1.0 Introduction

This report provides a summary of the substantive issues discussed at the pre-biennial *Symposium and Exhibition on the Dynamics of Non-Formal Education*, held on 1-4 December 1999 in Johannesburg, South Africa. It highlights many of the issues dealt with and synthesises the wealth of information, analytical insights and practical ideas of the way forward in the strategic use of non-formal education to create a more holistic education system that can deliver "Education for All". The symposium and exhibition were held at the initiative of the ADEA Working Group on Non-Formal Education (WG-NFE) and brought together a diverse group of policy makers, researchers, practitioners and development agencies, all committed to the achievement of the goal of Education for All (EFA) through the diversification of education provision and the strengthening of alternative approaches to learning. Technical papers reflecting key issues and case studies that were presented at the symposium are being published in a separate volume.

It was timely that this symposium was taking place against a background of increased use of alternative approaches, different modes of delivering learning and more flexible provision of schooling, which have all contributed to a highly impressive record of successful innovations in education. Despite this, it was felt that very little of the insights gained from such innovations have been widely adopted into the mainstream. Education systems, still largely based on the model of "Western Schooling", continue to be resistant to change, in the face of obvious and widely documented shortcomings that are amenable to readily available reform policies and strategies. The United Nations estimates that in 1999 around 40 million African children were out of school, the majority of them girls. Large numbers of children are prevented from entering school or forced to leave prematurely due to a variety of reasons such as poverty, income generation activities, social deprivation, cultural differences, and even perceived irrelevance of the schooling process. This state of affairs makes it all the more critical to focus on viable alternatives that would address the learning needs of these population groups in a manner that takes account of their circumstances and constraints. However it would be unfortunate and counter-productive if such alternatives continue to be regarded as marginal to the main business of formal education.

In an era characterised by increasing debate on 'lifelong learning' (LLL) as a key imperative for human development, attention needs to focus on the futility and increasing redundancy of the very idea of compartmentalising different approaches and delivery modes that should form part of a holistic education system. In a context of greater recognition of multiple and diverse learning needs, multiple arrangements and technologies for 'creating learning experiences' ought to be harnessed to create a more flexible and open regime for education. This, together with a system wide framework for accreditation of learning outcomes, should make the usual boundaries between formal and non-formal education, contact and distance education, in school and out of school education, become increasingly obsolete.

These were the key issues and concerns that exercised the minds of participants at the symposium. This report attempts to capture the dynamism, richness and enthusiasm of the deliberations, placing emphasis on the arguments as well as the practical ideas and recommendations that emerged as the 79 participants (mainly from 18 African countries – see Appendix 2) explored the dynamics of non-formal education.

1.1 Aims of the Symposium and Exhibition

The aims of the pre-biennial symposium and exhibition were to:

- provide a forum for taking stock of the ideas, policies, practices, management arrangements, concerns and achievements of non-formal education provisions, in relation to overall demand throughout the African region.

- bring together educators, policy makers, practitioners, researchers and development agencies with considerable know-how and experience in non-formal education in Africa, enabling them to commit and contribute to current and future systemic educational development throughout the continent.

- exchange ideas and experiences on non-formal education projects and activities observed on the ground during field trips to South African NFE projects around Johannesburg.

- develop concrete proposals allowing for the setting up of an educative society, forging recommendations with common crosscutting themes to all partners concerned.

- foster exchanges and strengthen the networking between different regions of Africa.

- identify and formulate new orientations, policy guidelines, future programmes of the ADEA Working Group on Non-formal Education, whilst respecting the partners' and actors' points of view, as well as the demands of each country.

- take advantage of the exhibition to study and discuss the exhibits, and provide participants with the opportunity to broaden their networks and information sources.

1.2 The Collaborating Partners

There were 79 participants at the symposium from 18 African countries and also from Bangladesh, India, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom and USA (see Appendix 2). The initiating and organising partners were the three agencies that formed the Core Team of the ADEA Working Group on NFE. These were the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, which is the lead agency, the Commonwealth Secretariat, which is the co-ordinating agency and secretariat for the Working Group, and UNESCO, which is also a co-ordinating agency. A number of other development partner agencies also participated actively in the symposium and exhibition. These were the Commonwealth of Learning; DFID; the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Pretoria; the Swedish International Development Agency; UNICEF, Kenya; USAID and the World Bank. All these collaborating partners together with key national/regional stakeholders in NFE collaborated to review and discuss the range of non-formal education activities during the last three years, and made significant suggestions for the future programme of the ADEA Working Group on NFE.

1.3 Welcoming Remarks and Official Opening

The participants were formally welcomed to the symposium and exhibition by Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria, from the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation which is the lead agency of the ADEA WG-NFE. He explained that the Working Group (WG) on Non-formal Education (NFE) was established in 1996 by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in order to contribute to the achievement of the goal of "Education for All" in Africa.

The mission of the Working group is to support African countries in their goal of Education for All by providing a platform for:

- Developing the non-school and non-formal dimensions of education systems

- Reinforcing national contributions to overall educational system performance

- Strengthening the linkages between education systems and their communities

- Enhancing partnerships between education ministries and providers/beneficiaries of non-formal education.

Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria went on to explain that the three years since the inception of ADEA WG-NFE have been productive for the organisation, with outputs including:

- Conducting research on a variety of NFE issues in both Anglophone and Francophone African countries. All these studies were undertaken by teams of African researchers from the countries involved with the support of technical institutions located in Africa and/or in countries of the north.

- Forming and strengthening Country Working Groups on non-formal education in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal and Zambia; as well as encouraging the establishment of NFE Country Working Groups in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa, where procedures are being put in place for their formation.

- Encouraging and strengthening partnerships at country, regional and global levels on basic education matters. This is done through networking and dialogue between ministries of education, NGOs, researchers and development agencies on NFE policies and practices.

He concluded his welcoming remarks by challenging participants to help plot the way forward for basic education, particularly NFE, during the next millennium. In this regard the symposium should be used to engage in challenging discussions on critical issues including: how to create an environment and culture of learning; how to create synergy between formal and non-formal education; and how to use various forms of learning delivery systems such as drama, drawing and field trips to develop and democratise basic education throughout the African continent.

2.0   Field Trips

On Wednesday 1 December 1999 participants visited six NFE projects around Johannesburg. The participants were divided into three groups and each group had 10-15 members. The following is a list of the six projects visited:

- Light Study Centre

- 17 Shaft Conference and Education Centre (Pty. Ltd)

- National Institute for Crime Prevention and Re-Integration of Offenders (NICRO)

- UNISA Tour/Prison Tour

- Tour to the First National Bank Training Centre

- UNISA Tour/ABET and Skill Training Project

2.1   Light Study Centre

Since its inception the project has provided adult basic literacy and numeracy classes and currently provides education programmes for adults equivalent to the school system, right up to the completion of Matric, the South African school leaving level. Most learners (more than 1000) are in the basic education programme covering Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), levels 1 to 3. This programme covers literacy, numeracy and life-skills. Specialist NGOs have developed the materials and programmes used by the centre over the last decade and a half. The curriculum content includes computer, secretarial, sewing and design courses. The learners are assessed internally according to national standards. The project's target group is adults from the Gauteng area, and particularly those communities surrounding the centres. The project has an equal number of women and men.

2.2   17 Shaft Conference and Education Centre (PTY) (LTD)

17 Shaft Conference and Education Centre (Pty. Ltd) is in Crown Mines on the southern outskirts of Johannesburg bordering Soweto, on what was originally a mine hostel. The success of the Centre led to its provision of facilities and administrative and management support to TransSizwe Security (Pty Ltd), formed in 1993 to re-train former liberation soldiers across party political lines for reintegration into the security sector of mainstream economic activity. TransSizwe is now a highly successful company providing security and bodyguard services to a variety of parastatal, industrial and commercial clients.

In 1994, 17 Shaft Conference and Education Centre (Pty. Ltd) in conjunction with TransSizwe Security (Pty. Ltd) launched "Recondev". The project has had a total of 422 successful trainees since its inception in 1994. These qualified trainees have completed bricklaying, plastering and tiling, carpentry and plumbing courses, accredited by the Building Industries Training Board. These trained ex-soldiers, rehabilitated gangsters and ex-convicts from the surrounding communities and further a-field obtained modular credits as well as basic entrepreneurial business skills needed for them to find employment and gain confidence to start their own business. Approximately 10% of these trainees have been women. The project's target group is marginalised youth and unemployed adults.

2.3 National Institute for Crime Prevention and Re-Integration of Offenders (NICRO) Economic

The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Re-Integration of Offenders (NICRO) Economic has a six steps training course in four township locations around Gauteng. The programme was designed to empower NICRO clients to re-establish themselves in the mainstream of the economy. The target group is those people who have historically found it difficult to earn an income in a highly competitive environment. The programme's purpose is to encourage clients to move themselves from being victims of circumstances to being creators of opportunities, by generating a future that is different from their past. On average, 60 percent of the clients are women.

The training course curriculum covers Business Game as a pre-course counselling module, Business Skills Training, Business Plans and Counselling, Business Finance Training, Business Linkage and Improve Your Business.

2.4 UNISA Tour and the Prison Tour

The University of South Africa (UNISA) is the largest university on the African continent because it reaches more than 100,000 students from all over the world using distance teaching. For South African students the university uses an integrated learner support system. The tour showed the symposium participants some of the infrastructure necessary to deliver teaching for 60 academic departments and examinations at more than 450 examination centres internationally. The Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is a newly established department housed within the Faculty of Education. It trains adult educators using distance methods coupled with contact teaching. Since its establishment, in 1995, the ABET Institute has trained more than 18,000 trainers, making it one of the largest university-based adult educator training programmes of its kind in the world.

Following UNISA, participants visited Leeukop's maximum and medium security prisons. The prisoners in the maximum prison have been sentenced to long terms (or life). The majority of the prisoners in the maximum prison have had little or no formal education. For the past three years, UNISA has offered the ABET practitioner course to about 75 maximum prisoners who have completed grade 10. It has been possible to reach this group with the financial assistance of the British Department for International Development (DFID). During 1998, the first group of students graduated in prison. They in turn present basic education classes for their illiterate fellow inmates. UNISA also presents its course in the medium security prison.

2.5 Tour to the First National Bank Training Centre

The First National Bank's training centre is an example of a good corporate training centre. It offers programmes for adults who are employed by the Bank and who have not completed their schooling. The courses offered by the centre start from the most basic and remedial to the more advanced courses including computer training and other job related courses.

2.6 UNISA ABET's Skill Training Project

The Skill Training Project was started by Elizabeth Twala, a graduate of UNISA ABET and her husband, who was one of the first learners at the school because he was illiterate. He has excellent skills in building and metal work and that is why he decided that whilst participating in the school's adult learning programmes, he would also teach job skills to the many unemployed people in the community. The project also teaches beadwork and crafts to women.

2.7 Refilwe's Learning Culture Project

Refilwe is employed by the UNISA ABET Institute as a part time ABET tutor. She has started a project which targets the youth and aims at nurturing a culture of learning. To achieve this, she teaches study skills, art and tries to encourage a reading culture among the youth through her books and reading project. The project also encourages entrepreneurship and teaches the youth about tourism. The project has a regular source of funding as a non-formal education project.

2.8 Discussion of the Field Trips

At 1830 hours on Wednesday 1 December 1999, the symposium participants assembled to discuss the field trips made to the seven sites during the day. The first participant to make a contribution noted that out of the seven sites visited, four of the ABET programmes were provided by business sectors. One of the South African participants responded by explaining that in South Africa most Adult Basic Education and Training is provided by industrial and commercial sectors.

There were several important and informative generic themes which emerged during the discussion. These themes revolved round the value of field trips during global gatherings of this nature; conceptual and practical issues underlying NFE provision for ex-prisoners, and the financing of NFE. Participants were unanimous in their appreciation of the benefits of the field trips, especially in helping to put NFE issues in South Africa in a proper context. In turn, this enabled them to realistically compare and contrast the NFE situation in South Africa with that in their own countries. Observations were made regarding the disparities, diversity and quality of ABET provision between the sites visited and their funding status.

Questions were also explored in relation to the philosophies, values and practical issues underpinning NFE provision to prisoners, ex-convicts and ex-combatants. The issues raised included: what are the attitudes of citizens to ex-convicts once they are released? Have tracer studies of these ex-convicts been made, including their employability, integration into communities and the relevance of the ABET programme to their lives in the community? Participants also wanted more data and information about the role of the state, NGOs, industrial and commercial sectors, and development agencies in the financing of ABET. Is the Government committed to financing the ABET projects? What are the problems confronting ABET NGOs in relation to financing of their projects?

3.0 Presentations and Exhibition

This section of the report gives a summary of the discussions that took place during the formal presentation sessions. The papers presented at these sessions have been published in a separate volume. It needs to be emphasised that the nature of the discussions reflected the exploratory and open nature of the symposium, which did not involve pressures for formal consensus building procedures. In order to guide a structured exploration of the issues concerned, the symposium theme was divided into the following six sub-themes:

- The South Africa case study: The Dynamism of Non-Formal Education, Basic Education and Literacy

- From Literacy to Lifelong Learning to the Creation of learning Societies

- Creating a Reading Environment and Literate Culture (Jointly with Working Group on Books and Learning Materials)

- Show & Tell: followed by Questions & Answers on "Using Literacy and NFE for Community Empowerment"

- Case studies and models of good practice on "Alternative Learning Opportunities- The role of NFE"

- Linking formal education and NFE for Integrated Diversity

- Asia Case-Study

The key issues that arose from the presentations are highlighted below, under these sub-themes.

3.1 South Africa case study: The Dynamism of Non-Formal Education, Basic Education and Literacy

The theme of the South African case study was the Dynamism of Non-Formal Education, Basic Education and Literacy. The session was chaired by Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria and involved the following five panellists:

Gugu Nxumalo: Acting Director, Department of Education
Lolwana: Department of Labour
Mandla Methembu: Interim Advisory ABET Body (IAAB)
Botlhale Nong: AETASA
Mastin Prinsloo: School of Education, University of Cape Town

Gugu Nxumalo, the Acting Director of Adult Education in the Department of Education started the ball rolling. She used the analogy of six blind men and the elephant to describe the historical context of the shambles that South African education was in, prior to majority rule in 1994. Nxumalo explained that the new South Africa inherited an education system, which was morally unjust, politically oppressive, financially wasteful and managerially incompetent, inefficient and corrupt. Overall, the challenge of educational transformation was enormous because the country had to transform 15 different Ministries of Education, 25,000 schools had been organised in many different ways, several teacher unions disorganised and confusion about the shortage and/or saturation of teachers in the schools. Therefore, complex and radical transformations needed to be made at the level of national governance, provincial district, non-formal education and schools. The single overriding moral imperative

for national and provincial departments of education is equity. This involves redressing the inequities of the former racially and ethnically organised education system as reflected in policies, practices and per capita spending, especially with respect to black and rural South African children and adults, who have suffered from a legacy of injustice and mistrust.

Therefore government is involved in massive changes throughout the education system, changes that include capacity building, transparency, development of partnerships and a collective spirit among the stakeholders. The nature of the landscape is changing. A case in point is that since 1994, development agencies put funds into government coffers instead of NGOs. As a result, funding of NGOs focusing on NFE issues has drastically shrunk because government is confronted with a questioning of priorities and does not have the capacity to fund the NGOs, let alone provide adequate funding for the NFE sector of education.

The Division of Adult Education is building better management structures with proper policy guidelines. Government is investing in a single integrated education system which links all forms of education because it is propelled by a similar framework and standards. A variety of pathways and education delivery systems are being created in and out of formal and non-formal education because all these routes have the same goal: sustainability, quality and equitable education for all citizens irrespective of race, gender, region, ethnicity and disability.

Lolwana from the Department of Labour focused her discussion on Literacy and Skills Development. She explained that the Department of Labour has passed a Skills Strategy Act aimed at addressing the following issues:

- Studying and monitoring the South African labour market;

- Linking education to economic and global markets because it is not a separate entity;

- Integrating education and training;

- Acknowledging and capitalising on the fact that skills training is demand driven not supply driven and that is why the work of the Labour Department complements the work of the Department of Education;

- There is a crisis in the funding of education which is linked to the job market because employers want to see the utility of education to their labour requirements;

- There is an intense debate on the purpose of adult education. Many believe that adult education should not be for its own sake.

She strongly felt that it is unrealistic for some educators to argue that *"learning should be for the sake of learning."* There is a divide between adult education and the demand driven economy resulting in the ghettoisation of education in the work context. She expressed the view that:

> *"Adult education needs a purpose, to me the purpose is to link it with the demands of the labour market, if we refuse to make that link then lets get rid of adult education because it will have no purpose!"*

The Labour Department has taken a broad view of Skills Training and ABET by conceptualising them within the broader context of lifelong learning, irrespective of whether the learning occurs in the public or private spheres. In the view of the Labour Department, private sphere work including cleaning, childcare, cooking are all formal legitimate work. It therefore challenges the dismissal of household activities as not work. The Department's Employment Skills Unit focuses on training citizens in skills required for all sectors of

employment, which is why the monitoring of the outcomes of skills development education is a critical component of the Unit.

Mandla Methembu, representing the Interim Advisory ABET Body (IAAB) explained that the agency was established for the renewal of the ABET sector. He went on to explain that ABET is a human right and an integral component of human development and civilisation. He concurred with Nxumalo that since 1994, funding for ABET has shrunk. The other challenges which ABET is confronted with include: inadequate legislation; lack of expertise and material resources in the field; and mismanagement and misappropriation of funds. There is a need for the establishment of a funding body because presently it is the employed that have access to skills development resources. The agency recommends that South Africa build a new ABET movement which is committed to breaking the back of illiteracy. Discussions are underway for the establishment of an advisory board in which all stakeholders are members. This board should act as a new, more democratic and relevant policy forum.

Botlhale Nong, a representative of Adult Education Teachers Association (AETASA), concurred with Lolwana from the Department of Labour that non-formal education has been ghettoised, which is ironical because the bulk of learning occurs outside the school frame. She went on to argue that the challenge is to stop the trend of making ABET the responsibility of adult education organisations outside the state. Instead, ABET should be built on a wide democratic basic education framework which ensures that the state also takes on major responsibilities for ABET.

The challenges facing ABET in South Africa include building democracy through a basic education vision, which includes and ensures an equal partnership between formal and non-formal education, and the development of a qualifications framework which recognises the importance of balancing competency/certification with professional remuneration. She criticised the way that government has taken advantage of the historical context of volunteerism in ABET to abdicate its responsibility in this area. Since ABET has survived historically through volunteerism, there is low remuneration of teachers working outside schooling, especially as their qualifications and status are lower than those of teachers employed in formal schools.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for dialogue around a broader vision of education, which includes the professionalisation of ABET. The process of professionalisation would establish management structures that reward motivated agents who are both accountable and valued. It would also include retraining and further training of these teachers and the linking of the staff development with their remuneration.

The presentation by Mastin Prinsloo: School of Education, University of Cape Town focused on challenging issues around literacy and adult education in South Africa. Prinsloo started by maintaining that the government's goal of breaking the back of illiteracy within five years is unrealistic. He argued that:

> *Minister Kader Asmal has set down the intention to "break the back of illiteracy" within five years as well as to ensure that all children achieve competency in reading, writing and numeracy skills by Age 9 or the end of Grade 3. Neither of these ambitions is realistic. They are premised on a misconception of literacy as simply the 'basic skill' of alphabetisation, and the accompanying assumption that it can be quickly and effectively passed on by briefly trained volunteer teachers and student teachers.*

He went on to state that decades of research into children's early literacy acquisition and into adult learning has shown that a wider conception is required of how literacy works in

particular situations for particular purposes, in order to learn how to learn. If the school does not make connections to learner's non-school understandings it probably would fail in its objective. What children can get in the first few years of schooling, and what adults can get in adult literacy classes if they are well taught and other things are in place, is an initiation into a lifetime of learning to be a reader and writer for particular purposes in particular contexts. If they are effectively taught, under contemporary social conditions, this is what they need to be learning about literacy from the beginning. If children and adults are to develop successful careers as critical and active readers and writers the four concepts of: coding competence; semantic competence; pragmatic competence; and critical competence should all be part of the basic curriculum. These cannot be taught in sequence, as if the one logically precedes the other, since they are highly inter-related.

He also argued that there is a need to recognise the specificity of the adult literacy curriculum, which the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) does not allow. There is a difference between what children are supposed to be doing in schools and what adults do with literacy in real contexts. Effective curriculum development needs to engage with literacy as embedded social practice and not as dis-embedded universalised skill. Assessment also needs to be more dynamically linked to a purposeful curriculum development, which starts with an understanding of unschooled adults as engaged social participants and not marginalised creatures of cognitive and cultural deficit.

ABET and the NQF were conceived and implemented in South Africa as social interventions and social strategies. It was believed they would be part of a larger process that would give all workers access to portable national qualifications, through training. This ambition has not been realised in other parts of the world from whom South African education and training policy borrowed so much (Australia, in particular) and almost certainly would not be realised to any significant extent in South Africa. The conditions associated with global capitalism have not gone that way, the outsourcing and deregulation of jobs has meant less work, and less chances of career paths, for most.

The strategy of developing proliferating lists of national standards and 'generic skills' for ABET and other parts of the NQF has led to a separation of assessment from curriculum that has had consequences that need to be recognised. In South Africa and elsewhere, the most immediate visible outcomes of such strategies have been a critical lack of curriculum development and teacher training, a massive uncertainty at the level of provision, evidence of 'teaching to the test', a dumbing down of content and also, ironically, curriculum over-specification.

3.1.1 Summary of Plenary Discussion

The presentations produced heated and lively debates. The presentations and plenary discussion identified a number of interrelated factors as contributing to the challenges confronting non-formal education in South Africa. The issues which time and again emerged from the discussions were: contradictions in the diverse views of stakeholders as to the purpose of education; how non-formal education is conceptualised; the dichotomy between formal and non-formal education; inadequate financing of non-formal education and the way forward.

Contradictions in What Stakeholders View as NFE and the Purpose of Education

There was a lot of interest in the statement made by Lolwana from the Department of Labour that the marginalisation of NFE is partly due to some educators' unrealistic view

that learning should be for the sake of learning. She argued that the purpose of education was to link adult educational needs with the demands of the labour market. Several speakers opposed her view, stressing the interdependence between humanitarian and functional purposes of learning. They maintained that since the 1960s it has been argued that learning for the sake of learning is not education. However, the reality is that in all education systems, learning concerns both the needs of the individual and the needs of society. Therefore it is the responsibility of the stakeholders to create a balance between nurturing the individual's love of learning and the utilitarian need for learning for the sake of employment and so on. The predominant view was that without the internal drive to learn for its own sake, an individual is not motivated to learn for functional reasons like employment. Marc-Laurent Hazoume went on to state that the crisis in education is worsening and in order to overcome the crisis, interfaces should be created between NFE and formal education. It is important to build bridges between formal education and NFE rather than reinforce the borders between them with attitudes, policies and practices that only ascribe a functional purpose to learning.

Concern was raised by Mamadou Bagayoko, regarding the fact that the presentations from the Departments of Labour and Education made no mention of child labour and how formal and non-formal education (NFE) can collaborate to address children's rights as a human rights issue. According to the participants' contributions, NFE is here to stay and it is not a stop-gap measure. That is why the Labour Department of the Department of Education and other stakeholders should work together to address the problems linked to the rights of the child to education.

Several participants raised concerns about how NFE and literacy, an important component of NFE, were conceptualised. Several participants supported Prinsloo's observation that the government's goal of breaking the back of illiteracy within five years is unrealistic. Unrealistic because these ambitions are premised on a misconception of literacy as a simple basic skill which can be quickly and effectively passed on by briefly trained volunteer teachers and student teachers. Roy Williams also raised concerns about the issues of volunteerism and the "medicalisation" of NFE. It is important that volunteerism in NFE is not used as an excuse by the state to under-fund NFE and under-pay literacy educators. He warned that the "medical model" should not be applied to NFE because it views literacy as a vaccination to be given when needed, which is wrong because NFE is a process of lifelong learning. Others were of the view that volunteerism has a long history in NFE as part of the liberal tradition of the privileged providing for the disadvantaged, and this tradition should not be eroded.

Jon Lauglo challenged what he called Prinsloo's notion of literacy as a homogeneous entity. The concept of literacy implies that there is only one use of literacy. In Lauglo's view it was important to pursue the notion of different literacies. Literacies have a variety of uses and limitations and that is what contributes to the dynamism of NFE. Different political, historical, economic and socio-cultural contexts create these varieties of literacies in response to the different needs of the learners. It is vital to acknowledge that literacies transcend varieties of situations and uses.

Agneta Lind was of the view that when the new South African Minister of Education took over in June 1999, he realised the need to revitalise adult literacy and that is why he launched the new initiative on breaking the back of illiteracy within five years. She suggested that the Minister was conscious of the NFE challenges confronting the country, which included:

- How to create complementarities and partnerships between stakeholders

- How to fund NFE. What is required is one lump sum of funds to be used in partnerships by both government and NGOs for the NFE programmes.

What is required is a concerted national action policy and strategy on learning and doing, a policy and strategy which takes cognisance of the needs, abilities and knowledge of children and adults as learners.

There was also a further broadening of the discussion on the purpose of NFE when Benoit Ouoba linked up the field trip to an ABET prison project the previous day with the importance of an NFE strategy on learning and doing:

> Yesterday we went on a field trip to a prison and we met prisoners who were involved in ABET. Through the training they can leave prison with skills and some qualifications, which should enable them to fit into society.

However, several participants thought it important that tracer studies and impact studies be conducted to establish whether these prisoners were rehabilitated and employable once they leave prison. Legally and socially, ex-prisoners usually are confronted with stigmatisation and isolation from society, which makes it difficult for them to be rehabilitated. It would therefore be informative to find out what is being done in South Africa to resolve this attitudinal problem.

Inadequate Financing of Non-Formal Education

From the presentations, it was clear that non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which were very active during the apartheid era, now have inadequate funding. The reasons provided for lack of funding included development agencies transferring the funds, which used to go to NGOs for NFE, to government, as well as NGOs misappropriation of funds. Benoit Ouoba wanted to know how the stakeholders were going to deal with this serious problem. Abubakar Rajabu was of the opinion that it was vital that NFE be provided with a fair share of the education budget: "The tendency in all our countries is to treat NFE as the poor cousin of formal education."

Michel Carton was of the opinion that development agencies should fund the professional development of NFE educators and skills development programmes. He concurred with Prinsloo that it is important for the South African NFE programme to develop a national identity. The NFE policy should incorporate major reforms such as building bridges between formal and non-formal education, exchange of ideas at national, regional and international levels and the formation of NFE country working groups in which all stakeholders are represented and working in partnership.

The Way Forward

Dickson Mwansa pointed out that an important aspect of NFE is the overall management of basic education. For NFE to flourish, basic education policies should value and be committed to community participation in education. Management strategies such as decentralisation should be focused on power-sharing and providing communities with the capacity and resources to empower themselves.

The South African panellists announced that they were making plans to establish a country working group which will bring all the NFE stakeholders together as partners. They explained that they would be delighted to receive the support of the ADEA WG-NFE and their fellow

educators gathered at the symposium. In response, Jean-Marie Byll Cataria welcomed the decision of the South African representatives to establish a country working group and explained that the WG-NFE will be willing to provide the support the country may need in establishing a country working group on NFE.

3.2 From Literacy to Lifelong Learning to the Creation of Learning Societies

3.2.1 From Literacy to a Learning Society: An African Perspective

Mamadou Ndoye from the Africa Region Department of the World Bank opened the session by highlighting the importance of non-formal education in the lifelong struggle to meet the challenges confronting education in Africa today.

Major challenges include how to:

- promote values and behaviour which reinforce preventative healthcare and provide the means to fight HIV/AIDS.

- address and redress the causes and effects of wars on education in Africa.

- develop human beings to ensure lifelong growth and progress.

- strengthen the participation of communities at local levels of government.

- strengthen demographic responsibility, environmental protection and democracy.

He stated that the education systems in Africa did not have the capacity to contribute significantly to meeting the above-listed major challenges. Education systems in Africa are elitist, inefficient, ineffective and produce too many illiterates. Africa is the only continent where the number of illiterates is increasing rather than decreasing. Moreover, the education systems are still influenced by the colonial legacy and as a result, stifle local cultural skills and actively operate against endogenous knowledge and values. Frequently, the solutions provided by these education systems are irrelevant and out of scope with the knowledge, skills and values of the communities and societies they serve.

He pointed out that learning societies already exist and should not be ignored. Instead, we need to build from there and follow the evolution of lifelong learning and literacy. It was first pre-empted that literacy meant learning how to read and how to count. This vision was a very political one, he stated. Subsequently it has been widened and embraces issues such as how to develop production, how to develop one's own culture, what is the meaning of life. People should be given tools for the learning process to take place, to acquire learning strategies in permanent learning situations. This evolution also carries a political meaning. We could look at conditions at hand to promote lifelong learning in an environment where one has no books. Policies on reading materials, rural libraries, socio-cultural facilitation etc. provide a huge field for investigation.

He further stressed that supply-driven policies do not provide the answer to lifelong issues. Instead governments should provide demand-driven policies in partnership with local communities, agencies, and NGOs. NFE has a very significant and central role to play here. Indeed, when it comes to answering very specific needs, governments cannot provide these kind of services, hence the need to provide the above-mentioned partnership with proper institutional tools, policy structures and procedures, to allow the initiative to be financially supported by agencies, NGOs etc.

Mamadou Ndoye advocated for education which gives back to communities control of education. Education that boosts the skills needed to exploit the acquired knowledge to the

full by developing expertise inherent in the socio-historical roots of society. In that way, African societies' capacities for creativity, productivity, innovation would become more visible and effective and in that way propel the continent to engage confidently in the competitive global market. It is also difficult to talk about learning societies in Africa if local languages are not used in education systems, as this will only induce limitations in the education system. Stock must always be taken in the non-formal sector (follow-up and assessment), to build bridges and go back and forth between NFE and formal education.

Catherine Odora-Hoppers aptly continued where Mamadou Ndoye left off in her paper entitled: From Literacy to a Learning Society-An African Perspective. In the paper, she presented a powerful argument for the creation of a vision and manifesto of Africa as a learning society. Odora-Hoppers observed that at the end of the twentieth century, Africa stands at a cross-roads, with bitter memories of its colonial past. It faces awesome challenges in its efforts to overcome its experiences of history and search for a way forward.

Throughout the four development decades, it has been difficult to crystallise a vision of Africa that is progressive and generative from a platform of denial of the continent's heritage and knowledge. This has been become more and more obvious as globalisation rears its head and seeks to deny existence to the local – in our case – a submerged local.

> *The concept of learning societies dares us to construct new premises upon which we can move to dialogue with others in the 21st century. Africa shall endeavour to make literacy initiatives socially, culturally and economically useful by defining precisely what aspects of culture, knowledge and latent resources will be unearthed through such initiatives. It should also clarify how literacy is going to help recast African societies as legitimate locations of human imagination. To make literacy serve the goals of human development and African renaissance requires that functional literacy is interrogated from the perspective of the extent to which it has consciously taken on the vision of Africa in the coming millennium, in a way that does not portray the continent as marginalised. It is essential that the vision links literacy efforts closely with such processes and frameworks as the recognition of prior learning processes so that its utility is immediately realisable in legitimate contexts.*

She went on to state that Africa's manifesto for lifelong learning and the making of Africa into a learning society must include a statement that allows the continent to heal from its injuries caused by centuries of denial and denigration. The learning continent must commit itself to joining and competing with the rest of the world on terms it determines and comprehends. The local will be a force for sustainable human development and not an inverted mirror of western identity! It is vital that the literacy to service such a manifesto will lucidly and fearlessly specify exactly how knowledge of the western alphabet should contribute to the renewal of a continent subjugated in part by the very discourse of literacy itself. Literacy involves ideological contest over meaning and power; literacy is a political, social and academic activity. It is part and parcel of community development and movements working towards human rights and justice.

3.2.2 Towards a Learning Nation

Justin Ellis's paper: *Towards a Learning Nation* describes how, in Namibia, the education system is developing structures and supporting human agency in the process of working towards a learning society. He observed that the reasons for working towards a learning society revolve round a growing demand for opportunities to learn, from both children and adults. Many people realise that to survive they must make their own choices in a risky and

complex world. People realise they can no longer rely on governments and industry to make choices for them. Other forces heightening the demands for learning opportunities include:

- technological change

- globalisation and competition

- social movements fighting for human rights at local, national, regional and global levels

- information society

- school on its own is not enough.

He explained that creating a learning society can be realised when key policy areas of action are concentrated on for good effect, developing:

- a culture of learning

- co-ordination

- change institutions

- credit for learning

- critical thinking

These five key policy areas can be realised through strategies that incorporate an active tripartite partnership between government, civil society and industry. The strategies must also include: appraisal and evaluation, accessibility, affordability, pedagogically trained teachers, application to the world of work, attractive incentives, accreditation, avenues for progression and promotion.

> *America's output is no heavier than it was a century ago. Its real value however is 20 times greater. The reason for this is the growing 'knowledge' component in output. Such inputs now account for about 70 per cent of the value of cars produced in the US. Since 1980 the share of value added to exports by high technology goods has risen by 50 per cent in the USA, and by over 100 per cent in Britain.*

Lifelong learning permeates all institutions in society from the family, school, community to the workplace. The family members like children and mothers learn about early childhood development within the family, community and schools; children learn through formal education in schools and adults learn job skills in workplaces. The learning needs of learners are diverse and range from HIV/AIDS to employment creation.

Therefore the Namibian National Plan of Action for Adult Learning is in two parts.

Part 1 focuses on:

- advocacy through public media, UN week, directory, lifelong learning;

- multi-purpose community learning centres;

- policy development, co-ordination, monitoring and research council meetings.

Part 2 of the National Plan of Action focuses on:

- supporting the development of democracy in NGOs and all other institutions through activities that promote ethics and human rights;

- improving the quality of learning through law, training, research, a National Qualifications Framework and material development;

- setting new literacy targets and commitment to Universal Primary Education, information and media freedom;

- addressing gender injustices including domestic violence and screening of materials for gender bias;

- sensitivity to learners' needs and rights at work, including affirmative action and the situation of workers in farms and other informal sectors of employment;

- environment, health and population matters through activities such as population education projects and primary health care;

- economics of adult literacy including expenditure, fees, contributions and disaggregation of information by gender;

- regional and international donors and agencies such as SADC and ADEA assess adult literacy projects.

There are problems associated with building a learning society. The implementation demands changing institutions, co-ordination, leadership and participation and incentives. New partnerships, creativity and synergy have to be actively promoted. The research capacity needs to be developed in order to more practically deal with the priority issue of the poor. The effects of globalisation on the country have to be monitored in order to detect the effects on the country and redress the effects of globalisation, including the paradoxes for education expenditure.

3.2.3 Thinking Strategically about NFE

In her paper, Jeanne Moulton put forth proposals about how to incorporate strategic thinking into the planning and management of non-formal education. She defined strategic thinking as the mindset, skills, attitudes and tools required for the constant process of strategic planning. It is asking the simple questions over and over again. What do we want to do? Why? And How? The "why" question is important because it takes us to deeper levels of understanding about our ultimate goal, and gives us more options for answering the "how" question. The following principles guiding non-formal education should be the same ones that guide strategic thinking about NFE:

- The learner must be allowed to take charge of his or her own learning. This includes communities of learners being encouraged to take responsibility for opportunities for their members to learn. That is why quality NFE programmes ensure that the community is in charge and providers of education are responding to community needs.

- NFE providers must be responsive to learners' needs and interests. They must be sensitive and responsive to the diversity in the learners' needs by developing curricula and materials that respond to the specific needs of specific groups of learners. NFE educators must work with the learners to clearly identify the problems to be solved and the resources required to solve them.

- The resources required entail more than just training and education: they go beyond that to include economic freedom, credit, equipment, supplies and skills training. Though the educator may not furnish learners with more than training, the educator may need to assist learners to find complements to training that will make it useful.

In Africa, the first step towards thinking strategically about NFE is for Departments of Non-Formal Education to discard formal education as the model. The Department of Non-Formal

Education has to support NFE educators in the process of fostering myriad curricula and in gaining government assistance for authenticating courses that have practical, immediate application in learners' lives. The second step is to invite the partners in NFE, i.e. NGOs and other government agencies, to participate in its strategic planning. Partnership is critical to NFE because a sizeable share of NFE funds go to NGOs and other government departments. Furthermore, NGOs are better situated to provide non-formal education because they are small, flexible and mobile.

It is important that departments of NFE think strategically about goals and resources. Strategies best suited to support NFE are extremely different from those suited to supporting formal education. That is why departments of NFE should frame their goals in terms of problems to be solved rather than visions to be achieved. NFE requires goals that are set in the light of available resources. These resources are not limited to the ministry of education budget; resources need to be mobilised in the business sector and other government agencies and communities.

3.2.4 Summary of Discussions

The presentations triggered intensive discussions centred around the following questions: What have we lost as a continent? Where are we heading for as a continent? Cream Wright responded by stating that a learning society should promote democracy by empowering those who are disadvantaged. It is time for Africans through education and other means to encourage the *negotiation of social reality*. He argued that there was a need to confront and address the fact that in the future we may all be winners and losers in some sense, but the negotiating process will always be there as the agreed means by which we win or lose. The purpose of education is to facilitate dialogue and the negotiating process. It is evident that the school on its own is no longer enough. Therefore, the concept of a menu in education should be opened up: individuals and communities should take greater responsibility for selecting and packaging their own knowledge needs; people should have access to learning in different places, at different times, and in manageable chunks that they can handle for their own purposes. Hence, the formal and non-formal systems will open up and interact: the techniques of non-formal education will be brought in to the formal system, just as some of the positive aspects of the formal will flow out into non-formal systems. People will move in and out of formal and non-formal education.

Cream Wright was further of the opinion that Africa has the potential to create new realities in education and human development, and to become a pivotal power in this respect. Mamadou Ndoye also shared this view and stressed that partnerships at the national level are necessary and useful for progress in education and human development. They are a means of mobilisation of educational resources in a country. Regional and sub-regional partnerships can reinforce this process. He also pointed out that in the present educational system, much more is expected from the non-formal than from the formal system in terms of pedagogical innovations, articulation between the learning systems and daily realities. Experiences developed in the non-formal should feed the formal system. On the matter of partnership, Justin Ellis commented that nowadays, regionalisation is a very real force in the South African sub-region: most of the countries in the region have realised that they have to do things together.

Jeanne Moulton talked about the globalisation issue and learning society: the economies that are flourishing in this era of globalisation and competitiveness are those in which individuals take responsibility for their own learning and for their own productivity.

She said:

> As people who are involved in adults' education, we should do what we can to support learners who are taking responsibility for themselves and I think it is the state's role to support that also. The state should not simply say "we are responsible for the education of our people", but "we are responsible for helping each person take responsibility for learning". I think that is what will bolster an economy in the competitive era in which we are living.

Mamadou Ndoye also reflected upon globalisation, in terms of the African cultural identity. He was convinced that musicians have already paved the way to what we would like to achieve: the optimal use of the endogenous cultural potentiality of Africa combined with modern technology to lift themselves to the international top.

Still on the issue of globalisation and African identity, Catherine Odora-Hoppers was of the opinion that the key concept is democracy, and that one should begin to link democracy and epistemology, democracy and cosmology, democracy and diversity, democracy and tolerance. She stressed out that there are contradictions in the way we use such words like 'marginalised' and 'the poor'. Such usage may sometimes stand slightly in contradiction to what we really want to attribute to people who do not have money or who do not live in houses like those in our fantastic suburban areas. She pointed out that:

> When we look at subsistence living only as poverty, we are denying very complex modes of organisation at rural level, which may not be a one-to-one equivalence of poverty. We have got to think very carefully about what is the image of the 'marginalised' or 'the poor'. We have to know exactly what is the poverty we are talking about, so that we desist from further aggravating the situation of the poor. Are they 'knowing' people? What is it that they know, and is there something in what they know, that we can either build upon, learn from and learn to be a bit more humble?

She also reflected on the issues of lifelong learning throughout the Jomtien process, and remarked that fundamental issues are absent concerning the family and the traditional knowledge upon which the African child first builds before he enters the day care or before he comes to school.

3.3 Creating a Reading Environment and Literate Culture

The session was a combined effort of the ADEA Working Group on Non-formal Education and the Working Group on Learning Materials. These two Working Groups are committed to the creation of an enabling environment in reading. Experience has shown us that throughout Africa, there is a tendency of providing books in a vacuum, in other words, without addressing how they are going to be used, whether they are relevant, who chooses these books, who writes, designs and publishes them. It is essential that big education programmes with a books component ask all these questions in order to avoid conflicts of interests. These conflicts of interest at times result in inefficient and ineffective books distribution and book provision that undermines local publishing and book selling capacity, resulting in the distribution of books for learning which are not necessarily very relevant to the people for whom they are intended. The ADEA WG-NFE, we work not only to influence non-formal education policies in ministries of education and culture but also to influence policies in development agencies involved with books, hopefully to help them avoid some of the mistakes of the past.

The papers and discussions during this session focused on policies for creating a literate environment, as well as strategies to promote reading and ensure a better integration into the socio-cultural environment.

3.3.1 Creating a literate environment: which environment, which literacy?

In order to create a literate environment it is essential to keep in mind that there are a number of interrelated environments and literacies. These literacies impact on the environment which in turn dictate the purposes and uses of literacies. In his paper, Ekundayo Thompson argued that in this dynamic world where the environment is for ever changing, one should talk about literacies and environments in the context of non-formal education. When planning the development of a literate environment, one should ask which environment one wants to create, which literacy one wants to use?

The purposes of literacy should be viewed as social practices, cognitive skills and means of intellectual transformation. This entails using knowledge as an ideology, as a means for critically reconstructing the world, *"reading the word, reading the world"*, thus clearly indicating the needs and educational objectives for what is being done in literacy. Against this background, Thompson argued further that political, socio-cultural and economic environments are critical to the development of political, economic and social literacies in the lifelong education of learners. Political literacy is expected to contribute to people's empowerment, so that they could be part of the decision making processes and part of creating conditions for good governance. The social environment enables people to interact, to learn to live together within the social context. Learning to live together is vital throughout Africa, given the social diversity. If people are to survive and develop, social literacy must also flourish so that the guns are silenced throughout the region. The economic environment is very important in terms of poverty alleviation plans. Economic literacy becomes central to alleviating poverty, as people have to understand the dynamics of why they are poor.

3.3.2 Strategies to promote reading

There was consensus as to the urgent need to continue developing user friendly, gender sensitive and contextualised materials that provide a scope for good parenting and help business and environmental conservation, based on the needs expressed. Elizabeth Wafula's presentation provided a wide variety of strategies that can be used to promote reading and a literate environment. Materials should move to the communities so as to reach as many communities as possible, and independent learning should be promoted. Some of the learning centres should be made into multi-purpose centres with the capacity to provide books and a wide variety of other materials. The aim should be building an environment in which reading is encouraged by supporting the production and dissemination of easy reading materials for all learners including adults.

Wafula went on to provide a case study of the Kenya Adult Literacy programme which was launched 20 years ago, with the aim of promoting the development of a reading environment. To her the programme is a good example of the lack of farsightedness in making provision for support of reading after standard IV (lower primary). No facilities were provided for further reading and quite a substantial number of children relapsed into illiteracy. She went on to say that all ideas for promoting reading will come to nothing if there is no integrated national programme supported by all stakeholders including the government. The stakeholders would have to include the media, government, the private sector and all the creative minds of the country. Collaboration should be encouraged at district and national levels with other NFE organisations and other departments, which have a non-formal education component. For example, the nomadic community in the arid northern region of Kenya have a camel library: it is a co-operative venture of the Kenya library funded by GIZ.

Other strategies she highlighted include:

> Training people to take care of development issues; funding and management of projects; networking; encouraging competitive printing; asking participants to pay a token price for books to support future production; creating a sense of ownership.

From the point of view of the publisher, it was felt that a certain number of constraints and opportunities presently existed. Difficulties encountered included tax on books, and even though VAT may have been waived there is still VAT on the paper and on the machine etc. Government should be asked to waive all the taxes including government levy on fuel for transport to make books cheap. The publisher cannot commit himself in enterprises that are not economically viable: these are collective problems and everyone should get together to find adequate solutions. The state should be aware that what is lost in terms of taxes is gained in terms of education potentiality, which is the real factor for development.

3.3.3 A better integration in the socio-cultural environment

Throughout Africa, literacy projects are implemented without taking into account the socio-political, economic and cultural contexts. Pilot projects and experiences are duplicated in many countries, either by donor agencies or governments, under the assumption that they have been successful elsewhere. In his presentation Mamadou Aliou Sow explained that in West Africa, international publishing firms and development agencies have been encouraged to develop materials and literacy projects for literacy education because governments want to prove that they wish to eradicate illiteracy. However, more often than not these literacy projects are not properly evaluated and the outcomes are not those expected in terms of sustainability and achievement.

Mamadou Aliou Sow also brought forth another critical dimension linked to the development of literate environments: the issue of the status of national languages, which have no official recognition and the lack of legislation on the local languages. In Guinea, there are hardly any outlets for reading materials published in national languages. In West Africa, literacy programmes are delivered in local languages but government policies do not value the use of acquired knowledge in these local languages. For instance, learners are unable to distinguish the difference between a birth certificate and a national passport. These literacy learners have to ask somebody who has gone through the formal education to assist them. There is urgent need to go back to all the endogenous factors existing in Africa and give appropriate recognition (value) to the status of national languages. As long as this is not done at a political level, it will remain a problem in West Africa.

3.3.4 Summary of Plenary Discussion

It was felt by some that a literate environment will not be a reality unless the private sector concerned with books and printed material is sufficiently involved. The viability of the production and low quality of the materials will remain a problem until the private partners and NGOs are involved and a significant number of people acquire reading competencies.

In the same way, as long as there is not enough diverse and accessible reading materials, the learning society will not become a reality. The low quality of the publications and lack of norm of the printed materials interfere with the viability of production, and is a depreciatory factor for institutions, private partners and NGOs.

Moreover, some participants pointed out that many countries encountered difficulties in creating a reading environment because publications or printed materials are very expensive.

For example, in Tanzania, some people have to spend almost quarter of their daily salary in order to buy a newspaper. However, the rural press in Kenya offers a useful strategy to encourage reading. The newspaper is printed out of cheaper, not high quality paper, and this helps to keep down the cost of the newspaper. Another example was the NAFA centres in Guinea. During the past few years, the Ministry of Education in Guinea, through the National Commission of Basic Education for All and UNICEF, associated themselves with a local private editor to produce learning materials for non-formal education. They came up with a project for a national literacy policy, which is now being considered for adoption by government.

3.4 Show and Tell: followed by Questions and Answers on sub-theme "Using Literacy and NFE for Community Empowerment"

The Show and Tell session brought out interesting examples of community empowerment through local activities and raised fundamental questions about what is really non-formal education at the community level. Why is NFE at the community level different from formal education? Should it be different and more importantly, how can it scale up? The main conclusion was that much more political commitment at the highest level is required for non-formal education to be picked up, expanded and integrated into the whole education system.

Experiences presented showed that there are varieties of community schools: some are connected to skills training, especially vocational skills, and others to life skills. The curricula are planned in such a way that these skills are delivered by communities, enabling them to have a say in what the children learn and what they themselves learn. Communities should have the opportunity to take part in curriculum development so that they can decide their own progression. Community schools provide education mainly to disadvantaged groups. Other disadvantaged groups that should be brought more into these schools are AIDS orphans, child workers, girls from poor families and street children. Community schools provide communities with opportunities for interfacing non-formal and formal education.

3.4.1 Strengths and Constraints of Community schools

Dickson Mwansa's presentation was on community schools in Zambia. He stated that one of the strengths of community schools is their closeness to communities. Added to this is the very high commitment to teaching by their teachers, which allows a more relaxed relationship between pupils and teachers than in government schools. The drawback is that most teachers remunerated by communities are not paid and many work on a voluntary basis. The majority of these teachers are untrained, not paid and some are demoralised. Furthermore, the availability of materials is sporadic.

Nevertheless, there are exciting innovations taking place in these community schools. Teaching can be supplemented with distance education materials; community schools are annexed to government schools so that the head teacher of the government school becomes head teacher of the annexed school; teachers can attend staff meetings at the regular schools, which is also a way of coaching the teachers.

Government's role regarding these community schools should also be considered, taking into account the qualification of teachers, the absence of didactic materials and limited finance. The state's responsibility regarding community schools as an aspect of equity was questioned because in the process, public money goes to children who are less disadvantaged than children who attend community schools. It was felt that through advocacy and pressure

on the state, it will come in and recognise the importance of community schools. Within countries where community schools are dominant, it is evident that there is something wrong within the education system and communities are taking their own initiative to come up with what is suitable for them. In order to help them, governments and ministries of education will need to go to the aid of communities so that they can provide quality education. In that manner, communities would not be left on their own, and government will then advise them on what they really need. Government is required to provide professional support without pulling community schools back into the main formal school system with all its weaknesses, from which these communities are trying to escape.

3.4.2 Education and Empowerment of Communities

Laurencia Adams of the West African NGO known as POSDEV viewed literacy and non-formal education as the very first steps towards the empowerment of communities. She explained that NGOs are tools for stimulating advocacy within these communities. Functional literacy, skill transfer and capacity building are all aimed at enabling communities to assess their situations, make strategic decisions and undertake activities with the objective of improving their socio-economic and political life. It is imperative that change starts now, if the challenges facing grassroots populations in Africa today are to be met and resolved. These challenges and constraints include: food security and poverty alleviation; health and HIV/AIDS; sustainable natural resource management; decentralisation and good governance and globalisation. All these need to be considered as well as issues relating to the dignified existence of local people.

There is an interface between community learning and the type of formal education that can promote equity in the face of diversity. Community learning facilitates the nurturing of empowering community knowledge, which communities can then use to change formal education. Teachers have tremendous competencies in Africa, and in general, everybody has a tremendous competency in their own culture though this is largely neglected and disregarded by formal education. Therefore, one should recognise the wealth of knowledge present in the cultural competencies of teachers in local languages, in the arts, music, dance, story telling, knowledge of the natural world around them, of plants, the ecology, etc., which is often ignored by formal curricula.

Jedidah Mujidi of the Ministry of Education, Kenya, continued in the same vein by presenting on alternatives to formal education in Kenya. In Kenya the total enrolment for children and youths is 10 million. Out of this, 1.5 million children are in early childhood education, 5.8 million in primary education, 0.8 million in secondary education and 2 million are out of school. It is a major concern of government that although the education policy is committed to education for all, they are still have large numbers of children and youth out of school. NFE in Kenya is not directly delivered by the Ministry of Education but by partners in education from the communities, NGOs and development agencies. There are a large number of community schools in Kenya, just like in Zambia. The problems associated with these schools are inadequate and irregular salaries for teachers because they are remunerated by communities. For instance the Masai communities' mobile schools do not want their teachers paid in monetary forms but in kind, such as payment in cattle, which symbolise high status in Masai society. The Ministry encourages such initiatives and facilitates communities to network, so that they reap higher returns. It facilitates disadvantaged groups such as AIDS orphans, street children, girls, child workers and nomadic groups. In 1999 the Ministry had a symposium to develop policies and laws governing child labour. As a result

the Ministry have been able to negotiate and initiate several policies. A double shift and multi-grade teaching delivery systems has been established in order to improve the quality of life of working children and communities, and to provide a flexible learning environment which connects formal and non-formal modes of delivery. The Ministry has also negotiated for fair conditions for pregnant school girls, so that they are not thrown out of school. Kenya is also in the process of establishing a Country Working Group that will focus on issues relating to NFE and other alternative learning systems. The committee will develop its own terms of reference and reflect the diversity of partners engaged in the NFE arena.

Roger Ravenstrup presented a paper he prepared with Patti Swarts entitled *Towards Equitable Diversity in Education in Namibia*. The focus of the paper is the interface between community learning and formal education for equitable diversity. He explained that innovative and low-cost education programmes can improve access to and quality of education and, simultaneously, generate new sources of funds and support. Even small financial investments in education can release great creativity and energy (Anderson, 1992). It is within this context that two innovative alternative programmes in Namibia are described. Both these programmes were targeted towards those who have historically been disadvantaged and marginalised – the San (also referred to as Bushmen, but for this paper the Ju/'hoansi) and the Ovahimba. It is important to note that both these examples are from marginalised groups: they do not at the moment threaten vested interests in the mainstream, but they do have considerable potential and significance if the lessons which can be learnt from them are applied in other contexts.

The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project among the Ju/'hoansi was initially a full donor funded project under the auspices of the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation. Certain components of the project are now funded by the Namibian government while some elements are still donor funded. The project aims to bring lower primary education (Grades 1 – 3) to the children in the area, instead of the children having to go away to a government school or not go to school at all. The education provided is meaningful, relevant and culturally affirmative even though it adheres to the national curriculum for lower primary, which provides a reasonable framework for local development. The medium of instruction is Ju/'hoan. The Nyae Nyae Village schools consist of 5 small schools scattered across a relatively large area. Learners come from feeder villages and stay with relatives. The schools have a feeding programme where the cooking is done by a member of the community. The teachers (5 senior and 6 junior teachers) have been recruited from the ranks of the Ju/'hoan communities scattered across the Nyae Nyae area. The main requirements for recruitment were that the teacher candidates were Ju/'hoan speakers and acceptable to the community.

The Ovahimba people live in Northwest Namibia in the Kunene region. They are a nomadic and marginalised group still living a very traditional way of life. The ordinary formal education system does not cater for the real needs of the Ovahimba who often move around during the school year in search of grazing for their cattle. In 1997, mobile school units were introduced among the Ovahimba in order to ensure that education adapts to the socio-cultural context and life experiences of the Ovahimba learners. This was an effort to make education more accessible (by moving around with the people) and the experience more relevant and meaningful to the learners (by incorporating life experiences and daily activities of the people).

Ravenstrup pointed out that the growing process of a much-needed shift of understanding of education in sub-Saharan Africa is primarily a response to the fact that the real needs of the majority of children are not being met, nor have been, by formal education. He went on

to explain that the two projects described above for Namibia are a pragmatic response to particular social contexts, where conventional formal education has not even partially succeeded, and where it was accepted that the conventions of formal education had to be diversified if equity and relevance are to be achievable in the long term.

Teachers as professionals also need some recognition, otherwise they are not going to be able to get the pay and status. The children whom they are teaching would sooner or later have to enter the formal system and that transition has to be made as smooth as possible. To have education innovation and to interface community learning and formal education, one has to change not only the surface structures but also deeper structures. These include: knowledge, time, space, materials, groups, management, instruction, assessment and recognition. In community learning, knowledge is what the community empowers to its children through peers, mentors, parents, other community members, instructors, in the traditional initiation rites and so on. How many different forms of knowledge, skills and competencies could be assessed and recognised, if diversity were not only recognised, but developed into an integrated, holistic system? One must also be aware that the formal education system is the one with the most firmly embedded power structures, not least the colonial inheritance of Examination Boards.

The learning is managed by the community itself and the instruction is given by the people who have the competence in the community. As the children's abilities are assessed very informally in authentic and real situations, they are given recognition in terms of more responsibilities or whatever it may be, totally unlike formal education. NFE is authentic learning which formal education is not. Formal education is largely pretend learning. In order to make these changes, one is also looking at the very deep structure of knowledge. It implies differences in the substance, state of knowledge and the relations around knowledge, and the sharing and transmission of knowledge.

If we are to move towards equity in diversity, we must be aware of what level we are talking about, or we will only be working superficially. If the full potential of the diversity is realised, one would see a system of education recognising a variety of forms of knowledge, a variety of ways of organising learning in terms of time, space, grouping etc., and finding ways of acknowledging this in terms of recognition. The changes in roles and in systems could be quite profound, and one must be aware of the fact that one cannot change one element at the surface level without implications at deeper levels. If one looks at the formal system, one understands why it is so difficult to change it because of the very rigid hierarchical way in which it is structured, and the fact that the curricula are based on classification and categorisation. It is exceedingly difficult to initiate change without identifying the power and knowledge relationships within the formal system. On the other hand, there is tremendous potential in tapping into the community knowledge and creating flexible time, flexible space and wider instruction.

3.4.3 Summary of Plenary Discussions

During the plenary discussions a lot of questions were raised. Why is it so difficult to take these innovations to scale? Why is change so slow, what are the real obstacles to taking these initiatives to scale? What are the forces militating against the attainment of self-reliant development processes based on traditional values? Why are we unable to determine our own development model or paradigm? Wouldn't change occur faster if the majority of grassroots population are educated and endowed with fundamental skills of reading, writing and analysis when young? Will this not make a community more capable of perceiving the

need for change and accepting change? At what point are we going to stop this vicious cycle of ever increasing numbers of illiterates, with ever increasing corresponding literacy programmes. If we are able to effectively change the downward trend of ever increasing numbers of illiterates, would not resources be liberated to address other very important issues?

Bringing innovations to scale and their sustainability

On the question of why it is so difficult to bring innovations to scale, one response was that "pilot" is not the same as "reality" that is why these innovations do not work when brought to scale. It was argued that many people wrongly believe that what is done in pilot projects will necessarily work in reality, everywhere. In some cases it can work, but there are certain pre-requisites to do with leadership of the community in terms of capacity for self-organising. For instance a well-organised local school committee leads to a sense of ownership and of belonging together as a community. In such cases, people move from just talking about problems to doing something about what their children learn and conditions under which they learn.

One of the difficulties in taking innovations to scales resides in the history of formal western education in Africa. Formal education that was introduced into Africa was urban middle class bourgeois education, which was made education for all. It was not the education of the lower classes in Europe, which would perhaps have been a better bottom-up foundation. Secondly, there is a deep structural phenomenon in the type of western education inherited by African states. The foundations of its epistemology, that is, its knowledge and intelligence are based on patriarchy and masculine hierarchical thinking. University departments, professorships, policy making in government institutions are based on these hierarchical masculine lines. Anyway, marginalised groups are always easy to do innovative projects with, because they are not a threat to the power base.

One of the strengths of the community school is the fact that it is integrated with life. Unless it is integrated with a community's life to a very large extent, there is nothing non-formal about it. Basic education in an integrated form is when literacy, basic knowledge and livelihoods work together. However, within basic education each component should have its own discipline in timing, in delivery system, in evaluation. Once these factors are agreed upon, then putting to scale is possible.

Once an innovation is identified with outsiders, the community and/or government does not perceive the innovation as a capacity building programme which can be sustained over time for a permanent solution. Governments have somehow to put in place a group of people to study these innovations. However, among ministers of education confidence in research and innovation is not very strong. As we move into the 21st century, more systematic modalities in terms of research capacity and good education practices need to be identified, put in place, disseminated and monitored in ministries of education throughout the continent. ADEA WG-NFE and ministries of education need to continue to invest time, commitment and funds in the follow up and implementation of these issues.

Non-formal nature of community schools

One should also reflect on the non-formal nature of these community schools. What makes them non-formal? Is it the fact that they are operated by communities and not by government, or are they non-formal because they develop different methods of training and deliver

different programmes? These community schools are gaining considerable importance in Africa: either because of deliberate government policy in trying to decentralise the education system, or because the state is completely absent and communities have to take initiatives. One answer is that community schools are non-formal because they cut seven years of primary education to four years. What a child does in formal schooling is packaged in such a way that it is done in four years. Also, community schools cater for various ages. NFE programmes are very flexible and variable in style and content; they can be expanded and brought to a much larger scale to benefit a wider community. That is what formal education does not allow! NFE programmes allow such flexibility and at the same time learners can be encouraged to link into the formal system if they wish to follow that direction. In this sense, they can be given the opportunity to select from the formal system certain beneficial skills that are unique to formal education.

Literacy and non-formal education are the tools that can be used for constructive change at the grassroots, to act as a catalyst to start rethinking African development. Change has to be done from within, and one has to negotiate and act as an ambassador to move the change process, otherwise the progress intended might not be made. It was remarked that very often some of the NGOs or community groups who engage in what is termed non-formal education are not even concerned with educational training but are concerned in achieving certain competencies in people; they see education as a vehicle towards maybe greater agricultural productivity and cultural development, or using new communication methods; so they would not assess their education activities in the kind of educational terms that would be used in evaluation. Educators should be mindful of those kind of objectives which are primarily focusing on how for instance to rescue people such as street children in a certain situation where they are disadvantaged, not necessarily how to give a certificate or make them competent in reading and writing, but how to change the situation. Education in these circumstances is just one vehicle, because there are other things that have to be in place for change to happen.

Quality education can be provided through collaboration and partnerships with communities, other government departments and churches. Quality assurance and quality development can be provided by the ministries of education. The aim is to contribute to equitable access, retention and completion of quality basic education and life skills for all children and youth. Basic education has greater benefits for the overwhelming majority of the population, for example, in human development and improving the quality of life. Basic education is a critical factor in the reduction of poverty, a critical component to achieving gender equity, and a cornerstone to creating a competent civil society.

Communities are demanding more participation in local governance, and the effectiveness of non-formal education in grassroots development has been proven in communities in West Africa where there has been a devolution of power from central government to decentralised structures and from local authorities to local communities. Impact can only be leveraged through NGOs and community based organisations.

3.4.4 HIV/AIDS

Several participants raised the issue of AIDS as a major challenge to NFE and community empowerment. This cannot be ignored as some 50 million people in the world have now contracted AIDS with about 35 million of them still alive at the present time. About two-thirds of these people living with AIDS are in sub-Saharan Africa. AIDS is already changing education drastically: seven percent of households in Zambia are headed by a fourteen year

old or younger person. Around the borders of Tanzania, 35 percent of the children are AIDS orphans. The magnitude of the problem and the rate at which it is growing, is attacking the fundamental structures of society. It is affecting children because Africa now has the problem of AIDS orphans and child-headed families, whilst extended families support structures are breaking down. In many areas of Africa, one cannot only speak of adults but sadly of child-adults. The critical roles of children and adults are being wiped out. Unless education first and foremost empowers, develops and protects these child orphans, then the continent is facing dire problems ahead. The teaching force in many countries is being seriously depleted, the role of the teacher is changing, and the role of the head teacher is also changing into a counsellor for others. External factors are seriously going to change the form and content of education.

Education has a very different range of responsibilities, needs and skills in terms of children and youth living in societies that are badly affected by HIV/AIDS. Life skills education is one direction that many, including UNICEF, are pointing to. HIV/AIDS is weakening the fabric of our education systems because many countries are losing teachers at a rate that is not replaceable anymore. It is forcing a great deal of new thinking about the kind of teachers required; their training, where they get the training, and what kind of information and skills they need to impart to their students. First and foremost, these teachers need to survive, and also educate and train children, youth and adults in how to survive too. There was consensus among the presenters that HIV/AIDS has to come right at the centre of attention in both formal and non-formal education.

Political Vision and Decision-making

Participants warned that NFE and community empowerment cannot be realised without political vision and commitment. What are the causes for particular projects to grow, to be sustained or to be replicated in other situations? Factors that contribute to the growth of certain projects are related to the choice of media and methodology; organisational and administrative factors and political will. Political will probably is the most critical factor. Tools exist to take on the challenges; the media and methods are available to carry out adult basic and non-formal education in ways that will enable social and economic development to happen on a large scale. However, in the final analysis, it does come down to political will. In the last decade, there are certainly indications that political will has been absent. Unless governments and international agencies take on basic education as a serious and high priority task, initiatives on education for all will continue to fail. This issue was forcefully explored by Cream Wright and Adama Ouane in their contributions. Given the number of years of experimentation in education and development, we have acquired knowledge on things that work, we can make things happen in communities, we can pack and unpack content, we can deal with all sorts of things in education. But we are refusing to face difficult political decisions. Cream Wright argued that the way education is funded is on a crazy principle of rewarding more and more those who have achieved and obtained more and more, therefore depriving more and more those that have never participated and attained education. A radical shift in the re-allocation of resources in society by governments to benefit people who are really in need is an important example of what needs to be done. Still on the issue of political will, Adama Ouane pointed out that:

> One illustration is the language issue: we have been grappling with experiments for almost half a century now, and there are answers to all the questions imaginable you can raise on languages. But still we have experiments going on. Nowhere is the mother tongue used in a sort of

valuable, meaningful scale. The arguments presented against full-scale use of the mother tongue in instruction vary from " it is very costly" to " countries have hundreds of languages, where do you start?" In all these questions, the real problem is the political vision and the will. It is a hard political decision concentrated in the hands of a few powerful people who always find ways of getting out of complicated situations.

3.4.5 Evaluation of these types of learning systems

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are under a lot of pressure to show results and perhaps do not have time to assess or evaluate the type of education they administer. The NFE efforts of NGOs are concerned with transferring knowledge and skills to a community, to enable the community to undertake certain activities through the application of that knowledge. The knowledge is applied usually to better the lives of the community. As grassroots service providers, the primary focus of NGOs is alleviating poverty and improving the standard of living of the people. Literacy is not an end in itself: it has to be relevant; it has to be used to upgrade the lives of the people. If it is unable to do that, then it raises the question of the relevance of this type of education. Some communities are refusing to send their children to formal schools and would rather move towards the NGO that provides useful knowledge and skills training. NGOs are under a lot of pressure to show results and they tend to concentrate on things that give immediate and tangible benefits such as transforming the local skills capacity and levels of production in a way that impacts on the quality of life.

3.5 Case studies and models of good practice on the sub theme: "Alternative Learning Opportunities – The Role of NFE"

3.5.1 Case studies from Guinea and Burkina Faso

During this session case studies were presented on models of good practice in the arena of NFE from Guinea and Burkina Faso through the NAFA centres and the CEBNF experiences. Seemingly similar, these experiences try to solve the problem of heterogeneity of target groups in classes; manage the effective training of trainers; find ways for a good monitoring and evaluation system and reinforce the capacity of appropriation of these experiences by the community.

Diallo explained that in the Republic of Guinea, reforms since independence in 1958 did not yield the expected results. Politicians generally initiated these reforms without adequate consultation with educators. Also the realities of the state of educational infrastructure did not make it possible to realise many ambitious goals. There were alternative solutions such as the NAFA centres, which were created from 1991 to provide alternative education for out-of-school children (children between 10 and 16 years old, who for one reason or another, have not been able to go to school). In 1999 there were 117 NAFA centres, with 82 rural centres and 89 women centres. The aims were that the centres should develop instrumental basic knowledge, reading, writing and counting. NAFA centres also provide learners with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, know-how and values required in transforming and preserving their environment. It allows children to join the formal system. It also reduces disparities between rural and urban zones and between girls and boys.

Training in these NAFA centres is flexible and the calendar is negotiated with parents and learners. The programme is delivered in 1080 hours, throughout three levels of 360 hours each. The approach is one of competencies in the fields of communication, knowledge of the environment and arithmetic (counting). The partners in this programme are the

government (through the Ministry of Education), UNICEF, and the communities. Responsibilities are shared, costs are minimised, and human resources are optimised. The state provides a qualified teacher and the community recruits an animator and a monitor (woman) to look after young girls. All these people are paid by the community. UNICEF provides the didactic material, equipment and sometimes supports the training.

During the five years of execution of the programme, numerous difficulties were encountered such as getting the programme accepted by the stakeholders; remuneration of the animators was also sometimes difficult because communities were too poor to pay regular salaries. Many parents see the NAFA centres as training focal points rather than information centres. They worry much more that their child should learn a job rather than become literate, which was asking too much from the animators who are not specialists if one judges according to the time of training (six weeks over two periods). Notwithstanding these difficulties, the NAFA centres are an innovation in Guinea, because they cater for the needs of the target groups which are left out of schooling, and they address the needs of children who contribute to the economic development of the country.

There is currently a high demand for NAFA centres. During the summer holidays, the National Institute for Research and Pedagogical Action re-structured its programmes drawing on the methodological approach used by NAFA. A stock-taking of NAFA centres by the Service of Statistics and Planning & School of Fundamental Quality started in 1999 to evaluate the impact of the programme. There is also a need for follow-up and to train communities in management. Poverty is gaining ground in Guinea and the programme needs to take that into account. We think that NAFA should assist communities to address problems of inadequate funds and poverty. For instance, communities' payments to trainers are inconsistent. Out of the 6000 classrooms funded through the support of development agencies, communities built 2500.

From 1968 to 1984, Guinea used six national languages from elementary to secondary level, but no evaluation was done. Popular pressure for the established language of education proved strong, so French was re-introduced whilst local languages were abandoned. The population preferred the French language. The aim of the programme was to give better access, equity and quality. If the national languages are now to be re-introduced, this should be done at both formal and non-formal levels. For the year 2000, the NAFA centres envisaged that this time technical results and not political decisions should determine the choice of national languages. Though Guinea is evolving with the NAFA centres, professional training is also taken into account. It is intended that training should be done on the basis of needs established through action-research which will be executed during the year 2000. There is a high demand for NAFA centres in Guinea because of their very flexible pedagogical approach. The competencies are based on economic viability. There are plans in the future to decentralise activities, share more responsibilities with the Ministry and other partners and ask government for a more substantial budget.

François Niada took the participants through the experiences of the Basic Non-Formal Education Centres (CEBNF) in Burkina Faso since January 1995. CEBNF have been established by the government, NGOs and associations throughout Burkina Faso, after the Conference on Education For All in Jomtien to challenge the participation of all partners in development by empowerment and capacity building. The CEBNF are part of the non-formal education system. Their philosophy is to ensure equity of access to education through basic education for all. They encourage the conscious and efficient participation of communities in the implementation of education. The Centres promote multi-resourcing

of competencies, develop educational bridges between formal and non-formal education and encourage the diversification of opportunities.

CEBNF have been developed on a pedagogical basis, which uses national languages as the medium of instruction, with French being taught at a later stage. The target group for these centres are girls, rural youths, early school drop-outs or out-of-school children from 9 to 15 years of age. The CEBNF strategy is to provide young people who fall through the cracks of formal education and adult education with the opportunity to acquire a minimum level of basic education, the eventual aim being for them to regain entry into the formal system and continue their training, or to enrol for professional training. CEBNF is a bridge between formal education and NFE and the mere existence of the bridge demonstrates the gap that exists between them.

The trainers come from the community, are chosen by it and are on probation for 4–8 weeks. No module or content is really rigid, so that teachers are trained with due regard to the demand. The monitoring is done by qualified senior teachers and assessors from both NFE and formal education. There are inadequate instruments for monitoring of the project and the development and evaluation of staff.

This project also focuses a great deal on community participation, but unfortunately, the community's participation in terms of conception is limited. Communities say that the present education system does not answer their needs and aspirations, and that is why some parents have taken their children from formal education to CEBNF. The social legitimacy of these centres is stronger than that of formal schooling. There is inadequate professional training, specifically of animators and supervisors. There is no real programme of training for trainers. Too frequently, trainers from CEBNF are turned down from training sessions. The community is not sensitised to identify needs, to build centres and participate in evaluation or follow-up. The communities only participate through financial contributions.

Basic education already is under funded in Burkina Faso. The plan was that the implementation of CEBNF was to be under the authority of provincial basic education and literacy, and funds allocated were to go to CEBNF and satellite schools which fall under formal education. However, the reality is that these funds go more to the satellite schools than to the CEBNF.

National languages were introduced in the formal system but this experiment was abandoned. Some NGOs tried to figure out a way of shortening the period of training in the education system. CEBNF educators discovered that once the trainees start their training in national languages, they acquire the French language very easily. They can catch up with those who started their training directly in French. NFE can use this transfer pedagogy to link-up with the formal system right up to secondary level, or to undergo professional training. There has been no in-depth analysis and evaluation of the needs of the community before the implementation of the CEBNF, even if the project responded to a social demand.

3.5.2 World Bank and Adult Basic Education

There is a growing interest within the World Bank in adult basic education (ABE) or non-formal education. In 1995, in the overall Bank wide policy statement on support to education, ABE (non-formal education) was put aside for further study.

On a Bank-wide basis, focus on ABE is gaining momentum and more specifically, the African department of the World Bank is engaged in a modest programme on ABE. The World Bank has a project named Basic Education and Livelihood Opportunities for Semi-literate

and Illiterate Young Adults (BELOISYA), with special reference to women and girls. BELOISYA commenced in 1997 when teams from Chad, Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Gambia were invited to a meeting in Dakar to launch a stock-taking programme in the field of ABE. The teams were given the task of looking at recent documentation from ABE in their own countries in order to find out what evidence is available that can be used to assess how well programmes and projects are working. The four teams then went back to their respective bases: documentation was collected partly from within countries and partly from headquarters of the World Bank. There was then a series of evaluative studies, which led to a paper synthesising all the information. This paper formed the basis for a conference in Chad in the first quarter of 1999 to which 10-11 other countries were invited and also participated in this sort of stock-taking experience.

Recently the Bank has financed a very large scale evaluation of NFE in Uganda: comparing the government's functional adult literacy programme with Action Aid's Reflect Programme. The evaluation used a combination of large scale survey methods, skills testing, more intensive group interviews, documentation and qualitative and quantitative research methods. The evaluation study is being published in Uganda. It is an unusually thorough evaluation looking at cost, test scores in reading, writing, arithmetic, economic livelihood activities in the two programmes, and significantly, it takes account of the learners' prior exposure to schooling. Most learners in Uganda who go to adult learners' activities have in fact had some exposure to schooling, and the degree of that exposure makes a difference to what they learn and how they score at the end of a course, and unless one takes account of that, one can obtain very misleading comparative results about the relative effectiveness of different programmes.

The Bank has launched an attempt to start an Internet-based communication system about this field, in the form of a Listserver for those who participated in the BELOISYA activities in Chad, and for any one who wishes to be on the listserve. Holding the opinion that it is acutely important to have a policy, as the government of Senegal does, of outsourcing to NGOs and setting up agencies that channel resources to NGOs for them to provide services in return for government contracts and funding, the World Bank is actually in the process of planning some further workshops and conferences in collaboration with the government of Senegal. It will also organise a workshop with special reference to Francophone African countries on the question of monitoring and evaluation of Adult Basic Education.

Jon Lauglo and his team were in the process of writing a skeleton draft outline document that will end up in its final form as World Bank Guidelines for Engagement in ABE in the African region. The symposium participants were given the opportunity to make inputs into the document and contribute to these emerging World Bank guidelines. Lauglo invited participants to read the document and give him feedback through the e-mail.

What do we know about the empirical findings of ABE effects on backing up schooling for children? Where is the systematic basis for decision making in terms of hard data? In terms of personal efficacy, empowerment, confidence building and active citizenship, what kind of evidence is there for a clear connection between programmes within this family (ABE) and their impact? Similarly, how does participation in literacy affect oral communication? Jon Lauglo explained that there is a major research gap in efforts to establish whether there is a direct connection between ABE and reduction of poverty.

Another important theme in the paper was that of efficiency of systems. This incorporates issues of education drop-outs, retention and skills acquisition. Most recent evidence gives a more positive picture of ABE than earlier reviews by the World Bank and others, which gave a very bleak picture of efficiency. One of the reasons why, for many years, ABE has

lingered in the wilderness has to do with its impact and efficiency. There is a case for coming out of the wilderness because of the positive evidence emerging from the data on efficiency and impact.

Another major area is evidence on policy choices that need to be made: how to strike a balance between the role of governments, NGOs, community based organisations, state programmes, volunteers, local government, functionaries and civil servants in ABE; how to strike a balance in the integration of formal education with NFE. There is a danger of school-like requirements being imposed on learning which should be more community oriented for people who in the vast majority of cases would not go to the formal system.

3.5.3 Summary of Plenary Discussion

Jon Lauglo's presentation sparked a lively debate. The questions and comments raised centred on the following: the reasons for the major shift of World Bank policy on ABE; this major World Bank shift should not make us lose sight of our own vision of NFE in Africa. The Working Group must be careful not to be side-tracked from its own agenda; the paper should incorporate the importance of linking up traditional knowledge with basic literacy as part of basic education for adults.

The major shift of World Bank policy on ABE

A few participants expressed puzzlement at the World Bank's sudden interest in ABE in Africa. Their questions reflected the view that the bank has long been oblivious to the common sense correlation between the education of adults and quality of life issues. World Bank personnel are very powerful people in terms of their capacity to influence policies at the national level, in terms of their capacity to influence donor orientations, yet it was only now that the Bank was showing interest.

Lauglo explained that the director for human development in the African region had long been aware of the necessity to engage more strongly in this field. In Indonesia, the Bank had been supporting for 20 years major literacy programmes, but it was only very recently that these had been evaluated, and the findings have been very interesting. In Senegal, under the initial leadership of Mamadou Ndoye and Madefall Gueye, there had been a major engagement in outsourcing projects. Recently, there has been a mid-term review of the projects. In Ghana, the Bank has been involved for a longer period. The World Bank stand has been "we will not push this field the way we push other things", but now it has adopted a more proactive stand.

Jon Lauglo also mentioned the grassroots libraries project pursued in the sub-Saharan Africa division of the Bank: grassroots libraries could be attached to schools or to separate resource centres. The Bank is trying to take stock of experience in that area which is of interest to people concerned with children dropping out of primary school as well as adolescents or adults completing NFE programmes and going to an environment where there is so little to read. This concern of continuing adult education and what comes after basic learning was supported by Adama Ouane who called for a special stand by the ADEA WG-NFE on this issue and emphasised the need to develop concrete programmes in this area.

On the questions of "why now" and "are there new discoveries", Mamadou Ndoye explained that currently there was a window of opportunity at the Bank which Africa should take advantage of. There was the opportunity to think afresh in the World Bank on many areas including: skills development and vocational training. Partly it is a question of what was emphasised, what was thought by the Bank's top management, but at many levels within

the Bank, there has been an awareness to engage in a more complete way with support to education. One simple reason is that the Bank now operated under the framework of the sector-wide approach, which ensured that in programmes consideration of all views about the whole sector was taken on board. The Bank could not concern itself with only primary schools, it must engage with the whole system and with those who were missed by the system.

The African Region must be careful not to be side tracked from its own agenda

With reference to the example of Indonesia, as mentioned by Lauglo, Adama Ouane pointed out that it was not a case of generosity but one of clear political decision made by Indonesia which got more than $700 million for non-formal education. He went on to stress that the same has to be done in Africa, pointing out that:

It is good that teams in the Bank are ready to support us, but we are meeting again with different actors, we must not let our agenda be changed because someone is sneezing somewhere. The resources are our resources mostly, the loans are resources we are paying for or somebody is paying for us. We have to define the agenda. Therefore it is essential that educators should not be side tracked from their vision and agenda.

The participants all welcomed the new interest shown by the World Bank. Those who have been in the field of literacy have ensured that it would remain on the agenda for years and that is why NFE has survived: educators are committed to it.

Lauglo's reply to this statement was that he knows that all symposium participants have spent their lives in the field and believed in it. At the same time it was important to be sensitive to what others outside the field thought about it, especially observations that ABE had been poorly or unsystematically documented. There were many examples of claims about very inefficient programmes through which a very small proportion of learners reached some adequately successful level at the end. That was why it was essential to evaluate and monitor those programmes and some emphasis on that was likely to be part of what the Bank would stress in negotiations with governments.

The importance of linking up traditional knowledge with basic literacy

Mamadou Ndoye advised that those guidelines should actively pursue the linking of traditional knowledge to ABE. Traditional knowledge should be linked to basic literacy as part of basic education for adults, if there was an interest in this domain. The World Bank wanted to support indigenous knowledge preserving it in museums; its relationship with schools; etc. He did not think its up to the World Bank to pontificate too much about traditional knowledge. It was up to governments to take initiatives and for the World Bank to be reasonably favourable to proposals that came up.

Structural Adjustment Policy

One participant observed that most countries were now impoverished because of the World Bank's structural adjustment policy (SAP). Most programmes in adult education and non-formal education were not doing well because once the resources became scarce and social needs were many, non-formal education and adult education were marginalised. Lauglo replied by retorting that SAP was an IMF policy not that of the World Bank. He disagreed that the reason why countries were impoverished was because of structural adjustment programmes. Structural adjustment programmes were there because, otherwise, many

governments would have gone bankrupt. SAPs came into effect because of the very bad economic situation governments found themselves in. The Bank's focus was very much on the need to invest more in education and health.

3.6 Linking Formal Education and NFE for Integrated Diversity

The chairperson of this session, Cream Wright, explained that the theme of the session "linking formal education and non-formal education (NFE) for integrated diversity" indicated how far the WG-NFE had progressed since its inception. The Working Group first started out being located within non-formal education and particularly within literacy. Gradually, the Working Group saw that there were so many other issues people were concerned with. Then they started looking at what appeared as 'the great divide' between formal and non-formal education. Conventionally, people tend to preserve their territory, people tend to talk about NFE and ministries of education particularly tend to flinch when one talked about NFE because they tend not to know who was doing what. In agencies themselves there was no love lost with the ministries; ministries hardly gave them anything and only called upon them to do certain things when government could not. That divide, to some extent, was conventional but also increasingly as one looked at the demands for education it was really just artificial. If there was concern about learning, one should be open to the full spectrum of possibilities within which learning can take place. NFE has moved from a narrow focus on literacy and broadened its scope to look at projects that deal with alternative versions of the formal curriculum for out-of-school children such as nomadic children. Then increasingly there was questioning on the divide between formal and NFE. This move was not particularly new. Especially in South Africa, this debate had been going on for some time.

Cream Wright further explained that earlier in the year WG-NFE had held a major workshop in Botswana to look particularly at the theme of how to bring together formal education and NFE. What were the mechanisms, what were the obstacles? What was there to be achieved? The presentations highlighted several pertinent issues. That there were lessons to be learnt from both sides of the divide; how could the formal and NFE be integrated? how to provide for diversity, a wide range of ways, means, time, places to acquire learning? More importantly, how could one manage that diversity? What came out of Botswana was the notion of equality of outcomes, not just equality of access or opportunity. It was not enough to show that access has been provided, by a certain number of years in education, learners should have achieved comparable outcomes.

It was argued that non-formal education and formal education should be looked at as part of one delivery package, whilst recognising the diversity of inputs, outcomes and processes in training in formal and non-formal, and finding the management framework to utilise them and manage the diversity. Reflection was invited on a pragmatic approach allowing people with learning needs to go from one system to the other, using facilities provided by the formal to extend the possibilities of non-formal education; how to create an interaction between the two systems, how non-formal education can influence formal education to open up to innovations and respond to learning needs.

3.6.1 A Framework for Managing Integrated Diversity

Roy Williams emphasised some of his basic principles in terms of his own background. He has come from a developed, literate society and from that angle he thought that the word 'illiterate' should be thrown out of the discussion and the dictionaries because it was unhelpful

to talk of illiterate people. The direction to go was to talk of a variety of literacies. He illustrated this argument by pointing out the following:

> *I have here a checklist made for my everyday functions in the world: I need to be literate in English, French, e-mail, excel, front page, financial reporting, fax and storytelling. If I mark myself on this checklist I get 40%, so I am illiterate and I am a failure! I have a PhD to prove it, a professorship to prove it, but I get 40% on the test so I am illiterate. I think it is unhelpful to talk of illiteracy.*

He also stated that he had just come from sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa where specifically the HIV/AIDS problem was a grave issue. He gave a brief comparison of South Africa to Thailand, which was often held up as a good example. In 1990 infections due to HIV/AIDS in South Africa were fairly low, but in 1999 they rose by 20 percent. This meant that by 2005, South Africa would have at least one million AIDS deaths a year. Thailand started as South Africa did in 1990 but now the AIDS deaths there were going down rather than rising. By 2010, the HIV/AIDS pandemic would have cost sub-Saharan Africa a great deal in terms of human, economic, social and political development of the whole continent. The vital point was the role of education and NFE with regard to the AIDS pandemic.

Roy Williams thought that there were different ways of looking at globalisation: in broad terms, globalisation was either standardisation or co-operation. These were the two big models present. If one looked at globalisation as standardisation, schooling was the prime example: globalisation was not a recent phenomenon, the fact that one could walk into any school on the planet as one could have done 20 years ago and say that was the school, those were the kids, those were the text books, etc., was absolutely startling. Schooling was the most globalised product ever. It was very different from globalisation as co-operation, which he thought was the alternative model that a lot of people were working with. We had a long way to go to realise globalisation as co-operation but that was the alternative. Diversity was comparable to globalisation as co-operation. If one wanted to co-operate and make the global village to work one had to develop modalities that made it work through a diversity of equal alternatives.

All the above issues were linked to three critical issues in change management. The Jomtien EFA 2015 targets were not achievable in most countries in Africa, as these targets were of very little use to anybody. They could be criticised as being northern concepts and being irrelevant to the south and the question should be asked about why G7 countries imposed targets, which were not even targets. In the Education for All debate it was necessary to look at the demand crisis, because it was not a supply crisis anymore in many countries. The third part of change management was AIDS. Where were these going to get the tools that would move them forward? In general terms, the answer to change management would be found more in the responsiveness and executive management style of the non-formal sector which was in many ways, ahead of the game. The non-formal sector was far more demand driven and much less bureaucratic. Decisions had to be made in response to a changing environment, whereas bureaucrats lived in another world which, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, no longer existed. They were still in it, but their world was gone. AIDS had taken that world away; the demand crisis had taken that world away. The responsiveness and executive management style of non-formal education must be tapped to meet the challenges that confronted sub-Saharan Africa especially with regard to AIDS and related matters.

When trying to put NFE and formal education into one framework, we would need to find ways to recognise the diversity of inputs in training, to validate inputs and contributions and to find a framework for managing diversity.

3.6.2 Towards a Policy Agenda for Diversified Delivery

Wim Hoppers' presentation was a follow-up to the discussion held on the systematic linkages between formal and non-formal education held in Botswana in June 1999. The presentation highlighted the relevance of moving towards a more explicit, systematic approach in basic education as a framework for promoting diversity in provisions for learning. A systematic perspective would be able to look at innovations which had been and were taking place under the heading of non-formal (distance education, open learning, adult education, experiential learning in street and work situations, resource based learning) elements wherever they were and look at the implications and the possibilities for replication. The premise for that was a large number of children and youth were not going to school, and it was very unlikely that 100% was going to enter school because of the nature of the school system itself. If an effort was to be made to ensure that all children had access to relevant and quality basic education, the first order of business would indeed be to shift the attention from schooling to learning and, under that heading, start exploring both existing and potential forms of basic education learning. It was stated that diversity should be considered in terms of equal alternatives. An example of doing so was the radical South American concept of bi-culturalism where children were educated in two cultures at the same time: Andean or Amazonian culture alongside western, Spanish cultures.

Diversity in learning needs, diversity in circumstances and diversity in terms of characteristics of learners were all relevant issues. There were *social and economic circumstances* where an increasing number of children could not go to school because they had to work, but also because they had to look after siblings since their parents had died of AIDS. There were differences in *learning needs*. That applied not only to children requiring 'special education' provisions, but also to supplementary 'life skills', vocational skills, remedial or additional language competencies. There were also differences in *cultural and religious traditions* in which kids were living. Many communities had not relinquished their assumed duty to provide learning that recognised their own traditions – even in the face of state resistance.

Another way of looking at diversity was in terms of the existence of different types of learning: the notion of community learning and of work place learning which often took place parallel to schooling; *childhood learning in homes and communities*, including much locally relevant knowledge and skills; although children entered schooling with this wealth of prior learning outcomes, it was generally not used as a basis for new learning. The learning that had already taken place before children came to school, and which was the kind of cognitive and affective baggage that they brought into the school, had never been fully recognised. *Ongoing informal learning in social and work situations*: the relevance of this learning and its relationship with school learning is still not sufficiently explored and captured in more comprehensive methods for assessing learning achievement. *Organised and structured forms of "non-formal" learning, there are various types that are being pursued, not just the community schools* involving private and community-based provisions: such as community schools, Koranic schools, open and distance learning arrangements, and traditional apprenticeships and the like.

Diversity could also be looked at in terms of availability of resources and the different possibilities for combining resources that these provided in terms of *teaching staff with appropriate qualifications; educational spaces; resources for learning; educational technologies*, in terms of *types of management and supervision*. These diversities did not only have relevance for specific marginalised groups but they are equally applicable to mainstream learning and learning situations. It could therefore be argued that these diversities could be taken into

account if there was an agreement about the wider systemic framework for basic education within which different types of learning could be promoted, supported and assessed.

In pedagogical terms the system would follow an *outcomes-based approach*, whereby learning outcomes were defined in terms of a basic knowledge and skills profile allowing for locally adapted teaching and learning strategies and content. The common basic profile enables core achievement (not necessarily including all learning) to be assessed through standardised instruments leading to common certification. There needed to be availability of a differentiated set of support services across the board and not simply for mainstream formal education only. Within such an overarching framework it would be acceptable to promote a *differentiated set of provisions for learning*, within which the conventional school would probably be the main form of learning, but by no means the only one.

Other aspects highlighted included: A *support infrastructure* for administrative and professional services accessible to all provisions within the system; the issue of an equitable formula for funding; a *funding framework* that would ensure acceptable equity in access to state subsidisation for non-formal education; an overall *quality assurance system* that would enable diverse forms of provision to grow but within a framework of strict criteria for access and quality.

Within this framework, it became possible to promote differentiation and look at different learning arrangements. The flexibility of learning arrangements could and needed to go beyond the adjustment of timetables, beyond the use of less qualified teachers or alternative technologies, it needed to enter into the heart of the curriculum and the manner in which schools responded to the social environment, including the types of learning already ongoing within and outside the so-called formal schooling system. If one looked at it from a systematic perspective, one would start looking for certain specific things in non-formal education and especially those innovations that have been pursued. What are they all about? Where are the elements that can help us to make headway, not just those small segments somewhere within the margin but within mainstream education too? These frameworks allowed educators to critically develop methodologies that addressed aspects like interaction with communities, adaptation of the curriculum, teaching and learning in the home language, implementation of the fast track options, the use of unqualified and community appointed teachers, learning achievements, access to a further cycle to re-enter into the formal system as well as into the labour market. Other advantages included effectiveness, leading to genuine empowerment and the specific relevance of the initiatives for girl students, working children, AIDS orphans, and the like.

3.6.3 The contribution of non-formal education to integrated diversity and an agenda for action

Wim Hoppers' presentation went on to discuss the contribution of non-formal education to integrated diversity and an agenda for action. He acknowledged that bringing together formal and non-formal education is more complex in that non-formal education for out-of-school children is far too much regarded as the poor cousin of the formal conventional school. The potential of NFE for deliberately exploring the relevance of alternative learning methodologies and arrangements for learning in order to cater for diversities is insufficiently utilised. The reality of the dominance of the formal system in terms of numbers, aspirations and preferences, financing, socio-political apparatus and in terms of economics, has to be acknowledged. It is essential that more systematic work is undertaken in key areas of basic education provision so as to promote viable forms of flexibility and effective modes of responsiveness.

The challenging question Hoppers posed was: should such work not be undertaken in sections of the mainstream where minimal resources are present and communities are in a better position to fully participate on their own terms? The answers may probably lie in between and it is possible to argue that NFE provisions, especially the current crop of 'community school' initiatives across the continent are important nurseries for certain types of innovations, and could possibly do more if systematic attention could be given to their actual potential. Yet other parts of the diversification agenda might well need to be pursued elsewhere, where suitable conditions exist and where they may be merged with methodologies for innovation that stem from different sources. Moving towards a system for integrated diversity will require a coherent, integrated research and development agenda that cuts across different sub-systems and begins to synthesise, from an African perspective, the lessons to be learnt and the directions in which to move.

Very little systemic analysis has been done on community schools and current research is very unclear about whether, at the moment, there is any that is worthy of replication. Because very little research is done towards a full understanding of what can work, and under what kind of conditions, many emergency schemes have been established from a deficit perspective, providing additional places in deprived areas for those who cannot attend. There is little evidence of intentionally perusing innovations for the purpose of overcoming weaknesses of the formal school system such as the lack of relevance for the older youths, for whom these schemes are often intended; or how to ensure more active involvement of the community that goes beyond purely financial and labour contributions; or how in some cases to involve communities in decision making that goes to the heart of the curriculum and what goes on within the curriculum.

Is it possible to expect major lessons to be learnt from provisions that cater largely for the poor and disadvantaged, and that are more likely to regard adaptation as a deficit approach? If it is essential that more systematic work is undertaken in key areas of basic education provision so as to promote viable forms of flexibility and effective modes of responsiveness, should such work not rather be undertaken in sections of the mainstream where minimal resources are present and communities are in a better position to fully participate on their own terms?

If there is a tendency that non-formal education's characteristics of flexibility and responsiveness largely represent concessions so as to provide formal education under the conditions of poverty, then it becomes very pertinent to initiate methodologies or alternative innovations in urban middle class schools and see how some of these innovations could fare within those kind of conditions, as a basis for understanding how education can be reformed, and how the access and participation caould be widened in order to include all the children that are supposed to go to school.

Attention needs to focus on a gradual incorporation of ever more efficient and accessible information and communication technologies, professional development, and exchange of information and experiences and a multi-channel approach to learning that relies on a variety of community resources, a number of channels of communication, increased learner control and promotes relevant learning experiences. Participatory learning, open and distance learning, development communications and social mobilisations are the four tenants that we would look to, and are based on the premise of developing learning communities.

3.6.4 Boundary Jumpers: A Multi-dimensional Approach to Learning

This title reflects the diversity of backgrounds we move into and out of as we push, if not step over the boundaries. Patricia McWilliams described a couple of initiatives with a focus on open and distance learning approaches within the area of NFE in which the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is involved in Africa. COL selected six case studies in Africa which use different types of media in open and distance learning, for which the results will be published shortly. They present factors for success or lack of success in certain projects; and the causes of growth or lack of growth or replication in certain situations. The research team identified three groupings to these factors for success or lack of success:

- choice of media and methodology

- organisational and administration

- most important, political will

Tools exist for taking on the challenges. Media and methods are available to carry out NFE in ways that will enable social and economic development to occur on a large scale. However, in the final analysis it does come down to political will. In the last decade there are indications that political will has been absent. Unless governments and development agencies commit themselves we will continue to fail to meet the goals for education for all. The research conclusions are gloomy unless three factors are addressed: the need to organise adult education and NFE in ways that continue to address the immediate life-related learning objectives of learners; at the same time giving learners the educational tools to continue learning on their own; blurring of the divisions between formal and NFE; and finally gradual incorporation of ever more efficient and accessible information technology.

In this region COL is involved with the multi-channel learning-based initiative. UNESCO was one of the agencies instrumental in early discussions. COL has committed resources to establishing whether it should take on this initiative. COL convened a meeting on the issue March 1999 with key players, at which there was strong endorsement for the establishment of this initiative. As a result, COL is considering how to support this multi-channel learning-based initiative, and whether there is need for a permanent centre to strengthen capacity for open and distance learning in the Africa region. This will entail collaboration across the whole gamut of what applies to open and distance learning, participatory learning development communication and social mobilisation. Current thinking favours an African centre, to be based in Harare (early 2000), becoming one of the important forums through which developing learning communities are supported.

3.6.5 Formalising the Informal: The ABET Institute at UNISA

The ABET Institute at UNISA was established in 1995 with funding from DFID, in response to the Government's expressed aim of Reconstruction and Development in South Africa. In her presentation, Veronica McKay explained that the ABET Institute is required to be responsive to those areas where education can play a role in development of communities. With development as the prime rationale for the Institute, it trains practitioners-in many instances nurses, community workers or adult educators to teach skills like basic literacy, numeracy or health education with a development bias.

Practitioners are encouraged to pay attention to a variety of social issues such as health, environment, women, youth and urban-rural problems. The outflow of nearly 20,000 trained practitioners has meant that the methods espoused by the ABET Institute have come to

challenge the practices of teachers in school classrooms. Through encouraging reflection and action research, the programme aims to encourage trainee practitioners to actively participate and reflect on whatever project or teaching practice they are involved in. The work of the Institute is generally considered to be non-formal due to its lack of formal accreditation and the present lack of a qualification framework for NFE. However, in terms of the way in which the programmes are implemented and the impact made by the programmes, they straddle the gap between formal and non-formal education.

The Institute's programmes link formal with non-formal education in a variety of ways. The location of the ABET programme with a university necessitates some formality around the programme. Students on the courses have a sense of belonging to a higher educational institution and they comply with the normal university regulations. Several of the content courses presented by the Institute are also offered by other university departments. Currently members of the ABET Institute are involved with the development of a qualification framework for the training of ABET practitioners, which the Institutes articulates with various professions. For example, the ABET qualification is a necessary extra for those people who work in health care, trade unions, industry training and so on. It also enables graduate students to be employed by various sectors. While the qualification is in the process of being recognised, the large numbers of graduate students who are in the field, and enrol as members of the various associations make it difficult to separate the non-formal component from the formal mainstream systems of society. The large numbers of people graduating from the Institute have become very vocal advocates of adult education. They are very active in the field, demanding a more professional approach to adult education.

3.6.6 Towards an ecology of innovative societal learning

Manish Jain, from the Institute for Re-thinking Development in India, explained the reason behind the title of his paper 'Towards an ecology of innovative societal learning' by saying that the concept of ecology means that we have to challenge ourselves to move beyond the mechanistic, positivistic and social engineering frameworks towards systemic relations. "Innovative learning" is drawn from the Club of Rome, which differentiated maintenance learning versus innovative learning which transforms learning. "Societal learning" is used instead of education. The values of human dignity, human sensitivity, and human creativity underpin the work of the Institute for Re-thinking Development in India.

He raised questions about the identity of NFE, the vision of development and elaborated on the crisis in education in India caused by the deskilling and dehumanising nature of schooling in India. The constraints creating by schooling include: people dislocated from their people and local languages, inferiority and superiority complexes being developed among people, stifling of creativity and frustrated consumerism without concomitant satisfaction, corruption, insensitivity. There is also overwhelming psychological impotence and dependency; schooling governed by authoritarianism, power for domination, dehumanised labels (e.g. 'failures', 'drop outs', 'illiterates' versus 'Pepsi generation'). Speaking about the crisis of destructive and exploitative development and its relatives, colonialism and globalisation, he stressed that relentless pursuit of economic growth by corporations globally is accelerating the breakdown of the planet life support systems, intensifying resource competition and insecurity, widening the gap between the rich and the poor and undermining values of relationships and family.

Therefore where do we go from here? An alternative would be generative learning eco-systems with the following characteristics: holistic, non-hierarchical networks; self organising

organic learning communities that are meaningful, purposeful and authentic (the agency of organism); ability to participate in and generate change; focus on fluidity, trust and nurturing; emphasis on diversity and sustainability. Such learning ecosystems will allow for the re-linking to issues of social justice and legitimacy, concrete social issues and people's movements. The challenge is to recognise that there are no interactions or experiences from which we learn nothing. Our task then is to make all this powerful, unconscious learning more conscious. Our agendas have to re-define local knowledge systems as indispensable and legitimate systems of understanding and "meaning-making", whilst creating space for constructing multiple truths, realities and narratives together.

3.6.7 Summary of Plenary Discussion

The essential argument presented during the plenary discussion is that our strategies need to focus on learning within the context of unity in diversity, and on systemic learning, which gives parity to what is acquired in both non-formal and formal learning. There is a need to reflect on what bridges and freedoms can be built to create a wide variety of learning spaces and of literacies that cater for the needs of all learners.

Participants reached an overall consensus that non-formal education is an acceptable, positive, complementary alternative to formal education, and not an exclusive alternative. 'Best' practices of the varied fields of formal and non-formal education and adult basic education should be drawn upon in ways that continue to address the immediate life related to learning objectives, at the same time giving learners the educational tools to allow them to continue to learn on their own.

This consensus is supportive of the Working Group on Non-Formal Education's advocacy to look at projects dealing with alternative versions of the formal curriculum for out-of-school children, versions of a school curriculum for people who have not been accessible for a long time such as nomadic populations etc., explore what is the divide between formal and non-formal in order to provide *equity of outcomes* rather than equity of access where very often poor, substandard, almost non-starter kind of education is provided, causing suffering and waste of time.

Change management and flexibility of learning arrangements

It was commonly agreed that community members need to take responsibilities for their own learning and for the learning of others; that indigenous learning and skills need to be integrated into learning patterns; that a variety of media and methods should be assessed; that sources of learning are all around us on a daily basis and need to be maximised and that success and quality of life are not based on credentials and qualifications. Rather, sustained learning is more likely the result of a combination of strategies. Learning opportunities should be provided that are directly relevant to life circumstances and immediate needs. Broadly the primary objective will be to improve equitable access to quality education, through the transformation of how people view the learning experience.

Between formal/non-formal/alternative/informal approaches, equity of outcomes should be the concern so that after a certain number of years, people should have achieved comparable goals and objectives. The guiding principle is to look towards a policy agenda for diversified delivery and move towards its implementation.

3.7   Asia Case-Study

- Kazi Rafiqul Alam and Muhammad Ibrahim: Capacity Development of NGOs for Basic and Continuing Education

- Ehsanur Rahman: Organisation of Community-based Learning Centres for Learning and Community Development

The experiences presented by colleagues from Bangladesh raised a lot of enthusiasm and interest among the audience.

The Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) works both for formal and non-formal education, but its main work is NFE, which they have been pursuing for the last thirty years. Recent development is in the formal sector, which began from 1992. In the NFE sector, they have a basic education programme covering about 200,000 learners throughout the country, which comprises programmes for: continuing education, education materials development, practical training, women empowerment, advocacy, and literacy resource centres. The goal is the enhancement of management capacity for implementation of quality, basic and continuing programmes.

The Basic Education programme caters for non-formal primary education, adolescent education and adult education. A major problem comes from children who are in the workplace, and need to be provided with a general education, whilst at the same time enhancing their skills in their respective field of work. DAM brings them into the literacy centre where they can attend classes. The Vocational Institute also goes to the workplaces by special arrangements, so that working children can upgrade their skills.

In the area of women empowerment, DAM contributes to basic education, skill training, consciousness-raising and income support: 80% of its beneficiaries are women (160 000 women). There are also advocacy programmes and committees throughout the country to raise awareness of the population about the drug problem; for the prevention of trafficking in women and children and for the promotion of environment throughout the whole country. DAM also implements programmes for women's empowerment, capacity building of partner organisations through training of personnel, study visits to different organisations, supervision and monitoring assistance, consultant service in programme development, materials and funds for running the programmes.

DAM also organises Community Learning Centres with the objectives of providing learning opportunities to people at community level whether they are primary education graduates, whether they are completing literacy programmes or are school going students or any member of the community. It provides basically 3 services: information service, learning opportunity, reading and writing opportunities, and it links up with the other community development services. Participants are a cross-section of the people in the community. Community meetings are the main platform for identifying ideas and the types of programs they will be organising.

Muhammad Ibrahim presented the Center for Mass Education in Science (CMES) experience, which takes science and technology through mass education to those disadvantaged people who need it. Target groups are composed of adolescents who are dropouts or not enrolled in the normal education system because they have to spend their time in helping their parents and in helping to enhance the family income. So CMES developed basic school systems with emphasis on education/work interaction and relevance, and maintained some compatibility with the national curriculum, but with some innovations.

Science, for example, is addressed through income generating activities that are market oriented. Chemistry is taught through soap-making or candle-making. The schools create their own brands of soap and candles in their own laboratories, and establish marketing channels; thus demystifying education and technology and selling their product to the community. One of the major interventions is the adolescent girls' programme. The girls are encouraged to empower themselves through increased awareness of their potential and through involvement in business (income generating activities). They are also encouraged to improve their understanding and to re-assert their rights to make informed choices in areas like reproductive health.

4.0 Discussions and Report Back of the Symposium Groups on Taking the ADEA WG-NFE Forward

A critical component of the meeting was the symposium groups' discussions and report back sessions. The participants were divided into eight symposium groups which were asked to discuss four issues. Each topic was discussed by two working groups. The symposium groups were required to engage in discussions and come up with comparisons, contrasts and analysis of pertinent issues regarding NFE in Africa. The issues were raised as a means of taking the ADEA-WG-NFE process forward at national, regional and international levels. The following are the four themes on which the symposium groups focused: Making Sense of Alternative Provisions; Organising Learning and Managing Resources; Collaboration and Co-ordination; and Linking Formal & Non-Formal Education. This section provides a summary of the ideas and recommendations from the symposium working groups on the way forward.

4.1 Making Sense of Alternative Provisions

Non-formal education being a very fragmented field, the Working Groups were invited to reflect upon such questions as the necessity of having a *database* to know what is going on and who is doing what. By whom and at what pace should a database be implemented, financially supported and maintained? The question was also asked as to the nature of *alternative provisions* (e.g. should they be understood as practical research outcomes, or highlighted case studies?); and how do they differ from each other and from the formal system which seems to be used as a benchmark for assessing all alternative things?. What are the *innovative elements* in some of these alternatives? What are the *convergent elements*: some of them work very hard to come close to what is happening in the formal system. What are the *divergent elements*: some of them are far from what would be considered as education in the formal system.

The group's comments on the meaning of alternative provision were that it must exhibit flexibility in terms of: delivery, process, learning transaction, interaction, methodology and timing. It should have a non-rigid structure with a content which is adaptable, responsive to needs, culturally appropriate in terms of language and socio-economic context and learner-centred. It should encourage maximum use of local resources, local expertise and indigenous knowledge. Alternative provisions are usually at comparatively low costs, tend to have a mixed clientele (children, youths, adults). They often differ from the formal system in terms of goals, objectives, content, reduced training (duration and process), type of stakeholders, vision, provision and history, as well as by the status of the trainers and the communities' responsibilities. They also benefit from flexible timetables, relevance to beneficiaries' needs and are generally demand driven, as well as making use of local languages. These alternative forms of learning therefore demonstrate that it is possible to use local languages as an efficient teaching medium; that local resources have much to offer in terms of education and training; and that education is a means of decentralisation, which can help to reduce inequalities relating to gender, socio-economic status and geographic region.

Databases would contribute to making sense of alternative provisions. They were defined as systematically organised (and preferably computerised) information on alternative provisions, existing in a print directory or in electronic/network format. To be effective and efficient, databases should be updated regularly, made widely and accessible, and be easily disseminated in a user-friendly form. In the current situation where such databases do not exist, the ADEA WG-NFE should advocate for action to be taken in this area by such stakeholders as:

• government department(s) responsible for non-formal education

• universities and institutes working in the area of non-formal education

• National / Regional NGO Associations in the field of non-formal education.

• Country Working Groups on non-formal education

Establishment of a database at the national level could be done through a search conducted for existing information, an analysis to identify gaps and the updating of information annually using annual reports, questionnaires, as well as annual decisions made by providers of non-formal education. Responsibility for initiating actions of this nature should be taken up by Country Working Groups (where they exist) as part of a consortium of key stakeholders.

The format for presentation of data should include the following: history of the organisation; name; nature and scope of the activity; contacts (names, addresses); areas of operation; links with government, university or others; funding sources; information on publications or literature, and main office bearers.

On the format for presenting data, ADEA WG-NFE has a role to play in the sense that it should:

• collate and disseminate national data bases

• provide training for data base staff

• provide computers and accessories where needed

• use the database to network on non-formal education

• advise on periodic updating of the database

• explore possibilities of establishing a regional database for Africa

• assist countries in improving the quality of data and monitoring of their non-formal learning system.

4.2 Organising Learning and Managing Resources

How can learning for different categories of learners (children, youth, adults in the process of life-learning etc.) be organised in a flexible manner? How to take into account the *diversity of learners* and the *diversity of learning situations* considering cultural differences, social circumstances, economic conditions? How to finance alternatives and make them more viable and should there be a redistribution of resources? How to provide human resources and define profiles of new types of teachers or new types of resource persons for serving these types of alternatives? These were some of the concerns discussed by participants. They reached a consensus that the goals and objectives for formal and non-formal education should be similar, with both providing for lifelong learning but through different modes of delivery. Provision for lifelong learning should not be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education

alone, but should include sectors such as health, agriculture, labour and the community itself. Contextual programmes should be designed by concerned ministries and the community to accommodate the needs of individuals and lifelong learning. Programme planning should include cultural, social and economic issues as all of these affect learners in one way or another. However, provision should be made for individual differences. Curriculum should provide for core areas, vocational programmes and specialisation to meet the needs of the individuals and provide skills for employment and self-employment. Programmes should be modular in nature to allow flexibility. In diversifying non-formal education programmes there should be linkage with the formal system: this could be achieved through provision for a core curriculum. There is also need to address the rigidity, which exists in the formal system, to facilitate this linkage between non-formal and formal education programmes.

Community resource centres should be established, where learning materials from all sectors can be made available to learners in the community. These resource centres could be attached to schools, libraries, health centres or any public facilities in the community, and should be managed by a member of the community with assistance from a co-ordinating committee. Concerning the organisation of learning, the group agreed that learning programmes should include early childhood development programmes from 0 to 5 years, which should target both children and parents, hence including resources for such areas such as nutrition, immunisation, childcare etc. It is important to include non-formal and formal representation in the planning process at the village/district/community level. The role of NGOs should include empowerment of the community to request resources from government for these programmes. Also, provision should be made for both pre-service and in-service training programmes for non-formal education trainers and practitioners, in the same way as it is made for formal programmes. At the pragmatic level, the effectiveness and efficiency of the utilisation of material and human resources should be carefully examined: teachers in the formal system, for instance, can also be facilitators of non-formal learning.

4.3 Collaboration, Co-ordination and Networking

The ADEA WG-NFE has used an approach in which partner agencies collaborate: 4-5 agencies contribute to a financial pool so that ownership becomes diffused and it becomes a country project. Questions still abound as to how to get NGOs, the private sector, donors and government to genuinely collaborate and work together and tackle problems in this area and as to who co-ordinates these efforts and how? The relevance of existing Country Working Groups (CWG) is well conceived, as they have a potential for meeting the major concerns for promoting NFE, which is often a marginalised sector in most countries. NGOs and individuals have felt the need to organise themselves and federate their capacities as a means of attaining their aim of promoting NFE through Country Working Groups. Most of these WGs were created in the aftermath of the Dakar Meeting and the diffusion of ADEA WG-NFE newsletters calling for the organisation of national forums, which were to lead to the creation of CWGs. In most cases, local resources of the CWGs come from funds raised through membership fees (individual or NGOs). External resources, including logistic and administrative support, are also provided by partners such as ADEA. Participants observed that in most cases, in countries where the National Working Groups have been successful, they benefited from the political support of ministers who attended the ADEA Dakar Conference in 1997.

Regarding the functions and roles of the CWGs, it was sensed that if a CWG was not activity oriented, participants in the WG could see it as a time consuming effort, hence

suggestions that activities should be clearly defined, and an operational activity plan should evolve. The participants agreed that all stakeholders in NFE and development should be participants in the group, and that all partners in development should make contributions to financially support the WG. Donor community should also be committed to funding it and should use their funding as a channel to exert pressure on the formation of Working Groups.

In terms of country level collaboration and network, it was agreed that all partners in development should be involved but, more importantly, the group should see NGOs as the operators and should increasingly out-source activities through them to carry out work on the ground. With regard to definite activities and functions, the CWGs should provide support services, assist in the training of trainers, provide a forum for joint policy development and for sharing information, and act as a clearinghouse for different things. Information technology could also be a tool through which the WG could play an advocacy role. In terms of collaboration and networking, agency partners, bilateral and multilateral co-operation agencies intervene at national level. They supported the creation of CWGs. In general, the financial partners have a national or local co-ordination structure such as a steering committee for basic education, as is the case in Guinea, or inter-agencies meetings on Education for All or non-formal education as in Burkina Faso. Governmental organisations and NGOs collaborate well with CWGs in most cases. This type of collaboration usually takes place in the context of training or study visits involving members from both entities. Only the private sector is nearly absent. It was recommended that the WG should promote government and civil society consultation in a joint policy development.

On the whole, international co-ordination is at the early stages though highly desired: the ADEA WG-NFE could have a stronger and reinforced role at international level. Finally, there is a need for the Working Group to open up the issues and to generate political will by creating public space through awareness raising and through lobbying, to reintroduce politics into discussions of education.

It was recommended that ADEA WG-NFE :

- could take responsibility for inter-agency co-ordination at the international level. However, concerning the co-ordination at regional and local level, this has to be reflected upon;

- support and facilitate the creation of Working Groups (in countries where they do not exist) and operate existing ones, reinforce the co-ordination mechanisms of activities in the field of NFE at grassroots level (encourage synergy between financial partners, state, NGO's, etc.;

- elaborate appropriate strategies for the mobilisation of internal resources;

- facilitate and motivate interests from the private sector as well as from civil society;

- reinforce the co-ordination and synergy between government and NGOs in countries where NWGs exist;

- determine the structures so as to mobilise resources.

4.4 Linking Formal and Non-Formal Education

Limitations of the concepts of formal and non-formal education were discussed, and the two types of provision were seen as not simply complementary, but as integral parts of a

holistic education system that can deliver basic education and lifelong learning to all citizens. In practical terms compatibility was highlighted as a critical factor, which is often interpreted too narrowly. Non-formal provisions are highly relevant to the needs of a substantial proportion of the population and also address a wide diversity of learning needs for the majority of citizens. Yet such provision is very often seen as an adjunct to formal provision: a sort of residual thing that can be called upon to deal with matters left over from formal education. Participants stressed that non-formal education should not be seen as complementary in such connotations that imply 'second best'! Related to this is the fact that NFE also often suffers from a lack of professionalism in terms of programme designers and managers, as well as teachers and resource persons.

All these issues were seen as part of the task of the ADEA WG-NFE, in terms of helping to generate a public debate on the limitations of the formal/non-formal dichotomy, that would lead to a re-conceptualisation of these terms in line with an integrated and holistic system. It is therefore necessary for the WG to facilitate a participatory dialogue and a practical process for conceptualising key issues relating to this dichotomy, including the framework of assessment and qualifications, the basis of the various curricula and the divergent paths that can lead to similar goals in learning achievement. There should be an on-going process of interrogation and dialogue around such issues as: what are the critical competencies required by different groups of learners? Can these competencies be achieved irrespective of the path to learning that is taken? Who defines these competencies and through what means/authority?

Another issue mentioned was the salient yet profound differences between equality of opportunity and equity of outcomes. It is no longer adequate to argue that there are equal opportunities for all to have access to learning, implying that those who do not succeed have only themselves to blame. There needs to be greater concern with the learning process itself, wherever and however it takes place, to ensure equity of outcomes as indicated by learning achievements. This issue is very closely linked to the problem of articulating equivalencies in learning outcomes within a structured and balanced qualifications framework. It is only within the context of such a framework and established equivalencies that alternative forms of providing learning can genuinely be seen as simply different routes to achieving similar goals or learning outcomes. If there is to be a diversity of provisions, different ways of studying, then there must be some kind of linkage so people can move between the different provisions, and there should be a framework within which all of that is located. It is also necessary to look at the concept of recognition, which is closely linked to certification. The ADEA WG-NFE should analyse processes of certification and recognition to help locate non-formal education within a well-structured qualifications framework.

Finally, participants considered improvements to the learning process itself. There were two critical levels at which the concerns related to this issue were discussed:

1. At the pedagogical level, there were concerns relating to approaches as well as methodology, and the implications for essential components such as training of trainers to facilitate the readiness, the predisposition, the consciousness of self and environment in the learner but also to inculcate the metacognitive skills and practise to learn.

2. At the systems level, it was argued that systems have to learn how to learn. This is a fundamental issue of capacity building related to empowerment and dialogue over what needs to be in the curriculum and how learning should be managed. Learning

how to learn is indeed a very fundamental issue: if people are going to be empowered to make choices from the diverse menu of learning opportunities and the variety of ways in which segments from different sources can be packaged, then they need to have learnt how to make judgements about such matters as a pre-requisite to being participatory actors within a holistic and democratic education system.

Participants agreed that facilitating a more holistic conceptualisation of education and learning systems in society will allow us to engage more meaningfully in reviewing the current situation and taking steps to adjust to the status of non-formal education as the ugly cousin of the formal education system. This in turn would mean that we can begin to make progress with the powerful notion of "integrated diversity" in education.

Appendix 1

The Programme

NB: NFE EXHIBITION DURING THE SYMPOSIUM 1-3 DECEMBER 1999

WEDNESDAY 1 DECEMBER 1999

0700–1500 hrs   Briefing on the Field Trips and Departure from Hotel for field visits:
                   4 groups to 4 different NFE programmes in Gauteng.

1700–1815 hrs   Discussion on the Field Trips

1830 hrs   Welcome Buffet at the Indaba Hotel

THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 1999

0800–1000 hrs   **SESSION ONE**
                   Plenary Discussion: South Africa case study
                   (Simultaneous interpretation in English/French)

Chairperson   **Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria,**
                   Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation

Presenters   Gugu Nxumalo: Adult Education, Dept of Education
                   Lolwana: Department of Labour
                   Mandla Methembu: Interim Advisory ABET Body (IAAB)
                   Botlhale Nong: AETASA
                   Mastin Prinsloo: School of Education, University of Cape Town,
                        South Africa

1000–1045 hrs   Break

1045–1140 hrs   Opening Ceremony

Chairperson   **Gugu Nxumalo,** Acting Chief Director,
                   Adult Education and Training, Department of Education, South Africa

1100–1115 hrs   Welcome from ADEA WG-NFE
                   Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria, Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation

1115–1130 hrs	Opening Address by: Father Smamgaliso Mkhatshwa The Honourable Deputy Minister of Education, South Africa
1140–1140	Vote of Thanks by Koumba Barry Boly, SDC, Burkina Faso
1150–1330 hrs	**SESSION TWO** Plenary Session: From Literacy to Lifelong Learning – the Creation of Learning Societies *(Simultaneous interpretation in English/French)*
Chairperson	**Adama Ouane**, Senior Programme Specialist, Literacy and NFE Section, UNESCO, Paris
Presenters	Mamadou Ndoye: The World Bank Justine Ellis: Namibia: Ministry of Education and Culture Jean-Pierre Carosin: Director of Caritas-Mauritius Elise Ways: Caritas-France Catherine Odora-Hoppers: From Literacy to a Learning Society – An African Perspective Jeanne Moulton: Thinking strategically about NFE
1330–1430 hrs	Lunch
1430–1600 hrs	**SESSION THREE** Creating a reading environment and literate culture
Chairperson	**Carew Treffgarne**: DFID
Presenters	Ekundayo Thompson: Creating a Literate Environment – Which Environment, Which Literacy? Mamadou Aliou Sow: Publications on NFE in French and in local languages
1630–1830 hrs	**SESSION FOUR** Show and tell: using literacy and NFE for Community Empowerment
Chairperson	**Stephen Matlin**: Director HRDD Division, COMSEC, London
Presenters	Dickson Mwansa: Literacy for Empowerment, National WG– Zambia Laurencia Adams: POSDEV Jedidah Mujidi: National WG–Kenya Roger Ravenstrup: An Alternative to Classroom Schooling – Among the Semi-nomadic, Ovambo
1830–1945 hrs	Supper
2000–2130 hrs	**SESSION FIVE** Working groups

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER 1999

0800–1000 hrs	**SESSION SIX** Linking Formal Education and Non-Formal Education for Integrated Diversity
Chairperson	**Cream Wright:** Special Adviser/Head of Education, COMSEC, London
Presenters	Roy Williams: A Framework for Managing Integrated Diversity Wim Hoppers: Towards a Policy Agenda for Diversified Delivery Patricia McWilliams: Boundary Jumpers: A Multi-dimensional approach to learning Veronica McKay: The University of South Arica Charles Delorme: The link between Formal Education and Non-formal Education Manish Jain – Towards an Ecology of learning
1000–1030 hrs	Break
1030–1200 hrs	**SESSION SEVEN** Alternative Learning Opportunities – the role of NFE Case Studies and models of good practice
Chairperson	**Agneta Lind:** Head of Education, Swedish International Development Agency
Presenters	Jon Lauglo: Engaging with Adults Dan Thakur: Pilot Phase – Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja in Uganda Elizabeth Wafula Francoise Caillods Alpha Mahmoudou Diallo: Member of the Pilot Committee for the Project in Guinea Francois Tengande Niada: National WG–BF
1230–1330 hrs	Lunch
1330–1500 hrs	Working Groups (3-4 break away rooms/huts)
1500–1530 hrs	Break
1530–1630 hrs	**SESSION EIGHT** Report back from working groups and plenary discussions
Chairperson	**Jeanne Moulton:** USAID

1630–1830 hrs	Synthesis/Future Orientations of the WG Plenary discussion

Chairperson   **Adama Ouane**: UNESCO

Presenters   Cream Wright: COMSEC
                    Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria: SDC

1830–1954 hrs	Supper

2000–2200 hrs   **SESSION NINE**
                  Asia: case study
                  (Simultaneous translation in Eng/Fr)

Chairperson   **Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria**: SDC

Presenters   M Kazi Rafiqul Alam: Capacity development of NGOs for
                         basic and continuing education
                    Ehsanur Rahman: Organisation of Community based
                         Learning Centres for Learning and Community Development
                    Muhammad Ibrahim

SATURDAY 4 DECEMBER 1999

1300–1430 hrs	Lunch

1430–1630 hrs   **SESSION TEN**
                  Meeting with NGO Collective Consultation on EFA
                  Assessment and Closing Ceremony
                  (Simultaneous translation in English/French)

Appendix 2

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