of curricular and delivery systems was perhaps the most important guarantor of success in the Nigerian case. The various studies of the nomads that were undertaken at the planning stages of the nomadic education programme facilitated not only the identification of their needs and problems but, more importantly, *the cultural filters to be used in developing functional and relevant curricula and educational delivery systems that suit the nomads' production rhythms and time budgets*. Although the importance of analysing the target groups' needs and problems is recognised in the literature, it has not been vigorously undertaken in most educational programmes, and this has led to the development of well-intentioned but irrelevant programmes. The educational programmes implemented for nomads in Nigeria by some state governments in the late 1970s and early 1980s constitute a good example of programmes that underestimated the importance of a detailed analysis of the clientele for effective programme implementation.

Mobilisation and sensitisation

Continuous mobilisation and sensitisation of the target group enabled the Commission to *overcome initial prejudices and scepticism* about the programme and engendered the *development of continuous support* for it among the nomads. It also facilitated the achievement of programme goals and convinced the nomads to provide material support for the sustainability and institutionalisation of the programme. Thus, countries contemplating the setting up of a similar programme need to reckon with initial resistance from the target group and will have to set up mechanisms for the continuous mobilisation and sensitisation of the clientele in order to generate sufficient support and acceptability for the programme and enhance its sustainability.

Opportunities for participating in decision-making

The achievements recorded in the Nigerian case were not unconnected with the concrete steps that were taken to involve stakeholders in programme design and execution. The Nigerian experience shows, therefore, that given the number of agencies involved in the implementation of the nomadic education programme,

there must be a decentralised decision-making process that not only involves the stakeholders in the design and implementation of the programme, but also provides opportunities for effective participation in decision making. Once goals and objectives have been identified, the various agencies implementing the programme should be granted a reasonable degree of autonomy to enable them carry out the tasks assigned to them effectively.

Political and institution building

It should be noted that a critical factor in achieving the breakthroughs recorded so far is the existence of *adequate political will on the part of government*. This is reflected in the enunciation of the national nomadic education policy and the establishment of a specialised agency, the NCNE, to implement the policy. This singular act goes a long way to broaden access to basic education and thus promote educational equity and justice as stipulated in the National Policy on Education.

Schooling – the non-formal education link

At the initial stage of implementing the programme, the NCNE concentrated its efforts on providing primary education for the children of the nomads. It soon became obvious that *adults also must be incorporated* as beneficiaries of the programme. Consequently, adult literacy programmes for men and women were introduced. This had a multiplier effect in supporting formal schooling. Furthermore, extension programmes specifically focusing on livestock improvement and provision of health facilities for both animals and humans added a considerable value not only to the educational attainment of children, youths and adults, but also to overall poverty eradication among nomadic pastoralists.

Policy reform

Five months after the advent of a new democratic dispensation in Nigeria in May 1999, a new policy measure was enunciated by the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. This was the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, which is an ambitious educational reform programme aimed at eradicating illiteracy, ignorance and poverty in order to accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration. Although this reform measure predates the Dakar Framework of Action, it captures its essence.

This policy reform is firmly rooted in the constitution of the Federal Republic with the passage of the UBE Bill into law on 7 May 2003 in the National Assembly. This Act recognises the important role of the NCNE, especially in actualising pertinent EFA goals that affect the disadvantaged segments of the Nigerian population. Consequently, it has been given pride of place in the Governing Board of the Universal Basic Education Commission, as well as 5 per cent of the 10 per cent consolidated revenue funds of the federal government meant for implementing the UBE programme, in addition to its normal annual subvention from government. This important Act will go a long way to increase the visibility of the NCNE and its programmes, to improve its financial position with a view to consolidating the gains achieved so far and to enable it to venture into new areas that can bring about a total transformation in the life of Nigerian nomads.

... a critical factor ... is the existence of adequate political will on the part of government ... reflected on ... the national nomadic education policy and the establishment of a specialised agency.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to present the case for an educational provision whose target population is varied and whose programmes are diverse. This situation gives rise to the introduction of certain policy measures and sound educational management strategies to ensure unfettered access to quality basic education comparable to that obtained in the so-called mainstream system, not only for the children of nomads, but for nomad youths and adults regardless of gender. Those educated in the non-formal system, especially the youth, have the opportunity to move to the formal stream if the need arises, so long as they have fulfilled certain basic requirements. However, if they have no need to do this, they may be content with the post-literacy social, political and economic skills acquired in non-formal education settings which are necessary for survival in contemporary Nigeria.

The NCNE implements and co-ordinates the various programmes provided by other government authorities at local and state levels, as well as by CBOs and NGOs. Collaboration and partnership are the key ingredients in managing this diverse system. The overall responsibility for superintending the programme lies with the federal Ministry of Education, which issues policy guidelines and directions, and sanctions the activities of other providers through its inspectorate mechanisms. Other ministries provide technical support and expertise in programme design and execution. These are the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Women Affairs and Youth Development, and Internal Affairs. Under the law establishing the NCNE, the ministries are members of its governing board and have considerable influence on matters of policy and management of nomadic education nationwide.

It must be acknowledged that NGOs and CBOs play an important role in programme implementation. The fact that they are internally weak and generally lacking in focus, and therefore unable to run the programme, leaves much to be desired. Consequently, government and the NCNE, together with its state and local government counterparts, will continue to be the major providers of this form of education for some time to come. Some NGOs, such as Pastoral Resolve, are viable because of their strong leadership and ability to attract funds. However, their areas of coverage are limited. Consequently, government should continue to be involved not only in implementing the programme, but also on issues of qualification and accreditation. We should perceive this initial period of development as a learning one for the NGOs and CBOs. By the time they are fully institutionalised and empowered, the role of government will be confined to monitoring, quality control and certification.

In the areas of teacher training and curriculum development, some attempts are being made by the NCNE to fashion a special programme of training for teachers with the co-operation of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and some selected colleges of education. A new training curriculum on nomadic education has been approved and is in use in the colleges for pre-service teacher training, while the NCNE organises refresher courses for serving teachers on an annual basis. This is at the formal level. In the case of the extension programmes, the Veterinary Training Institute at Vom, Plateau State, provides pre-service training, while the NCNE, through its annual workshop for extension workers, organises refresher courses for this group of front-line workers.

The Commission solicits the services of experts in the relevant ministries and development agencies in running short courses and workshops for nomads in the areas of reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, new techniques in animal husbandry, and political, social and economic skills. In the area of literacy training, the Commission has to make do with the existing teachers in the formal schools and only occasionally recruits trained adult literacy instructors who organise and teach literacy courses to the nomads. This is a major area of deficiency which needs to be addressed and which calls for closer collaboration between the NCNE and the National Commission for Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in matters of in-service adult literacy instructors.

In the area of the curriculum, the NCNE merely adopts the existing school and basic and post-basic literacy courses developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and NMEC, which have been approved by the National Council on Education. This is essential if the nomads are to have access to education comparable to that available to sedentary communities. However, the process of adaptation or development, as well as the production of materials and their eventual distribution, is a long and tortuous one, demanding considerable expertise and funding. Nevertheless, this is fundamental and unavoidable and is perhaps the only way that the nomads can see themselves as partners in learning transactions in which their world view, lifestyle and occupational systems are incorporated into the curricula, teaching/learning modules and textual materials. On the contrary, in the purely extension courses, there is no tailor-made curriculum for them. However, the NCNE and other relevant agencies of government, and/or NGOs, CBOs and development partners can collaborate with a view to developing training module(s) in any specific area(s) of concern and interest to the nomads. This process need not take too long nor does it require a heavy financial commitment. Moreover, the process has in-built quality assurance procedures which will ensure a minimum standard of learning and achievement.

From this account, it is very obvious that managing diversity in an integrated system, as exemplified by the nomadic education programme in Nigeria and the agency created to organise, manage and coordinate it, is a complex one. This complexity is the result of the challenge of aligning the various components of the programme, namely the design of appropriate curricula and instructional materials, and training the right calibre of teachers and instructors so that they are appropriate to the specific situation of the target beneficiaries. The programme must also meet the need to identify viable strategies that will, in the final analysis, achieve integration. This demands a strong and accountable leadership, sustained political will and support, and effective partnership and understanding.

[managing diversity] ... *demands a strong and accountable leadership, sustained political will and support, and effective partnership and understanding.*

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10 Adult Education and Women's Literacy in Senegal

Binta Rassouloula Aw Sall

Introduction

In 1983, the Government of Senegal formulated a literacy policy and a five-year action plan intended to reduce the illiteracy rate by 5 per cent per year by redressing the disparities between sexes, ages and urban and rural areas, improving the quality of supply and promoting a literate environment to sustain and develop knowledge once it had been acquired.

This extensive programme was set up with government funding and the support of financial partners such as the World Bank, CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), together with complementary programmes organised by other agencies.

Within this action plan, the Literacy Project Prioritising Women (LPPW), funded by the World Bank, developed two distinct components: 'functional literacy' and 'post-literacy'. The objectives of the project were:

- To make 135,000 people between the ages of 15 to 39 literate, 75 per cent of whom would be women, in five regions of Senegal;

- To experiment with and popularise qualitative approaches better adapted to the requirements of the beneficiaries;

- To strengthen the Ministry's monitoring capacity.

LPPW was evaluated in 2002 and the lessons learnt from this project and from others were used to improve the literacy policy that Senegal implemented as part of its ten-year Plan for Education and Training (PDEF) which was intended to correct the weaknesses and constraints identified.

Problems identified in the quality of literacy programmes

Despite the efforts made to strengthen capacities, the implementation of literacy programmes has run into serious difficulties, mostly related to:

1 The inadequacy of the link between training programmes and people's real needs and concerns. This inability to ensure the functionality of the programmes is partly due to weaknesses at the levels of design, implementation and instrumentation, which resulted in

– a decline in motivation, with falling attendances and poor participation of beneficiaries in the learning activities and in the management of the centres;

– weak reinvestment of the learned skills and therefore poor impact of the training on the environment;

– no sustainability of the activities and no possibility of self-reliance for the beneficiaries.

2 The fact that links were only rarely established between training and real development, and therefore the recurrent question asked by newly literate people was 'Now we can read, write and calculate. What next?'

Addressing these different obstacles to the linkage between literacy, poverty reduction and efficacy, LPPW designed a new approach, the Adult Education Integrated Programme (AEIP).

What is the integrated approach?

The AEIP is intended to strengthen the capacities of the learners and of their organisations.

This capacity building is part of a dual framework consisting of the poverty reduction strategy and implementation of the programme booklet, designed with a view to renewing the basic education curriculum.

How the AEIP participates in the poverty reduction strategy

The programme participates by:

- Particularly targeting women in the poorest regions in order to redress disparities;
- Strengthening technical capacities for wealth creation;
- Supporting the setting up and improvement of organisations;
- Assisting in the search for technical, material and financial resources to improve incomes;
- Supporting sustainability, especially in terms of competent human resources (leaders, relay-persons), facilities to guarantee lifelong education (reading and training centres) and relationships with the environment, development management, supporting structures and the world of finance.

How the AEIP helps to test the NFE curriculum

The AEIP is a fertile field for carrying out the testing of the new basic education curriculum by:

- Setting up the basic learning competencies (writing, reading, mathematics in real situations);
- Developing life skills (civic life, environment, health, hygiene, etc.);
- Implementing the 'entrepreneurial' component of the literacy programme booklet which ensures both the building of technical competencies related to income-generating activities for the learners and follow-up of the effective use of the techniques learnt in real situations.

Implementation of the AEIP

The AEIP integrates the initial literacy programme and the post-literacy programme. It is a new approach in which post-literacy is taken on board before and during all the training activities in an integrated way. So the AEIP is built on an important device for sustainability, made up of several areas on which it is necessary to push simultaneously to obtain the desired results.

'Now we can read, write and calculate, what next?'

These different elements are:

- Strengthening the beneficiaries' organisational capacities (management of the organisation, training of the leaders, training of the relay-persons);
- Creation of a literate environment (management of the library, cultural activities, communication for a change of behaviour);
- Connection to administrative, associative and financial networks;
- Technical training to carry out and manage income-generating activities;
- Setting up a reading and training centre for the whole community.

The programme includes:

- Organisational support for the recipient structure;
- Connection of that structure to administrative and financial networks;
- Development of a literate environment.

These activities are interconnected and constitute production-centred learning units. Thus, starting from competencies to be developed for income-generating activities there is a need to:
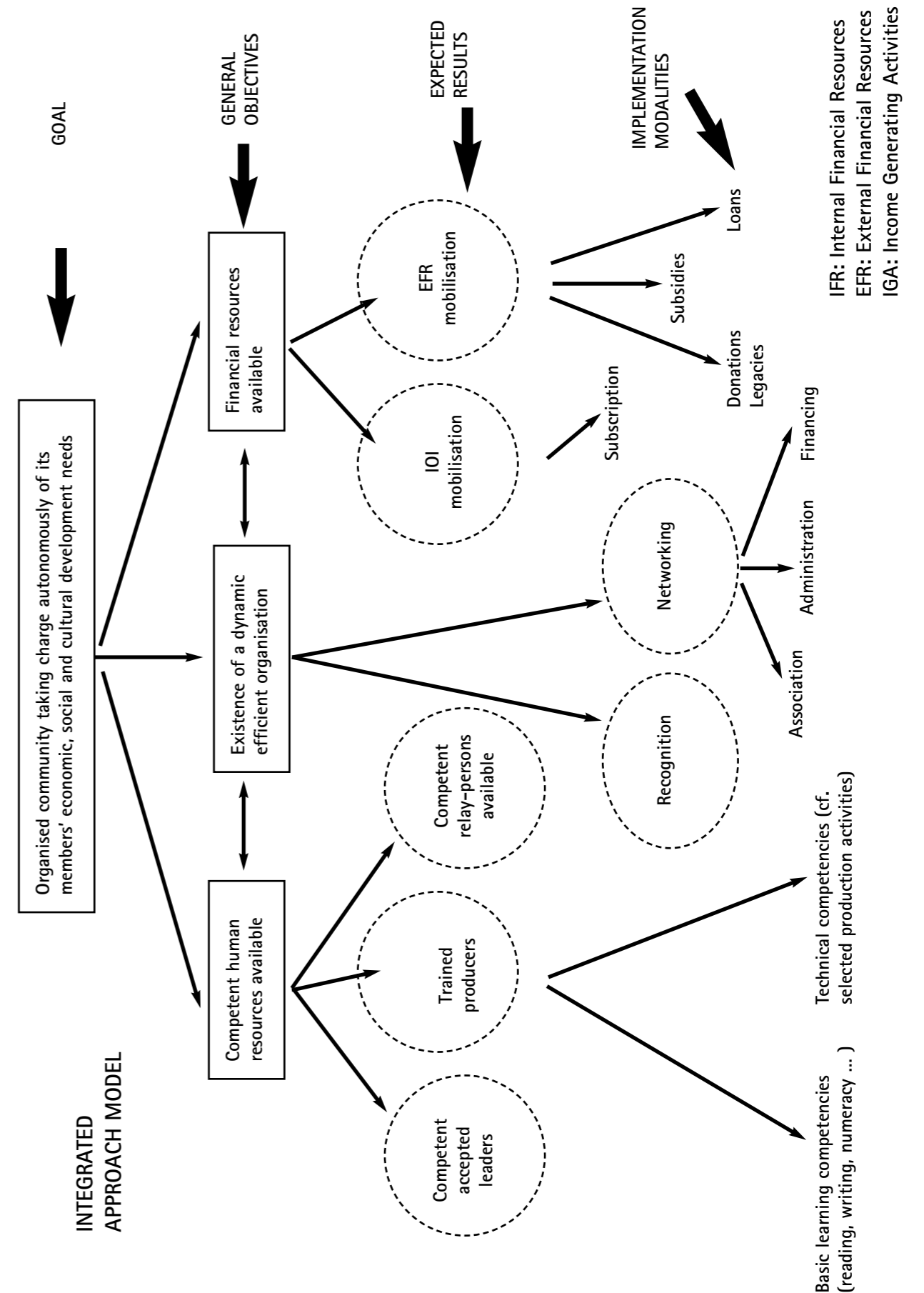
- Determine the tasks to be carried out in the fields of organisation, literate environment and connection to networks and production, taking into consideration the constraints of local development plans;
- Define the capacities to be built for each task;
- Identify training needs and content (instrumental and technical) and corresponding support needs, taking into account the participants' experience and their environment;
- Build learning units by regrouping capacities and competencies common to all the fields of intervention.

With adequate timetabling of these learning units, true integration can be achieved, thus ensuring simultaneous action on the different areas.

This integrated planning exercise is done for each programme site, allowing a genuinely customised training.

Table 10.1 The AEIP's Expected Results and Indicators

Fields	Results	Indicators
1. Organisation	The community has a functional organisation, officially recognised, belonging to a network and involved in the development activities of the Reading and Training Centre (RTC).	1.1 The organisation has a legal existence; 1.2 The organisation is structured (with a bureau and structures in accordance with the articles); 1.3 An adapted action plan integrating the activities of the RTC is designed and implemented; 1.4 The organisation has a savings/bank account; 1.5 The organisation belongs to an associative network, etc.
2. Training	The RTC has sufficient competent human resources able to efficiently implement the group's activities and the local development plan	2.1 30 participants in the programme – can read and write in their language – use the writing medium in their daily activities – keep elementary management books – apply the techniques learnt in their activities, etc.; 2.2 Members of the organisation Bureau (at least five members) – correctly identify the different missions of the Bureau – keep the group's documents up to date (minutes, invitations) – chair meetings properly – plan and follow-up their activities; 2.3 At least two relay-persons – can read and write in their language – apply social mobilisation techniques – support the group's work.
3. Improvement of incomes (IOI)	The application at a large scale of the techniques learnt in IOI has significantly improved the financial resources of the organisation and the incomes of its individual members	3.1 The organisation has, at least, doubled its investment capital; 3.2 Income generating activities are diversified; 3.3 Products of IOI are effectively commercialised in other 3.2 Income generating activities are diversified localities; 3.4 Credit is available for each member to run profitable individual activities; 3.5 A part of the benefits generated by the IOI is used for community development activities.
4. Sustainability	The project site has a permanent functional education centre	4.1 The RTC is built in long-lasting materials; 4.2 The RTC is well equipped with – storage units – enough chairs, tables and mats – audio-visual material (recorders, TV set) – reading boards; 4.3 There are varied books and newspapers properly kept; 4.4 Written products of the learners are classified; 4.5 The library's management tools are well kept; 4.6 The number of books in national language increases; 4.7 An animation program is executed by the relay-persons; 4.8 Each training activity of the RTC is also attended by indirect target-people (other members of the community: leaders, family); 4.9 Books and newspapers are read by the participants and the indirect target-people (lending system); 4.10 There is an operational RTC management committee; 4.11 The RTC belongs to a book distribution network; 4.12 Training activities are financed by the resources generated by the RTC.

INTEGRATED APPROACH MODEL

GOAL

Organised community taking charge autonomously of its members' economic, social and cultural development needs

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Financial resources available

Existence of a dynamic efficient organisation

Competent human resources available

EXPECTED RESULTS

EFR mobilisation

IOI mobilisation

Networking

Recognition

Competent relay-persons available

Trained producers

Competent accepted leaders

IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

Loans

Subsidies

Subscription

Donations Legacies

Financing

Administration

Association

Technical competencies (cf. selected production activities)

Basic learning competencies (reading, writing, numeracy …)

IFR: Internal Financial Resources
EFR: External Financial Resources
IGA: Income Generating Activities

AEIP Outcomes, 2000–2003

AEIP was piloted in 2000–2003 with the following results:

1 Modelling the approach

From the results of the action research, a model of the approach was designed and was used to extend the programme.

- 93,000 learners, 85 per cent of whom were women, participated in the programme;

- 185 operators were financed for the duration of the AEIP;

- A methodological guide was written;

- Booklets for animators and supervisors were edited;

- New monitoring and assessment instruments were designed.

2 A good mastery of the basic learning competencies

- A clear improvement in the mastery of the basic learning competencies was observed.

Seventy-five per cent of the participants can now read, write and calculate in the language of instruction.

Participants used writing to communicate, especially to record data in the check-in and check-out books and in the account-book.

3 Better management of the income-generating activities

- Eighty per cent of the participants applied basic rules of management;

- Sixty-five per cent of the participants were involved in the production and commercialisation of IGA products;

- At the collective level, incomes have improved and the capital that was initially invested has tripled.

4 A good connection to networks

- Eighty per cent of the beneficiary organisations have a legal existence and are connected to the various networks. For example, groups advised by the FEERE operator in Kolda were able to get a 7 million franc loan from a savings fund thanks to networking. Regional networks were created and associations federated to set up a savings mutual fund and a health friendly society which managed to obtain a 4.7 million franc loan.

5 Creation of a literate environment

- Almost all the Reading and Training Centres have libraries with textbooks and newspapers for those who are directly and indirectly targeted;

- The participants have produced written records such as minutes of meetings, reports or simple notes classified in a filing system;

- Training sessions on topics related to health, prevention and the management of the environment are held, and as a result participants often serve as relay-

persons for vaccination and reforestation campaigns organised by the other sectors;

- Road signs and management books of the mutual aid association have been produced in the national language;

- There are more and more new newspapers (for example *Jooko-Jokondiral* of EESL in Yeumbeul), labels on packaging and technical notes on manufactures (for example GPF of Sébikotane, GROCEF-Rufisque), all in local languages.

6 Existence of functioning organisations

- Eighty-five per cent of the beneficiary organisations are structured and have functional management committees;

- Their bureaux meet regularly.

Thanks to the good organisation of the management committee a mutual health and credit aid association has been set up.

In spite of these achievements, there are still deficiencies in the basic learning competencies (reading and writing) and in the acquisition of technical skills (mastery of the management tools). Indeed, 25–30 per cent of the participants feel that these skills are difficult to master. These weaknesses are often due to the classical literacy method used by the Reading and Training Centre animators, which is not adapted to the psychology of adults.

1 The major constraint identified concerning training relates to the profile of the personnel in charge of teaching who are sometimes unqualified.

2 The staff do not always receive the training required for the programme, and the qualified resource persons are rarely involved in advising them.

3 Follow-up is also irregular. The reason given for this is the inadequacy of transport to the places where the project is being implemented.

Observations made in the field suggest that the following conditions must be fulfilled to implement the AEIP successfully.

Conditions for the implementation of the AEIP

As the AEIP is a development programme, the following principles must be observed in its implementation.

Commitment

The implementation of the programme must be part of a local development plan where the economic, social and political objectives for the region are defined. Actions must be supported by human resource training and must have a functional character.

Community participation

The programme's objectives must correspond with the interests of the community, and the strategies must involve the target groups in defining the programme's content, level of competencies, learning methods and general conditions of implementation.

Co-ordination

The administrative tasks specific to implementation involve joint action by different actors – institutions, organisations, resource persons, etc. These must be co-ordinated so as to ensure the sharing of responsibilities and tasks, communication and evaluation at local level.

Mobilisation

Mobilisation consists in preparing the teaching programmes and materials, and in setting up an information service. To achieve this, it is necessary to train personnel who will be in charge within the organisation.

In conclusion, certain conditions must be respected before and during implementation of the AEIP.

- *Prior to implementation:* training needs must be correctly defined, and the various components of the training must be articulated, integrated and functionally linked with the practical activities of the learners.

- *During implementation:* the use of resource persons, the use of well-trained, competent, properly advised field personnel, regular and effective follow-up, good motivation of the target group, a good level of organisation and mobilising community dynamics ensure the optimum conditions of sustainability for the activities and self-reliance of the beneficiaries and their organisations.

11 Moving Beyond the Classroom: Expanding Learning Opportunities for Marginalised Populations in Ethiopia and Tanzania

Eustella Peter Bhalalusesa

Introduction

I have pleasure in sharing with you the findings of two studies on non-formal education that were undertaken by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)[1] using national teams in Ethiopia and Tanzania. The studies mark another step forward in FAWE's attempts to document the situation of girls in education and to develop and advocate for policy options to improve girls' access to education and their educational achievement. They were undertaken with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). This paper is made up of five sections. The first section sets out briefly the background to the FAWE-NFE research project and explains how it was conceptualised. This is followed by a situational analysis of the status of basic education in Ethiopia and Tanzania with emphasis on the education of girls and women. The third section covers the methodology used to carry out the research project and the potential benefits and limitations of using this methodology. The fourth section presents the main findings of the study, with particular focus on quality and management issues of the NFE system. This provides the foundation for the last section which draws conclusions and makes recommendations on how to improve policy and practice.

Basic Education: The Global and National Contexts

The global context

The decision to provide opportunities for basic education for all in developing countries is based on the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948. Article 26 of the Declaration stated that education is a basic human right and that it should be free, at least in the basic and elementary stages (United Nations, 1949). From a human rights perspective, basic education, apart from being a human right, was also considered as an indispensable means of realising other human rights. Education is the key which enables people to fully enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and freedom of expression and to have a full understanding of the rights and duties of modern life. It is also arguable that education forms the basis for individual dignity and self-respect. It helps human beings to unlock their talents, realise their abilities and develop a sense of moral and social responsibility.

Education is the key which enables people to fully enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and freedom of expression and to have a full understanding of the rights and duties of modern life. It ... helps human beings to unlock their talents, realise their abilities and develop a sense of moral and social responsibility.

Voting in Sierra Leone – education helps people play their full part in society

Many developing countries ratified the declaration and adopted educational policies in line with international concepts and recommendations on Universal Primary Education and Education for All.

Many of these international recommendations recognised the disadvantaged situation of girls and women and the need to pay particular attention to their education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), for example, recommended universal access to primary education, with particular emphasis on girls, as a goal for development in the 1990s. This recommendation was further underlined by the World Conference on EFA held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The conference emphasised that the top priority was to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for girls. In the same year, the World Summit for Children (1990) stressed that efforts for the improvement of women's status and their role in development must begin with the girl-child. This was further reiterated at the sixth conference of Ministers of Education and those responsible for economic planning in African member states in 1991. The conference underlined the need for special consideration to be given to school-age children and vulnerable groups, especially girls and women.

The Pan-African Conference on the Education of Girls (1993) also stressed the need to make the education of girls a top priority in development programmes. This need was clearly spelt out in the Ouagadougou Declaration, together with the role of African governments, bilateral and international agencies, and NGOs in implementing the Declaration. The Organisation for African Unity in particular was urged to take affirmative action towards reducing the disparity in education between girls and boys with a view to eliminating disparities by the year 2000.

The mid-decade meeting convened in Paris in June 1996 to review progress towards EFA should also be mentioned. The meeting noted that the right to education for girls and women, especially those from the least developed countries, was still a far-off dream. It stressed that more effort was needed to improve basic educational opportunities for girls and women.

The World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000, culminated in the adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action, which embodies a revitalised collective commitment to achieve EFA by 2015. The Dakar meeting emphasised the need for well-directed determined action to ensure the fulfilment in practice of the commitment made, not only in Dakar, but in a series of international meetings in the 1990s, as well as through the Jomtien Declaration, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the CRC. The Dakar Framework was a call to action.

Despite these initiatives, more than 125 million children of primary school age are still out of school, 60 per cent of whom are girls (World Education Forum, 2000). In addition, approximately 880 million adults are illiterate, most of them women. Empirical studies have revealed that in countries and regions in which abject poverty, debt and poor health are endemic, it is girls' educational opportunities that suffer from stringency-restricted policy-making. In turn, as households face difficult economic circumstances, boys' educational chances are prioritised. This situation is now compounded by the scourge of HIV/AIDS, the prevalence of armed conflict, entrenched cultural practices that discriminate against girls and hostile school environments. These are some of the factors that have contributed to an absolute decline in the number of girls enrolling in schools, completing their studies and performing well (FAWE, 2000).

According to Oxfam (n.d), in the absence of a concerted global strategy for achieving UPE, millions of children, especially girls, will continue to be denied the right to education. Sub-Saharan Africa will, therefore, require particular attention if EFA, and especially education for girls and women in marginalised populations, is to be improved.

The situation in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the most populous nations in Africa, with an estimated population of 63.5 million (Woldegerima et al., 2002). It is one of the poorest countries in the world. About 85 per cent of the population live in the rural areas and subsistence agriculture is the mainstay of the economy.

Ethiopia committed itself to the provision of modern education in 1908. More recently, ambitious initiatives have been taken to expand basic education opportunities for all. These include the introduction of the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (EETP) in 1994, which stressed the need to expand basic education so that it reached all school-age populations, including girls and other disadvantaged groups. The 1997 Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) outlined strategies and mechanisms to achieve basic education for all by 2015.

According to the country's 1999/2001education statistics, there were about 12.6 million primary school-age children (aged 7–14 years) of whom 6,426,503 (51%) were enrolled in primary schools. The gross enrolment ratio at primary school level was 51 per cent and the GER by sex was 40.7 per cent for girls and 60.9 per cent for boys. A large number of school-age children (47%) are out of school, the majority of whom are girls. The drop-out rate for girls is higher than that for boys. Girls drop out of school for various reasons, including lack of money, household demand for child labour, early marriage and lack of support from parents.

Because of Ethiopia's rapid population growth, the current formal education system lacks the capacity to serve fully the school-age cohort, especially girls. If the educational delivery system continues as it is now, Education for All will not be realised. This is a very serious challenge to the Ethiopian government and to the NGOs and private organisations that are involved in the development of the country's human resources. It is quite clear that the formal schooling system alone cannot cope up with the growing demand for education and provide a solution to the problems described above. One of the possibilities would be to exploit the potential of the non-formal system to address the educational needs of those who are not served by the formal school system, especially women, girls and the marginalised. This has been emphasised by the ESDP. After reviewing performance in the previous four years, the ESDP placed special emphasis on NFE as a means of promoting basic education in the years 2000/2001 to 2004/2005.

The situation in Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa, bordering Kenya and Uganda in the north, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique in the south and the Indian Ocean in the east. The country has a total area of 945,087 sq km and a population of about 32.3 million people (2000 estimates). Like Ethiopia, Tanzania is mainly agricultural, especially subsistence farming. According to the UNDP *Human Development Report 2000*, Tanzania is also one of the world's poorest countries, with over 50 percent of the population living below the poverty line.

[In Ethiopia] ... the formal schooling system alone cannot cope up with the growing demand for education ... One of the possibilities would be to exploit the potential of the non-formal system to address the educational needs of those who are not served by the formal school system ...

[In Tanzania] a high proportion of children drop out before reaching Standard 4, which is the minimum necessary stage for acquiring literacy skills, and thus swell the ranks of the illiterate population.

At independence in 1961 the government inherited an economically poor and illiterate society: about 85 per cent of the population (80 per cent of men and 89 per cent of women) were illiterate. The school system was designed to meet the labour needs of the colonial government. Primary school enrolment was less than 30 per cent of the school age population (Kamwela, 1986).

Immediately after independence, the government passed the Education Act of 1962 to abolish all forms of discrimination in the provision of education. In 1974, access to primary education was made universal in order to expand basic educational opportunities for all school-age children. This move was reinforced by the Education Act No. 25 of 1978 which made primary school enrolment and attendance compulsory for all children of primary school age. A similar effort was made to expand opportunities for basic adult education.

Despite the government's commitment to UPE and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the goal of equal access to free and compulsory primary education has not been realised. Currently, more than 3 million school-age children do not attend school, most of them girls, especially those from marginalised populations and poor families, orphans, the disabled, refugees, street children, hard-to-reach communities and nomads (UNICEF, 1998).

This situation has been exacerbated by late enrolment of children in school. Although the 1978 Education Act (amended in 1995) stipulates that all children should be enrolled in school when they are seven years old, in practice until 2002, when the new enrolment structure was introduced, only a small proportion of these children were enrolled in school. Access to primary education for children of an age at which they are legally required to attend has fluctuated in recent years, indicating that many of those who were enrolled were over the compulsory schooling age. In 2000, only 4,842,875 children of school age attended school. This represented a GER of only 75 per cent and a Net Enrolment Rate (NER) of only 57 per cent (Ministry of Education, 2000). The decline in enrolment is the result of many factors, including abject poverty among parents who are unable to meet the cost of sending their children to school, distance from schools, inadequate curricula, lack of value given to education by parents and shortage of space to build schools, especially in urban areas like Dar es Salaam.

A high proportion of children drop out before reaching Standard 4, which is the minimum necessary stage for acquiring literacy skills, and thus swell the ranks of the illiterate population. The reasons for the high drop-out rates are various, ranging from difficult economic circumstances, early pregnancy or marriage, initiation ceremonies, over-protection of children with disabilities, frequent parental divorce, parents migration, the long distance from homes to schools, poor school conditions, failure of schools to meet society's expectations and, in recent years, the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Tanzania cannot achieve the objective of basic education for all without at the same time addressing the needs and problems of out-of-school children. With the current population growth, economic stagnation, poor schooling conditions and low enrolment, the proportion of school-age children enrolled in schools is likely to continue to decline unless concerted measures are taken.

Tanzania's Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP), launched in 2002, recognises that about three million children and young people between the ages of 7 and 18 years have dropped out of school or have never been enrolled. However, this large number is likely to decrease with the abolition of school fees in January 2002. So far, the government has enrolled 365,963 out-of-school children (240,280 boys and 125,683 girls) in various Complementary Basic Education Programme centres.

However, given the capacity of the formal school system and the resource constraints likely to prevail in education for the foreseeable future, it is possible that significant numbers of girls and boys from specific groups are likely to remain outside the formal system.

An analysis of basic education in Ethiopia and Tanzania points to the fact that there is a need to move beyond the confines of the classroom and put in place a system of learning that can reach all groups, including those from the marginalised populations who are currently unable to realise their right to education.

Background to the FAWE NFE Project

The FAWE NFE research project is an offshoot of FAWE's Strategic Resource Planning Project, the pilot phase of which was undertaken in 1995 by national teams in Ethiopia, Guinea and Tanzania with technical assistance from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. The project's main objectives were to:

- Examine the causes of low participation, persistence and performance of girls in primary schools, both absolutely and relative to girls;

- Identify the most promising policy choices for states which wish to achieve universal enrolment of children at primary school level; and

- Investigate the resource implications of such policies.

Completed in October, 1996, these studies were successful in identifying policy and allocation options for enabling achievement of education for all within the formal system. Later, FAWE extended the project to six other countries (Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia), and studies on these were completed in 1999.

While the studies explored various micro-level scenarios for achieving education for all and achieved significant results, one of the lessons was that a formal system alone (as noted earlier) cannot cater for all children. It thus becomes necessary to move outside the formal classroom and explore alternative approaches that can reach more girls, women and other sectors within communities that are poorly served. Accordingly, it became evident that approaches need to be devised that can lead to skills and knowledge acquisition capable of empowering these groups to become productive members of their communities. The groups include, among others, nomadic populations and those displaced by armed conflict and environmental and economic change. Among the alternative and perhaps more cost-effective means of transmitting knowledge and skills in these circumstances is non-formal education. In recognising that the primary targets of FAWE's activities include girls currently out of school, FAWE resolved to explore the role of NFE in complementing the formal school approach to providing EFA.

It was in this context that the NFE research project in Tanzania and Ethiopia was conceptualised.

Objectives of the study

Overall, the NFE research project in Ethiopia and Tanzania sought to explore alternative approaches to basic education that provide learning opportunities for

An analysis of basic education in Ethiopia and Tanzania points to the fact that there is a need to move beyond the confines of the classroom and put in place a system of learning that can reach all groups, including those from the marginalised populations who are currently unable to realise their right to education.

disadvantaged youth, especially girls and women, so as to improve their knowledge and skills for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. Specifically, the study attempted to:

- Explore existing modes of education delivery and their characteristics;

- Assess the impact of alternative approaches on education provision and the extent to which the impact was gender specific;

- Identify strategies for adopting and adapting NFE approaches to provide educational opportunities for marginalised groups such as refugees, nomads, street and labouring children, orphans, urban slum dwellers and the disabled;

- Identify key linkages between formal and non-formal education that are necessary to ensure full complementarity.

It was expected that successful completion of the research project in the two countries, and dissemination of the research findings, would result into the following outcomes:

- Improved school enrolment for disadvantaged children, especially girls;

- Improved understanding among policy-makers and planners of the impact of NFE on marginalised populations;

- Increased awareness of the synergies and bridges that can be developed between formal and non-formal education;

- Development of strategies and mechanisms for expanding basic education opportunities to marginalised populations, especially to girls.

Research Design and Methodology

The research project benefited greatly from the diversity of methods used to carry out the studies in both countries. Tanzania used a case study approach in three carefully chosen research sites: Kigoma for refugees; Kagera for orphans (mainly because of HIV/AIDS); and Temeke for urban slum dwellers. The three sites represented the major groups of marginalised populations in the country. In particular, orphans and street children are groups which are expanding rapidly. These case studies were an important way of generating information to reach an in-depth understanding of the issues, as well as insights into the usefulness of NFE for marginalised populations. In Ethiopia, on the other hand, the project used a survey approach, covering the entire country. Surveys enabled the researchers to achieve wide and inclusive coverage and obtain quantitative data suitable for generalisation. Based on the two approaches a variety of methods were used, including interviews, focus group discussions, observations and questionnaires. Consequently, rich data were obtained from the two approaches.

Findings and Analysis

The study in both countries came out with interesting and significant findings in relation to the four objectives that guided the investigation.

Existing NFE modes and their characteristics

The study noted that there were several non-formal education programmes in both countries run by government and NGOs. In Tanzania, the government-sponsored programmes include Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) for adults and Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) for out-of-school children. Both are pilot projects which receive donor funding and cover a small number of communities.

The study also noted that in both Tanzania and Ethiopia, NGOs have made considerable efforts to help the governments address the problem of out-of-school children and young people. However, comprehensive information about the type and coverage of ABLE programmes supported by these NGOs is not readily available. The ACCESS model by ActionAid Tanzania is described on page 126 (see box).

The contribution of NGOs to the provision of educational opportunities for out-of-school children was also recorded in both countries.

Overall, the research findings showed that the existing NFE education centres in both countries had several features in common: they were very few, urban oriented and enrolled very few children, mainly boys. The participation of girls and women was very low in NFE programmes in both countries. It was evident also that most NFE programmes rely heavily on external funding. Once this assistance is withdrawn, their capacity to implement the programmes will be seriously affected.

Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania Pilot Project

Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) is a pilot project designed to test complementary approaches to providing primary education for out-of-school children and young people. The project caters for children and young people aged 11-18 who have either dropped out of school or never enrolled. Its objective is to mainstream school-age children into the formal system after they have completed the three-year course and to enable them to sit the Primary School Leaving Examination and compete for selection to secondary school. The target group is divided into two cohorts: children aged 11-13 years and young people aged 14-18 years. The Tanzania Institute of Education is responsible for curriculum and instructional materials development.

Aims and Objectives of COBET

COBET's aims and objective are to:

- Enable out-of school children and youths to acquire competencies in reading, writing and numeracy, and life and survival skills;

- Complement the formal primary education system;

- Ensure effective implementation and achievement of the children's right to education; and

- Do away with the backlog of unschooled children and illiterate youths.

COBET is being piloted in 50 centres with a total enrolment of 1,560 children and young people. The coverage is small in relation to the current number of out-of-school children (estimated at three million). The Ministry of Education and Culture is currently planning to scale-up the project.

The ACCESS Model by ACTIONAID – Tanzania

ACCESS is an acronym for 'Appropriate, Cost-effective Centres for Education within the School System'. The project is a complementary, low-cost, flexible educational initiative linked to the formal system in order to enhance access to basic education for out-of-school children aged 6-13 years for the first four years of primary education. It operates as an integral part of, and a feeder to, the existing formal school system. Unlike formal schools, ACCESS uses non-formal approaches, giving due emphasis to flexibility in all stages of the programme so as to accommodate the special needs and life conditions of poor communities and disadvantaged children, mainly in rural areas. Multi-grade learning is encouraged since children of different ages are placed together in one class.

Basic features of ACCESS methodology

- Targets out-of-school children who would otherwise miss out completely on access to basic education;

- Has easy linkage to the formal school system; it has a duration of four years and children are allowed to mainstream at Standard 5;

- Easy access: all children can access the programme because it is village based;

- Flexibility in timetable: it considers the convenience of pupils and parents;

- Avoids levies, uniforms or other mandatory payments that burden poor parents and stop children from attending school regularly.

The project operates in two districts. In December 2002, there were about 35 centres with a total enrolment of 5,206 pupils (2,962 females and 3,244 males)

Quality of the various NFE programmes

NFE differs considerably from formal education, but in both cases the aim is to provide quality education. The quality of an educational activity is determined by many factors – inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes – and can be looked at by using several models. In determining the quality of educational activity, academic standards, the relevance of the curriculum, the quality and quantity of the instructors and the availability of facilities and materials need to be taken into account.

NFE curricula

The quality of NFE is dependent, inter alia, on the quality of the curricula on which implementation of the programme is based. Most NFE curricula seek to provide knowledge and skills that enable young people as well as adults to meet the challenges of development in their environments, while at the same time establishing equivalencies with grades and levels within the formal education system. NFE curricula should therefore provide transformative knowledge, which learners can apply in making and executing decisions concerning nutrition, health, environment, politics and other life experiences.

In principle, NFE curricula should be different from curricula in formal education since they have to address diverse real and immediate needs of their pupils.

With the exception of government-sponsored programmes such as COBET and ICBAE in Tanzania, there are no guidelines for curricula development in NFE in either country. Investigation and analysis show clearly that many NFE centres develop their programmes on the basis of their own inclinations and what the owners consider to be relevant for the learners. Most of the programmes do not meet the needs of the various groups.

Availability, quality and usability of teaching/learning materials

In both countries NFE is treated as second best. As a result, it is given lower priority in allocation of budgets. This has further implications in so far as availability of physical infrastructure and teaching materials is concerned. The physical facilities where NFE programmes are conducted are either poor or inadequate. Very often, teaching and learning is conducted in primary school buildings, old buildings, makeshift structures or residential houses. This is one of the main concerns voiced by all out-of-school children, youth and adult learners interviewed in the sites which were visited.

Apart from the physical infrastructure, teaching and learning resources also play a central role in the process of improving quality of education. Availability of adequate quantities of good quality textbooks enables effective instructional arrangements in classrooms and provides teachers with instructional support. Currently, NFE programmes are not supplied with adequate quantities of good quality teaching and learning resources.

However, it was interesting to note that regardless of the poor learning environments, students in some of the centres, for example in projects run by COBET and ACCESS, were highly motivated and aspired to continue with secondary education. In common examinations sat by pupils from both formal schools and NFE projects, children from NFE centres in many cases performed better than or as well as those from formal schools. The question is how their enthusiasm can be sustained so that they can make progress towards their chosen goal.

Facilitators and their qualifications

NFE programmes continue to rely heavily on untrained volunteer facilitators who are chosen from among men and women in the community who can read and write. There is no standard as regards recruitment. Sometimes primary school teachers are used to teach in these centres on a part-time basis. Given their limited educational attainment as well as lack of professional training, most of the staff in the NFE is not gender sensitive in their teaching approaches. They also lack appropriate competencies in participatory teaching methodologies. As a result the methods used in teaching are mainly teacher-centred and do not encourage and nurture learners' creativity and potential. This shortage of skilled and trained human resource, added to the problem of shortage /lack of teaching materials and financial constraints, strongly contributes to lowering the quality of NFE programmes in meeting the intended objectives.

Impact of NFE programmes

The study also investigated the impact of NFE programmes in the two countries. Analysis of the research findings demonstrates clearly that there were some positive effects, although on a marginal scale. Despite the hard and poor learning environment, NFE centres managed to enrol a few chidden in Standard 1 and the majority of children could read and write. In places where NFE programmes were operating, they helped the government to reach children in difficult environments who would otherwise be out-of-school children. There was also a high demand for registration in some of the programmes, for example in the COBET and ACCESS centres in Tanzania. The demand may be due to absence of registration

... regardless of the poor learning environments, students in some of the centres ... were highly motivated and aspired to continue with secondary education.

Linkages between formal and non-formal education are necessary to ensure complementarity and sustainability.

fees and other monetary contributions, as well as shorter and flexible school hours. In behavioural terms, some programmes in Tanzania enabled out-of-school children (especially street children) to learn how to be co-operative, and to share, care and love. Teenage mothers, who had been expelled from school due to pregnancy, felt that the second chance to continue with their primary education in a non-formal setting had enabled them to rehabilitate themselves.

Management of the NFE system

The provision of quality education and training is the ultimate goal of any education system. However, the goal cannot be achieved without a well-established management and administrative machinery. The following section identifies some issues related to the management of the NFE system as evidenced in the study.

Institutional structure to support NFE provision

It was noted that both Tanzania and Ethiopia have a fully fledged Ministry of Education (the Federal Ministry of Education in Ethiopia and the Ministry of Education and Culture in Tanzania) charged with management of both formal and non-formal education systems. In both countries, education policies place due emphasis on decentralisation and an efficient as well as professionally co-ordinated participatory system for the administration and management of the education system. As a result, regional states in Ethiopia and district councils in Tanzania have full authority and responsibility for the management and organisation of NFE programmes and allocate the required resources, including budgets for running both formal and non-formal education programmes. The role of the Ministries of Education at the central level is to ensure that educational standards are maintained as well as ensuring that policies formulated are properly implemented. In practice, however, particularly in relation to NFE programmes, this is yet to be realised.

It was evident from the research findings that in both countries the management of NFE falls under various agencies. As noted above, apart from the government, a considerable number of NGOs and private agencies were also involved in offering educational opportunities to children outside the formal system. However, for the NFE programmes offered by NGOs there were no clearly defined guidelines for operationalisation and no specific curriculum to guide educational practice or monitoring and quality control mechanism. Further, the NGOs and private providers were not centrally co-ordinated by the responsible ministry in and this proved to be a serious limitation in both countries. The lack of co-ordination meant that the duration, content and quality of the programmes offered varied widely. It also meant that participants could easily move from one programme to another or from a non-formal to a formal context. Since there no guidelines to facilitate the implementation of NFE undertakings, the various NGOs and individuals were left to operate on their own, with adverse implications for linkage among NFE programmes and between NFE and the formal sector.

Linkages between formal and non-formal education

Linkages between formal and non-formal education are necessary to ensure complementarity and sustainability; the studies in both Ethiopia and Tanzania looked for such linkages in their respective countries. The research revealed that there were some linkages as confirmed by the programme co-ordinators in Ethiopia and

Tanzania. Primary schools, for example, support NFE programmes in various ways, including teaching in NFE centres, providing teaching materials and allowing out-of-school children to mainstream into formal primary schools. Some graduates from the NFE programmes have been mainstreamed into the formal system.

However, there is no formal and clear policy to guide such linkages. Many NFE programmes operate in isolation from other social development programmes in their communities, and in some places NFE programmes are perceived to operate as parallel systems or replacements for the formal education system.

Strategies for adopting and adapting NFE approaches

The research findings showed that the governments of Ethiopia and Tanzania are both committed to policy-based reform and development of the education sector aimed at improving basic education opportunities for all. In collaboration with NGOs and local communities, the governments are determined to ensure access to quality NFE for adults and out-of-school young people, especially girls and women.

The two governments recognise that despite efforts to make education accessible to all, girls, women and other marginalised groups have not had equitable access to education. Both countries, for example, have education and training policies (ETP) that identify policy objectives and guidelines aimed at promoting basic education opportunities among girls and women. These include the establishment of special financing schemes to support girls and women in training institutions and the redesigning of adult education programmes to encourage and promote the enrolment and attendance of women.

However, policy objectives and guidelines have not been translated into specific and detailed strategies, plans and programmes. For example, in Tanzania, UMATI (an NGO dealing with reproductive health and family planning) has initiated an NFE programme to help young teenage mothers to complete their primary education after they have been expelled from the formal system because of their pregnancy. However, it was evident from the findings that girls who graduate from NFE centres and had completed basic education programmes could not be absorbed into public secondary schools as the government directive about girls who become pregnant still stands. There is thus a clear contradiction between the public importance given to NFE and the actual support which it receives. Even in terms of funding, NFE programmes do not receive due attention in budgetary allocations. While NFE is recognised as an important complementary approach to the formal system, it comes at the bottom of the list in terms of revenue allocation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The need is great: the policy commitment is in place. Communities recognise the possibilities inherent in non-formal education. Some programmes are doing a creditable job with minimal resources. What is the potential of NFE?

Overall, the two studies point to the fact that some non-formal education provision does cater for out-of-school children. However, these NFE programmes are too few to serve the needs and interests of girls and women in marginalised populations. Many NFE programmes are not gender specific and they operate without clearly defined guidelines and co-ordinating mechanisms. There are not enough teachers and they are poorly trained and inadequately remunerated. Despite the good intentions, the overall impact of the existing programmes has thus been minimal and has had only a marginal effect. Some strategies to expand

learning opportunities have been put in place, but there are not enough of them and they are not translated into specific detailed action plans or allocated adequate resources. Although there are some linkages between non-formal and formal education, these are weak; in most cases, NFE programmes operate as parallel programmes or replacements of the formal education system and hence they are not complementary.

Recommendations

Education for girls and women, particularly in marginalised populations, must be a national and international concern that requires a strong government commitment. Participation of other government and non-government agencies in the processes of promoting basic education for girls and women, developing relevant curricula, articulating strategic plans, developing policy guidelines and implementing the programmes is essential. To this end, the implementation of the following recommendations will be critical in achieving basic education for all girls and women in marginalised populations.

 Governments in both Ethiopia and Tanzania need to:

- Draw up effective strategies for mobilising national and international support for girls and women in marginalised populations and for enhancing financial investment in basic education for girls and women.

- Design realistic and implementable policies, within a sustainable and well thought out organisational structure, for linking basic education opportunities for girls and women in marginalised populations with other socio-economic development programmes and existing local institutions.

- Design realistic strategic action plans supported with adequate resources to promote the education of girls and women in marginalised populations.

- Develop clear policy guidelines on the co-ordination of NGOs and private initiatives to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication.

- Develop gender-specific curricula based on an assessment of needs. The curriculum development process should involve girls and women from marginalised populations.

- Provide a training programme for instructors with a view to ensuring that the formal and non-formal education systems are not distinct but complement each other.

- Create an NFE co-ordinating body in the Ministry of Education and Culture.

- Facilitate budget allocation from central government in order to supplement teacher training, remuneration for teachers and the provision of educational material in NFE centres.

- Launch advocacy and social mobilisation campaigns to sensitise communities to a positive attitude towards girls' and women's education so as to encourage girls and women to participate in the basic education programme

Finally, this research project was undertaken in two countries. Hence their findings, conclusion and recommendations relate mainly to those two countries. However, they lessons can also be drawn for other African countries in a similar situation.

Note

1 The Forum for African Women Educationalists is a Pan-African non-governmental organisation, founded in 1992, whose goal is to increase access, improve retention and enhance the quality of education for girls and women in Africa.

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ANNEX A

Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

General Comment No. 13

**The right to education
(Article 13 of the Covenant)**

The right to education (art. 13)

1. Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. Education has a vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, and controlling population growth. Increasingly, education is recognized as one of the best financial investments States can make. But the importance of education is not just practical: a well-educated, enlightened and active mind, able to wander freely and widely, is one of the joys and rewards of human existence.

2. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) devotes two articles to the right to education, articles 13 and 14. Article 13, the longest provision in the Covenant, is the most wide-ranging and comprehensive article on the right to education in international human rights law. The Committee has already adopted General Comment 11 on article 14 (plans of action for primary education); General Comment 11 and the present general comment are complementary and should be considered together. The Committee is aware that for millions of people throughout the world, the enjoyment of the right to education remains a distant goal. Moreover, in many cases, this goal is becoming increasingly remote. The Committee is also conscious of the formidable structural and other obstacles impeding the full implementation of article 13 in many States parties. [...]

I. NORMATIVE CONTENT OF ARTICLE 13

Article 13 (1): Aims and objectives of education

4. States parties agree that all education, whether public or private, formal or non-formal, shall be directed towards the aims and objectives identified in article 13(1). The Committee notes that these educational objectives reflect the fundamental purposes and principles of the United Nations as enshrined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter. For the most part, they are also found in article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although article 13(1) adds to the Declaration in three respects: education shall be directed to the human personality's "sense of dignity", it shall "enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society", and it shall promote understanding among all "ethnic" groups, as

well as nations and racial and religious groups. Of those educational objectives which are common to article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 13(1) of the Covenant, perhaps the most fundamental is that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality".

5. The Committee notes that since the General Assembly adopted the Covenant in 1966, other international instruments have further elaborated the objectives to which education should be directed. Accordingly, the Committee takes the view that States parties are required to ensure that education conforms to the aims and objectives identified in article 13(1), as interpreted in the light of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) (art. 1), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 29(1)), the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (Part I, para. 33 and Part II, para. 80), and the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (para. 2). While all these texts closely correspond to article 13(1) of the Covenant, they also include elements which are not expressly provided for in article 13(1), such as specific references to gender equality and respect for the environment. These new elements are implicit in, and reflect a contemporary interpretation of article 13(1). The Committee obtains support for this point of view from the widespread endorsement that the previously mentioned texts have received from all regions of the world.

Article 13 (2): The right to receive an education – some general remarks

6. While the precise and appropriate application of the terms will depend upon the conditions prevailing in a particular State party, education in all its forms and at all levels shall exhibit the following interrelated and essential features:

(a) Availability – functioning educational institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of the State party. What they require to function depends upon numerous factors, including the developmental context within which they operate; for example, all institutions and programmes are likely to require buildings or other protection from the elements, sanitation facilities for both sexes, safe drinking water, trained teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries, teaching materials, and so on; while some will also require facilities such as a library, computer facilities and information technology;

(b) Accessibility – educational institutions and programmes have to be accessible to everyone, without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the State party. Accessibility has three overlapping dimensions:

Non-discrimination – education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups, in law and fact, without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds (see paras. 31–37 on non-discrimination);

Physical accessibility – education has to be within safe physical reach, either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location (e.g. a neighbourhood school) or via modern technology (e.g. access to a "distance learning" programme);

Economic accessibility – education has to be affordable to all. This dimension of accessibility is subject to the differential wording of article 13(2) in relation to primary, secondary and higher education: whereas primary education shall be

available "free to all", States parties are required to progressively introduce free secondary and higher education;

(c) Acceptability – the form and substance of education, including curricula and teaching methods, have to be acceptable (e.g. relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality) to students and, in appropriate cases, parents; this is subject to the educational objectives required by article 13 (1) and such minimum educational standards as may be approved by the State (see art. 13 (3) and (4));

(d) Adaptability – education has to be flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings.

7. When considering the appropriate application of these "interrelated and essential features" the best interests of the student shall be a primary consideration.

Article 13 (2) (a): The right to primary education

8. Primary education includes the elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability which are common to education in all its forms and at all levels.

9. The Committee obtains guidance on the proper interpretation of the term "primary education" from the World Declaration on Education for All which states: "The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling. Primary education must be universal, ensure that the basic learning needs of all children are satisfied, and take into account the culture, needs and opportunities of the community" (art. 5). "[B]asic learning needs" are defined in article 1 of the World Declaration.

While primary education is not synonymous with basic education, there is a close correspondence between the two. In this regard, the Committee endorses the position taken by UNICEF: "Primary education is the most important component of basic education."

10. As formulated in article 13(2)(a), primary education has two distinctive features: it is "compulsory" and "available free to all". For the Committee's observations on both terms, see paragraphs 6 and 7 of General Comment 11 on article 14 of the Covenant.

Article 13 (2) (b): The right to secondary education

11. Secondary education includes the elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability which are common to education in all its forms and at all levels.

12. While the content of secondary education will vary among States parties and over time, it includes completion of basic education and consolidation of the foundations for life-long learning and human development. It prepares students for vocational and higher educational opportunities.

Article 13(2)(b) applies to secondary education "in its different forms", thereby recognizing that secondary education demands flexible curricula and varied delivery systems to respond to the needs of students in different social and cultural settings. The Committee encourages "alternative" educational programmes which

parallel regular secondary school systems.

13. According to article 13(2)(b), secondary education "shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education". The phrase "generally available" signifies, firstly, that secondary education is not dependent on a student's apparent capacity or ability and, secondly, that secondary education will be distributed throughout the State in such a way that it is available on the same basis to all. For the Committee's interpretation of "accessible", see paragraph 6 above. The phrase "every appropriate means" reinforces the point that States parties should adopt varied and innovative approaches to the delivery of secondary education in different social and cultural contexts.

14. "[P]rogressive introduction of free education" means that while States must prioritize the provision of free primary education, they also have an obligation to take concrete steps towards achieving free secondary and higher education. For the Committee's general observations on the meaning of the word "free", see paragraph 7 of General Comment 11 on article 14.

Technical and vocational education

15. Technical and vocational education (TVE) forms part of both the right to education and the right to work (art. 6 (2)). Article 13 (2) (b) presents TVE as part of secondary education, reflecting the particular importance of TVE at this level of education. Article 6(2), however, does not refer to TVE in relation to a specific level of education; it comprehends that TVE has a wider role, helping "to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment". Also, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "[t]echnical and professional education shall be made generally available" (art. 26 (1)). Accordingly, the Committee takes the view that TVE forms an integral element of all levels of education.

16. An introduction to technology and to the world of work should not be confined to specific TVE programmes but should be understood as a component of general education. According to the UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989), TVE consists of "all forms and levels of the educational process involving, in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life" (art. 1 (a)). This view is also reflected in certain ILO Conventions. Understood in this way, the right to TVE includes the following aspects:

(a) It enables students to acquire knowledge and skills which contribute to their personal development, self-reliance and employability and enhances the productivity of their families and communities, including the State party's economic and social development;

(b) It takes account of the educational, cultural and social background of the population concerned; the skills, knowledge and levels of qualification needed in the various sectors of the economy; and occupational health, safety and welfare;

(c) Provides retraining for adults whose current knowledge and skills have become

obsolete owing to technological, economic, employment, social or other changes;

(d) It consists of programmes which give students, especially those from developing countries, the opportunity to receive TVE in other States, with a view to the appropriate transfer and adaptation of technology;

(e) It consists, in the context of the Covenant's non-discrimination and equality provisions, of programmes which promote the TVE of women, girls, out-of-school youth, unemployed youth, the children of migrant workers, refugees, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

[...]

Article 13 (2) (d): The right to fundamental education

21. Fundamental education includes the elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability which are common to education in all its forms and at all levels.

22. In general terms, fundamental education corresponds to basic education as set out in the *World Declaration on Education for All*. By virtue of article 13(2)(d), individuals "who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education" have a right to fundamental education, or basic education as defined in the *World Declaration on Education for All*.

23. Since everyone has the right to the satisfaction of their "basic learning needs" as understood by the World Declaration, the right to fundamental education is not confined to those "who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education". The right to fundamental education extends to all those who have not yet satisfied their "basic learning needs".

24. It should be emphasized that enjoyment of the right to fundamental education is not limited by age or gender; it extends to children, youth and adults, including older persons. Fundamental education, therefore, is an integral component of adult education and life-long learning. Because fundamental education is a right of all age groups, curricula and delivery systems must be devised which are suitable for students of all ages.
[...]

Article 13 (3) and (4): The right to educational freedom

28. Article 13(3) has two elements, one of which is that States parties undertake to respect the liberty of parents and guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

The Committee is of the view that this element of article 13(3) permits public school instruction in subjects such as the general history of religions and ethics if it is given in an unbiased and objective way, respectful of the freedoms of opinion, conscience and expression. It notes that public education that includes instruction in a particular religion or belief is inconsistent with article 13(3) unless provision is made for non-discriminatory exemptions or alternatives that would accommodate the wishes of parents and guardians.

29. The second element of article 13(3) is the liberty of parents and guardians to choose other than public schools for their children, provided the schools conform

to "such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State". This has to be read with the complementary provision, article 13 (4), which affirms "the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions", provided the institutions conform to the educational objectives set out in article 13 (1) and certain minimum standards. These minimum standards may relate to issues such as admission, curricula and the recognition of certificates. In their turn, these standards must be consistent with the educational objectives set out in article 13 (1).

30. Under article 13 (4), everyone, including non-nationals, has the liberty to establish and direct educational institutions. The liberty also extends to "bodies", i.e. legal persons or entities. It includes the right to establish and direct all types of educational institutions, including nurseries, universities and institutions for adult education. Given the principles of non-discrimination, equal opportunity and effective participation in society for all, the State has an obligation to ensure that the liberty set out in article 13 (4) does not lead to extreme disparities of educational opportunity for some groups in society.
[…]

II. STATES PARTIES' OBLIGATIONS AND VIOLATIONS

General legal obligations

43. While the Covenant provides for progressive realization and acknowledges the constraints due to the limits of available resources, it also imposes on States parties various obligations which are of immediate effect.

States parties have immediate obligations in relation to the right to education, such as the "guarantee" that the right "will be exercised without discrimination of any kind" (art. 2 (2)) and the obligation "to take steps" (art. 2 (1)) towards the full realization of article 13.

Such steps must be "deliberate, concrete and targeted" towards the full realization of the right to education.

44. The realization of the right to education over time, that is "progressively", should not be interpreted as depriving States parties' obligations of all meaningful content. Progressive realization means that States parties have a specific and continuing obligation "to move as expeditiously and effectively as possible" towards the full realization of article 13.

45. There is a strong presumption of impermissibility of any retrogressive measures taken in relation to the right to education, as well as other rights enunciated in the Covenant. If any deliberately retrogressive measures are taken, the State party has the burden of proving that they have been introduced after the most careful consideration of all alternatives and that they are fully justified by reference to the totality of the rights provided for in the Covenant and in the context of the full use of the State party's maximum available resources.

46. The right to education, like all human rights, imposes three types or levels of obligations on States parties: the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil. In turn, the obligation to fulfil incorporates both an obligation to facilitate and an obligation to provide.

47. The obligation to respect requires States parties to avoid measures that hinder or prevent the enjoyment of the right to education. The obligation to protect requires States parties to take measures that prevent third parties from interfering with the enjoyment of the right to education. The obligation to fulfil (facilitate) requires States to take positive measures that enable and assist individuals and communities to enjoy the right to education. Finally, States parties have an obligation to fulfil (provide) the right to education. As a general rule, States parties are obliged to fulfil (provide) a specific right in the Covenant when an individual or group is unable, for reasons beyond their control, to realize the right themselves by the means at their disposal. However, the extent of this obligation is always subject to the text of the Covenant.

48. In this respect, two features of article 13 require emphasis. First, it is clear that article 13 regards States as having principal responsibility for the direct provision of education in most circumstances; States parties recognize, for example, that the "development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued" (art. 13 (2) (e)). Secondly, given the differential wording of article 13(2) in relation to primary, secondary, higher and fundamental education, the parameters of a State party's obligation to fulfil (provide) are not the same for all levels of education. Accordingly, in light of the text of the Covenant, States parties have an enhanced obligation to fulfil (provide) regarding the right to education, but the extent of this obligation is not uniform for all levels of education. The Committee observes that this interpretation of the obligation to fulfil (provide) in relation to article 13 coincides with the law and practice of numerous States parties.

Specific legal obligations

49. States parties are required to ensure that curricula, for all levels of the educational system, are directed to the objectives identified in article 13 (1). 24/ They are also obliged to establish and maintain a transparent and effective system which monitors whether or not education is, in fact, directed to the educational objectives set out in article 13 (1).

50. In relation to article 13 (2), States have obligations to respect, protect and fulfil each of the "essential features" (availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability) of the right to education. By way of illustration, a State must respect the availability of education by not closing private schools; protect the accessibility of education by ensuring that third parties, including parents and employers, do not stop girls from going to school; fulfil (facilitate) the acceptability of education by taking positive measures to ensure that education is culturally appropriate for minorities and indigenous peoples, and of good quality for all; fulfil (provide) the adaptability of education by designing and providing resources for curricula which reflect the contemporary needs of students in a changing world; and fulfil (provide) the availability of education by actively developing a system of schools, including building classrooms, delivering programmes, providing teaching materials, training teachers and paying them domestically competitive salaries.

51. As already observed, the obligations of States parties in relation to primary, secondary, higher and fundamental education are not identical. Given the wording of article 13 (2), States parties are obliged to prioritize the introduction of compulsory, free primary education. This interpretation of article 13 (2) is reinforced by the priority accorded to primary education in article 14. The obligation to provide primary education for all is an immediate duty of all States parties.

52. In relation to article 13(2) (b)–(d), a State party has an immediate obligation "to take steps" (art. 2 (1)) towards the realization of secondary, higher and fundamental education for all those within its jurisdiction. At a minimum, the State party is required to adopt and implement a national educational strategy which includes the provision of secondary, higher and fundamental education in accordance with the Covenant. This strategy should include mechanisms, such as indicators and benchmarks on the right to education, by which progress can be closely monitored.

53. Under article 13 (2) (e), States parties are obliged to ensure that an educational fellowship system is in place to assist disadvantaged groups. 26/ The obligation to pursue actively the "development of a system of schools at all levels" reinforces the principal responsibility of States parties to ensure the direct provision of the right to education in most circumstances. 27/

54. States parties are obliged to establish "minimum educational standards" to which all educational institutions established in accordance with article 13(3) and (4) are required to conform. They must also maintain a transparent and effective system to monitor such standards. A State party has no obligation to fund institutions established in accordance with article 13(3) and (4); however, if a State elects to make a financial contribution to private educational institutions, it must do so without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds.

55. States parties have an obligation to ensure that communities and families are not dependent on child labour. The Committee especially affirms the importance of education in eliminating child labour and the obligations set out in article 7 (2) of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (Convention No. 182). 28/ Additionally, given article 2(2), States parties are obliged to remove gender and other stereotyping which impedes the educational access of girls, women and other disadvantaged groups.

56. In its General Comment 3, the Committee drew attention to the obligation of all States parties to take steps, "individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical", towards the full realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant, such as the right to education. Articles 2 (1) and 23 of the Covenant, Article 56 of the Charter of the United Nations, article 10 of the World Declaration on Education for All, and Part 1, paragraph 34 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action all reinforce the obligation of States parties in relation to the provision of international assistance and cooperation for the full realization of the right to education. In relation to the negotiation and ratification of international agreements, States parties should take steps to ensure that these instruments do not adversely impact upon the right to education. Similarly, States parties have an obligation to ensure that their actions as members of international organizations, including international financial institutions, take due account of the right to education.

57. In its General Comment 3, the Committee confirmed that States parties have "a minimum core obligation to ensure the satisfaction of, at the very least, minimum essential levels" of each of the rights enunciated in the Covenant, including "the most basic forms of education". In the context of article 13, this core includes an obligation: to ensure the right of access to public educational institutions and programmes on a non-discriminatory basis; to ensure that education

conforms to the objectives set out in article 13(1); to provide primary education for all in accordance with article 13(2)(a); to adopt and implement a national educational strategy which includes provision for secondary, higher and fundamental education; and to ensure free choice of education without interference from the State or third parties, subject to conformity with "minimum educational standards" (art. 13 (3) and (4)).

Violations

58. When the normative content of article 13 (Part 1) is applied to the general and specific obligations of States parties (Part II), a dynamic process is set in motion which facilitates identification of violations of the right to education. Violations of article 13 may occur through the direct action of States parties (acts of commission) or through their failure to take steps required by the Covenant (acts of omission).

59. By way of illustration, violations of article 13 include: the introduction or failure to repeal legislation which discriminates against individuals or groups, on any of the prohibited grounds, in the field of education; the failure to take measures which address de facto educational discrimination; the use of curricula inconsistent with the educational objectives set out in article 13(1); the failure to maintain a transparent and effective system to monitor conformity with article 13 (1); the failure to introduce, as a matter of priority, primary education which is compulsory and available free to all; the failure to take "deliberate, concrete and targeted" measures towards the progressive realization of secondary, higher and fundamental education in accordance with article 13(2) (b)–(d); the prohibition of private educational institutions; the failure to ensure private educational institutions conform to the "minimum educational standards" required by article 13(3) and (4); the denial of academic freedom of staff and students; the closure of educational institutions in times of political tension in non-conformity with article 4.

III. OBLIGATIONS OF ACTORS OTHER THAN STATES PARTIES

60. Given article 22 of the Covenant, the role of the United Nations agencies, including at the country level through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), is of special importance in relation to the realization of article 13. Coordinated efforts for the realization of the right to education should be maintained to improve coherence and interaction among all the actors concerned, including the various components of civil society. UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, ILO, the World Bank, the regional development banks, the International Monetary Fund and other relevant bodies within the United Nations system should enhance their cooperation for the implementation of the right to education at the national level, with due respect to their specific mandates, and building on their respective expertise. In particular, the international financial institutions, notably the World Bank and IMF, should pay greater attention to the protection of the right to education in their lending policies, credit agreements, structural adjustment programmes and measures taken in response to the debt crisis. When examining the reports of States parties, the Committee will consider the effects of the assistance provided by all actors other than States parties on the ability of States to meet their obligations under article 13. The adoption of a human rights-based approach by United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and bodies will greatly facilitate implementation of the right to education.

ANNEX B

United Nations Commission on Human Rights – Resolution 2004/71

Follow–up to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling its resolution 2003/70 of 25 April 2003,

Taking note of resolution 2003/5 of 13 August 2003 of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights,

Reaffirming the need for continued actions at the international level to support national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular universal access to basic education for all, including human rights education, by the year 2015,

Convinced that human rights education is a long-term and lifelong process by which all people at all levels of development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies, and that human rights education significantly contributes to promoting equality and sustainable development, preventing conflict and human rights violations and enhancing participation and democratic processes, with a view to developing societies in which all human rights of all are valued and respected,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 58/181 of 22 December 2003, in which the Assembly decided to dedicate a plenary meeting during its fifty-ninth session on the occasion of Human Rights Day, 10 December 2004, to review the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995–2004, and to discuss possible future activities for the enhancement of human rights education,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the achievements and shortcomings of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and on future United Nations activities in this area (E/CN.4/2004/93), of the report of the High Commissioner to the General Assembly on the mid-term global evaluation of the Decade (A/55/360) and of the study of the High Commissioner on the follow-up to the Decade (E/CN.4/2003/101), which indicated achievements and shortcomings of the Decade as well as suggestions for its follow-up;

2. *Takes note* also of the view expressed in those reports concerning the need to continue a global framework for human rights education beyond the Decade in order to ensure a priority focus on human rights education within the international agenda, provide a common collective framework for action for all relevant actors, support existing programmes and provide an incentive for the development of new ones, as well as enhance partnership and cooperation at all levels;

3. *Recommends* to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2004 to recommend to the General Assembly that it proclaim at its fifty-ninth session a world programme for human rights education, to begin on 1 January 2005, structured in consecutive phases, in order to maintain and develop the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors;

4. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant governmental and non-governmental actors, and submit for consideration and adoption to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, a plan of action for the first phase (2005-2007) of the proposed world programme, focusing on the primary and secondary school systems;

5. *Also requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to keep in mind that the plan of action of each phase of the world programme shall be properly structured, shall be formulated in realistic terms, with an indication of at least minimum action, shall be funded by voluntary means, shall include provisions to support activities undertaken by all actors, in particular non-governmental organizations, and shall be evaluated by the Office;

6. *Recommends* that the Secretary-General ensure that an adequate component of United Nations assistance provided at the request of Member States to develop their national systems of promotion and protection of human rights supports human rights education;

7. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to report to the Commission at its sixty-first session on progress made towards the implementation of the present resolution;

8. *Decides* to consider this issue at its sixty-first session under the same agenda item.

57th meeting
21 April 2004

ANNEX C

Symposium Participants

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