

African Platform for Adult Education: Civil Society Report

Forging Partnerships Towards a Renewed Vision of Adult Education in Africa



Acknowledgements

The African Platform on Adult Education, composed of four networks: ANCEFA, FEMNET, PAALAE and PAMOJA is convinced that CONFITEA VI will offer the opportunity for policy dialogue and advocacy on adult education which will lead to a renewal of commitment at the national, regional and international levels.

This Civil Society Report of the Platform is our contribution to both the Regional Preparatory Conference in Kenya in November 2008 as well as to CONFITEA VI in May 2009 in Brazil. Concerned about the lack of recognition on the importance of adult education by our governments, we offer this document as a basis for debate and discussion on how we could move from declarations to concrete actions.

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"Considering that the access of adults to education, in the context of life-long education, is a fundamental aspect of the right to education and facilitates the exercise of the right to participate in political, cultural, artistic and scientific life...."

Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education UNESCO General Conference, 19th Session, Nov 26, 1976, Nairobi

Foreword

More than thirty years ago, Member States of UNESCO affirmed the importance of adult education both as a right and as a means of enabling people to claim their other rights. In the binding document coming out of the 19th session of the UNESCO General Conference, which was meant to give effect to the conclusions of the Second and Third International Conference of Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in Montreal (1960) and Tokyo (1972) respectively, the governments not only expounded on their vision, mission and goals but also outlined what should be done in the areas of 1) structure, content, methods, research and evaluation; 2) management, administration, coordination and financing; 3) status and training of adult education workers; and 4) international cooperation.

As a critical inter-governmental UNESCO process, the conclusions of the meeting in Nairobi would have bound governments to their own recommendations and required them to report on the status of the fulfillment of their recommendations. Unfortunately, like in many other United Nations meetings, the Nairobi meeting and the succeeding fourth and fifth CONFINTEA meetings (Paris, 1985; Hamburg, 1997) have resulted in more declarations and eloquent promises but with very little to show in terms of actual delivery of promises.

As we prepare for yet another CONFINTEA meeting, it is important that we do not come out again with a series of recommendations that will not have any effect on the lives of millions of marginalized adults for whom these declarations are supposed to make a difference. We will need to review the past and salvage whatever painful lessons could help us as we imagine a future where the contribution of adult education to development is recognized, valued and supported by governments all over the world.

In the Recommendation of the 1976 Nairobi meeting, there are already some elements for imagining the future for adult education in the African region.

"The place of adult education in each education system should be defined with a view to achieving :

- a) rectification of the main inequalities in access to initial education and training, in particular inequalities based on age, sex, social position or social or geographical origin;*

- b) the assurance of a scientific basis for life-long education and learning as well as greater flexibility in the way in which people divide their lives between education and work, and, in particular, providing for the alternation of periods of education and work throughout the life span, and facilitating the integration of continuing education into the activity of work itself;*
- c) recognition, and increased exploitation, of the actual or potential educational value of the adult's various experiences;*
- d) easy transfer from one type or level of education to another;*
- e) greater interaction between the education system and its social, cultural and economic setting; and*
- f) greater efficiency from the point of view of the contribution of educational expenditure to social, cultural and economic development."*

Within the framework of lifelong and lifewide learning, governments have committed themselves to addressing inequalities in access to education. Governments also spoke of recognizing the importance of starting from the learner's life and educational experiences. Governments also discussed the importance of valuing, recognizing and accrediting previous educational experience. Governments also highlighted the clear links of socio-cultural and economic developments to adult education and the contribution of adult learning and education to such developments.

We need to remind our governments of the vision they had when they met in Nairobi in 1976. For us, in the African civil society, Nairobi also reminds us of the 2007 World Social Forum (WSF).

Thousands of activists came together from all regions to proclaim that "Another World is Possible". It was an honor and joy for us Africans to host this seventh WSF meeting which has been held four times in Brazil, a country with a long history of social movements. Coming in large numbers, African activists not only showcased our work but also collectively analyzed the situation of our world mired in poverty, conflict and environmental degradation. We showed the world that while our governments are slow in making its promise towards the African Renaissance which they committed to as part of NEPAD (the New Partnership for Africa's Development) the African civil

society meanwhile, is dynamic and committed to meeting the regional problems with our vision and actions towards "Another Africa is possible".

Taking advantage of this global event, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) organized its Seventh World Assembly with the theme "Adults' Right to Education: Convergence, Solidarity and Action". Many of us were present in the different thematic discussions of Adult literacy, HIV Prevention, Conflict, Peace and Human Rights, Environment and Sustainable Development, Social Economy, Governance and Democracy, Migration and Cultural Diversity. The Assembly was a space for us, African networks on education to be present. PAALAE and FEMNET, members of ICAE were there side by side with ANCEFA and PAMOJA.

Nairobi is therefore a city which reminds us that African civil society has been able to work together. Despite the challenges of bringing together all our visions and missions, despite individual leadership styles, Nairobi is there to remind us that we need to work towards a vision where African networks are collectively engaged in bringing about "Another Africa".

With the support of ICAE and dvv International (German Adult Education Association), the four African networks on Education, met in March of 2008 to plan and strategize for CONFITEA VI. A concrete outcome of this meeting is the formation of the African Platform for Adult Education. This coalition of four networks aims to establish an African civil society capable of taking part in or influencing decisions concerning preoccupations and challenges in the literacy and adult education domain, with a vision of quality services for everyone.

One of the main activities of the Platform is the preparation of this African Civil Society Report. Aside from presenting our analysis of the situation of adult learning and education in the region, we also look at civil society efforts in ensuring that quality education is possible. Here we talk about our advocacy initiatives, whether they be working with communities, mobilizing at the national level or policy dialogues at the regional level. We also describe some of our programmes, aware of the need to cull lessons from good practices as well as weaknesses so that we are effective in our work.

As we are in the forefront in running adult literacy and other adult education programs in our countries, we would like our work not only to be recognized but more important, to be used as basis for establishing new partnerships with governments and other stakeholders.

In the preparation of the National Reports for CONFITEA VI, we have different experiences in participating even as the guidelines indicate that broad consultation is important. Some of us were called to a meeting to simply listen to the already prepared national report and validate it with our presence.

Very few were asked to be involved from the beginning. Many governments did not even care to invite us for a consultation.

From our experience we think that aside from our social, political and economic context, which shape our adult education realities, there are four kinds of challenges that need to be addressed as we go to the next CONFITEA: the policy challenge, the resource challenge, the governance challenge and the quality challenge.

We outline a few recommendations on these challenges with the basic assumption that what is needed in the African Region is a new kind of partnership where stakeholders not only share a common vision but also are committed to ensuring that this vision is realized by working together. We consider the coming together of our four networks as a form of new partnership. We are still in the process of developing what this new partnership means. And this is one of our challenges. Side by side with this is our aspiration to have also a new partnership with our governments. Many UN declarations, including CONFITEA are talking about government and civil society partnerships to attain certain goals. In 2000 Dakar meeting on Education for All (EFA), one of the key strategies is forming partnerships with civil society. In our countries, such partnerships with government is very uneven. We are called upon to deliver programs but when it comes to policy formulation and/or discussion on budget allocation, we are left out of the discussion.

We share our governments' pronouncement that adult education is a both a fundamental right and means to facilitate other rights. We share the 1976 Nairobi vision of our governments where they imagine adult education as a means of addressing inequalities and other development challenges. We believe in the principles of 2006 Bamako World Social Forum and 2007 Nairobi World Social Forum of "Another World is Possible" which for us translates to Another Just and Equitable Africa is Possible – through Education and Learning. We urge our governments to invest more in adult learning and education so that a just and equitable Africa could become reality. We hope that in November, also in Nairobi, we, together with our governments are able to forge new partnerships to develop a new vision and to collectively strategize on how to make this a reality for the millions of marginalized African women and men.

DIARRA Mahamadou Cheick
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Introduction

The right to education is an internationally recognized right. From Article 26 of the 1950 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the more specific conventions (i.e. on the Rights of the Child, on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) to the various international treaties and recommendations adopted over the years (e.g. Education For All), the importance of this right has been emphasized again and again. In the region, this has also been reaffirmed by the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Article 17). As such, governments have legal and political obligations to respect, protect, as well as facilitate and provide for this right.

The Nairobi meeting in 1976 underscored that access of adults to education is a fundamental part of this right. This has been reaffirmed in the succeeding CONFINTEA 1985 meeting and again highlighted in the last CONFINTEA meeting in Hamburg in 1997. Apart from being a human right in itself, the right to education is also essential in realizing other human rights.

Moreover all these meetings acknowledged the critical contribution of adult education to personal and societal development. Defining adult education as "the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society", the Hamburg Declaration underlined the nature of the contribution of adult education to development. By encouraging and providing means for a continuous acquisition of skills and knowledge, adult education conceived within a lifelong learning perspective develops the capacities

of individuals not just for productivity and creativity but also for them to become active, critical citizens, ready to participate in democratic practices in their societies.

That adult education is indispensable for development, is also echoed in the 2001 and 2002 Reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on Education, Katarina Tomaševski. After visiting countries and reviewing documents, she concludes that education enables economically and socially marginalized adults and children to 1) get out of poverty, 2) participate fully in their communities, and 3) be protected from exploitation. She also points out that education promotes gender equality, peace, democracy, better health practices and protection of the environment. Given all these benefits, education, without question, should be on top of the governments' priorities. Aside from respecting and fulfilling their legal and political obligation on the right to education of adults, governments also will be able to achieve their national development goals should they invest in education for all - girls and boys, women and men.

I. Adult Learning and Education in Africa:

The Sad Story of the Absence of Adult Education in Development Frameworks

The highest poverty rates, unemployment rates, illiteracy rates, infant mortality rates, HIV prevalence rates, malaria and tuber-culosis incidence are found in Africa. Gender inequality in social, political and economic spheres persist. Conflict and political instability characterize many of parts of the region. Corruption is rampant at all levels of government.

In response to such development challenges in the region, the notion of African Renaissance was put forward. Articulated by the then President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki in 1998, it was supposed to rally the region to a vision of renewal and reconstruction based on the 1) establishment of democracy throughout the region; 2) economic recovery of the continent; and 3) mobilization of the people to be active agents of the development process where they are the drivers.

Three years later in 2001, such a vision was articulated in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), an integrated socio-economic development framework adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Its objectives were eradication of poverty, sustainable growth, integration of Africa in the globalization process and empowerment of women. Underlying the framework were the following principles:

- 1) good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development;
- 2) African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors of society;
- 3) anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people;
- 4) partnership between and amongst African peoples;
- 5) acceleration of regional and continental integration;
- 6) building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent;
- 7) forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world; and
- 8) ensuring that all Partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the Millenium Development Goals and other agreed development goals and targets.

The agreement of Heads of States to pursue the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 was an important moment for the global community to collectively address key

development issues in the 21st century. Building upon a decade of major UN conferences and summits, governments pledged to a global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting a series of time-bound targets for 2015.

For the African region, taken all together, NEPAD and MDGs posed several challenges. First was the question of linking and integrating the concerns of NEPAD as an African-driven development process and the MDGs, as a globally determined agenda. Second was the implication of the transformation of the OAU to the African Union (AU) and the energies that such transformation absorbed so that the new regional body AU, was unable to drive the NEPAD process. Finally, how does one generate the funds to simultaneous implement two ambitious frameworks in cash strapped Africa?

A more fundamental issue that should be raised vis-à-vis NEPAD and MDGs is their perspective on the role of adult education in their framework. NEPAD suggests the following strategies for addressing the problems confronting the education sector in Africa:

- 1) Evolve national policies and incentives for private sector participation in the provision and delivery of educational services;
- 2) Establish national guidelines for adequate funding and judicious utilisation of resources;
- 3) Develop a medium- and long- term framework for specified education and literacy programmes for different categories of citizens;
- 4) Ensure a realistic assessment of country potentials for and constraints militating against ability to meet international development and educational goals and targets;
- 5) Ensure a framework for prioritising the allocation of educational resources to areas of greatest needs especially with respect to meeting the scientific and technological demands of the 21st century and needs of employers of graduates of educational institutions;
- 6) Emphasize functional education that promotes skill development and opportunities for innovative application of educational knowledge; and
- 7) Identify the causes and also methods for managing Africa's brain drain.

Unfortunately these strategies remain in the realm of a wish list. The latest NEPAD progress report (2006) enumerated the following as their activities: a) building capacity in education research and development by developing a data-base of research and development projects for secondary schools in Africa; b) distance education and teacher training and development project where baseline studies have been undertaken in five African countries; and c) in the area of education in post-conflict environments: mathematics, science and technology education for teachers project where missions are currently planned. The very narrow projects it has implemented under Education is an indication of the weak role NEPAD has assigned to this sector. Even as it claims that people are at the center of the development process, it is clear that the development of skills and capacities through education is not a priority. To highlight such weakness, ANCEFA came out with a position paper, entitled "Putting the 'E' into NEPAD."

Meantime, the mid-term review of the progress of Africa in achieving the Millenium Development Goals also does not bring good news. In a report issued by the MDG Africa Steering Group in June 2008, it claims that "the continent as a whole is lagging behind on each Goal despite a very encouraging recent rise in the rate of economic growth, an overall improvement in the policy environment, and strong macroeconomic fundamentals...progress towards achieving gender equality and environmental sustainability remains inadequate". For the MDG on education, it reports that while several African countries are on track to achieve universal primary education by 2015 thanks to tremendous efforts made by African governments and effective support from their development partners...progress towards UPE remains too slow in other countries. Millions of children—specially girls from poor backgrounds and rural communities do not have access to primary education, because many countries are not able to provide adequate services for their population...". To address this dismal situation, the MDG Africa Steering Group has identified a list of oportunites to implement and scale up interventions in support of the MDGs. For education, the Group recommends "investing in education to achieve the MDGS and EFA goals by 2015, including gender parity at all levels, through holistic sector plans that reflect the country context and include cost-effective expansion of post-primary education."

How education affects achievements of the Millenium Development Goals (Herz and Sperling, 2003)

- **Poverty reduction:** Over the medium run, poverty reduction depends on economic growth. No country has ever achieved continuous and rapid growth without achieving an adult literacy rate of at least 40 percent. Wages and farm income almost always increase with education. The higher productivity these income gains reflect can contribute to national economic growth.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Women are now the principal victims of HIV/AIDS in poor countries. Education helps women protect themselves, both by informing them about the disease and by making them more effective in asserting their reproductive and sexual rights. Young people (15–24 years) who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those with little or no schooling.
- **Maternal mortality:** Women with six or more years of education are more likely to seek prenatal care, assisted childbirth, and postnatal care, reducing the risk of maternal and child mortality and illness.
- **Child health:** Educated mothers are 50 percent more likely to immunize their children than mothers with no schooling.
- **Hunger:** Most farmers in the developing world are women. Educating girls and women leads to more productive farming and accounted for more than 40 percent of the decline in malnutrition achieved between 1970 and 1995. 2003.

Source: *Towards Universal Primary Education: Investments, Incentives and Institutions: UN Millenium Project. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality*, p. 21, 2005.

The MDG Africa Steering Group recommendations do not include anything on adult education, either in the recommendation on the MDG on Education nor for other MDGs. The Steering Group composed of representatives from the United Nations, the African Development Bank Group, the African Union Commission, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank Group and the World Bank clearly do not have any idea of the role of adult education and learning in meeting all the MDGs. It seems that they do not read about other UN-MDG related initiatives. For example, in 2005, the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality of the UN Millenium Project noted in their Report that better education is "fundamental to the prospects for economic and social development and is a key input into the achievement of most of the other Goals".

To achieve the Goals in Africa, significant investments in human resource development are needed urgently, since health, education, agricultural extension and other critical social services cannot function without cadres of properly trained staff. HIV/AIDS, years of public sector wage ceilings and hiring freezes, outward migration, and poor working conditions have stripped Africa of the human resources needed to deliver needed interventions.

The Joint Learning Initiative (2004) estimates that Africa now faces a shortage of a million health workers. Qualified teachers and other service providers are also in short supply. To build Africa's capacity to deliver the services and interventions to achieve the Goals, major coordinated investments in preservice training (such as degree and certification programs) will be needed to build a qualified work force of service delivery staff. These will need to be complemented by in-service training for existing staff, adequate salaries, and human resource management systems.

Given the need to reach rural and often remote areas, we put great stress on scaling up the training of vast numbers of community workers in health, agriculture, and infrastructure, with programs of one-year training. These community workers will play a vital role in enabling villages to make the basic MDG investments in health, education, water and sanitation, electricity, irrigation, soil nutrient replenishment, and other areas of vital need. This process of scaled-up community-based training should start right away in 2005.

Source: *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve Millennium Development Goals* pp. 155-156 (2005)

Another report to the UN Secretary General by the UN Millennium Development Project, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (2005) has a separate section on MDGs and Africa where they highlight that the region has the greatest MDG investment needs, one of which is to invest in the education and training of people.

The absence of reference to adult education in development frameworks and the resulting failure to include education and training of adults as a key strategy for attaining development goals is a major problem. The dominant view that EFA should be reduced to universal primary education is reproduced in development frameworks whether it be NEPAD or MDGs. By having this fragmented view of provision of education, Africa will continue to be marginalized if it aims only for universal primary enrolment for its citizenry.

II. Adult Education and EFA in Africa:

Another Sad Story of the Exclusion of Adult Education

It is significant that the World Forum on Education for All in 2000 was held in Dakar, Senegal, an indication that EFA is a key concern in Africa. A mid-term Report drawn by the Pole de Dakar Education Sector Analysis Team within the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa in 2007 presents some of its findings on the Progress of the achievement of the EFA goals. While the Dakar Forum in 2000 constitutes a milestone for reversing the dynamics of primary education in the region, statistics show that while there is progress from the 2005 review, many countries are still far from the goal of UPE.

At the same time, the Report admits that focusing too much on Universal Primary Education "has partly overshadowed structured thinking on secondary education; now, seven years on from Dakar 2000....there is a question mark on the future of these children, and interrogations, as to the relevance for them to continue on in large numbers into general and technical secondary education".

The Report also tackled EFA goal 6 on Quality and summed up the debate on African education on the relationship between quantity and quality where "the argument, often put forward is that deterioration in learning quality is the price to be paid for expansion in enrolment". It also raised the delicate issue of measuring quality and pointed out that since goals of education systems have changed over time, developing new tools to assess quality is necessary. One of their conclusions is that "the overall low level of performance of the African education systems and the very significant disparities between and within countries, sway in favour of placing greater importance on managing the quality of learning".

Compared to the earlier POLE Report of 2005, the 2007 POLE Report devotes a separate section on non-formal education and adult literacy. Among its conclusions are: 1) the extent of non-formal education greatly varies from country to country and "among the countries where access to formal education is rare, recourse to non-formal education is not a systematic policy and is still very marginal in many cases"; 2) those who profit from non-formal education are mostly men, people in the rural areas and non-poor families (based on data from seven countries); 3) the chances of literacy are much higher when people have had non-formal education; and 4) in terms of impact of non-formal education on other social areas [e.g.

birth control and preventive health for mother and child; information on practices in terms of birth registration and knowledge of HIV/AIDS], there is no significant difference between those who have benefited from non-formal education and those who have no education at all. In other words, the idea of wider benefits of non-formal education is not supported by evidence presented in the Report. This controversial finding could easily be dismissed by the very small sample of countries that are covered as well as the problematic comparison of different data sets. But what is emerging is that there needs to be more systematic gathering of evidence on the benefits and impact of non-formal education.

"It is to be remembered that these first conclusions would deserve to be explored more in depth and that the non-formal education and literacy sector, like the other education sectors, covers a variety of situations and contexts, which can partially explain the very variable quality in results. A more systematic assessment of these results connected to the contexts and modes of organization, while controlling trainee characteristics, could help to pinpoint the best practices and contribute to repositioning this activity within more global trade-offs at education policy definition and funding level".

Source: Chapter on "What Strategy for Non-formal Education in the Current Panorama of Education for All" p. 16. POLE Report: Dakar + 7 - Top priority for integrated sector-wide policies, 2007.

In addition to the problematic conclusions on non-formal education (which are addressing EFA goals 3 and 4), another limitation of the Report is the lack of a gender analysis even if one of the EFA goals is addressing gender. In a region, which has consistently demonstrated wide gender disparities in different fields, such absence is sending a clear signal of the weak political will to monitor EFA Goal 5.

Meanwhile in another Report, the EFA Global Monitoring Report Mid Term Review 2008 which looks at progress and achievements towards EFA since 2000 in the sub-Saharan Africa region, an uneven picture of the region is drawn. It

Educating girls and women yields broad benefits

- Girls' education is strongly associated with better welfare at the individual, family, and social levels. It is a central means to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty.
- Educated mothers are more likely to send their children to school, a key to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty (Filmer 1999; World Bank 2003; UNICEF 2004b).
- Educated mothers get married later and have fewer children. With reduced fertility, mothers can concentrate more attention on each child, and they can afford to send their children to school. In Africa women with seven or more years of schooling marry five years later than women with no education (World Bank 1993).
- Educated mothers have healthier families. Educated mothers access and use beneficial information about health care for themselves and their families and use health services more often.
- Educated mothers have better nourished children, who are less likely to die in infancy. On average one additional year of schooling for a mother results in a reduction in child or infant mortality of 9 per 1,000 (World Bank 1993).

Source: Towards Universal Primary Education: Investments, Incentives and Institutions: UN Millenium Project. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, p. 26, 2005.

explains that "the pace of progress towards universal primary education (UPE) in the region has been faster than during the 1990s, with the average primary net enrolment ratio (NER) increasing from 57% to 70% between 1999 and 2005. However, some countries have lagged behind and some goals – such as early childhood care and education (ECCE), the learning needs of young people and adults, adult literacy and the quality of education – have received insufficient attention. Most countries failed to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. The region is still home to 33 million children not enrolled in school".

Both Reports present an imbalanced picture of the progress and achievement of the EFA goals- primarily focusing on UPE. Secondary education is beginning to get attention primarily as a result of the question of what happens to the children once they complete primary education. Gender is treated unequally in the two Reports (there is more discussion of gender in the EFA GMR) while Goals 1, 3 and 4 are not satisfactorily covered and it is justified by the lack and the absence of data. One common element of the two Reports is their conclusion of the importance of a comprehensive sector wide policy approach that is needed to promote equity in access to education and improve education quality.

Side by side examining the progress of Africa vis-à-vis the global EFA agenda, it is also important to consider the specific Africa Education agenda as elaborated by the African Union. In September 2006, the Conference of Ministers of Education of the Union met in Maputo, Mozambique to approve the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa

(2006-2015). While affirming the importance of education as " a critical sector whose performance directly affects and even determines the quality and magnitude of Africa's development", the Conference also admitted that most of the goals set for the First Decade of Education for Africa (1997-2006) were not achieved.

The First Decade focused on four priority areas: a) equity and access to basic education; b) quality, relevance and effectiveness of education; c) complementary learning modalities; and d) capacity building. In its evaluation of why the First Decade did not achieve its goals, it cites five factors: 1) no plan of action was adopted till two years after the formal launch; 2) there was very little indication of ownership of the stakeholders; 3) publicity was ineffective; 4) the Decade did not have any support from Africa's development partners as they had developed their own Africa- specific programmes which were not linked to the Decade; and 5) at the country level, governments negotiated their education sector development programmes with the development partners, but not within the context of attaining the Decade's goals.

Learning from these lessons, the Second Decade of Education for Africa is envisioned to be funded from the internal resources of the countries and poorer countries will be supported by wealthier African countries. It is also expected that the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) will foster intra-regional cooperation by pooling countries efforts. For this Second Decade, four priority areas have been identified: 1) gender and culture; 2) education management systems; 3) teacher development; and 4) tertiary education.

EFA Goal 3. Promote learning skills for young people and adults. This goal places the emphasis on the learning needs of young people and adults in the context of lifelong learning. It calls for equitable access to learning programmes that are appropriate, and mentions life skills particularly. We should note also that EFA Goal 6 refers to essential life skills as a desirable outcome of quality basic education.

Progress: Governments have mainly responded to the learning needs of young people and adults by expanding formal secondary and tertiary education. However, a great variety of structured learning activities for youth and adults takes place outside formal education systems, often targeting school dropouts and disadvantaged groups. The extent to which this supply corresponds to demand, though, is largely unknown. Improved monitoring of the supply and demand for non-formal education is urgently needed.

A number of countries have made significant efforts in scaling up non-formal education programmes for youths and adults. However, these programmes are highly diverse, often differ in terms of objectives, target groups, content and pedagogy, and tend to be overseen by multiple ministries and/or other government bodies. Large-scale literacy programmes, often encompassing life skills (health, civic rights) and livelihoods (income generation, farming), are common in Ethiopia and Senegal, where they benefit from substantial external support.

National programmes focusing on skills development in the informal economy have been set up in Ghana and South Africa. Programmes focusing on rural development are found in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia, and are run in cooperation with agriculture ministries.

While national data on enrolment in non-formal education are limited, information can be obtained from household surveys. Results show that the proportions of youth and adults having obtained their highest educational attainment level though a 'non-standard curriculum' exceed 1% in Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, the Niger and Senegal. The proportions rise to 20% among youth and 31% among adults in Burundi.

Among both youth and adults, more men than women reached their highest level of educational attainment in non-formal education, with particularly large disparities in Chad (eight percentage points) and the Niger (twelve). Reaching the highest educational attainment in nonstandard curricula is more widespread in rural than urban areas in Burundi, Chad, the Gambia, the Niger and Senegal.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Overview, p. 4

Governments were asked to submit their Decade Action Plans three months after the September 2006 launch. From the review of the Second Decade of Education for Africa Plan of Action 2006, little or nothing substantial is devoted to Adult Learning and Education. That notwithstanding, the following related activities have been highlighted: 1) link literacy, vocational and technical training and non-formal education to national development needs by reviewing the curriculum on literacy programmes, vocational training etc to embrace modern technology, ICT, open and distance learning methods; 2) increase the economic and social empowerment of men and women through functional literacy by developing literacy assessment and monitoring tools and 3) improve societal support for national languages in education by mobilizing and empowering researchers, teachers and language practitioners. A search on the website of the AU does not yield any updated information on the Decade since the launching of the action plan in 2006.

Reviewing both regional and global agendas for education indicates that adult education remains in the bottom of priorities. In the same vein that the contribution of adult education in the achievement of development agendas is not understood, not valued and not recognized, the place of adult education in the education sector is also very weak. Moreover due to already scarce resources, it is far from being a priority for national governments across Africa. To be able to strengthen such position, one needs to start from the actual status of adult education in the region.

EFA Goal 4 : Increase adult literacy by 50 percent. This goal calls for a certain level of improvement in literacy by 2015. It says that it should be 50 percent better than it was in 2000. The needs of women should receive particular attention. In addition, all adults should have opportunities to go on learning through their lives

Progress: Literacy is a fundamental human right, a springboard not only for achieving EFA, but also for reducing poverty and broadening participation in society. Yet, it remains a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa, where 150 million adults – 62% of them women – could not read and write, according to censuses and surveys undertaken between 1995 and 2004.

The number of adult illiterates is on the rise due to continuing population growth, despite an increase in the average adult literacy rate from 54% in 1985–1994 to 59% in more recent years. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for about one in five of the world's 774 million illiterates in 1995–2004. The average adult literacy rate in the region (59%) was well below the world average of 82% in 1995–2004, and very low rates (below 50%) still characterized several countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, the Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Adult literacy rates went up in most countries, with increases of more than fifteen percentage points in Burundi, Cape Verde and Malawi between 1985–1994 and 1995–2004.

Gender disparities in adult literacy were particularly marked (GPI 0.73 in 1995–2004), even though the situation has improved since 1985–1994. In fifteen countries (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, the Niger, Senegal) the literacy rates for females were less than two-thirds of those for males. Some cases of gender disparities in adult literacy favouring women were observed in Lesotho (GPI 1.23 in 1995–2004), a trend also found among younger cohorts in Botswana (the GPI of the youth literacy rate was 1.04) and Liberia (1.06).

Besides gender, key correlates of illiteracy include poverty and place of residence. Overall, illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty. The link between poverty and illiteracy is also observed at household level, with the literacy rates of the poorest households substantially lower than those of the wealthiest.

There is a need to improve literate environments. Written materials (newspapers, books, posters), broadcast media (radio, television) and information and communications technology (ICT: fixed and mobile phones, computers, Internet access) need to be developed in order to encourage literacy acquisition, a reading culture, improved literacy

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Overview, p. 4

III. Adult Learning and Education in Africa:

The Good and the Bad News

Children, young people and adults learn throughout the day and in different settings. Informal learning takes place in the family, in the community and through mass media. For children and most of the young people, it is assumed that most of the provision for learning will take place in schools and other types of formal education.

Meanwhile for adults, the school setting is only one of the many spaces for learning. There are provisions for learning in the workplace, either to learn new skills or to upgrade them. People choose to go to privately run training programs to gain more competencies. Adults who did not have a chance to go to school could avail of literacy classes in non-formal settings. In the rural areas, there are extension activities which reach out to farmers to show them other forms of agriculture. These range of learning activities, whether they are called education, training or human resource development all form part of adult education.

Adult education denotes the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society.

Adult learning encompasses both formal and continuing education, non-formal learning and the spectrum of informal and incidental learning available in a multicultural learning society, where theory- and practice-based approaches are recognized.

Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, CONFINTEA V, 1997.

The nature and coverage of adult learning and education make it a very difficult subject to cover whether it be for the purpose of developing policies, implementing programmes, monitoring trends or simply studying the field. Recognizing this complex challenge and the limitation that we cannot cover everything, we decided to focus in four critical areas: policy, resources, governance and quality. In reading the national reports submitted by our governments, we have then examined only those questions related to these areas.

A. Policies in Adult Learning and Education: A Diverse Understanding of What is Needed

The Constitution is the fundamental legal document which outlines the basic principles that define the nature and extent of government. It also in this document where the State outlines the rights it pledges to respect and fulfill. In the region, eleven countries have reported that the right to education of adults is guaranteed in their constitution (Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles and Uganda). In the 2006 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo included a provision on the eradication of illiteracy through government designed programs.

In terms of actual laws on adult education, there is a range of legal frameworks that countries have reported on. Benin has adult education related laws (1999 and 2003) which promote the use of national language in instruction, whether it be in schools or literacy classes. A general law on education which provides for the right of education is found in Burkina Faso. Cameroon has a law promulgated in 2004 which covers specifically literacy and professional training. Chad has its 2006 law providing for the orientation of education and a more recent law in 2007, which confirms the political will to support adult education and training. In Kenya in 1996, there was a parliamentary act which provided for the creation of the Board of Adult Education as a statutory body which was mandate to co-ordinate, advice and regulate promotion of adult and continuing Education. Adult education is furthermore included in the Education Act Cap. 211 Laws of Kenya which governs the overall provision of education in the country. In Malawi, the national adult literacy programme operates within the framework of the country's 1962 Education Act. For Mozambique, the Law of the National System of Education places particular importance on the subsystem of adult literacy. In Namibia, several laws (the Education Act, Labour Act, Social Security Act and Affirmative Action Employment Act) play critical roles in formulating adult education policies and programmes. For Tanzania, there is the 1975 Parliamentary Act which created the Institute of Adult Education, the agency responsible for running continuing and non-formal education programmes. The 1975 National Education Act

Eritrea, A Good Example of A Favorable Policy Environment

In the National Education Policy (2003) three elements on ALE are mentioned :

- 1) recognition of the diversity of adult education and ensuring provision for this diversity;
- 2) provision for continuing education through formal and non-formal education; and
- 3) provision for the integration of adult literacy and continuing education provision into the mainstream of education and poverty reduction.

Concept Paper (2002) talks about the provision of vocational training programmes for adults who have completed literacy and post literacy programme as well as proposes the the development of adult literacy programmes that will be equivalent to elementary school education, and thus bridge the gap between literacy and middle school.

The DRAFT National Policy on Adult Education (2005) has the following objectives:

- 1) to promote a broad concept of adult education as a field of activity that is much wider than literacy and numeracy education for adults and out of school youth;
- 2) to promote awareness of adult education as a diverse multi-sectoral activity;
- 3) to facilitate the effective implementation of the right to education for all as enshrined in the constitution and other national policy papers; and
- 4) to facilitate the establishment of inter-sectoral co-ordinating mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accreditation of adult education activities

Source: Eritrea National Report

which covers provision in adult education and training was amended in 1995 to reinforce implementation. Finally there is the House of Representatives Policy on Vocational Training (2007) which is the legal framework for the provision of vocational training to out-of-school children, youth and adults. The Equal Opportunities Commission Act (2007) of Uganda considers adult education as a means of giving second chance to the discriminated and marginalized population.

This variety of laws in ten African countries (which deals with promotion of national languages to creation of adult education institutions to incorporation of adult education and literacy in the general education system up to provision of vocational education) demonstrate a recurring phenomena of the uneven and limited understanding of what constitutes adult education and the necessary legal framework that needs to be in place. The absence of a comparable legislative framework on adult education makes it a challenge to understand and compare laws across the countries in Africa. The same situation could be said of the policies and national plans on education.

In the national reports, countries provided information on adult education policies within and outside the education sector. In 2001, Benin came out with a national policy on literacy and adult education, which contain the new vision, mission, objectives, strategies and the resources needed to reach the goals by 2010. In 2006, the Ten Year Plan for Education indicated that this national policy on literacy and adult education had to be articulated with the formal education as well as with the other development sectors. For Burkina Faso, there seems to be a very favorable policy environment

with 1) the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (revised in 2003); 2) Ten Year Plan on Education where one of the objectives is the promotion of literacy ; and 3) a specific policy on literacy and non-formal education. In Cameroon, there is no clearly defined law on ALE but there are related laws in 2004 and 2007 which deal with literacy and professional training. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, there are also no specific policies on ALE but there are related Executive Orders which touch on the functioning of center for professional training for the young.

In the case of Gambia, a series of multi-sectoral policies (Revised Education Policy 1998 – 2003, The National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women 1999, The National Education Policy 2004 – 2015, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2006, Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006 – 2015, and the Public Expenditure Review 2006) provides us an idea of what sectors adult education policies should be integrated. In Ghana, the reports mentions adult education related policies emanating from the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment and Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. Guinee mentions the the PRSP (2007) as an important policy document that is having an impact on ALE. In Lesotho, policy documents like Vision 2020, Education Sector Strategic Plan 2003-2015, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper show confirm the importance of adult education. For Madagascar, there is a National Policy on Literacy and Adult Education (2003) which provides the institutional framework for coordination of literacy and adult education activities. A new law on education (2004) also specifies the place of non-formal education in the sector. In 2006, Malawi embarked on the development of the National Adult Literacy Policy. For Mali, a national policy on

The Kenya Policy Environment: From Vision to Implementation

Master Plan on Education and Training (MPET) 1997–2010: includes recommendation on the strengthening and expansion of the Adult Basic Literacy Programme (ABLP) to cater for adults and out of school youth and links education with the national development goal of industrialization by the year 2020. Kenya Vision 2030 where the Government aims at providing globally competitive quality education, training and research for development. The strategy paper also commits the country to achieving an 80% adult literacy rate by the year 2030.

Report on Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET) of 1999 that recognizes the heterogeneity and diverse nature of ALE provision in the country and therefore recommends strengthened partnerships between the Government and other Stakeholders with a view to enlisting them into effective and expanded delivery of ALE programmes for adult learning.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2001–2003), Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment (2003–2007), National Poverty Eradication Strategy 1997–2010, recognizes that education for adults plays an important role in human resource development, key determinant of earnings and is an important strategy for poverty reduction and economic recovery.

Free Primary Education (FPE) programme (2003) which is strategy towards achievement of EFA goals which are aimed at increasing literacy for adults and out of school youth.

Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research which recognizes ACE as a vehicle for transformation and empowerment of individuals and the society. The paper calls for integration of adult and continuing education into a national qualifications network.

Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) 2005–2010 which is a government and donor initiative for funding programmes in the education sector to fulfill the MDGs and EFA goals in Kenya. Adult and Continuing Education is one of the 23 investment programmes in this initiative.

Gender Policy in Education (2007) that underlines the need to increase participation of illiterate adults, especially women and out of school youth in gender equitable basic literacy and continuing adult education programmes.

The **National Youth Policy (2007)**, which addresses issues of youth empowerment for sustainable livelihood and a related National Youth Policy for Polytechnics (2007) which is a legal framework for the management and governance of youth polytechnics as it addresses issues of technical and vocational training of youths for acquisition of relevant skills

Source: Kenya National Report

non-formal education was adopted by the council of Ministers in 2007. In the addition, the country report also talks about the 10 Year Program for the Development of Education (2000–2010), the Education Sectoral Investment Programme I and II (2001–2004, 2004–2007) and the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Poverty. In Mozambique, there is the Program of Action for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA 1 and 2) which include literacy as a necessary condition for development. For Namibia, aside from the several laws mentioned above, they also have the National Development Plans and Strategic Plans for the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) and Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation (MHETEC) where adult education is included. Given the Federal nature of the government in Nigeria, the report talks about the existence of legislative and policy frameworks in different states. In Senegal, the 10th

Economic and Social Development Plan (2002–2007), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper provide the policy framework in addition to to the Strategic Framework Orientation for Literacy. In South Africa, the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) provides for the establishment of public and private adult learning centres, funding for ABET provisioning, the governance of public centres, and quality assurance mechanisms for the sector. In addition, there is the Human Resource Developmental Strategy(2001) is a joint initiative of the Departments of Labour and Education to reinforce the establishment of an integrated education, training and development strategy to harness the potential of adult learners. In Uganda, the The National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan (NALSIP) was formulated in 2002 with the objective of strengthening national commitment to literacy and incorporating literacy into overall development frameworks.

For Zambia, national policies on Science and Technology, National Employment, Agriculture, Community Development, Culture, Gender and Youth are reported to be having an impact on adult education.

A review of the laws and policies vis-a-vis the Nairobi recommendation show a weak implementation among countries in the region. If not absent, many adult education policies remain narrow (e.g limited to literacy), isolated (instead of relating to other sectors) and fragmented (instead of linking with other components of the education sector). The weak articulation of adult learning and education within country's national development plans, poverty reduction strategy papers, education development plans is also reproduced at the regional and global levels (NEPAD, MDG Africa review, EFA and Second Decade of Education for Africa).

POLICY CHALLENGE: How does a country develop policies that are framed within a lifelong and lifewide learning perspective and embedded in development frameworks (whether it be within the MDG agenda or PRSP)? How can adult learning and education related policies address the needs of those marginalized learners who remain excluded because of poverty, sex, ethnic affiliation?

B. Resources for Adult Learning and Education: irregular and low investment

To provide quality adult learning opportunities, one needs sufficient human and financial resources. It is not easy however to have an overview of the investments in adult education since one needs to look at different sectors in addition to the education sector. Many countries have mentioned this limitation when reporting on the section on funding. But for those who have provided information, it is evident that given the weak place of the adult education sector, it is consequently in the bottom of the government funding priorities. Most of the countries reported that adult education is allocated less than one percent of the education budget. For some countries, the budget has even declined through the years (Senegal, from 1% to 7%; Malawi, from 5% to 1.5%). In countries where education continues to be a non-budget priority, this means adult education gets almost nothing.

Meantime budget allocations do not necessarily guarantee availability of funds. Going by the allocations within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework for Mali for the period 2004-2008, the non-formal education sector was supposed to receive 0.6% to 2.9% of the education budget. But a recent review has shown that only 1.4% of the allocated budget was disbursed.

Three percent of Mozambique's education budget is allocated to adult literacy. Nigeria seems to be doing better than most African countries in terms of share of ALE in the total education budget. Between 1997 and 2008, the percentage

"The objectives and goals of adult education policy should be incorporated in national development plans; they should be defined in relation to the overall objectives of education policy and of social, cultural and economic development policies.

Adult education and other forms of education, particularly school and higher education and initial vocational training, should be conceived and organized as equally essential components in a coordinated but differentiated education system according to the tenets of life-long education and learning.

Each Member State should:

(a) recognize adult education as a necessary and specific component of its education system and as a permanent element in its social, cultural and economic development policy, it should; consequently, promote the creation of structures, the preparation and implementation of programmes and the application of educational methods which meet the needs and aspirations of all categories of adults, without restriction on grounds of sex, race, geographical origin, age, social status, opinion, belief or prior educational standard".

Source: Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, UNESCO General Conference, 19th Session, Nov. 1976, Nairobi

allocation of funds to Adult Education in Nigeria ranged between 0.65% - 8.94% of the total allocation of funds available to education. For Tanzania, the increase in budget allocation to adult education is reflected in the increase in local government's allocations to this sub-sector. In Burkina Faso, a special fund for Literacy and Non-formal Education is receiving contributions from government, bilateral agencies and the private sector.

What is interesting is the kind of activities that are being funded. According to the Ghana country report, the Government in the 2006/07 fiscal year, voted an amount of \$1.2 million for Technical and Vocational Education Training to provide quality education in the country. Funding was also provided to the Integrated Community Centres for Employable Skills (ICCES). In the informal sector, the government of Ghana, NGOs and CBOs are the main providers of funds. The allocation for women's empowerment showed that \$0.28 million was approved in the budget for the 2006 financial year but \$0.23 million was released.

Overall external public financing for development in Africa needs to increase to \$US 72 billion annually to support the achievement of the MDGs. Approximately \$US 8.3 billion is required yearly to ensure achievement of the education MDGs and EFA goals in Africa by 2015. This figure excludes school feeding programmes, expenditures for technical and vocational

The proportion of public funds, and particularly of public funds earmarked for education, allocated to adult education, should match the importance of such education for social, cultural and economic development, as recognized by each Member State within the framework of this Recommendation.

The total allocation of funds to adult education should cover at least:

- (a) provision of suitable facilities or adaptation of existing facilities;
- (b) production of all kinds of learning materials;
- (c) remuneration and further training of educators;
- (d) research and information expenses;
- (e) compensation for loss of earnings;
- (f) tuition, and, where necessary and if possible, accommodation and travel costs of trainees .

Source: Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, UNESCO General Conference, 19th Session, Nov. 1976, Nairobi

educational and higher education. One key commitment made by African governments is allocate 20% of their budget to education (2002 Dar-es-salaam Conference of Education Ministers and EFA-FTI guidelines).

FUNDING CHALLENGE: Many Governments have not been able to match their pronouncements on the importance of education with actual budgetary allocation and effective utilization of such resources. At the same time, the promise of massive mobilization of funds for Africa by development partners has not been realized. In this context of domestic resources scarcity and unpredictability of external funding, where do countries get the much needed resources for adult education?

Gauging human resources available for adult education, is also a difficult task. For countries where adult education is well integrated in the education sector, data is available. Adult educators/facilitators comprise 10% of the teaching force in Zimbabwe, 14% in Eritrea and 20% in Tanzania. Kenya reported a 40% decline in the number of literacy teachers which meant a drop in the literacy classes offered. For many countries, there is simply no way of counting how many people are involved in the provision of adult learning

It should be recognized that adult education calls for special skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes on the part of those who are involved in providing it, in whatever capacity and for any purpose. It is desirable therefore that they should be recruited with care according to their particular functions.

Source: Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, UNESCO General Conference 19th Session, November, 1976, Nairobi

ALE in Seychelles is primarily centralized and taken in charge by the government of Seychelles. The Ministry of Education and the National Human Resource Development Council (NHRDC) work in close collaboration with other partners to monitor the provision of ALE by other parastatal and private training institutions.

Source: Seychelles National Report

opportunities. Qualifications of adult literacy and/or education facilitators vary from country to country with some requiring university degrees and others, are themselves completing primary education. The work force in adult education, as a whole is poorly paid and in some countries, they work as volunteers. In spite of great demand on them to undertake multiple and complex responsibilities, there is very little done to systematically upgrade the skills of this work force. No country has reported a policy for training adult educators.

HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGE: The dwindling number of teachers in the formal education sector and their declining quality are the harsh realities countries face as they grapple with meeting the EFA goals. How does one build and strengthen an adult education workforce which will be able to meet the demands of the sector? How does one professionalize the sector?

C. Coordination or Management: Issues of governance in Adult Education

As provision of adult education goes beyond the education sector, obtaining an overview of such activities is not so easy. Many of the countries have enumerated the different Ministries which are involved in adult education but most of them describe their role in a very general way. In countries, where adult education is quite established, the institutional framework is clear (e.g Kenya and Tanzania) and getting an overview is relatively easy. For the others, because of the dispersed nature of adult education, it is not possible to monitor and take into account all the activities. Consequently, there is little valuation and recognition of the immense contribution of adult education.

The context of decentralization in many countries has both positive and negative effects. The positive effect is increased community involvement in adult education and the negative aspect, comes to the foreground, when decentralization is not matched by allocation of funds. Partnerships with communities and civil society work better at the local levels where stakeholders need to work together towards concrete objectives. What role the private sector has, especially in terms of adult education and training ensuring industry needs, is one that also needs to be examined. In many countries, the use of *Faire-faire* (a form of outsourcing/ subcontracting) in the delivery of literacy programs is an interesting case for how NGOs are involved in government programs.

Member States should endeavour to ensure the establishment and development of a network of bodies meeting the needs of adult education; this network should be sufficiently flexible to meet the various personal and social situations and their evolution.

Source: Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, UNESCO General Conference, 19th Session, Nov. 1976, Nairobi

GOVERNANCE CHALLENGE: Bringing together government, civil society, academe and the private sector stakeholders is one of the biggest challenge in terms of the coordinating the work in this sector. The nature of the relationship between the state and other non-state actors is a key question that needs to be addressed. Are existing government structures facilitating genuine participation? What kinds of partnerships need to be in place for all the stakeholders to work together? How does one ensure participation of communities?

D. Increasing Access or Bringing Quality Learning to the Marginalized Populations

For some time, the issue of quality has been sidelined as the global EFA discourse focused on access and by doing so, highlighted the importance of quantity. The false dichotomy between quantity and quality is slowly being addressed as policy makers realize that what and how students learn and what they do with such learning is equally important than just bringing them to school settings. For example, there is a shift now from universal primary enrollment to universal primary completion. That means it is not enough that children are brought to school. Perhaps more important is that they complete the years for primary education. The same debate is applicable to adult learning and education. One should not only plan to bring as many adult illiterates to literacy programs but also design activities that ensure quality learning. For after all, one basic indicator of quality of learning is the extent to which the learner is able to apply and use whatever knowledge and skills he/she has learned.

Quality is not so easy to measure and quantify because a large part of the contributing element to quality are learning processes. What people do as a result of the acquired information and skills does not remain in the realm of education but in fact, redounds to a better quality of life.

Complex as it is, one could still distill some key factors that contribute to quality. A basic question is to what extent is the adult education program relevant to the personal, family, community and social life of the learner. How effective are these adult education programs carried out as they bring together both human, technical and financial resources? How equitable are these provisions?

Case Study 1: Mabadiliko ya Wanawake (Women for Change), Tabora

Aisha left school in Form 2 to get married. For many years she fulfilled her role as a wife and mother. In 2003 she met Sahiba, a women's development network during a capacity building workshop. In view of her involvement with women at grassroots level Sahiba facilitated her presence to the Africa Social Forum 2004 in Lusaka and the Polycentric in Bamako in 2005 experiences that motivated her to open up literacy classes in her village in Tabora. Aisha uses videos mostly by women's rights organizations to educate men and women learners on reproductive health issues, governance, legal and human rights.

Case Study 2: Building strong foundations for learning

Asma is a 70 year old grandmother and veteran member Sahiba. Presently she works with the Zanzibar Chapter of FAWE where she has been instrumental in popularizing science camps for girls. Working with Sahiba she instituted leadership models for girls and women in the localities FAWE runs programmes. In some places Asma has begun study groups for illiterate women. One of these women accompanied her at the World Social Forum in Nairobi. Moreover, since 2005, Asma has been working with Sahiba to develop a teaching guide to help madrasa teachers, with no or little education or training, to teach children how to learn using locally available resources.

*Source : Gender and ALE in Africa: with specific References to Tanzania
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QUALITY CHALLENGE: The UN Rapporteur for Education, Katarina Tomasevsky identified four elements of the right to education which could be examined as the basis for development of indicators for quality adult learning and education: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. For example, when one looks at the curriculum of adult education programs, one basic question is how is it relevant to the life of the learner and to what extent it addresses the learner's need. To what extent the curriculum takes into consideration what learners already know? For example, does the curriculum

take indigenous knowledge into consideration? In terms of methodology, one could ask what reading and other supporting materials are available? How participatory are the methods? To what extent they involve the active participation of the learner? The adult educator facilitator is key in ensuring quality so this requires a trained person who sufficiently trained and motivated to support adults in their learning process. Finally, the question of how is how is monitoring and evaluation conducted at the program level as well as at level of the individual?

IV. Civil society responses to the challenges

Civil society organizations undertake a wide range of activities: from advocacy work to implementing programs. Sometime we are considered enemies by our government. Other times, we are the ones who implement their programs. We are found in different fora either as part of our policy dialogue or negotiation for better conditions for adult education. We also work at different levels: the community level, regional, national and international with different constituencies. But like any other organization, we also have our problems and weaknesses. One of our weakness is our difficulty to work together, for many reasons: political differences, leadership problems and/or competition. Given the enormity of the challenges we face, it is urgent that civil society organizations bring their strengths together and jointly address these challenges.

The AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ADULT EDUCATION is therefore the organizational expression of the aspirations of four networks to work together so we could effectively reach our goals for adult learning and education in Africa. It is made up of the ANCEFA, FEMNET, PAALAE and PAMOJA.

A. Who are we?

1. African Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA) emerged in 2000 following the World Education Summit in Dakar. An umbrella regional network of up to 27 African national civil society coalitions campaigning and advocating for EFA across Africa, with its regional secretariat in Dakar, Senegal.

ANCEFA's goals are:

- 1) the promotion and capacity-building of African civil society to advocate and campaign for access to free quality education for all;
- 2) the engagement of the civil society in national and international dialogue on the issues of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, gender equity, resource mobilization both within and outside the African continent, mitigating the impact of the conflicts on educational achievement and the needs of the poor, marginalised and vulnerable groups in pursuit of universal access to free, quality, education for all.

2. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) was set up in 1988 to share experiences, information and strategies among African women's non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through advocacy, training and communications so as to advance African women's development, equality and other human rights. Since its inception in 1988, FEMNET has played a leadership role for African women's NGOs at regional and international decision-making and policy fora.

FEMNET aims to strengthen the role and contribution of African NGOs focusing on women's development, equality and other human rights. It also aims to provide a channel through which these NGOs can reach one another and share experiences, information and strategies to as to improve their work on African women's development, equality and other human rights.

3. The Pan African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (PAALAE) is a non-political, non-governmental, voluntary partnership based in Dakar, Senegal. Its seven focal points, reflecting geographic, cultural and linguistic groupings, are Senegal, Nigeria, Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali and South Africa.

PAALAE is composed of national adult education associations, NGOs, institutions and individuals active in the field of literacy and adult education. It has its beginnings from the now defunct African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE), which was founded in 1984 following the merger of AAEA and Afrolit society. It is recognized by UNESCO, and is a founder member and, currently, a regional member of the International Council for Adult Education.

The fundamental objective of the Association is to promote adult education in all its variety of forms and dimensions and in relationship to the need for healthy growth and development of individuals, communities and societies in the African region.

4. PAMOJA Africa Reflect Network or popularly called PAMOJA is an Africa-wide non-lucrative, participatory education and development initiative established in 2002 by African Reflect practitioners, to facilitate learning, sharing and continuing evolution of Reflect practices in Africa. It forms part of CIRAC (Circle for International Reflect Action and Communication), which is a global organization of Reflect practitioners, set up in 2000. The use of Reflect has since spread to over 350 organizations, government ministries and departments in 60 countries across the world. In Africa, Reflect is practiced in more than 23 countries. Reflect came up to supplement other literacy programs in order to bring about change in Africa.

Among its core objectives are:

- To facilitate the formation and strengthening of PAMOJA Reflect Forums within Africa, promoting inter-agency collaboration and solidarity, facilitating the continuing evolution of Reflect and emergence of distinctively African Approaches.
- To promote capacity building of Reflect practitioners across Africa through cross-country training for key resource people, exposure/exchange visits, peer evaluations at all levels.
- To promote cross-country collaboration and innovation around key thematic issues in Africa, for example promoting innovation and learning about the role Reflect can play in addressing, HIV/AIDS, conflict, governance and youths.
- To influence the relevant policies and practices of governments, NGOs and donor agencies, through a combination of grassroots mobilization, people's organization and publications that take their base from people's knowledge and experience, with the primary intention of strengthening people's control over their own lives.

B. Partnerships that work

It is clear that the challenges—policy, resources, governance and quality— that face adult education cannot be addressed separately. The long term marginalization of adult learning and education in national development frameworks and in the education sector itself has resulted in its low priority whether it be allocation for human or financial resources. The unclarity of where adult education falls in terms of oversight and management means no central government structure is monitoring and evaluating its contribution. Because of the low status and non-recognition of the contribution of adult education, policy makers are not serious in addressing the quality issues.

The enormity and complexity of the challenges and the urgency of addressing them means that no one stakeholder alone could be able to deal with them. While recognizing that the

governments are primarily responsible for respecting, ensuring and providing for the basic rights of adults to education, other stakeholders could be drawn in partnership to ensure that government is able to deliver its commitments.

While civil society has been a key partner of government in addressing these challenges, many times such efforts of civil society are unrecognized and therefore not given value. The concept of partnerships is easily integrated in government speeches but when it comes to implementing the values of partnership – equality, dialogue, recognition of one's contribution, empowerment- there is still a lot that needs to be done. We are not adversaries of government as we share the vision of governments who are committed to providing quality learning and education to the marginalized population.

Since CONFITEA V, aware of the many dimensions of the problems facing adult learning and education, we have mobilized our organizations to undertake policy advocacy work and capacity development.

In preparation for the mid-term review of CONFITEA V, ANCEFA, PAALAE and PAMOJA met with the support of UNESCO BREDIA in July 2003 and came up with the following conclusions:

"Although the conference acknowledged the importance of adult learning; although the conference managed to forge worldwide commitments to the right to learn of adults; although the conference succeeded in providing a forum for the exchange of experiences on provision and required improvement; although, and most important, the Conference recommended future policies and priorities...and actively promoted international cooperation, not much happened in the ensuing 6 years. While civil society has done its best in service delivery, it is greatly saddening that adult education still remains at the bottom of the list of African countries' priorities- many still do not have well articulated policies in place; the majority of the programmes have not been revised; curriculum remain irrelevant; teachers/instructors are neither well trained nor well remunerated; learning materials are still patchy; and some methodologies used, unsuitable for adult learning"

Unfortunately the same conclusions could be said after five years have passed. While one could say that there has been a little improvement in a few countries, the regional reality is that adult learning and education is a marginalized activity for the government.

In this same meeting, among the recommendations we made were:

The region should undertake a systematic all African drive to focus on adult learning within the NEPAD initiative.

Adult learning programmes to be used as a vehicle for enhancing African renaissance processes for the social and economic progress of the African people.

For ourselves, we recommended:

- 1) Adult learning programmes activities, as a priority should focus on HIV/AIDS infected and affected populations, prisoners, informal sectors and learners with special needs. Programmes should address issues of gender (both women and men), poverty, the youth, human rights, health, HIV prevention and environment.
- 2) Civil society capacity should be strengthened in order to engage in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of adult education programmes.
- 3) In order to facilitate a better self-image and the development of the African identity, adult learning programmes should encourage an understanding of, and the positive development of African culture.
- 4) Through adult education programmes, CSOs should sensitise communities to the importance of education as a human right and as a prerequisite for development. It should strengthen institutions' capacity building to meet challenges, to professionally manage adult education programmes, as well as to advocate for participatory development of the official policy, curriculum and reform.
- 5) CSOs should focus on training for trainers and peer educators.
- 6) CSOs should enhance south-south exchange in order to share valuable best practice, home grown experiences.

Since that meeting in Dakar in 2003, civil society has made good its commitments.

Many of the national reports talk about programmes on HIV prevention, many of which civil society organizations have undertaken in partnership with governments. The integration of the gender perspective is not only part of our speeches but is in fact, slowly taking root in our programmes. Our programmes are working not only to provide additional income but also to genuinely empower communities.

UNESCO has recognized many of these programmes. In 2003 the International Reflect Circle (CIRAC) was awarded the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize. This was an unusual candidate for an International Literacy Prize in that it is not an institution or an individual literacy programme but a network of organisations and individuals who share a common vision and who together have contributed to the continuing evolution of the Reflect approach to literacy. CIRAC was praised for supporting adaptable and flexible programmes and helping

practitioners exchange experiences, teaching and written materials in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. In 2005, the humanitarian organization, GOAL Sudan, was awarded the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its Women's Literacy Programme in Displaced Communities using the Reflect approach, combining literacy with empowerment. Two years later, in 2007 - Family Re-orientation Education and Empowerment (FREE) in Nigeria was awarded the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for creating a network of learning centres. FREE provides literacy skills and community development programmes particularly targeting women and girls. More recently last September - The People's Action Forum (PAF) Reflect and HIV/AIDS programme was awarded the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its innovative strategies and strong community ownership. The UNESCO jury admired the association's use of local languages in teaching the rural women in their literacy programmes to be autonomous, following the motto: "rather than wait for government to decide, people should be involved in the decision-making process."

In the African Regional Conference on Literacy held in Bamako in September 2007, the case studies for "Effective Practices in Literacy in Africa" selected demonstrate how civil society organizations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia contribute to providing quality adult literacy programmes. <http://www.unesco.org/ui/literacy-programmes/>

We relentlessly strengthen and develop the capacities of our member organizations even with very meagre resources because we know that unless we build the quality of facilitators, we will not be able to provide quality services.

We try to use all the opportunities to advocate for integrated adult learning and education policies and more funding. As we committed in 2003, we also did advocacy work in our communities so that people know that education is a basic right and start claiming their entitlements to this right. In the recent African Regional Conference on Literacy in Bamako (2007) PAMOJA and ANCEFA organized a ten day advocacy caravan going through rural communities in Guinea, Senegal and Mali and presented the demands of these communities to the attention of the participants of the conference through UNESCO. A key demand of the caravan is that at least 3% of the education budget should be allocated to adult education.

Indeed there are many advocacy spaces that need to be maximized. The UN Literacy Decade (2003-2015) is an important policy space as our governments have committed to ensuring that the literacy goals of EFA will be addressed. There is also the UNESCO Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), a collaborative framework for working on literacy which involves 35 countries (19 of which are from Africa) with critical literacy needs. Initial activities at the sub-regional and regional levels have managed to bring together governments and civil society organizations not only to examine literacy policies but to

share effective practices. As a framework for bringing literacy stakeholders together for empowering learners, it holds the promise of paving the way for genuine partnerships as it not only intends to build government's capacity but commits to development of capacities for all the stakeholders.

Finally, an innovative advocacy framework that has been gaining ground not only in Africa but in other parts of the world is the Writing the Wrongs: International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy (www.actionaid.org/docs/writing%20wrongs%20literacy%20benchmarks%20report.pdf). The benchmarks were arrived at by studying and systematising experience of what works in adult literacy. Sixty seven successful literacy programmes in 35 countries were analyzed to look into common features that they share which could be simplified into concrete, hands-on benchmarks or guidelines for policy-makers. The twelve benchmarks were designed to facilitate serious planning to achieve the Dakar 'Education for All' goal of a 50% reduction in adult illiteracy by 2015. Developed by experts in adult literacy from all over the world, they are expected to be a starting point for policy dialogue between governments, funding agencies, NGOs, and those adults who have been deprived of their right to education. It could also be used as a checklist against which a

government or donor might ask questions about an existing or proposed programme. Not meant to be a blueprint or to be part of conditionalities, it is considered to be a work in progress with literacy stakeholders considering that success of any literacy programme depends on flexibility to respond to unique local needs and circumstances. In 2007, the government of Nigeria engaged itself in a dialogue with literacy practitioners from all over the world, to see how this tool could be used.

V. Moving from Rhetoric to Action: Forging Partnerships Towards a Renewed Vision of Adult Education

Our governments together with the international development and education community have promised so many times in the past decades to improve the lives and learning and education situation of the many excluded Africans. It is clear that we do not need more declarations or new recommendations. To achieve the Education for All goals and the MDGs, African governments will have to move away from rhetoric to implement action plans that deliver the promises they made in various international fora. We from civil society organizations consider ourselves a key partner in this endeavour.

Our vision, quality education for all Africans, cannot be achieved without the collective efforts of all stakeholders. Our vision of education- one that goes beyond schooling as it encompasses learning through life- requires the mobilization of all sectors in government in partnership with civil society, universities and private sector. Our vision of education requires that a sound foundation of learning through literacy needs to be in place for children, the young and adults to continue to learn. Our vision of education is embedded in a social justice perspective which requires affirmative action to the marginalized and excluded populations in our region.

Our governments need to recommit themselves to prioritizing education, and within this, ensure that provision for adult learning and education, is integrated. Our governments need to show their commitment by generating and allocating sufficient human and financial resources and not being too dependent on external resources. In the same vein, the international donor community must also be held accountable for their commitments. The call for development assistance to Africa made in many G8 and EFA High Level meetings has not brought the necessary level of funding. Multi-stakeholders dialogues, to include civil society organizations, need to take place in a more regular and transparent manner to ensure not only aid effectiveness but also to put in place genuine development partnerships. Governments need to put in place reporting and monitoring mechanisms, not only for transparency and accountability purposes but also for learning and evaluating one's progress.

We know that for us to be partners in a renewed vision for adult education in Africa, we need to strengthen our ranks and further reinforce and develop our capacities. We are developing

ways on how we could constructively engage in multi-stakeholder dialogues aware that our responsibility is to bring the voices of the communities in such discussions. We need to continue not only to engage with our constituencies in a participatory way with a goal of empowerment but also put in place transparent and accountable mechanisms when dealing with communities. We need to work with and create synergies with researchers and the academe.

As we face the challenges of policy, resources, governance and quality, we are clear with our goal. Together we need pursue our quest for quality learning for all in Africa which means 1) having relevant educational goals; 2) developing appropriate curriculum and learning programs; 3) devoting enough quality time for such learning opportunities; 4) promoting effective participatory teaching methods through continuous training; 5) ensuring appropriate languages of instruction; and 6) regular monitoring, assessment and evaluation processes.

We are ready to be genuine partners to ensure that Africa attains its vision of quality education for all. We do not want to continue with the lip service paid to the notion of partnerships- used when it is convenient (e.g. to be service providers) but easily forgotten in more substantial areas like policy dialogues whether at the national, regional or international levels. We believe that if the principles of partnership – independence and self-reliance, equality and equity, participation and inclusion- guide our relations with the government and other stakeholders, we will be able to work together to reach our goal of a just and equitable Africa.

We do not need more recommendations. We need strategies that will allow us move from rhetoric to action. We need to work together to develop these strategies to ensure that we will reach our vision of quality education and learning for all in Africa.

67. Member States should regard adult education as a matter of global and universal concern, and should deal with the practical consequences which arise therefrom, furthering the establishment of a new international order, to which Unesco, as an expression of the world community in educational, scientific and cultural matters, is committed.

Source: Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, UNESCO General Conference, 19th Session, November 1976, Nairobi

The 1976 Nairobi Vision of Member States:

The place of adult education in each education system should be defined with a view to achieving:

- a) rectification of the main inequalities in access to initial education and training, in particular inequalities based on age, sex, social position or social or geographical origin;
- b) the assurance of a scientific basis for life-long education and learning as well as greater flexibility in the way in which people divide their lives between education and work, and, in particular, providing for the alternation of periods of education and work throughout the life span, and facilitating the integration of continuing education into the activity of work itself;
- c) recognition, and increased exploitation, of the actual or potential educational value of the adult's various experiences;
- d) easy transfer from one type or level of education to another;
- e) greater interaction between the education system and its social, cultural and economic setting; and
- f) greater efficiency from the point of view of the contribution of educational expenditure to social, cultural and economic development".

(Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education UNESCO General Conference, 19th Session)

The 2007 Nairobi Vision of African civil society (WSF):

Another equitable and just Africa is possible—through education and learning



African Platform
for Adult Education