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and
Development

Role and Impact of Adult Education

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Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes e.V.
Obere Wilhelmstr. 32 / 53225 Bonn / Germany
Phone: +49 228 97569 0 / Fax: +49 228 97569 55
E-mail: info@dvv-international.de

Internet: www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development
Facebook: [facebook.com/AdEdDevjournal](https://www.facebook.com/AdEdDevjournal)

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Editorial

Seriously useless learning



Johanni Larjanko
Editor-in-Chief

Most people do not know about adult education. Learning takes place in school, happens when you are a kid and is about learning how to read and write. Yes, we have places on earth where schools do not exist. There are many who will never see the inside of a classroom. Yes, literacy and numeracy are fundamental to being able to function in most societies today. We need them to manage life in the world. This is true for children, and for adults. The lack of even the most basic skills training keeps many in a vicious cycle of poverty and despair. The world has acknowledged that. There are now international agreements in place to fix this. I am talking about the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals. So we have targets, specific numbers, agreed dates. This is not a new thing. We have had the same in the past. The results are mixed but fall well short of the agreed targets. Our solution has been to redesign our agreements and try again. Today the world agrees that by securing an education for all we will help people out of this vicious cycle. And who can argue with that? Unfortunately this usually ends with an extensive focus on primary education.

The thing is, you need to educate the parents too. Adult education has a proven track record of improving peoples' lives. It actually helps empower them. However, many in our field try to argue for an increase in funding and a raise in status for adult education using socio-economic arguments. If and when adult education is actually discussed, words like entrepreneurial competences and employability are popular. Adult education helps you get a job, and thereby improves your situation, the argument goes. It "fosters social cohesion" and builds "social capital". And who can argue with that?

Let me be provocative and throw a spanner in the works here. If we, as adult educators, try to emulate the econo-speak of the corporate world, we will always lose. Why? Because learning is about more. Learning is not a commodity on a market. We are not numbers. And learning is not about transferring a predefined set of desired skills or behaviours. We learn because we are human. We learn because that is in our fabric. The greatest gift we can give others is the spark of curiosity and questions, not the answers. Learning is fragile. It is a journey where we do not know the final destination. To embrace this approach to lifelong learning is to accept uncertainty. It is to recognise that we are not in control. Developing a country is not copying the blueprint from someone else. Adult education has many important roles to play, and the impact is unquestionable. It is just not always the roles and impact we usually mention.

A good adult educator is one that listens more than dictates. A good adult education system encourages taking risks, accepts failures and allows seriously useless learning, knowing full well that it is in the unexpected where we may reap the biggest reward of all. Independent, resourceful and happy people.

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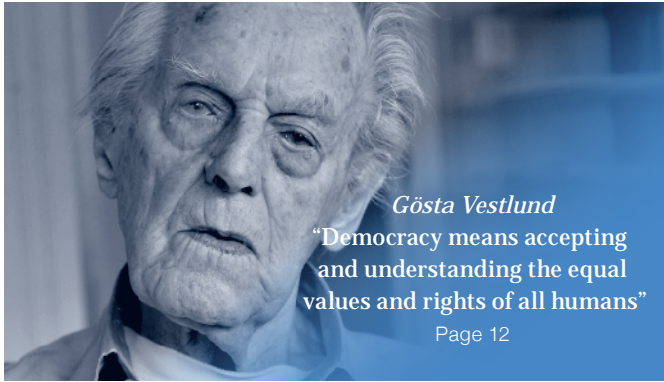


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The invisible friend: adult education and the Sustainable Development Goals



Aaron Benavot
University at Albany – State University of New York
USA

Abstract – *We live longer, in an increasingly global world. Our workplaces develop, and we are affected by climate change. We need adult education to cope with these changes. At the same time, the sector is languishing all over the world. This article focuses on the ways in which adult education and lifelong learning are present in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It highlights several contradictions in the new Agenda, and calls for innovative engagement and advocacy.*

Relative to other areas in education, progress in adult literacy, adult basic education and other opportunities for lifelong learning has languished in recent years and in much of the world. Whether due to lower prioritisation in Ministries of Education, minimal donor support, weak data-reporting mechanisms, or the absence of sustained private investment, the momentum behind expanding access to Adult Learning and Education (ALE) has slowed.

By contrast, global trends accentuate the value of, and the need to invest in, ALE. To name a few: Adults are living longer, and they are generating more demand for learning throughout life in diverse settings and formats. New technologies, growing automation, and shifting locations of production are influencing the skills needed by, and career trajectories of, workers in evolving labour markets. National populations are growing more diverse, partly due to intensified migration, thus highlighting the need for new approaches to promote social integration and solidarity. Adults are expected to become more resilient to the effects of climate change, extreme weather and natural disasters. Growing numbers of refugees and displaced people increase the need for adult education in emergencies, as well as for opportunities for (re)training and skill acquisition. Given these trends, international interest in ALE should be booming.

Within these contrasting forces, the new development Agenda, known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹, highlights the multifaceted roles and impacts of adult education on sustainable development. References to

ALE and lifelong learning are found in many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – sometimes explicitly, several times implicitly. Consequently, in my view, a huge window of opportunity has opened up for ALE advocacy.

Lifelong learning in the Post-2015 development agenda

As negotiations over the Post-2015 development agenda ensued, support for a stand-alone goal on education, while initially uncertain, proved to be substantial. The background brief submitted to the 4th session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) in June 2013 referred to education as “a fundamental human right and the bedrock of sustainable development”, and gave examples of its impact on a range of social, economic and political outcomes² (Wulff 2018).

Public support for education’s inclusion in the emergent agenda was also widespread. In 2013, the UN conducted a series of “global conversations”. The one on education engaged nearly 2 million people in 88 countries. The UN also launched the MY World survey, asking people which global policy priorities mattered most to them and their families. By December 2014, more than 7 million people had responded and overwhelmingly chose “a good education” and “better healthcare” as top priorities (UN 2014).

Once the broad international support for education was established, the next question became what kinds of “education” would the international community agree to in its education goal? Support for quality primary education was strong, but the priority of other levels and types of education was unclear. Some saw consensus only possible around a slightly enlarged goal of universal completion of basic education, to which learning targets would be added. Others sought agreement in broadening the nature and scope of global education priorities (Wulff 2018).

The end result came as a surprise to many. The final formulation of the education Goal and 10 targets (SDG4) represented an unprecedented vision of education and lifelong learning (Wulff 2018). SDG4 draws on, but goes significantly beyond, all previous international commitments to and targets in education. It prioritises early childhood, universal completion of primary and secondary education, and equal access to post-secondary education. It focuses on relevant learning outcomes, including foundational skills and others for rapidly-shifting labour markets. It promotes access for marginalised populations, and it highlights values and behaviour that foster gender equality, global citizenship and environmental protection.

The strength of the proposed goal derived, in part, from the many ties that education was perceived (or known) to have with other SDGs. The new development agenda – designed to be universal, indivisible and interlinked – encouraged integrated policies and intersectoral planning (Persaud 2017). Given this vision, a broad impactful Goal on education was a snug fit.

After years of intense negotiation, 193 UN member states adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda, with its 17

SDGs and 169 targets, on 25 September 2015. In addition to the expanded vision of education articulated in SDG4, the other 16 SDGs included numerous direct and indirect references to education, including ALE (ISCU and ISSC 2015). As John Oxenham noted: “Each of the 17 Goals has a set of targets, and each set has at least one target that deals with or implies learning, training, educating or at the very least raising awareness for one or more groups of adults. Goals 3 [health], 5 [women], 8 [economy], 9 [infrastructure], 12 [consumption] and 13 [climate] especially include targets that imply substantial learning for ranges of adults – and organised, programmatic learning at that” (Rogers 2016: 10).

The impact of education on many SDGs is also apparent in two other ways (UNESCO 2016: 368ff). First, by disaggregating SDG indicators by education levels, the potentially salient ties between education (or more educated adults) and various development outcomes becomes overt, often confirming longstanding research. Second, progress in the 2030 Agenda depends on utilising education to build capacity in countries. Improvements in health and sanitation services, agricultural productivity, climate change mitigation and crime reduction are contingent on training professionals and educated workers who can implement policies, lead information campaigns, and communicate with targeted communities.

So near, and yet so far

If adult learning and education is so strongly present in the SDGs, all is well, right? Well, not quite, as the following contradictions show.

Contradiction one

Although SDG4 formally recognises lifelong learning, still policy and political realities remain focused on the transformative power of schooling children and youth, and promoting foundational skills.

Never before has the notion of “lifelong learning opportunities for all” been articulated as an international development priority. Lifelong learning comprises all learning activities, from the cradle to retirement and beyond, undertaken with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences, within personal, civic, social and employment-related perspectives (UIL 2015). Lifelong learning involves multiple and flexible learning pathways, entry and re-entry points at different ages, and strengthened links between formal and non-formal structures (see Figure 1).

And yet, despite this recognition of lifelong learning, progress in formal education, up to and including tertiary education, remains at SDG4’s core. Increasing access to pre-primary education, ensuring universal completion of primary and secondary education leading to relevant learning, and making technical, vocational and higher education available and affordable, garner the most attention. The means to do so – improving facilities, creating effective learning environments, increasing the supply of qualified teachers – are also prioritised.

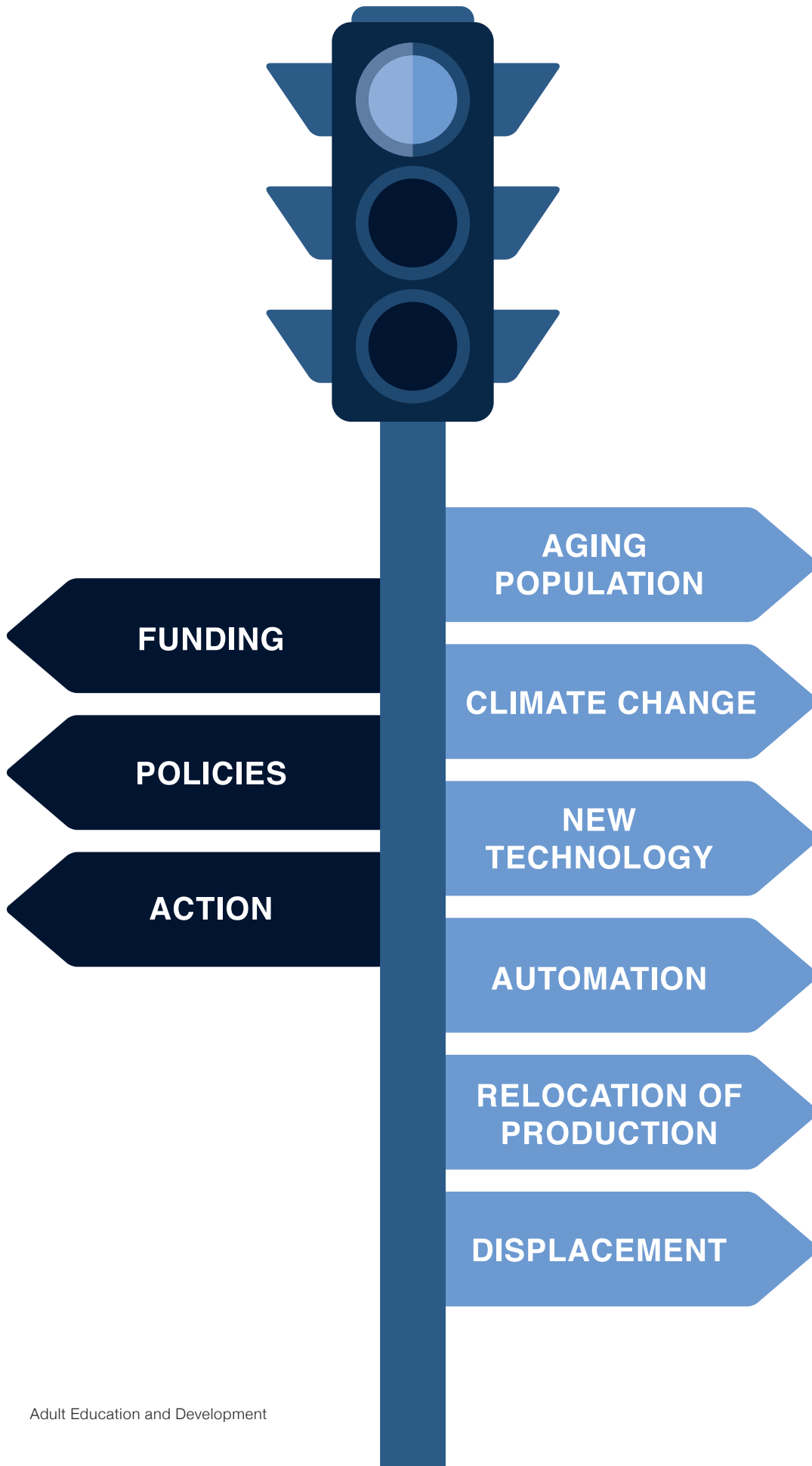
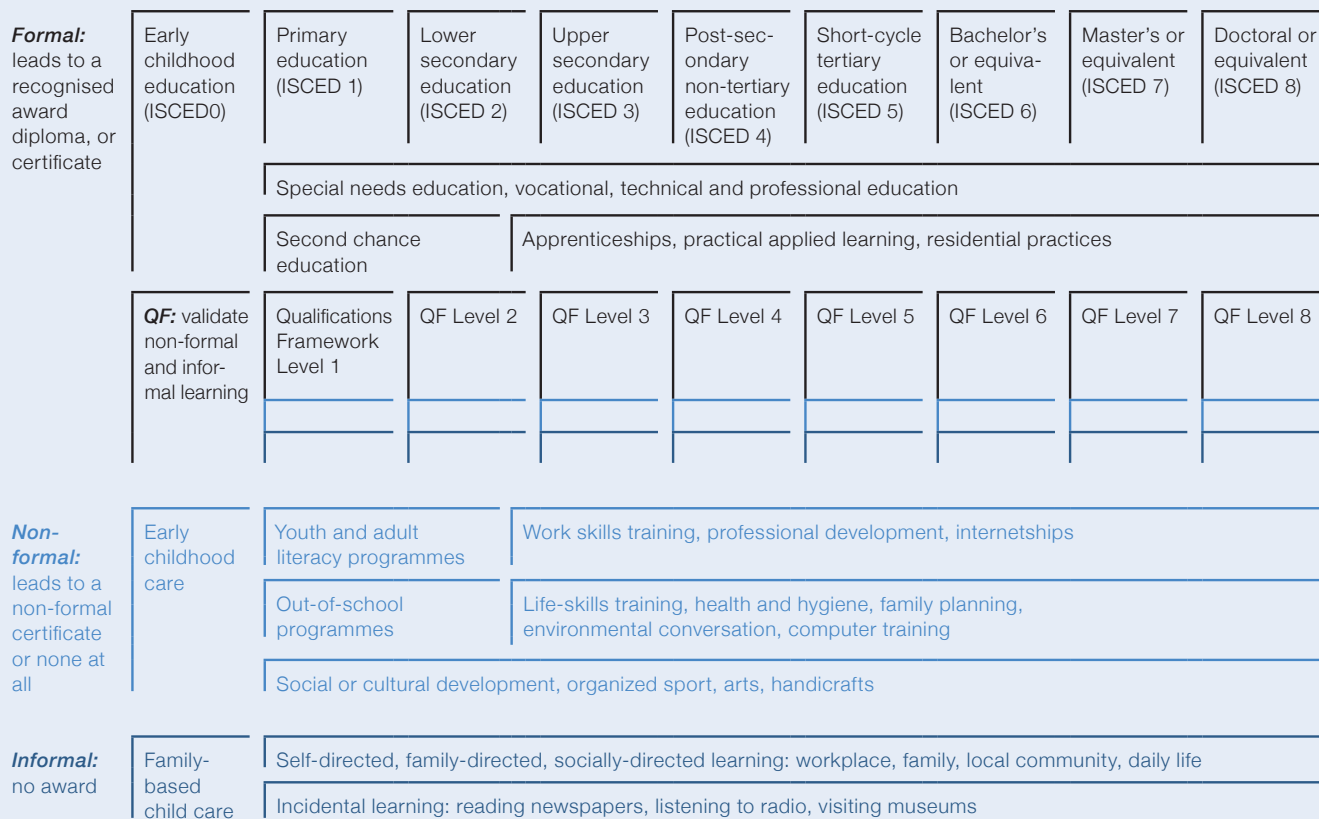


Figure 1 – Lifelong learning includes education opportunities through all stages of life



Source: UNESCO 2016: 8

Adult education, by contrast, receives minimal attention. Countries are expected to improve adult literacy rates, advance policies that promote the acquisition of relevant skills for decent work, and eliminate gender disparities and other forms of inequality in ALE. But the term “adult education” is not explicitly mentioned in any SDG4 target. The only recognition of adult education is found in the global indicator for target 4.3, which measures the participation rate of adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months. Given that “lifelong learning opportunities” are invoked in the goal itself, one would have expected a serious country commitment to expand ALE. Such is not the case.

Contradiction two

While many SDGs (apart from SDG4) make reference to different forms of adult learning, ongoing efforts to define and measure ALE, and disentangle its effects from those of formal education, are in short supply.

In numerous arenas of development policy, evidence of the impact of having more highly educated citizens is extensive, having accumulated over decades.

For instance, countries with higher levels of educational attainment have less poverty, improved health outcomes, greater economic growth and increasing social cohesion (UNESCO 2013, 2014). Evidence of the demographic effects of education (on fertility, mortality, nuptiality and migration) is extensive. Expanding access to education, which influences marriage and family preferences, social norms and cultural practices, accelerates the decline in fertility and the demographic transition.

With the global population reaching 9.7 billion by 2050, it is estimated that crop yields need to increase by 70% to keep up. Agricultural extension programmes and farmer field schools, when designed well, have helped improve crop yields, increase food security and reduce vulnerability to poverty (FAO 2016; Waddington et al. 2014).

Measures of completed schooling are also associated with increased environmental awareness, concern and, sometimes, action. For example, higher levels of schooling increase a person’s concern for environmental protection (Lee et al. 2015).³ Educated citizens with greater concern for the environment are more likely to get involved in activities to protect the environment. Education also gives citizens skills needed to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.

A survey in ten African countries showed that farmers with more education were more likely to build resilience through adaptation (UNESCO 2016).

As these examples illustrate, there is often ample evidence of the impact of education on aspects of sustainable development. That said, it is difficult to disentangle the development effects of participation in adult education, professional training or other lifelong learning opportunities from those of the quantity and quality of formal education. (The fact that more highly-educated adults are more likely to take advantage of adult education opportunities makes disentangling these two types of evidence even more complex).

Evidence in most literature reviews bearing on the nexus between education and sustainable development usually concentrates on measures of formal education, and not on the impact of adult education participation. Studies of the impact of ALE tend to be limited in scope and uneven in quality. Check, for example, the *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (2017), which compiled an extensive body of evidence to assess the impact of ALE on health and well-being, employment and the labour market, as well as social, civic and community life. Social scientific research of ALE in many of these areas simply lacks rigour, or geographical scope, or both.

In short, the inclusion of education as a driver of sustainable development contains many references to ALE, and yet the evidence used to justify its inclusion mainly relies on measures of formal schooling, and less frequently on systematic studies of the outcomes of participation in ALE.

“There are no standardised ways to define, measure and monitor the outcomes of participation in ALE.”

Contradiction three

SDG4 shifted educational priorities from access and completion to quality and learning, in part due to advances in the measurement of learning in international assessments. No similar quantum leap has taken place in the field of ALE: There are no standardised ways to define, measure and monitor the outcomes of participation in ALE.

One central aspect is the focus on results such as learning outcomes, rather than on access, participation or completion. International policy interest in learning and its measurement has proliferated since 2000. For example, the World Bank added measures of learning in almost all its education projects, and in 2011 published a new strategy document, *Learning for All*. At the same time, country participation in learning assessments – both international (TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA) and regional (SACMEQ, PASEC, TERCE) – increased (Kamens and Benavot 2011). A major comparative assessment of adult literacy was established (PIAAC). By focusing on the global competition for skilled labour and emerging knowledge societies, the media highlighted the

critical role of learning. Research into the impact of cognitive skills (measured by test scores) on economic growth gained visibility (Hanushek and Woessmann 2008, 2012).

With reference to adults, however, learning outcomes in SDG4 are narrowly defined as: literacy and numeracy (target 4.6), skills for employment and decent jobs (4.4), and knowledge and skills for sustainable development (4.7). No other forms of adult learning are recognised or valued. Moreover, global indicators for these targets align only partially to their stated intent. Skills for decent work (4.4) are reduced to adults acquiring ICT skills; knowledge and skills for sustainable development (4.7) are reduced to mainstreaming education in policies, curricula, teacher training and student assessment. These indicators represent problematic proxies of SDG4 targets. Unfortunately, there are few initiatives to improve upon them using innovative measurement strategies. Since we lack relevant global indicators, and there is little incentive to take up the measurement challenges, it is unlikely that we will see any progress on these adult education targets in the future.

Won the battle, but lost the war?

In debates over the new sustainable development agenda, advocates of adult education had pushed for language highlighting the specific role and value of ALE, but their suggested formulations were often stymied. Rather, they were asked to support the big tent idea of lifelong learning, assuming that adult education would find its rightful niche. Perhaps now in hindsight, as contradictions amass, it is increasingly clear that the shift to “lifelong learning” is doing little to mitigate the many challenges and impending marginalisation facing adult education. Although the international community created an exceptional global education agenda, comprehensive in scope, realities are giving way to prioritisation in planning, resource allocation and funding. More often than not, the provision of clear education pathways for adults remains an ardent dream – despite the urgency to address the effects of climate change, economic and health inequalities, democratic deficits and more.

It is ironic that this process is unfolding when the 2030 Agenda is chock-full of references to ALE, both explicitly and implicitly. And while the international development rationale for adult education is there for all to see, ALE advocates have yet to find ways and means to transcend the conventional boundaries of their field and seize upon the opportunities accompanying the sustainable development agenda. There are indeed many challenges – conceptual, definitional, measurement-related and financial – but they deserve to be addressed compellingly and persuasively by new ideas and approaches. If not, in 2030 we shall lament once again how important ALE is, but how little it is valued in reality.

Notes

- 1 / <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>
- 2 / It was produced by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, ILO, ITU, UNV, OHCHR, PSO, UNDP, and IFAD. <https://bit.ly/2Lfcgcu>
- 3 / <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>

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About the author

Aaron Benavot is a Professor at the School of Education, University at Albany-SUNY. His scholarship examines the changing contours of basic education, approaches to adult literacy and lifelong learning, and education for sustainability. During 2014–2017 Benavot served as Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report, an editorially-independent, evidence-based annual report published by UNESCO that monitors the progress of education targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Contact

abenavot@albany.edu
albany.academia.edu/AaronBenavot



Section 1

Playing a role

The role of adult education is in the eye of the beholder. There are many who want to use adult education for their own purposes, very often as a simple tool to accomplish narrow goals. Fortunately there are still many of us adult educators who feel this is about so much more.

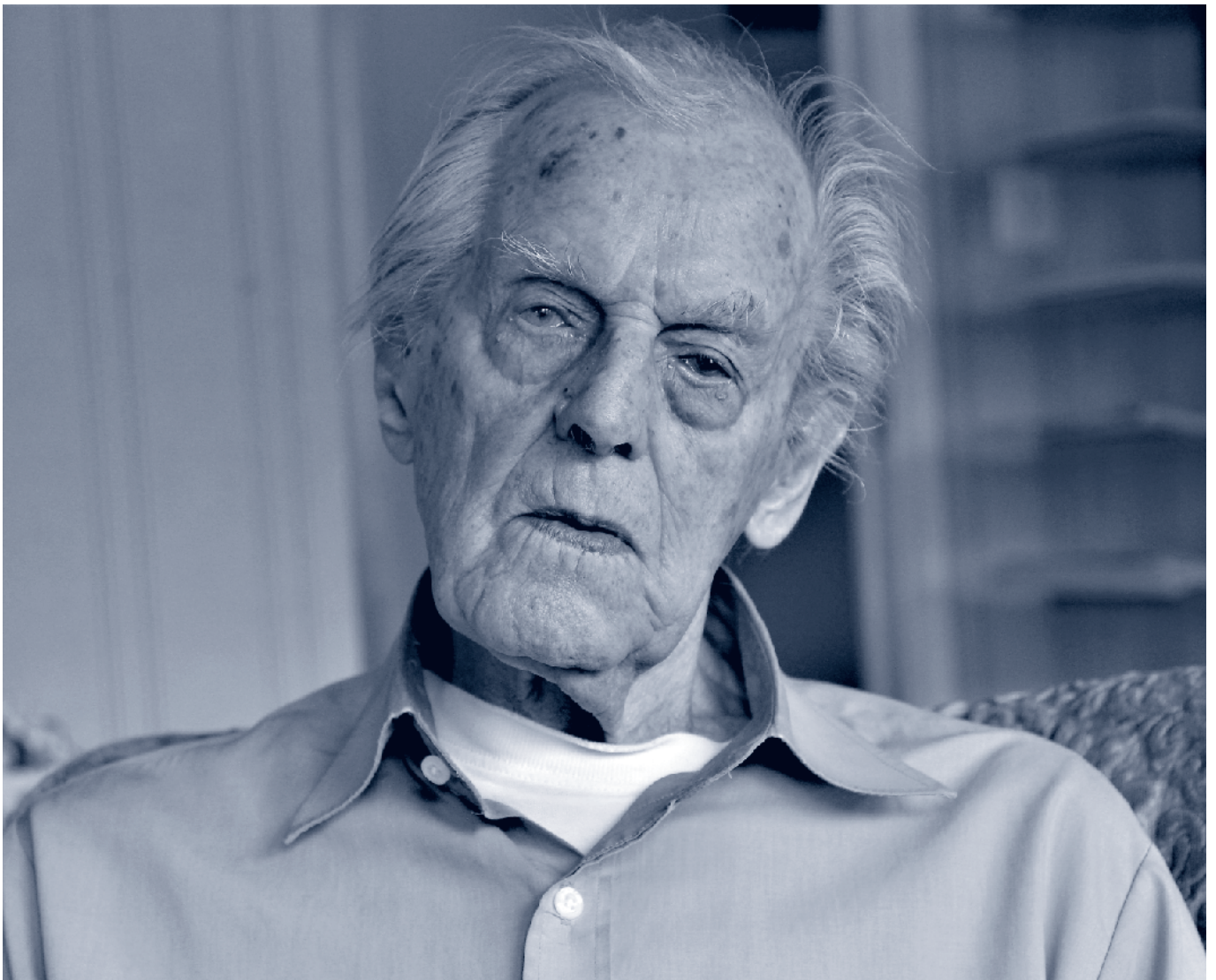


Gösta Vestlund

“Democracy means accepting
and understanding the equal values
and rights of all humans”

Interview

Interview by Sturla Bjerkaker, adult educator
and member of the International Adult
and Continuing Education Hall of Fame
Photos by Maria Zaitzewsky Rundgren (p. 12),
Håkan Elofsson (p. 14)



Gösta Vestlund (105) is a former “folk high school” teacher, principal and inspector from Sweden. In his unusually long lifespan and career, he has been particularly occupied with learning for democracy. He spent many years working for literacy and folk high school movements in Africa. His perspective

on the impact of adult education is quite unmistakable: Without adult and lifelong learning and education, we would not have the Nordic welfare societies as we see them today, and we would not have well-developed democracies, either in Europe or in other parts of the world.

We are in a nice suburban area half an hour east of the Swedish capital Stockholm, in a semi-detached red-brick house built back in 1961. The bleak sun rising this late February morning shines in through the large windows, revealing a nice panorama of a snow-filled garden. From the television set, the winter Olympic Games from South Korea are flickering through the living room. Nordic disciplines, Nordic winners.

Calm, sitting on his sofa, Gösta Vestlund is the grand old man of Nordic popular enlightenment and liberal adult learning and education. It is called “*folkbildning*” in Swedish, and is in the same vein as the Danish synonym “*folkeoplysning*”. It is quite difficult to translate into other languages. This seems to me to be due not only due to the term but also to the concept, as “*folkbildning*” is hardly recognised anywhere outside Sweden.

“Not quite true”, argues Gösta Vestlund, “my experience from Tanzania for instance tells me that ‘*folkbildning*’ is possible in other cultures too.”

More about this later.

Gösta Vestlund has been well known in Sweden and in the Nordic countries for many, many years. Turning 105 this year, he was born back in 1913. This means that he has lived through not one, but two World Wars in Europe, the First and the Second.

He lives alone, and does his own housekeeping. His only problem (!) is that he cannot see to read very well any more. He has special equipment which makes the letters 16 times bigger, allowing him to read things like international reports on educational progress, or on the lack of progress. His memory is excellent, and his perspective of the future is even more impressive. Because, as he says: “As long as you’re alive, you have a mission!”

The journey from a small village in the middle of Sweden to the international stage and living in Tanzania in the 1970s. How did this come about?

“I went on my first visit to Africa and Tanzania back in 1965”, Gösta Vestlund remembers. “We were ten folk high school teachers from Sweden about to start literacy study circles in different areas of the country. It was a literacy campaign financed by SIDA (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and the ABF (Workers Educational Association), which was back then and still is the largest study association in Sweden. We cooperated with the Institute of Adult Education in Dar es Salaam and the Cooperative Institute in Moshi.”

How did Sweden come to be engaged in development cooperation work in Tanzania?

“Swedish Prime Ministers Tage Erlander and later Olof Palme had contacts with Julius Nyerere, the famous Prime Minister of Tanzania, through SIDA. A Tanzanian delegation came to Sweden in 1971. What they found was a system for educating adults which, they said, was needed in Tanzania as well. ‘We need time before the children are educated’, they continued, ‘so let’s start with the adults.’”

You had many visits to and working periods in Tanzania?

“Yes”, Gösta continues. “I went there again for negotiations in 1974. We discussed how to organise adult education and how to implement the study circle methods. We also presented the Scandinavian folk high school model, and we proposed to start a few such schools to find out if it fitted into the Tanzanian learning culture.

‘Only a few!’, our Tanzanian friends replied, ‘we have 14 million people to educate, so we need folk high schools in every one of our 86 districts!’



At 105, Gösta still reads everyday to follow recent developments in adult education. His only problem is to see the small type

Folk High Schools were established, and today 55 such schools exist. They are called Folk Development Colleges (FDCs)."

Are these schools still running according to a Swedish and Scandinavian model?

"As far as I know", Gösta replies, and hands over a concept note he recently received from the Ministry of Education in Tanzania. It is about *The Role of Folk Development Colleges in Reaching Vulnerable and out of School Children/Youth*. The note refers to the start in 1975, and relates that more than 30,000 students were attending FDC courses as late as in 2009: "The objective of the training is to provide young people and adults with knowledge and skills that would enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant [...]. The FDCs will be One Stop Centres for young people who missed opportunities to proceed in formal education", the Ministry note concludes.

This must be nice reading for you, Gösta?

"Yes, I find it very satisfying, after working for these schools all those years ago."

He points out that the foundation for the FDCs in Tanzania can be traced back to the 1920s. At that time, the

United Kingdom established schools for farmers in large numbers of regions to teach them how to grow crops. These schools did not function well, but when farming was combined with society and local development, as well as with teacher training activities, it started to work. This is almost the same as Grundtvig and Kold did in Denmark 100 years earlier, when they invented the Scandinavian Folk High School Movement.

"What they didn't have in Denmark", Gösta adds, "was the opportunity to sit under the mango trees and discuss life..."

Having been widowed, he moved to Dar es Salaam in 1976 with his second wife, and had to learn Swahili. They attended a Swahili study circle in Sweden, and then a Swahili course run by SIDA. He was already 62 at that time, and learning a new language did not come easy. The family stayed in Africa for two years, after which he went back to his ordinary position as Folk High School Inspector at the Ministry of Education in Stockholm, a position he held for more than 20 years all in all, after working as teacher at several folk high schools and as the principal for one in Sweden. During his long lifespan, he also initiated folk high school teacher training at the University of Linköping, where teachers and principals from Tanzania also attended shorter courses.



"How do we nurture our democracy", Gösta asked in his book from 1980

Tanzania is still an important country for Swedish development cooperation, and for adult educators in study associations and folk high schools in Sweden. Eva Önneshö, who for many years was responsible for international affairs in the Temperance Movement's study association (NBV), says that a special NGO, "the Karibu Association" is still active with members in both countries, and that around 20 of the FDCs in Tanzania are working together with schools in Sweden.

One of the main tasks which has occupied the mind of Gösta Vestlund during his 105 years is promoting democracy. For him, democracy is much more than free elections, it is a way of being, it is a lifestyle. He agrees that free elections are essential in any country and culture, but argues that the ability to read and write is a foundation and a precondition for democracy. That is why he looks back at his work in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia as work for democracy.

So what about the conditions for democracy in a developed Western European country such as Sweden? Are they perfect?

Every year, the Folk High School Tollare outside Stockholm organises a seminar named after Gösta, the Vestlund Seminars. The headline for these seminars is "Democratise Democracy".

"We must keep the dialogue on democracy alive at all times", argues Gösta Vestlund.

"I have just read the latest World Values Survey Report, and I think I can recognise a change amongst groups, for instance in developing countries. They are moving from being oppressed to being more empowered people. This is a cultural change that we can see in many places, and it is promising. There is a growing number of people in many countries saying that 'we will not be oppressed but empowered and participating'.

It is also promising to see that young people in Sweden today are increasingly keen to discuss questions and learn about how society functions and in which direction it is moving. The core of democracy is acceptance and insight into all human beings' equal values and rights. Literacy is of course essential in this context, and let us not forget that this applies in equal measure to environmental issues such as climate change. All this must be seen in a democratic context."

Our grand old man of "*folkbildning*" does not know why his health is so good, it goes against all sense ... But it is good. His brain is clear. He just doesn't see so well any more, but he can listen to books and can take part in the human dialogues he finds so important. To be "*bildad*" (formed) – he says – is to not humiliate others.

Gösta, your view of mankind must come from somewhere. Can you remember 100 years back in your life, and tell me what formed you as a human being?

"Oh, it is so much, but I must start with my grandmother. Born in the middle of the 19th century, she knew what it was like to be poor. It was a period of starvation in the Swedish countryside at the end of the 1860s. It was essential for her to take care of everything that nature could give and to grow crops wherever it was possible. She also taught me to behave and that I should be on time and do my work conscientiously. She expressed sanity and sensitivity, and she gave me the confidence to express my views, even if we were poor. Everybody should be valued equally.

Another important event which shaped me took place at the beginning of the 1930s, "only" 85 years ago ... Three young men who had escaped from Hitler's Germany knocked on our door. They told us about the growing Nazi regime and what was about to happen in Germany. This opened my eyes to the world outside my local community in the middle of Sweden, and must be one of the reasons for my work abroad and for my views on democracy."

"The ability and the opportunity to stay in contact and to open a dialogue with others must be the core of popular enlightenment, formation, *bildning* and therefore of democracy", says our 105 year-old interviewee, who is still engaged. In 2016 he became inducted as a member of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame at the University of Oklahoma, USA.

"A great honour for me", he said.

An honour for the Hall of Fame as well.

How adult education can save your life



Henrique Lopes
Portuguese Catholic University
Portugal

Abstract – *This article outlines the impact that adult education can have on our health. It is time to place preventive healthcare education in the same category as literacy and numeracy, and to re-evaluate the importance of lifelong learning for our survival.*

Every country around the world faces major problems over managing their healthcare systems. This is so in some countries because they lack the economic, technical and human resources to provide their populations with appropriate levels of care. Others have vast service provision networks endowed with highly-qualified professionals, but are not able to keep up with the financial requirements, given the nature of the prevailing “summative innovation”, which implies that every advance and innovation results in increased costs.

There are countries spending a lot of money on healthcare. They tend to have well-equipped hospitals, with the United States heading the field in this group. In spite of this, they do not obtain healthcare results and indicators that are as good as other countries which spend less than half as much, with European countries being the most known of the latter case.

In other words, healthcare-related issues cannot be reduced to a question of resources. Putting more money and resources into the classical model only guarantees the maintenance of performance in terms of health indicators, and eventually a slow decline as the population ages.

Healthy water

Simple historical analysis reveals how around 80% of the progress in health that has been achieved over the last two centuries stems from the mass availability of clean drinking water, good food and hygienic habits. All the panoply of re-

sources sunk into medication and establishing networks of modern hospitals is very useful, but this is not where we should look when seeking to take qualitative steps forward in the healthcare of populations. The only exception has been the vaccination campaigns, for reasons to which we will return below.

The scientific literature underpinning the field of disease and public health management conveys how the morbidity profile of any given population may largely be explained by lifestyle and the notion of implicit risk attaching to the behaviours of its citizens.

It is easy to show examples of how lifestyles impact: Around 90% of type 2 diabetes, the most expensive disease for Western countries' healthcare systems, can be avoided through educating people about food and diet and combating sedentary life styles. There is an identical situation for many of the circulatory diseases that account for around a third of all deaths in these same countries. Furthermore, many cancers of the digestive tract are susceptible to prevention through minor dietary alterations which involve replacing some higher-risk foodstuffs with other, healthier alternatives that are often also cheaper and more widely accessible.

In the second component, that of the perception or notion of risk-incurring behaviours, we may point to the huge numbers of people who lose their lives or are injured in road, work and domestic accidents, particularly children and young persons. There are also millions of people worldwide experiencing substance dependence on the most varied of products because they were not brought up or educated to grasp the notion that addiction is a disease and that the consumption of addictive products only increases the risk of becoming ill. This simplistic idea does not explain the extent of this reality, but it does reflect the core of the problem.

Thousands of examples might be put forward as regards both lifestyles and risky behaviours, and always with the same final result: undermining the healthcare profiles of both the persons portrayed and their respective populations.

Adult education as a healthcare tool

Changing this scenario, which is more than a simple question of resources, represents a political option over the choice of paradigm. We can either keep spending rising sums of money to offset that which has already happened, or we can educate populations so that their health remains as good as is possible, hoping to thereby prevent what may otherwise happen in the future. It is in these terms that adult education constitutes a core healthcare tool for supporting a new paradigm underpinning the state of health through the management of knowledge.

The current health service paradigm fundamentally incorporates a reactive attitude towards the appearance of disease, and receives around 98% of the total available healthcare budget. Prevention very often fails to expand significantly beyond vaccination campaigns, thus accounting for a very small proportion of state spending that is earmarked for health.

“Undoubtedly, while knowing how to read and count are essential facets, being alive provides a pre-condition for even being able to read and count.”

The idea that citizens must learn health in the way that is already accepted in the case of literacy and numeracy is still lacking. Undoubtedly, while knowing how to read and count are essential facets, being alive provides a pre-condition for even being able to read and count. Therefore, developing healthcare literacy is essential and worthy of the same level of dissemination as both literacy and numeracy. Avoiding a life of dependence or even premature death is far more important than reciting the most beautiful of poems or calculating advanced theorems. There is clearly a hierarchy of priorities, and life is certainly at the top of that pyramid.

Learning at the right time

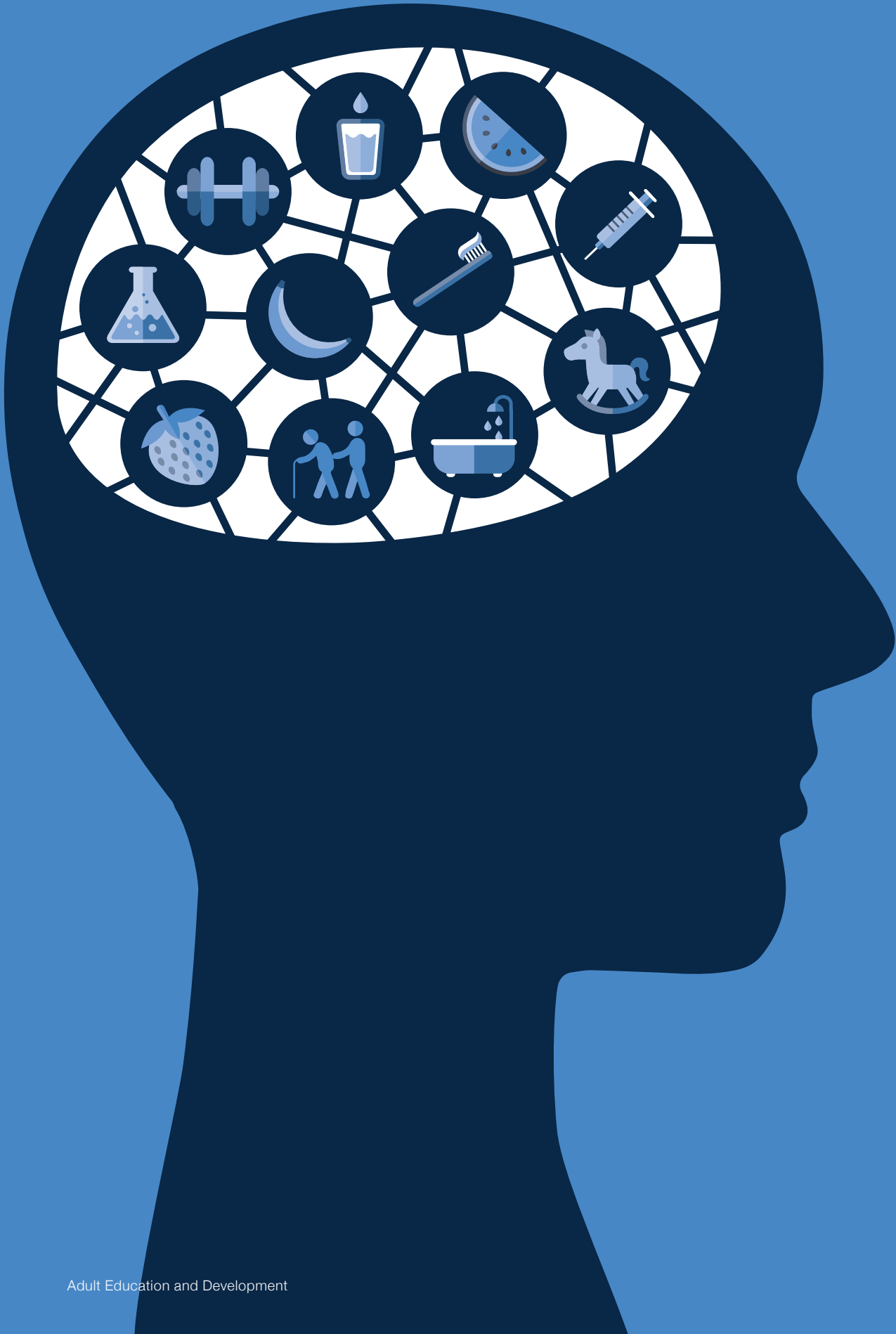
The nature of this learning differs from the usual education processes. It is not possible to learn as a child and expect that such knowledge may be used throughout life, as is the case with learning how to read for example. The very nature of health determines that a person is potentially subject to different problems in each different phase of life, coupled with variations not only in the levels and types of social responsibilities, but also in physical and intellectual capacities. Therefore, while we do need basic training and education at younger ages, there is other knowledge that it is only worth providing at later stages of life. For example, there is no sense in educating a child about geriatric care, as decades will pass before such knowledge ever becomes relevant.

Furthermore, knowledge about health has been evolving at a very swift pace, and it is only worth conveying contents that are of value to the user. Healthcare literacy thus becomes an education process that needs to stretch from the cradle to the grave, with each phase of life requiring specific training, be it in the respective social roles that a person plays, or in the specific needs with which he or she has to deal.

This is the reason why adult education is key to healthcare literacy, without underestimating the set of contents that children and young people need to learn.

There is a cycle of nature that must be integrated into the search for answers, and it deals with parenthood. It is necessary to know how to be a parent. If a licence is (understandably) required to be able to drive, why should the necessary learning and education not also be extended in this direction, to becoming a mother or father, which equally represents a major challenge on which the health of the baby depends. For example, a significant proportion of infant mortality might be avoided through small changes in diet and the rapid recognition of danger signs in the baby.

For adults, there is a need to know how to deal with the range of care that a person ends up providing to children, to sick persons in our care (with each disease requiring dif-



ferent types of knowledge in keeping with how caring represents a complex and demanding task), the elderly that we need to support, the notion of risk whenever we are driving or walking along a street, or any of the numerous other risks that we incur daily. A trained and informed citizen will know in his or her later years how to preserve the years of potential life, and especially the quality of life in these years.

The benefits of being educated

To sum it up, citizens educated in healthcare literacy tend to adopt healthier lifestyles, enjoy better mental health, and engage in fewer types of risky behaviour. Faced by illness, they tend to be patients or carers who react in the earlier stages of the disease, mitigating severe situations and intervening in the disease when it is easiest to do so, thereby resulting not only in lower levels of healthcare expenditure, but also better recoveries, both faster and with less suffering.

“Non-formal and informal adult education are particularly suitable to offer learning at the time when a person falls ill or has sick persons in his or her care.”

Adult education aligns very closely with these healthcare goals, standing out as a natural partner. Non-formal and informal adult education are particularly suitable to offer learning at the time when a person falls ill or has sick persons in his or her care. Adult education also provides constant access to the contents deemed appropriate to their particular phases in the life cycle, the social roles they perform and the specific pathologies with which they have to cope. Furthermore, training the elderly holds special relevance, as this is the phase in life when most illnesses emerge, alongside the corresponding needs for managing not only the disease and the medication required, but also everything else that life entails.

Ongoing and lifelong training and education proves equally essential for healthcare professionals. We have long since abandoned the idea that when you gain a qualification in a field of health, you are set up to be a potentially good professional for the rest of your career. Several associations representing the various healthcare professions determined between 2000 and 2005 that a need was arising for regular training and education through formal, informal and non-formal means, as the valid knowledge any specialist receives at one particular moment in time is now out of date within an average of four years. Some associations now stipulate that, in order to retain their professional licences, members have to participate in training on a regular basis (commonly between one and four years) or run the risk of having their licences suspended.

Education against epidemics

Another aspect in the relationship between health and adult education stems from the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). The SDG that specifically targets health contains a total of thirteen objectives to be attained by 2030. Of these, only two do not entail a direct relationship (substantially increase health financing and the recruitment; support the research and development of vaccines and medicines). In three instances, healthcare literacy is absolutely critical to attaining the set objectives: end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases, and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases; reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment; promote mental health and well-being; reduction and management of national and global health risks. In the remaining eight objectives, there are differentiated levels of alignment, albeit they are always positive. The conclusion is that the SDGs will only ever be achieved through an active contribution from healthcare literacy.

It is important to note that healthcare literacy is not an issue for the future. This already exists even while still in an initial and early phase, with the exception of vaccination campaigns. What is being done in terms of vaccinations, and has saved millions of human lives, can also be done in the area of chronic diseases, ageing, accidents and addictions.

Real case stories

Let us now consider some brief examples of the developments at our Research Unit that demonstrate how adult education contributes towards improving health and health outcomes.

Example 1

Adult women returning to education make a very significant improvement to their levels of self-esteem, extroversion and citizenship participation rates¹. This study took place in Portugal and involved around 3,500 women. They made their own self-evaluations in relation to a set of indicators covering the three interrelated concepts before and after participating in adult education. The aspects covered self-esteem and extroversion (the two pillars of mental health), demonstrating how adult education contributes directly to improving and preserving mental health.

Example 2

Oral health in Guinea Bissau. This was a joint project with a specialist oral health non-governmental organisation in the poorest region of Guinea Bissau, the Bijagós Islands. The project established an informal training programme for teachers, mothers (the local ethnic group lives in a matriarchal structure), and relevant social actors, on the importance of good oral hygiene and health. The NGO provided a full-time dentist free of charge who was also tasked with undertaking

the training campaign. This included monitoring some primary school classes on some of the islands. At the end of three years, the project was able to ascertain that the average level of oral health of children in these schools was close to levels in Europe. Furthermore, the teeth brushing behaviours also spread throughout the children's families. This resulted in new problems, such as every family member using the same toothbrush.

Example 3

Seventy-one million people suffer from Hepatitis C worldwide. This is one of the easiest diseases to prevent whenever basic healthcare measures are adopted. Twenty-four public healthcare policies have had their effects fully validated, not only in terms of prevention, but also improving diagnoses and the treatment of this disease. This project developed a tool incorporating epidemiological characteristics with the taking of health-related decisions. This was then made available across multiple digital platforms (smartphones, tablets and computers), helping anyone with an interest to simulate which policies are most suitable, to ascertain the level of intensity of their application, and to see how this then impacts on the number of diseases, new outbreaks, the number of transplants, the number of patients requiring treatment, etc.

This type of tool may transform the regular citizen into a potential defender of the best healthcare causes and practices, of particular use to patient associations, decision-makers, professionals, etc., in order to ascertain whether they are heading down the best path. You may test this out at www.lehc.com. The tool can be downloaded free of charge.

There is a bridge under construction between healthcare and adult education which, once completed, will support qualitative improvements in populations' general state of health. The sheer potential transforms adult education into the best ally currently available to boost the health of the planetary population.

Notes

1 / Study published by UNESCO-UIL (2011), in the book "Accreditation of prior learning as a lever of lifelong learning", chapter by Henrique Lopes.

Discuss this article at our virtual seminar (see page 100)

Get Involved!
ICAE
Virtual Seminar
2019

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About the author

Henrique Lopes, professor and researcher of Public Health, works in the fields of Public Health Policies, Health Quality and Health Literature. He has also worked in research on adult education. Currently he is the scientific coordinator of the European research project for Hepatitis C elimination until 2030 "Let's End Hep C".

Contact

henrique.lopes@sharen.pt

The skill to emancipate

It seems to me that someone had the bright idea of clicking the reset button on adult education, erasing all its history and many of the functions. During rebuilding, the following conversation took place:

What is the foundation of human existence?

– Basic needs. Adult education should then provide people with the means to satisfy them.

What is the main concern of people around the globe?

– Getting and keeping a job. Adult education should help with employment.

Sick people do not work, so health is the next task.

What is the world's main concern?

– The global crisis. It is caused by the lack of skills of poor workers. Adult education should provide the relevant skills and competencies.

Look at the last decade and tell me this is not exactly what has happened.

Throughout the centuries, adult education has meant many things – practical assistance, intellectual enjoyment, spiritual paths. It was always a kind of empowerment of individuals and communities. Plato recommended adults to learn, contemplate and debate simply because it is good for their souls. Some looked for knowledge in order to reach God, or knowledge beyond God. Others were looking for wisdom and truth. That is history. Even in modern times, pivoting around employment and production, adult education was often understood as an emancipatory practice. John Dewey stated that the purpose of adult education “is to put

meaning into the whole of life”. Today this sounds more like a title of the seminar of some exotic religious sect. We still quote Freire, but we don’t strive to “conscientization” in our work. We refer to the four pillars of the Delors report from 1996, but in reality we mostly mean “learning to do”. The Basil Yeaxlee classic “An educated nation” from 1920 would today be called “A skilled nation”.

How did this happen? We are making an error in thinking. Liberal education is not about results; it does not have any “modern” result. Today only countable, measurable and financially-expressible results are valued. Empowerment, emancipation, self-realisation, justice and equity play minor roles as a decorative framework of main agendas. Adult education is reduced to a recruiting centre and a space for boosting skills. Upskilling, competencies and performances are celebrities. Truth, dignity, justice and even peace are poor cousins who are supposed to sit quietly in a corner.

Focusing on our employment, we forget the millions of those who are in precarious jobs or jobless, very often not because of any lack of skills. Taking care of our own well-being, we neglect the starving human beings and the world community. Obsessed with producing skilful and eager consumers, we behave as if the world were almost perfect. Shouldn’t we “learn to be and to live together”? Valuing only what is measurable, we tend to bury the fundamental values of mankind.

History tells us that taking the narrow path often leads us to a blind alley. Maybe it’s time to “undo the reset button” in adult education?



Katarina Popović is Secretary-General of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE).

Contact

sec.general@icae.global

Why adult education matters in Latin America, and how its limited priority affects its impact



Carmen Campero Cuenca
Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
Mexico

Abstract – *Adult education is a broad, complex field intertwined with multiple social and educational realities. This article points to a couple of potential key roles for adult education for individuals, their families and communities in Latin America. Some reasons for the limited impact that adult education currently has in the region are also presented.*

Youth and adult education is a human right and the gateway to the exercise of other rights. The answers to crucial problems in today's world, expressed in a global and interconnected way in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are integrally linked to quality education and lifelong learning for the entire population. Providing youth and adult education are the key to guaranteeing individual and community development and building more just societies (GIPE 2018).

“Despite its importance and potential, youth and adult education is secondary to the agendas of education for children and young people.”

Youth and adult education is relevant in various aspects of individual and community life such as: health and well-being, employment and the labour market (including sustainable livelihoods), justice and democracy, social, civic and community affairs, art and culture, new technologies and social networks.

Despite its importance and potential, youth and adult education is secondary to the agendas of education for children and young people, a condition that can be perceived at different levels and in different situations. For example, youth and adult education is not explicitly mentioned in SDG 4 and its global indicators. Funding organisations also do not con-

sider its role. This lack of priority is reflected in most national budgets, where youth and adult education budget allocations are scarce. The limited or non-existent professionalisation of educators, as well as the compensatory approaches that prevail in many programmes, with little relevance for the groups to which they are directed, are two more expressions of the insufficient importance given to this educational field (Campero 2017). All of the above is in stark contrast to the potential demand and will affect what impact can be achieved.

Some impact in Latin America

Educators of young people and adults observe certain changes in the people who participate in socio-educational processes that occur in their daily life or in the medium or long term. The changes can take place in their families and/or environments. In larger projects, it is possible to assess these changes at the different levels of intervention, whether national, regional or local. This is how we can confirm that adult education produces a manifold impact¹ that can be appreciated and is important to demonstrate, recognising that it is the result of complex causal relationships. Some impacts can be anticipated and others are unexpected. (Gómez and Sainz 2008 and Bhola 2000).

Experiences that have an impact are often referred to as good practices, or as relevant or successful practices. In most of the cases² at which we will now look, civil society has played a central role, as have local organisations and institutions of various kinds. Together they reflect the importance and potential of youth and adult education:

1. School re-entry centres, public high schools, educational and vocational centres focusing on the inclusion of young people and adults offer, by transforming programmes, an alternative to rigid exams. In their place, they consider the social and educational trajectories of the people concerned, and recognise the knowledge that they have generated; they also incorporate tutorials and collaborative study groups. These institutions support young people in their social, emotional and educational lives. They generally do their work in coordination with community organisations. Such initiatives have shown their relevance in fostering educational continuity and employment, in strengthening links between students and their communities, as well as in civic participation.
2. Study groups, particularly literacy groups largely attended by women, in addition to strengthening reading, writing and arithmetic skills, encouraged the female learners to address equal rights and opportunities by bolstering self-esteem. To achieve this, they use strategies such as the strengthening of their self-esteem, the recognition of their knowledge and the contributions they have made throughout their lives to their families, communities, colleagues and workplaces. The results of the processes that take place in the study circles are the reduction of violence or mistreatment, the changing of roles inside the heart of their families, participation in collective affairs, as well as greater autonomy to act and make decisions that transform their lives. In this way, these circles contribute to making an impact on the younger generations and on the lives of the students themselves, thus counteracting the triple discrimination they face as a result of not knowing how to read, being women and, moreover, being poor.
3. Programmes for young mothers and young pregnant women that include financial support for women between the ages of 12 and 18 to continue their basic education, are also beneficial. The programme includes content that allows them to build a life project and make decisions for the exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights, the prevention of a second pregnancy, to strengthen their self-esteem and develop their work and digital skills. In this way, the aim is to enable them to give new meaning to their pregnancies and to find options for their development, in a context in which they are likely to face personal, social and economic difficulties. A further feature of these projects is that there is coordination work between various social and government institutions.
4. Projects that are oriented towards the indigenous population are of great relevance. They have different objectives and target populations: women, young people and educators. Even so, they all have the common denominator of the recovery of the profound meaning of education based on community and individual life experiences and the self-evaluation of these aspects. Another common trait is to foster horizontal relationships between those who serve as facilitators (educators and trainers) and young people and adults (learners). A further strength of these processes is that they incorporate the mother tongue, visions, customs and traditions. Part of the impact of such projects consists in the ability of the participants to identify and evaluate their own life experiences, world views and community expressions, and to revitalise their historical memory, as well as to strengthen local leaderships and organisational processes in order to promote self-employment and transformation projects that contribute to the reduction of migration.
5. Spaces where there is a willingness to invite those who come to learn, share their knowledge, participate, weave life projects and transmit generational knowledge are also important. Examples include community radio stations, social and cultural centres, street football, dance and music sessions in local squares, libraries and museums. Through these projects, the bonds between neighbours are strengthened, as is solidarity and the interest in continuing learning.
6. Community training schools are another group of projects in which the participants know and promote their rights. They are organised to solve community problems or neighbourhood security-related problems, supervision

of land tenure, care of the environment, or coexistence. These projects are joined by others that involve social and educational processes related to housing, self-employment, the exchange of goods and services, the marketing of their products in a fair market and cooperatives of various types, amongst other things. In this way, it is possible to improve living conditions, reduce migration, and strengthen community ties.

7. Another group of projects recover and/or conserve nature reserves and protected areas through intersectoral work. Basic education processes are linked to the recovery of local culture and knowledge; the conservation of the environment is promoted and, gradually, the responsible exploitation of its forest, fauna and fishing resources. These processes are supported by training courses on conservation, management and sale of products; decisions are made collectively.

From outlines to policy proposal

The wide range of projects and programmes mentioned in the previous section shows the vastness of this field of education. By analysing them, we can identify characteristics common to several of them, some of them present in a smaller number of programmes, and some more specific.

Some common characteristics of the projects and programmes are features ...

- ... that expand the frontiers of education by considering and articulating learning that is shaped in different contexts and situations. This helps to link formal education with more flexible modalities and spaces;
- ... that consider one or more of the dimensions of the life of young people and adults: work, health, exercise of their rights, culture, care for the environment, civil participation, coexistence. This leads to cross-sectoral work;
- ... in which participants are recognised as actors who function in specific contexts and who have knowledge, experiences, interests and needs that are incorporated into educational processes;
- ... with differing emphasis which seek to promote critical knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes necessary to draw attention to conceptualise and solve problems of various kinds, as well as to foster creativity, solidarity, cooperation, self-discipline, self-confidence, empathy, leadership, shared responsibility and autonomy;
- ... which use participatory methodologies at different times and stages of the projects. And, in addition, the programmes are connected with the people and with neighbourhood and community organisations, promoting links, as well as creating or consolidating local leaderships:

- ... which intentionally seek to transform realities.

Another common feature is that in spite of the strong commitment of the educators and other advocates who develop these projects, they are carried out in precarious conditions, with few resources of any kind, so that their scope and impact is often limited.

These project and programme features support policy proposals that have been strongly expressed by Latin American civil society over the past five years, with a view to defining the SDGs and the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Meeting, in which the precarious conditions prevailing in youth and adult education are considered.

There are also overlaps with the international policies of youth and adult education such as CONFINTEA V, CONFINTEA VI and the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, whose approaches are still far from being realised in most countries.

In short, the proposal is to promote and consolidate comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies – cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary – from a human rights perspective, in which education is holistic and integral. We are talking about policies implemented in specific programmes and projects with sufficient resources; policies which promote equality between men and women, including affirmative action for the most disadvantaged groups; policies that are centred on the contexts, interests and needs of the people they target, and in which the participation of all the sectors of society involved is fostered; policies which emerge from participatory decisions and in which the State lives out its role as a guarantor.

An additional and fundamental policy for progress is that governments should devote 6% of GDP to the education sector, and that investment in historically disadvantaged areas such as youth and adult education should gradually increase. In addition, it is necessary to define policies not only from the perspective of education, but also in conjunction with economic and social policies, in order to mitigate existing inequalities and poverty, which have been on the increase (Civil Society Declaration 2013, ICAE 2015, Brasilia Charter 2016, UNESCO 2009, 2015 and 2017, CLADE 2017, FISC 2017).

“While the impact of youth and adult education can be identified, assessed, appreciated and shown, it can seldom be measured in the strict sense of the term.”

What comes next?

The practices within youth and adult education in Latin America presented in this article contribute towards development. They have changed the lives of individuals and their families, in their environments, and at different territorial levels. How-

ever, the marginal situation of youth and adult education compared to education for children and adolescents is a structural factor that prevents its impact from being amplified, since it generates precarious conditions for its development, giving rise to a critical juncture.

On the other hand, we live in a world where often the only thing that counts is what can be measured. While the impact of youth and adult education can be identified, assessed, appreciated and shown, it can seldom be measured in the strict sense of the term. The reality is complex.

Hence the importance – to those of us who work towards and are committed to the right to the education of young people and adults and to the construction of a more just world – of systematising our experiences, highlighting who the participants are, the factors involved in the processes, the results and impacts, as well as the problems encountered along the way, all with the aim of valuing our work, socialising it and demanding other logics of reflection and action. Systematisation helps generate information that makes visible and positions both youth and adult education and the young people and adults who participate.

Notes

1 / By impact we mean the modifications of reality that are produced by a set of causal relationships; in this case, youth and adult education is one of these.

2 / These experiences were contributed by members and friends of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) of Latin America, to be included in papers presented at various international forums held in 2017.

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About the author

Carmen Campero Cuenca is a social anthropologist and teacher in adult education from Mexico who has dedicated more than 45 years to youth and adult education, 36 of them at the National Pedagogical University. She is a co-author and teacher of training programmes with various approaches, and has published extensively.

Contact

ccampero2@gmail.com

True stories



Vanna Peou, Cambodia

“Most of the schools were closed because we were afraid of airplanes bombing us”

Vanna Peou is the Country Director of DVV International in Cambodia, working at the intersection of adult education and development cooperation. Being born in a poor family in Cambodia during the civil war period made learning really difficult.

Adult Education and Development: Why were you not able to study as a child?

Vanna Peou: I was born in the civil war period. It was terrible, most of the schools were closed because we were afraid of airplanes bombing us. A large number of children, including myself, did not go to school because of this. 1975 was the beginning of what is now known as the Cambodian Genocide. Everyone, including my family, was evicted from Phnom Penh to live in the countryside without any social infrastructure from 1975 to 1979.

What made you want to study later, and how did you manage to do it?

I have always wanted to study. In late 1979, when the Khmer Rouge regime ended, my family came back to live in a village not far from Phnom Penh, and I was finally registered at school in first grade. At this point I was already much bigger and older than the other students, so the teacher told me that I had to go to grade 2 or 3. But I didn't know anything. I couldn't read or write because I had never studied before. I was very worried, so when I told my parents, my father decided to teach me himself after school. I spent the whole day studying at school, and at night I studied with my father. Seven months later, I took the exam and passed it, which allowed me to study in grade 5, where I ended up being the youngest and smallest.

How has learning changed your life?

For about nine years, I worked with the government as a weather forecaster. At the same time, I provided lectures on

Climatology for the students of the Royal University of Agriculture. To be closer to social development, I resigned from the civil service to work with NGOs in 2001. It was a great opportunity for me to meet different people in the country with differences in level. I learned and exchanged experiences with them. Every day I learn new things, and also give new things back to them. If we want to change the world, we have to change our own; it is only through education that we can change ourselves. For me self-education is a top priority, and day by day I unconsciously become an educator for the community. Now I am working with DVV International as the country director, which gives me more opportunities to see the world.

What would you like to tell others who are in a similar situation?

As I see the situation in my country, as well as other poor countries in the world, many students drop out forever. They give up their studies and sell their labour without skills, which is very dangerous for themselves and for society. Getting this opportunity, I would like to urge those who think that they cannot continue to study because of their age, that this is not the problem. The problem is about how you want to see yourself grow in the future. Learning knows no age boundaries.



Vanna Peou

Rana Khoury, Palestine

Pushing away patriarchal practices

Rana Khoury is Vice President of Development and Outreach at Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem, Palestine. She is interested in the role that adult education can play in improving the lives of Palestinian women.

Adult Education and Development: What challenges do you see for Palestinian women today?

Rana Khoury: There are many challenges facing Palestinian women today. Similar to their male counterparts, Palestinian women continue to live under one of the longest military occupations in the world, the Israeli Occupation. Such a reality entails the denial of their basic rights, severe restrictions on their movement, and little or no access to public space, the labour market and viable resources that could spur their growth, both individually and collectively. But for Palestinian women, living under occupation also exacerbates the patriarchal practices, norms and attitudes that solidify the reactionary and traditional views of women and their role in society.

Palestinian women also face a high unemployment rate, standing at 48.9% during the first quarter of 2018. High unemployment among women is associated with marginalisation and living in poverty. It is well documented that among the poorest of families are those that are headed by women. In terms of their political participation and representation, the number of female leaders in different capacities, particularly in decision-making processes and positions, remains very low.

How can adult education help empower them?

Promoting the idea of adult education in relation to women in Palestine will ultimately enhance their rights. Adult education/lifelong learning is education, and education is a right, and as such adult education designed to enhance women's socio-economic and political opportunities is a right that women must gain in society. Hence, adult education aims at empowering these women so that they can then creatively advocate for their issues and rights, beginning with the fact that their education and training is a right and not charity.

As a first step, I see that there is a need for immediate action to create economic opportunities for women and support employment promotion through comprehensive, gender-sensitive, innovative, quality adult education programmes that enhance women's competences on all levels: behavioural, functional (technical) and professional. Well-designed and long-term, goal-orientated adult education

enables women to face the current realities, but also empowers them with competences and skills that serve them well into the future. The human capital development of women would not only promote income and employment generation possibilities for women, and thus help eradicate poverty, it would also promote economic sustainability for Palestine in general, similar to many other countries which have gone through similar experiences and are now considered among the top economies of the world.

Can you give us a concrete example of the impact of adult education from your work?

There are countless examples to draw from over the years since Dar al-Kalima has taken the lead in promoting adult education in Palestine, stressing emphatically that its work serves all, from "the womb to the tomb". Examples include establishing the "Cave Artisans", where Palestinian women are trained in the Palestinian handicraft industry. To date, it has transitioned hundreds of women into artists with products sold worldwide and establishing their own businesses in different fields of crafts, many using recycled material such as glass.



Rana Khoury

How to develop resilient people in stronger communities



Carolyn Johnstone
Federation University
Australia

Abstract – *This article explores ways in which adult education can develop resilient people and strengthen the sense of community between different groups. Based on case studies in Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq as they recovered from earlier conflicts, the article proposes key design features for effective adult education provision, including a quality checklist and an impact spectrum, which could be used by policymakers to measure the impact of adult education.*

When a society is fragile, possibly recovering from conflict or trauma, the first priority for assistance is not usually adult education. I would however like to provide some examples of international and local organisations providing services in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and Iraq during the periods following each country's conflict (see box page 29).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, a number of adult education programmes were designed to give learners skills in conflict resolution. The Neighbourhood Facilitators Project in Republika Srpska trained 20 local people from the three major ethnic groups as well as five specialist international facilitators. Mixed teams of international staff, plus trainers from at least two of the groups with whom many residents identified, went on to deliver neighbourhood education where the focus was on helping communities to solve local problems. A mixed-delivery team was also a feature of a United Methodist Committee on Relief initiative in Sarajevo, which had conflict resolution at its core and used adult education as a lever for change. Mixing international with local staff is not always positive, however, as problems can arise when the external intervention is unaware of the strengths and successes of local provision. There were democracy-building programmes during the international intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe supported local elections there as early as 1996, and they included adult education in the process.

In Cambodia in the mid-1990s, a vocational training school grew from a perceived need to supply older resi-

Overview: Conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and Iraq

Bosnia-Herzegovina: The three main ethnic groups and the six republics of the former Yugoslavia fought for territory, influence and recognition from 1990–1995. The conflict consisted of independence struggles and civil war, including the Siege of Sarajevo lasting from 1992 to 1995. The inter-ethnic fighting was brutal, and was characterised by ethnic cleansing where minority populations were forced out of an area or killed. The massacre of around 8,000 men and boys in Srebrenica was one of the most notable episodes of the Bosnian civil war. In September 1995, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) carried out air strikes against Bosnian-Serb targets to force them to enter into peace negotiations. The conflict ended when the General Framework Agreement on Peace (Dayton Accords) was signed in Paris on 14 December 1995. NATO-led international forces were subsequently deployed in Bosnia.

Cambodia: Cambodians lived through decades of conflict, including the Khmer Rouge communist insurgency that brought Pol Pot to power in 1975, systematic ethnic killing, an invasion by Vietnam in 1979, guerrilla operations and a civil war from 1979–1988. United Nations Peace Accords were signed in Paris in October 1991, leading to the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). UNTAC began work in March 1992, and elections were held in May 1993.

Iraq: In the 1980s to early 2000s, Iraq's foreign policy was set against a context of post-colonial relations, US superpower dominance and complex relations with neighbouring countries. There was a territorial dispute with Iran from 1980–88, and Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Periodically from 1991 until 2002, international forces conducted air strikes against Iraq's military facilities and potential sites of weapons of mass destruction, along with action to enforce United Nations-approved no-fly zones designed to protect the Kurds and Marsh Arabs from genocide. In 2003, a US-led coalition controversially invaded Iraq, removed Saddam Hussein from power, and occupied the country until sovereignty was restored to an Iraqi Government in 2004.

dents of an orphanage with the means to earn their own living, and adult literacy classes were delivered by a charity that supplied water to rural communities. Language training was delivered by volunteer native English speakers as part of professional development programmes for lecturers at Phnom Penh University, in the aviation industry and as part of medical or teacher training. This was to help learners gain

access to published literature and enable them to engage in professional debates. For Cambodians who had been displaced, educational opportunities were generally thin on the ground, although they may have been better than those available to people who had remained in Cambodia. In Thailand, for example, the focus was on primary and pre-vocational education for refugees because the Government prohibited their receiving anything over and above basic education until 1986. Ongoing support for such people once they have returned home may well focus on developing former refugees' economic self-sufficiency, but other courses can help ease their reintegration into the community. Returnee Cambodian refugees joined the wider community by taking part in national elections in 1993. Prior to the election, adult education included information videos, travelling theatre and specific details on electoral procedures that explained the role of political parties and the right to a confidential, free vote for each voter.

During the occupation of Iraq by the US and UK in 2003/4, a reintegration programme for former Iraqi soldiers and militia included skills screening, education benefits, job training and placement. The authorities sometimes paid learners to attend classes, and they were reintegrated into Iraq's civil society and economy. However, many who wanted to remain in jobs in the security sector lacked the literacy skills to complete, for example, the Facilities Protection Service application forms and entry tests. Adult literacy classes were therefore needed. Unemployment rates were very high, so international organisations assisted the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in providing job-seekers with information, training and job placement. The scheme started with five Vocational and Technical Training Centres (VTTC) and ten Employment Service Centres (ESC) that focused on literacy training. Trainees were to be paid a stipend while attending their courses, lasting up to two months. The courses included carpentry, plumbing, elevator repair and cosmetology. 30% of the trainees were to be young adults, and 10% of them were to be female. More than 1,000 trainees had been enrolled by 2005, while 1,500 workers had been placed in jobs.

In all three situations, the adult learners have developed individual skills in areas such as literacy, languages, job skills, negotiation and communication. Let us now take a closer look at the impact of these courses.

Adult education helps develop resilient people

When an adult learns a new skill, the direct benefits to that individual are often very clear: They find a better-paid job, or they can speak to a wider range of people. The broader benefits of participating in education are sometimes hidden, though. Learners who succeed in obtaining employment have more resources at their disposal; they enjoy economic and physical security but, more importantly, they have an identity and sense of self-worth that builds confidence. It is likely that such adult learners will connect better to society, and this builds resilience.

Frequently, quality adult education encourages learners to engage with course content in a critical and enquiring way, and to question themselves and others. The adult learners can extend this practice to their wider interactions, so they are encouraged to question relationships and reflect on everyday experiences. Such habits result in ongoing learning and continuous development of skills that enable responses to changes in the work or political environment.

“Developing resilient adults is beneficial to individuals, but communities also benefit from having adult learners in their midst.”

Adult education also offers people a new social group, consisting of fellow learners with shared goals and extending beyond the individual's family or employment networks. In the above examples of adult education, learners with these wider networks have increased their social capital, and those with greater capital have the capacity to respond to a wider range of adverse events. Many individuals who start by taking part in adult education are drawn towards playing a more active role within their community, one outcome of this process being to enhance social cohesion.

Developing resilient adults is beneficial to individuals, but communities also benefit from having adult learners in their midst. These effects operate at two levels, both creating a new environment of shared benefits, while at the same time more directly increasing overall group productivity. We turn now to consider ways in which adult education can strengthen communities.

Building stronger communities through adult education

Many people regard the ways in which adult education is embedded in communities as a defining feature of this type of learning. Adult education can build stronger communities by helping to build social capital, encouraging community activism, and strengthening democratic processes that lend communities a voice. There is a link between social capital, participation in educational activity and representative government. Critical pedagogy and the dialogue of learning emphasise the link between adult learning and the learners' lived experiences. This connects learning and political activity so that adult education programmes have the potential for community impact. This is particularly relevant in our modern, globalised world.

“Opposing forces – those of the marketplace and those of the ideology of human rights – are making the discussion on democracy and citizenship even more complex and convoluted. Not surprisingly, education is caught in the storm.” (Torres 2009: 127)

Community participation as part of strategies for people-centred development has been a feature of some of the adult education provided in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and Iraq. Community-based learning groups received assistance

from international organisations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, often with the expectation that the group would continue to represent and act for the community even once the learning activity had ended. The World Bank takes the view that a community should be at the heart of planning reconstruction after emergencies if any intervention is to be sustainable; it has made grants to schools that involve the community, and it believes that the reconstruction of schools can be used as an early vehicle for community engagement in post-conflict situations (World Bank 2005).

In recent times, the increased number of displaced individuals across the world has spotlighted them as separate communities in the countries of settlement. A number of communities hosting groups of refugees in Australia have sought to provide adult education in order to help new arrivals integrate. However, there has also been parallel provision of adult education to the receiving community, building intercommunity cohesion, for example through workshops on understanding the refugee experience and providing classes on practical ways to support asylum-seekers and refugees.

There is a tightly-interwoven relationship between the adult education being provided, the development of strong, stable communities, and the management of the education process within a community. Collective identity might be strengthened by an individual completing adult education. However, the term “community” implies a distinct group, with the implication of difference at its heart, and this could create divisions within society and cause difficulties if the various groups compete against each other. Adult education has the potential to act both as a stabilising and a destabilising force in society, and there are risks inherent in poor quality provision. The next section suggests ways of designing adult education so as to support resilient people in stronger communities in ways that are positive.

Designing adult education for resilience

Quality-assured provision is important, but in situations where communities are fragmented or fragile, it can be easy to excuse dips in quality due to the irregular nature of adult education. Unfortunately, low-quality adult education will usually be ineffective when it comes to strengthening communities, and may even be counterproductive. The best way to avoid this situation may be to use the checklist below (see *Figure 1*). It is a synthesis of the principles and standards that are prioritised for post-conflict adult education. Note that points 1, 3 and 4 are directly reliant on an interdependency between the community and its adult education.

In the context of a fragile community, or communities, it is particularly important that adult education provision should be sustainable and adaptable. In checking for sustainability, it is important to assess the impact of the programme or policy. The ideal is to move towards the right of the spectrum at *Figure 2*, aiming as a minimum for self-sustaining provision.

If adult education is to enhance relationships at the community level, it must take account of its potential to simulta-

Figure 1 – Checklist for designing adult education

- 1 / Recognise that adult education is set in the **context** of the host society

- 2 / Acknowledge embedded **values**: human rights, diversity and gender equality

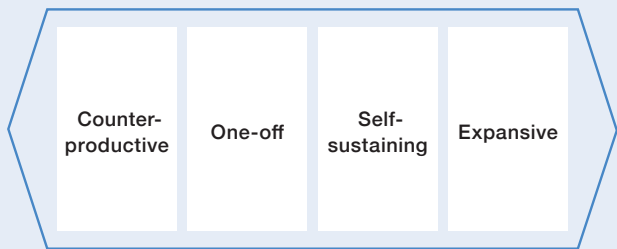
- 3 / Exploit **community** resources and encourage participation of all groups of all people

- 4 / Meet adults' **learning and psychosocial needs**: learner-centred, participatory and inclusive learning

- 5 / Use decent, safe **facilities**, including multi-purpose venues if necessary

- 6 / Provide CPD and qualifications for **teachers** who understand how adults learn

Figure 2 – The impact spectrum of adult education



neously stabilise and de-stabilise. Education that is most likely to strengthen communities usually consists of a more gradual process, dealing with the complex issues underpinning identity and values, rather than using the positive bonding of the individual adult learners to achieve short-term effects within a narrowly-defined “in-group”. As an activity that takes place within a group and that strengthens the community, learning contributes to the acquisition of social capital, while the content of the adult education programme may contribute to the store of either economic or cultural capital.

The overall approach to adult education in societies recovering from conflict has been ad hoc, with fragmented funding and organisational arrangements. With the current situation of groups of displaced and fragmented people trying to build new lives in unfamiliar locations, the potential of adult education to develop resilient people in stronger communities cannot be overlooked. Funders, policy-makers and practitioners should view projects through a new lens that will allow a golden thread of adult education provision to be woven through multi-layered and complex delivery vehicles.

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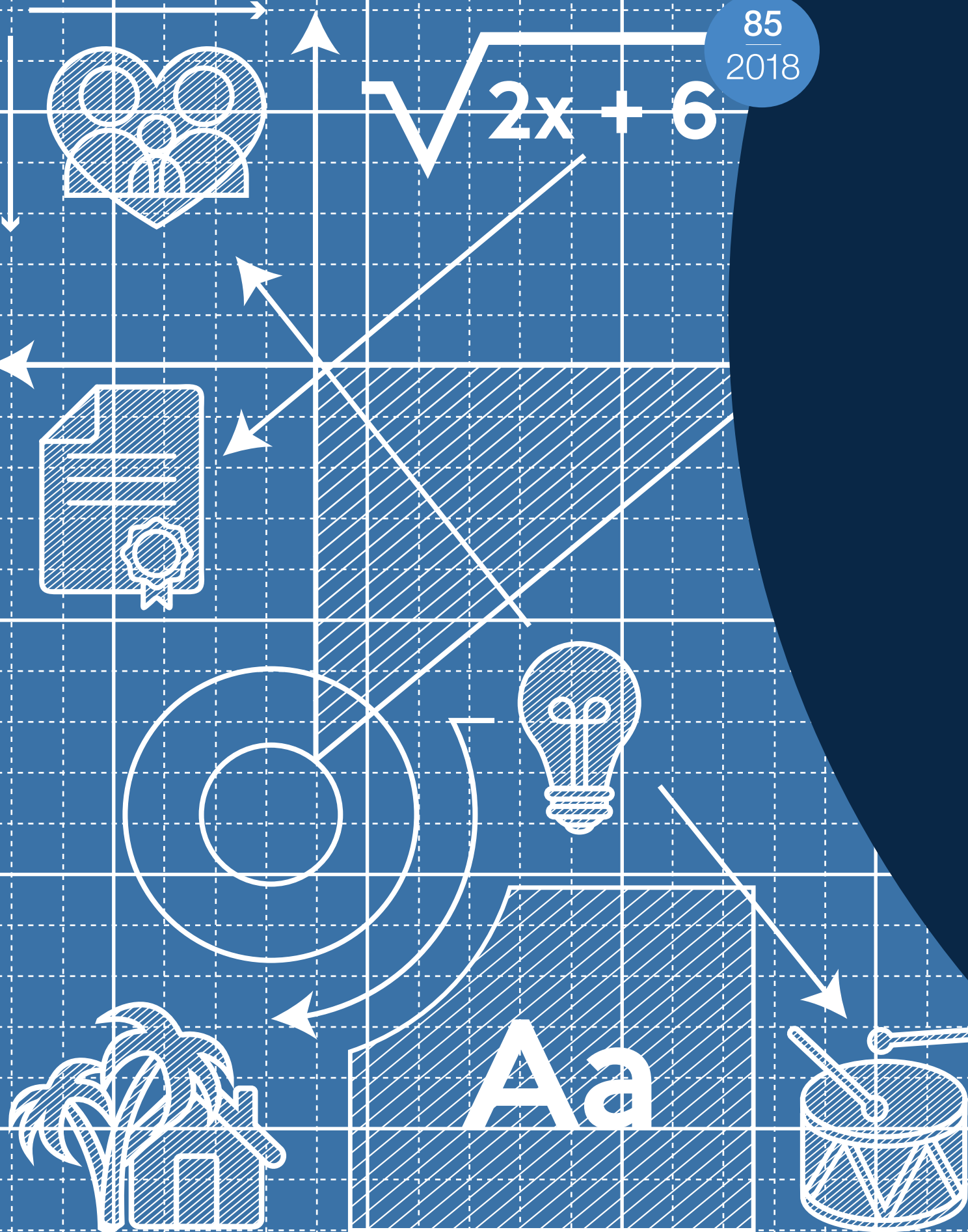
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About the author

Before moving to Australia to teach at Federation University, **Carolyn Johnstone** was an officer in the British Army. Carolyn is interested in how international organisations, governments and NGOs work in partnership, using adult education as a policy lever to address global challenges including conflict, sustainable development and human security.

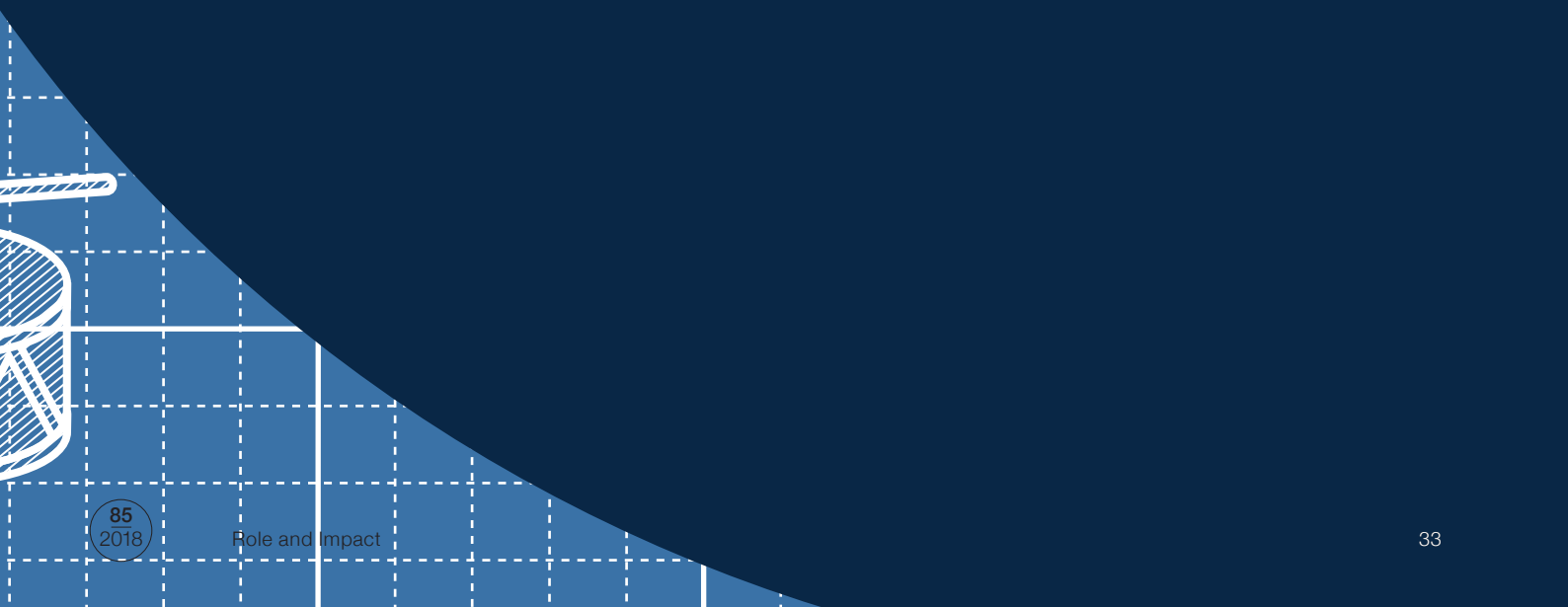
Contact
c.johnstone@federation.edu.au



Section 2

Achieving results

Results are important. By showing what has been accomplished you can explain why adult education is needed. To impact on a country you need to understand policy. To have a lasting effect you need to understand motivation. To understand the process you need to see the participants.



Seham Negm

“Literacy is about knowing the world around us”

Interview

Interview by Rabab Tamish,
Bethlehem University, Palestine
Photos by Women & Society Association



Seham Negm is the founder of the Women and Society Association in Egypt, which has been active in women's empowerment and education since 1994, and of the Arab Initiative for the Social and Economic Empowerment of Women who overcome Illiteracy. She has dedicated her work over the last three

decades to fighting illiteracy and promoting social justice and equity. Seham is active in international and regional networks on adult education and was elected Vice President of the Arab Region of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE).

I am curious about how you perceive the impact of adult education in the Arab region. But first of all, how did you get into adult education?

My engagement in the field came in two stages. It started in 1971, when I was at high school and a member of the "Egyptian Youth Organisation". We led literacy programmes in which I volunteered as a literacy teacher.

Then when I started my university studies in the Faculty of Business, we were asked to organise community projects. At that time we were engaged in highly marginalised, very rural areas. This experience helped me link my academic life with the community. As a result, I learnt a lot about my people and that illiteracy is not only about reading and writing, but also about knowing the world around us.

We were three young women who after obtaining our University degrees established the "Women and Society Organisation" with the aim in mind of increasing women's participation and empowerment. Cairo was a destination for internal immigration at that time, and people were coming from rural areas in search of job opportunities. The engagement with these groups taught us about their living circumstances, in which their inability to read and write, as well as their social backgrounds, limited their opportunities to manage their lives in Cairo. For instance, they could not obtain official documents for their jobs or residence status in Cairo. Many of them did not have birth certificates for their children, so they could not register them in schools. We paid considerable attention to these groups and arranged literacy classes, with a special focus on women. I would say that this period led to a shift in my understanding of adult education. I found that conducting hundreds of classes for women had not achieved the expected results. Women were less motivated, and we started to think of empowerment beyond imparting reading and writing skills.

How did you do that?

There were many women's organisations in Egypt in the early 90s which provided different services aimed at bringing about gender equity and empowerment. We started networking and engaging in some forms of partnership with these organisations in order to exchange experiences and expertise. We found that women were more likely to attend literacy classes if they could be induced to take an interest in learning about social services, legal aid and reproductive health. The partnerships were effective because each organisation provided sessions related to its expertise. We organised training on literacy programmes, and in some cases we offered this service to women who participated in their programmes. What was helpful here was our links with female university students, whom we targeted for specific programmes. Their academic background was needed to conduct needs assessment studies in order to collect data that could be used at the planning stage of our programmes. For instance, they interviewed women in rural areas in order to identify topics that interested them, as well as collecting data on their knowledge and on stereotypes regarding specific issues such as misconceptions on reproductive health and the level of awareness of legal rights. This experience was crucial for extending the networking and the engagement of all partners in the process, as well as for ensuring that the work was not limited to specific organisations.

You mentioned earlier that the process went through two phases. What was the second one?

During our engagement with illiteracy programmes for adults, we noticed that the number of young learners was increasing. We arrived at the conclusion that the real crisis lay in the fact that the educational system marginalises children and excludes them from receiving a good education. We decided to extend the scope of our services and provide classes for

the early years, in other words for Grades 4 to 6. We paid further attention to these groups by investing in keeping them in school. We managed to cover the financial expenses of 1,200 female pupils every year so that they could stay in school. We have records of hundreds of students who managed to complete high school and even reach university level. Here we learnt about the importance of intervening in the early years, and developed networking with the formal education system.

Why target female learners?

In common with other countries, literacy is an economic and social issue in Egypt. Poor families cannot afford to send their children to school, and when they have the opportunity to do so, they invest in the education of their boys, assuming that it will be they who can find jobs and support their families. We often provided the same opportunities for male students when we encountered a situation in which a family refused to let their girls attend if the boys were not enrolled as well. But we prioritised girls in order to help counterbalance the lack of equal rights for women.

We shifted the intervention by also reaching out to the policy-making and decision-making level in order to enable these young learners to gain access to the regular school system. The Ministry of Education was very cooperative at that time, and opened up the regular schools for use as community sites, helping young learners to overcome their difficulties when it came to attending school. This helped us influence the policy-making and decision-making level. I readily acknowledge that we received genuine support for adult education here, mainly when it came to literacy.

So do you argue that the term “adult education” in Egypt is equivalent to literacy programmes?

No. Our active engagement in the local, regional and international debates has extended our understanding of the field. This is what I call Phase III, which reflects this type of engagement. ALECSO (Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) took the lead here when it came to establishing networks at regional level by providing forums that discuss possibilities for engaging civil society in the process. As a result, our first cooperation with the General Directorate on Adult Education in Egypt (which was established by the Egyptian Government in order to take the lead at national level) was about organising the first conference, which was attended by more than 150 civil society organisations. Here they called for adult education as a right and a tool for development. This conference led ALECSO to support the call for establishing the Arab Network for Literacy – in close cooperation with UNESCO’s offices in Cairo and Beirut – and my role was to work with members of the network on developing its vision, values and constitution.

This regional and international communication helped me to see that the term “adult education” embraces other elements, and we extended our activities in the region with the support of ALECSO. Thus in 2004 we became a member of UNESCO’s network on adult education, and I was twice

elected as the regional coordinator of UNESCO’s initiative “Learning for All”. The engagement at international level also kept us involved in the challenges and the new concerns of the field and how to update our methods and tools. In 2010, the political changes in Egypt created a need to invest in debate and citizenship skills in order to help the population play an effective role in the election process, as well as encouraging women to take on leading roles.

“Our main aim was to engage the social and economic powers in society at taking a responsibility at leading social change.”

Has this led to an impact on other sectors?

Yes. I would like to share our latest initiative, which is entitled “the Arab initiative for empowering women who have managed to overcome illiteracy”. We decided to reward female learners who overcome illiteracy and manage to lead new projects in their lives. We thought that by doing so we would, firstly, motivate other women to do the same, and secondly that we would increase people’s awareness of the importance attaching to education. We decided to engage the private sector by asking them to be partners and share ownership of the project. The council included representatives from the private and civil sectors. Our main aim was to engage the social and economic powers in society to take responsibility for leading social change. For instance, we integrated the media into the process by calling for awards for initiatives that helped enhance the quality of adult education. This motivated many young journalists and television producers to pay attention to adult education issues at work. The media sector reached out to popular actors and singers, who developed short films and songs about the importance of education. These products were easily spread, and touched the hearts and minds of poor Egyptian families. Music is an influential tool, and our media partners were able to make it popular, even in rural areas. Some famous actors became very interested in adult education and produced drama series on gender issues and on the role of women in society.

So how do you assess the impact of adult education?

I believe that this type of engagement has led to an impact. But I agree that we do not have the appropriate tools to measure it. We have conducted studies and collected evidence from the field on the quality of education that adults receive. We share this with the community, and such sharing has an impact. For instance, we conducted a study in cooperation with the media sector in which we analysed the six main newspapers in Egypt for a year. We arrived at the conclusion that none of them had covered issues related to adult education. We were thus able to influence journalists’ and editors’ concerns, so that they put the topic on their priority list. This year we awarded prizes to exceptional journalists who contributed to the field.



Seham Negm (right) with Mahmoud Saad (middle), chairman of the jury of the “Women liberated from illiteracy award” and Islam Qandil (left) executive manager of Qandil, a partner of the initiative

All of this has helped us to reach the policy level, which is now working hard to improve the quality of adult education despite the political and economic instability in the region, particularly in Egypt. I see that our work, as well as that of our partners, has an impact on the community. We feel that different sectors are more open to play an active role. Our links with the people made it easier to seek help. We have evidence of hundreds of people who were able to cooperate within their respective contexts in order to boost awareness of adult education or share successful models. Today, we can easily contact newspapers, television and radio stations as well as actors and ask for their help to cover a specific topic or provide space for learners to practice their skills. They do it with motivation and love.

Statistics about the Arab world nevertheless provide warning indicators regarding the quality of adult education and that there is an increase in the percentage of illiterates. How do you explain that?

I agree that the political situation has influenced sustainability and change. I have learnt that networking and building debates is not easily achieved, especially when funding and human resources are limited. Arriving at a common practice is also a challenge because decision-makers think from a quantitative perspective, and not in qualitative terms. This has provided inaccurate statistics which do not reflect the reality in depth.

I also think that genuine efforts on the part of governments to achieve change are still limited. Young people remain marginalised, and decisions taken at official level do not consider the full participation of the community and

partners who have been engaged in the field. Formal literacy programmes do not follow up on former course attendees, and thus learners feel that their education has not improved their social and economic lives and, accordingly, many of them have relapsed into illiteracy. We are at risk of creating a situation in which young people join fundamentalist groups in order to feel that they belong and are valued. I believe that there is a need to seriously invest in education as a tool for development and sustainability.

We need to build on the current initiatives in the Arab world and learn from them how to bring about change. For instance, our interaction in the Arab world and the international discourse helped us to improve services for women and increase their participation in our programmes. Sometimes the solutions are not drastic, but there is a need for a readiness to take action and to think outside the box.

What do you hope to see in the future?

I hope that my work, and the work of our associations, will help to influence policies that increase partnerships between the public, private and civil sectors in order to improve the quality of adult education in Egypt.

Better impact through programme planning?



From left to right:

Sonja Belete
DVV International
Ethiopia

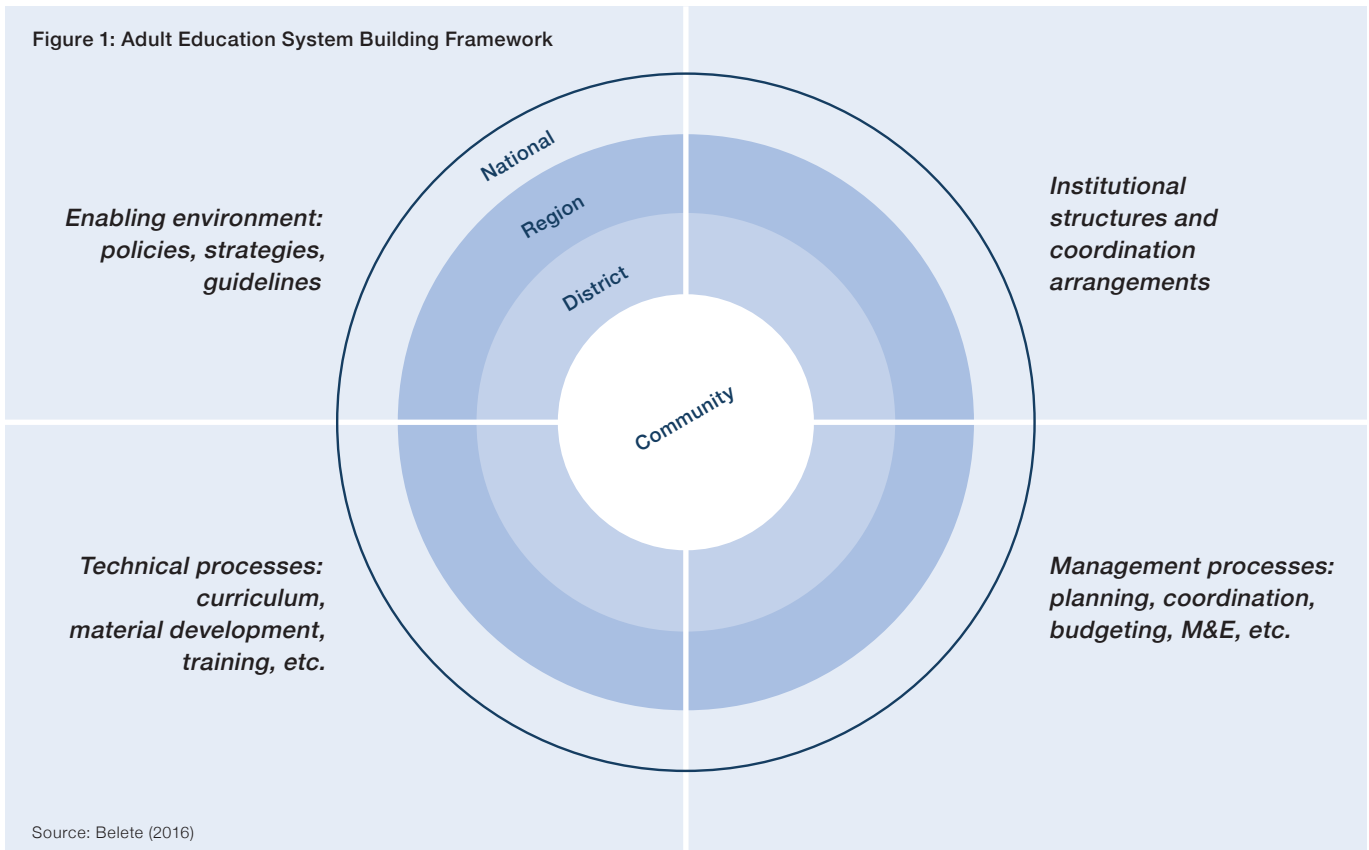
Steffi Robak
Leibniz University Hanover
Germany

Abstract – *This article explains how and why programme planning has developed in adult education. It describes some core features and possible benefits of using programme planning to improve the impact of adult education. Finally, it outlines how programme planning can be accomplished, using Uganda and Ethiopia as practical examples.*

Lifelong learning opportunities and adult education programmes depend in part on the interpretations, ideas, models, resources and funding that are contributed by states, governments, communities and stakeholders. This is often referred to as the macro level. In addition, lifelong learning activities also depend and are based on the competences of adult educators. It is they who must transform these ideas, interpretations and possibilities into training programmes, projects, offers and finally seminars or actual training courses, according to the demands and needs of the population. This is usually referred to as the meso level.

The role and policies of adult education within a lifelong learning system in a country are built in part on international policies (i.e. UN, EU, OECD), but the actual work is carried out on a national level. A major challenge for adult education nationally is to respond to the specific education and learning demands of the population and to create learning cultures that harmonise with people's socio-biographical, economic and educational backgrounds as well as learning habits. Adult education can only have an impact if it meets these preconditions. It is simply the best way to make adult education accessible, to prepare for employment, to improve work or even to provide access to education for the first time in people's lives. Adult and continuing education is also embedded in broader policies and system building processes that are rooted in a country's social, political and economic situation. Moreover, this has an impact on the delivery of adult and continuing education.

Figure 1: Adult Education System Building Framework



“Arranging these single courses or classes into a comprehensive and ongoing programme is a major achievement in the history of adult and continuing education.”

From humble beginnings

Once upon a time adult education consisted of single courses, discussion groups or classes in reading, writing or arithmetic. Arranging these single courses or classes into a comprehensive and ongoing programme is a major achievement in the history of adult and continuing education. Today the amount of learning activities is evidence of a society’s performance. This is measured through comparative educational monitoring systems such as the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). The approach and the capacities for shaping an adult education system vary from one country to another. However, the ability to design programmes, projects, seminars as well as other forms of distance learning and digital learning forms the basis for all education. The planning and provision of programmes for adults is one of the core activities of the professional staff working in adult education (DVV International/DIE 2015).

A programme and/or systematic concept of projects is the result of historical, social, economic and educational developments at a given time, and of specific professional pedagogical aspirations within diverse institutional contexts (Gieseke & Opelt 2003). A programme works as a reflection of social processes (Gieseke 2017) because it shows the needs, demands and interests of learning at a particular time according to the social and economic developments that are going on in a country. In a systematic perspective, when we teach students in adult education or train professionals, we define programmes as macro-/meso-didactically-designed artefacts that provide a mixture of learning arrangements, projects, courses, discussion groups and target group concepts. Every institution of adult and continuing education demonstrates its way of offering education and qualification for adults via its training/learning programme (ibid).

Learning to plan

Adult education or lifelong learning programmes are a part of the operational framework of a country’s adult education system. Experience in Ethiopia, Uganda and other African countries has shown that the competence of adult educators to plan programmes that meet the needs of target groups is not enough. The ability of adult educators to consider other influencing factors and actors outside the realm of their technical expertise so as to ensure that these programmes can actually be delivered to the target group is also crucial. This

implies that adult educators have to conduct joint planning with so-called “system managers”. These may be experts from planning and finance departments within governmental or private institutions, as well as within NGOs. When the adult education programmes have a multi-sectoral design, cooperation with technical experts from different fields is also required. Figure 1 (page 39) gives an overview of the main components of an adult education system across the tiers of governance that exist within a country. This forms the operational framework/background for any adult educator to plan training programmes and offers.

According to this model, an adult educator should be aware of the policies, guidelines and strategic orientation at national level, and how they are rolled out at local level. In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education has designed and approved a “Transfer Directive” which allows learners to follow different adult education paths and give recognition to prior learning. Awareness of different institutional structures and organisations that deliver or coordinate learning programmes for adults ensures that planning does not take place in a vacuum and can be aligned with or complement other existing courses.

Many adult educators are comfortable in the technical processes to plan and deliver their training/learning programmes. When faced with a challenge, they will most frequently redesign the curriculum or learning materials. However, no training programme can be delivered if the adult educator does not engage with the planning and finance departments within the institution in which they are working. This is especially true for governmental programmes, where national and local government budgets will determine what is feasible – and the planning department will coordinate related initiatives. Monitoring and evaluating training programmes, as well as feeding their results into a comprehensive Management Information System, is also crucial for the success of a particular training programme. Processes such as planning, budgets, coordination and monitoring as well as evaluation are referred to as “Management Processes”. These have to be considered as enabling and/or hindering factors for programme planning and implementation. In cases in which the budget is insufficient, or the institutions do not have adequate human resources of a streamlined structure, it will be difficult to deliver the training programme, no matter how well it was planned from a technical perspective and related to the needs of the target group.

The key to programme planning

What does programme planning as a key competence mean? The professional action of programme planning comprises all activities required for developing programmes, individual educational courses, or projects. It is about finding topics, formulating offers and bundling different contents into programmes or even profiles of adult and further education organisations. Programme planning secures the curricular/supply structures of adult and further education organisations; – it even and above all legitimises the organisation as such

(Käpplinger & Robak 2017). Our research into programme planning shows how comprehensive programmes are generated, how policies influence programmes and programme planning processes, how the professionals in programme planning processes balance different aspects (i.e. learning demands, learning needs, learning interests), and finally how they measure the competences and abilities of the different target groups. Programme planning research also shows that educational as well as extra-educational missions of the provider intervene in programme planning processes, i.e. the idea of education in adult education centres differs from those in institutions that are run by churches and trade unions. Also, visions and convictions (content, pedagogy, ethics) of the professional programme planners’ institutions of adult education are visible in the programme planning process.

How to imagine programme planning as a professional competence?

There are different models of programme planning, which can be summarised as linear or cyclical models on one side and interactive, relational or adjusting models on the other (von Hippel & Käpplinger 2017). Linear and cyclical models define steps in a planning process, i.e. 1. engage, 2. assess, 3. plan, 4. implement and 5. evaluate. Observations in the practical fields show that programme planning is more complex and does not follow linear steps. The interactive models show that planning processes are complex interactive adjusting processes (Caffarella & Daffron 2013). Research shows that the capacity to bundle programme decisions by using specific knowledge islands forms part of these adjusting processes.

These models are non-linear, and do not have a hierarchy of tasks. Wiltrud Gieseke’s research shows that programme planning constitutes an alignment of the positions through negotiation. It implies coordination, and thus also an optimisation of the needs and requirements assessment for programme development. Programme development does not follow a linear course of development; it goes through different stages before the goal is reached. The stages depend on situational contexts. Every offer/project within a programme follows a different path. Possible paths include: 1. needs analysis – networking (negotiating with partners and politicians) – designing offers – evaluation; 2. evaluation – discussions with colleagues – changing concepts – designing an adjusted offer; 3. a new idea as a result of a networking discussion – needs analysis – negotiation with partners, stakeholders, politicians – finding funding – designing an offer together with teachers.

Programme planning is a back-and-forth process that needs knowledge, communication and decision-making processes on the basis of an idea and interpretation of education, qualification and competence development. It needs autonomy, which is especially difficult in a transnational perspective. It also needs to consider the country’s adult education system as a framework of reference in order to ensure that training programmes can be delivered in a sustainable manner.



Figure 2: Model of Knowledge Islands in Programme Planning



Programme planning in Uganda

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is the government department responsible for adult literacy and community development in Uganda. In 2014, they decided to redesign their adult education programme and place the emphasis on the actual needs of the learners and in line with Uganda’s Vision 2040, which addresses higher-level strategic objectives in the country. The main emerging needs of learners were not functional literacy only, but were linked to livelihood skills training, business skills training, financial literacy and a more conducive environment through community development activities which could be included in Village Action Plans at the local government level. The Ministry’s counterparts at district and sub-county levels are responsible for implementation. However, these structures have insufficient budget and human resources to take on a programme of this nature.

As a response, the Ministry, supported by DVV International, embarked on redesigning their adult education and community development programme into one comprehensive programme with five core elements. These are functional adult literacy, livelihood skills training, business skills training, savings and loan scheme (to generate start-up capital for small businesses) and community development through the planning and implementation of local action points identified

during the participatory learning process. This programme required a new curriculum (generated in a bottom-up manner), a new methodology (based on the Reflect approach), and new implementation structures (integrated technical committees of experts from different government sector offices). Together they enable the design and delivery of this kind of integrated training programme. The programme is currently being piloted in three districts in Uganda. Much has been done at macro level to assess the possibility of up-scaling the programme to the national level with government funding.

Programme planning in Ethiopia

The rural context in Ethiopia likewise demanded the design of an adult education programme that could address the needs of diverse target groups ranging from farmers (both male and female) to young people. The programme needed to address the holistic livelihood situation of the population as well as the core strategic objectives being targeted in Ethiopia’s 5-year Education Sector Development Plan, which aligns with the country’s National Adult Education Strategy. To deliver a diverse range of adult education training programmes, DVV International cooperated with the Ministry of Education and its counterparts at regional and district levels, as well as with government sector offices such as Agriculture, Women’s Affairs, Trade and Industry, among others. The aim

was to design Community Learning Centres (CLCs) as places of learning where a variety of training programmes can be offered for different target groups. These CLCs are coordinated by a Coordinator (who is a government employee), and the members of the community have a committee through which they can voice their needs and interests. Management and technical committees with representatives from the abovementioned government offices meet regularly to plan training programmes and schedules. The centres provide learning opportunities for community members, but they also serve as a space in which service-providers/institutions can reach a larger target group at once.

Planning these training programmes in both countries has required a different skill set from adult educators. They have engaged with sector experts in different fields, worked with financial and planning experts, and engaged in aspects such as designing not only training programmes, but also institutional structures and management processes that can lend life to the training programmes.

Notes

1 / For an African perspective see Gboku and Nthogo Lekoko (2007).

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About the authors

Sonja Belete is the Regional Director for the East/Horn of Africa region of DVV International and supports and advises the Ethiopian and Ugandan Governments on developing comprehensive adult education systems. She holds a Masters degree in Adult Education and has over 30 years experience in designing and implementing adult education and livelihoods programmes in different African countries.

Contact

dvveastafrica@gmail.com

Steffi Robak, Prof. Dr., is a professor of Adult Education and Diversity Education at the Leibniz University in Hanover. At the Institute for Vocational Education and Adult Education, she focuses on intercultural education and international education research in areas such as education management and professionalisation in adult education.

Contact

steffi.robak@ifbe.uni-hannover.de

Empowering women in Senegal with numbers



Elisabeth Gerger
SIL Africa
Senegal

Abstract – *The impact of literacy skills on the lives of adults is universally acknowledged. Sadly, the same cannot be said of numeracy. It is often left in the shadows, like a kind of poor cousin. This article is all about how numeracy skills can affect the everyday lives of women in Senegal.*

While there are some illiterate women with amazing mental numeracy skills, many others know very little. I have often been shocked to see how many market vendors in my town in the south of Senegal are unable to correctly calculate how much change they should give me. These observations as well as requests from women who have participated in literacy projects which I coordinated led to the decision to develop a numeracy programme.

Following research into traditional numeracy practices of an ethnic group in the region, I developed a numeracy programme for women, based on their traditional practices and bridging to new ones. Together with the highly-motivated staff of three local literacy partner organisations, the Pëpántar Manjaku, AMOJ and Sempe Kaloon associations, and an excellent teacher trainer, we piloted the programme in three languages Manjaku, Joola-Fonyi and Karon from 2015–2017.

Making counting count

The goal of the numeracy pilot programme was to encourage the women to practice their reading and writing skills and improve their acuity in numeracy in order to be better equipped to manage their income-generating activities and family finances. Research has shown that reading and writing often take place in the context of market situations and keeping records (Maddox 2001), and “it has been argued that numeracy rather than literacy makes a more relevant entry point for adults” (Rogers 2005: 5). I share this opinion.

During several years of preparation, we developed a mathematical vocabulary list, a scripted teacher's guide and a learner's manual with exercises in each of the three languages. The R.C. Maagdenhuis Foundation, based in Amsterdam, funded a pilot programme from 2015–2017 with six classes, two for each language group. Most of the classes were held in the south of Senegal: two classes in Joola-Fonyi in the villages of Baïla and Boutégo and two more in Manjaku in the villages of Toniataba and Djidinky, while there were two Karon-language classes in the villages of Dombondir, in Senegal, and in Darsilami in the neighbouring Gambia.

The conversion challenge

The curriculum included topics such as reinforcing mental arithmetic skills, the four written operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division), estimation, measurement of length, weight and capacity, as well as how to use a calculator and managing small businesses. Establishing a budget, writing income/expenditure lists and calculating profit were also part of the programme. The conversion of money is a challenge in our West African context: The denominator of money in French is “franc CFA”, but the denominator in the local languages is based on the 5 F CFA coin, with 5 F CFA equalling 1 “ékori” (in Joola-Fonyi). Many women have problems when it comes to calculating money, so we used plastic money to practise with.

Some lessons served to raise awareness of various issues: how to plan and save for the expenses at the beginning of the school year or for an important event, or how to reduce ‘unnecessary’ spending, for example by writing an SMS instead of making a phone call. The women learned about the importance of keeping business and personal money separate, and of always putting working capital aside in order to be able to buy new stock when the old is exhausted. They also discussed “tontines” (savings groups) and borrowing money.

“Many of the participants were not able to express themselves in French, the official language of Senegal.”

With exercises taken as much from daily life as possible, the women analysed problems and applied their skills and knowledge to various situations. They were encouraged to reason aloud in order to explain their strategy for solving a problem, for example a mental calculation. Reading traditional riddles, talking about traditional ways of measuring length or capacity, were ways of basing the course on knowledge that the women brought to the classroom, thus attaching importance to their cultures and languages. Creativity was part of the programme, through activities such as composing and singing songs, discussing pictures and playing skits of market scenes. Working together and helping each other reflected traditional values.

We had planned to link numeracy teaching and learning to an income-generating project, for example a garden project, but we were not able to find an organisation to fund and manage this component.

Speaking the language

Many of the participants were not able to express themselves in French, the official language of Senegal. Since instruction and learning took place in their own language, they were able to understand, learn from and contribute to the discussions.

126 women started the course, and 110 completed it. The participants attended an average of 86 % of the sessions. This suggests that the course met their perceived needs. We tested the women on what they knew and their ability to calculate correctly at the beginning of the programme. Then they took the same test after the end of the first and second year. The results of the evaluations were skewed because the testers were not able to prevent the women from helping each other. Moreover, not all the women took part in the evaluations. Nevertheless, the results showed a marked improvement, from an average of 34 % before the beginning of classes to 53 % at the end of the second year.

To understand the deeper effects, we must look at testimonies from the participants, as related by the literacy teachers during the in-service training sessions and by the women themselves during my class visits.

Many women said that that they were better able to give correct change. Some said that children would not be able to trick them anymore. Several women commented on the usefulness of the calculators, especially when there were many clients or several numbers to add. Some mentioned the usefulness of learning the difference between working capital and profit, and the importance of putting money aside to enable them to buy new stock. A vendor of palm wine found the lesson on liquid measurements helpful. Several women said that they were glad they had acquired estimation skills in the context of money.

We encouraged each class to have a “tontine”. This practice of saving money regularly is common with women's groups. Each woman pays a regular contribution for a certain time period. One of the numeracy classes used the amount saved over the course of the year to buy gardening tools that they would rent out for a small fee. Other groups were interested in getting in touch with a micro-credit organisation in order to obtain a loan that would provide them with capital. Some women appreciated learning about bank accounts and taking a loan from a financial institution.

The impact on development

Low levels of literacy are one of the barriers that hinder development in the sub-Saharan region (Moore 2015; UNESCO 2012). Insufficient use of local languages in instruction is considered one possible reason for low literacy (UNESCO 2017). Cognitive skills such as literacy and numeracy are foundational skills, and form a basis for acquiring more job-



A manjak teacher helps a participant solve problems of multiplying with 10, 100 and 1000

specific knowledge and skills. They are important on a personal level in order to manage one's business better or to be more eligible for a well-paid job. They are essential on a national level too. "Low skills reduce labour force productivity and make investment less attractive, decreasing the transfer of technology and 'know-how' from high-income countries. Low skills also perpetuate poverty and inequality because the private sector can't flourish in a country that doesn't have a skilled workforce to sustain it." (World Bank 2017).

While it is difficult (and too early) to show concrete results in terms of how the programme contributed to development in the long term in the lives of these teachers, women and families, I would like to suggest two main points.

"The women are now better equipped to make informed choices, based on written information and group discussions."

1. The programme contributed to development by increasing the women's "choices, capabilities and freedoms" (Sen 1999).

The programme enabled women belonging to minority groups (and their teachers!) to improve their reading, writing and

arithmetic skills (the three Rs), as well as their financial literacy or numeracy. Equal distribution of improvements is an important aspect of development according to Sen (1999), and working with minority groups helps advance towards this goal.

Choices

The women are now better equipped to make informed choices, based on written information and group discussions. They have various strategies for performing arithmetic tasks – mentally, with a calculator, or in writing. They know what questions to ask when considering opening a bank account. The women learned new ways of managing money, and now have the option of putting it into practice. Often, there are no easy solutions given the local context. For example, many women have to continually relaunch their businesses with borrowed money because they do not retain any working capital. The teachers compared putting working capital aside to keeping one's cooking pot or gardening tools, which a woman would not think of selling. But many women said that poverty forces them to spend most of their income straight away. Many of them did not keep personal money and business money separate for similar reasons. Saving might be difficult, as there are always many needs of the extended family to address. One of the cultural values and strengths of Senegalese society is inter-dependence and helping other family members. The women face many challenges in this age of globalisation, with changing traditions



The women work in pairs solving problems in their workbook

and values, increased living expenses and the growing influence of money and materialism. The programme raised their awareness of different options, and they might decide to change over time.

Capabilities

The women learned new skills such as calculating with various strategies, estimation, using international measurements of length, weight and capacity. They were now able to manage their finances better, for example by giving their customers the correct change. Their understanding of various aspects of financial management has increased. Through group discussions, they learned to analyse problems related to numerical challenges, to reason and to apply their skills to different situations.

Freedoms

Besides freedom of choice, the women now enjoy other freedoms as well. Some expressed their contentment about being able to manage their finances better and not depend on others to read their bank statements. They appreciated not being cheated as easily any more. Some enjoyed greater respect as a result of their increased capabilities. For example, one husband allowed his wife to work in his shop. Almost all the women were keen to buy a calculator at a subsidised price. This allowed them to work more effectively and (hope-

fully) to make fewer errors. Some women appreciated the fact that they were now like others to whom they had previously looked up.

Most women were part of a women's association. The participants in the literacy and numeracy programme are now more likely to obtain posts as secretaries, accountants or presidents within these structures, since they are better able to read, write and do sums. Several women mentioned the fact that they were now able to help their children with their maths homework. They are better equipped to play an active role in their children's education. This shows that the benefits of the programme have extended beyond numeracy skills pure and simple.

Sen's "choices, capabilities and freedoms" are linked to respect, self-esteem and empowerment. In my view, the programme enabled women to develop their skills, enlarge their understanding and "face the world with purpose and pride" (International Bureau of Education 1990, quoted in Indabawa & Mpofo 2006: 9).

2. The programme provided a basis for economic progress for the women.

The programme helped the women make fewer mistakes, which should increase their income. They understand the difference between the two money denominators – franc CFA and ékori – and know that they have to multiply/divide by 5 when converting between the two.

Since the numeracy programme placed a strong emphasis on financial management, the women will be better able to manage their small businesses. They now have a better understanding of how to calculate their profit. They can prepare a budget, and keep track of income and expenditure.

If the women's groups are more efficient in managing their funds, they will have more funds available, which could then be either spent or invested wisely.

Building a momentum

In my view, the literacy and numeracy programme in three local languages provided a strong basis for the women's continued personal and economic development. It built on their strengths – their language skills, their traditional values and uses of numeracy. The women practised reasoning, analysing and applying information to other situations. They learned new numeracy skills, with examples relevant to their daily lives, as well as acquiring basic financial management skills. According to the testimonies of several women, this enabled them to manage their businesses better. They have more information and knowledge to make choices that will benefit them and their families and communities. They take decisions on a self-determined basis, deciding how they wish to develop, where and when they are willing to change, whether and if so how to integrate Western practices and values into their Senegalese worldview.

The women are now better equipped to play a meaningful role in other training programmes, for example in the context of income-generating projects or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This would also encourage them to keep putting into practice what they have learned, and help them to overcome the challenges they are facing.

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About the author

Elisabeth Gerger works as a literacy and education consultant with SIL Africa. She has lived in Senegal since 2003 and coordinated literacy activities in more than ten local languages. Together with three Senegalese partner organisations, she developed and organised a numeracy pilot programme for women from 2015–2017 in three local languages.

Contact

elisabeth_gerger@sil.org

The keys to a peaceful and prosperous Africa

Africa is undergoing a process of change, as the continent aspires to be completely peaceful and prosperous by 2063. This may seem an overly ambitious goal, given the multifold challenges from both within and outside. In addition, there is an intense debate underway as to whether these social, economic and cultural changes are liabilities or assets in terms of real national and continental unity and sustainable development. The provocative question is how to transform a liability into an asset for nation building. In my humble opinion, only functional literacy and a continuum of education can successfully address this issue. It is my understanding that, while literacy is an asset for a person's journey through life, basic/functional literacy is the key to open the floodgates of an ocean of knowledge and wisdom in context.

Many African countries consider schooling to be the answer. Schooling is one form of education, but it is not the only one. It is therefore time to challenge this notion. We need to go beyond expanding formal schooling, to find and build an innovative societal grid of transition and transformation through literacy learning that adds value.

So much more than teaching the alphabet, it is these literacy-learning circles that do respond to crises such as worsening and accelerating population displacement and migration, to conflict and violence, to climate change and to increasing inequalities. Learning has an impact on development, and it fosters harmonised social and cultural orientations towards

globalisation. It helps to build new roles for families and communities in changing patterns of living, and it can align communication and business in a competitive knowledge economy. Learning has the capacity to revolutionise opportunities for subsistence and develop agriculture towards improved productivity, thus enhancing food security. This is why the demand to create a viable, inclusive literate environment for all, as well as to promote adult literacy and education, is still at the top of the list of priorities on the African development agenda.

Even so, most adult literacy programmes are poorly organised and fail to attract learners. The majority of adult learners are also not motivated to attend adult literacy classes or circles. Creating a policy and a physical environment is not enough. Self-improvement and social development are crucial to spark people's motivation to learn. The key point lies on how it is relevant to the actual life of the learner in context. This is the engine of adult learning. Without motivation, there is no drive to learn and change. Finding out how to motivate adult learners in order to make them fully engage and persist in their own learning process is more critical than constructing bricks-and-mortar facilities. If we wish adult literacy and education to play a part in the African development agenda, we must build on the inner compulsion that arises from adults' everyday lives. Listening to learners and their learning aspirations is the foundation for turning problems into a promise to enhance life in Africa.



Samuel Asnake Wollie (Ethiopia) is the Chief Education Programmes Coordinator at the UNESCO Liaison Office Addis Ababa.

Contact
wolllesami@gmail.com

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Impact beyond the tests: adult education that makes a real difference



Chanell Butler-Morello
Catawba Valley Community College
USA

Abstract – *The Adult Basic Education (ABE) programme at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, North Carolina is a two-year programme that educates and empowers adults with disabilities to live more independently, improve academic skills, and gain employment. These groups of students are unique because they show only modest gains on standardised tests but enormous gains in quality of life. This article examines the success of these students that tests simply cannot measure.*

Standardised tests are the typical expectation for measuring success in students in many parts of the world. However, adults with disabilities are just one example of a population that is not best served through the use of standardised testing. At one programme of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in Hickory, North Carolina, these adult students with special needs have demonstrated tremendous growth and have a wide range of success stories to tell, in spite of difficulties proving such gains through written exams.

The ABE Academy is a two-year programme that runs four days a week. Typical students have physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism, Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury, paralysis, etc. One thing they all share is a desire to learn, grow, make new friends, and find a sense of purpose. These students attend in the hopes of improving their academic skills, gaining greater independence and obtaining employment or furthering their education. Instructors break up the large classroom of approximately 40 students into four groups according to their academic levels. Many students bring one-on-one aid workers to assist them.

Learning by doing

The curriculum is contextualised to real-life situations such as daily interactions in the outside world, applying for jobs, being a good local citizen, etc. The instruction is highly engaging, and is customised for individual learning needs and goals. There are not a lot of textbooks utilised in this class-



ABE Academy students at Catawba Valley Community College participate in Operation Clean Sweep, a volunteer initiative to clean up litter from the roadways in Alexander County, North Carolina. This allows the students to give back to the community while also preparing for a possible career in Waste Management and/or Environmental Services

room. Activities are hands-on, interactive and fun. For example, students learn how to grow their own garden with fresh fruits and vegetables, read recipes and cook healthy meals, and they actually cook the food together in the kitchen located near the classroom.

“Activities are hands-on, interactive and fun.”

The curriculum also has weekly themes in the programme that correlate to specific career fields that are in demand in the local area. This way students can learn which types of jobs are interesting to them, possibly jobs they have never even considered or heard of in the past. There are also guest speakers from all over the community, visiting and sharing information about different professions. Local businesses and clubs donate materials and supplies to the classroom because they believe in what the school is doing. What we have found is a recipe for success.

High standards

The school emphasises to the students that they are expected to comply with the attendance policy, arrive on time, actively participate, and meet high standards of behaviour. While standardised tests are given, and they are tied to performance funding for the programme, there is a strong belief that they

do not record the vast majority of successes that these students achieve.

Some examples of successes the students have achieved that cannot be measured in a standardised test include:

- improved self-confidence and self-worth
- the ability to communicate better verbally and express wants and needs to others
- interacting in a socially-acceptable manner and making friends (for possibly the first time)
- creating resumes, interviewing for jobs and obtaining employment
- gaining acceptance to new educational programmes within our college or at university
- developing the “soft skills” that allow them to succeed in the workplace or on the College campus
- the ability to grow and cook their own healthy meals
- discovering a career they can enjoy
- achieving greater independence and less reliance on relatives for daily care
- a deeper sense of happiness, purpose and fulfilment

From violence to self-discovery

One success story that truly stands out is that of our student Staci*. Staci was a student who had various forms of both physical and intellectual disabilities. Due to her very limited communication skills, she was very explosive and nearly vio-

lent at home and on campus (i.e. throwing tables and chairs, screaming, slamming doors). She attended class very sporadically, and therefore was unable to make any improvement. It was evident from the beginning that she didn't really believe in herself and therefore wouldn't bother making an effort to learn, as she already expected to fail before she even began. However, when the ABE Academy opened and offered a structured environment with a mandatory attendance policy, Staci decided she would give it a try. She immediately blossomed in a way that, frankly, none of us expected. She very quickly demonstrated a sense of pride in her regular attendance, completion of class activities, and ongoing participation in the programme. She began to communicate more effectively and was able to make friends for the first time on campus. She dramatically improved her social interaction skills, and started smiling for the first time whenever she arrived at school. While Staci demonstrated only modest gains on standardised testing, her increased self-confidence and newly-developing skills were very impressive. She caught the attention of faculty, staff, and Vocational Rehabilitation counsellors. Staci was offered a job at a local restaurant, and left our programme to work for the first time in her life. We were truly thrilled for her.

One young man Jeffrey* was completely uninterested in finding a job when he entered our ABE Academy. He wanted to improve his academic skills, but felt adamantly opposed to ever working. However, as his social and academic skills blossomed, so did the idea that maybe a career was possible. Through the strong community connections that the programme fosters, Jeffrey was eventually offered a full-time position at a local high-end furniture factory, and is now successfully employed for 40 hours a week. He has a new level of independence and a great sense of pride in being able to support himself.

In summary, if one were to judge the performance of the school by the data collected from standardised tests alone, it would seem that these adults are not learning very much. However, daily observations and various other measures of success have demonstrated that these adult students with disabilities are in fact making enormous strides in their quality of life, and are learning in ways that empower them to achieve a new sense of purpose and to contribute positively to their local community.

About the author

Chanell Butler-Morello is the Executive Director of the Learning & Personal Enrichment Innovation Center (Adult Education) at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, North Carolina. She has years of experience teaching and leading in the field of adult education.

Contact

cmorello@cvcc.edu

Discuss this article at our virtual seminar (see page 100)

Get Involved!
ICAE
Virtual Seminar
2019

* Students' names have been changed in the interest of confidentiality.

True stories



Khau Huu Phuoc, Vietnam

11,000 places to learn in Vietnam

Khau Huu Phuoc is research and training manager at SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning in Vietnam. He is convinced that Community Learning Centres are an exceptionally good tool for adult education in Vietnam.

Adult Education and Development: When were the Community Learning Centres opened, and what do they offer?

Khau Huu Phuoc: The first ten Community Learning Centres (CLCs) were established in 1998 with the financial support of the Japanese government. Since then, under the direction of the government, CLCs have increased in number, and now exist in every commune (the lowest level of administrative division) in Vietnam, totalling more than 11,000.

Vietnam CLCs are legal entities and serve three main functions:

- education and training
- information and consultation
- community development

Programmes and activities are geared towards elevating local people's lives through providing knowledge and short courses on work skills. There are also short information and propaganda sessions when new policies and directions from the government are disseminated.

What have the CLCs changed in the commune?

In places where CLCs have actively engaged in the development of people's lives and of the community, there have been significant changes in people's cultural, spiritual, physical and family lives. These can be seen mostly in rural and suburban areas where people do not have easy access to education. At CLCs, people learn new techniques that improve their productivity and give them a higher income.

What's your favourite thing about the CLCs?

It's probably the amazing coverage of the CLC network in the country, with one in every commune and ward. This has maximised learning opportunities for people, especially the disadvantaged and marginalised, many of whom are illiterate. According to the General Office of Statistics of Vietnam, 95% of the population aged from 15 can now read and write. CLCs have especially benefited low-income families, farming-dependent people, and young people with limited financial conditions for learning. In a sense, CLCs are key accelerators of lifelong learning for all.

Learn more: Visit the CLC in Xuat Hoa Commune, Hoa Binh Province of Vietnam at <https://youtu.be/28vEX0NAxzw>



Khau Huu Phuoc

Aizhamal Arstanbek-kyzy, Kyrgyzstan

“If you want to change others,
start with yourself”

Aizhamal Arstanbek-kyzy participated in the Regional Youth Empowerment Project in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. This helped her express her opinions and defend her decisions in front of relatives.

Adult Education and Development: What was the project about?

Aizhamal Arstanbek-kyzy: Today young people must be comprehensively developed and versatile, but unfortunately the percentage of such active young people in the Central Asian region is very small. Young people have hidden talents, but they cannot develop them into their strengths and use them. Among young people there are few people who can serve as an example and guide young people.

The “Central Asian Regional Youth Empowerment Project” included training on the most relevant and necessary topics for young people. In addition to the theory, it included a practical component. Compared to other short-time training, this programme lasted almost a year. The project helped to solve problems and helped us discover our hidden qualities and talents that were in “sleeping mode” inside of us. I myself went through all these stages.



Aizhamal Arstanbek-kyzy

Why did you participate in the project?

I decided to participate in the project because I wanted to defeat an opponent inside of me who thought only of herself, and not about society. There is a saying, if you want to change others, start these changes with yourself. Participating in such a good project, I expanded my circle of friends and acquaintances. I wanted to be as successful as other participants and trainers on the project, whom I met during the project implementation.

How can self-confidence be taught based on your experience in this project?

Self-confidence increases only when you learn to have success. After I achieved certain results – with every new challenge, I asked myself the question “Why can’t I do it? I just managed a similar challenge yesterday! Every new challenge is a new opportunity for the next success!” This strengthened my belief in myself. Of course, there will be obstacles, but once defeated, they will teach us to be patient and continue to strive to achieve our goals. So I also used this method: despite difficulties and obstacles not to be afraid and go ahead.

Do you think differently about your community now – and if so, why?

Yes, I started to think differently about my community. Changes in my community started with my friends asking: “Aizhamal, how do you manage to participate in other events and projects after the lessons? How are you not afraid of the risks that arise? Despite the fact that you are ‘wearing a scarf’, your day isn’t a waste and boring – how do you do that?” After these questions, my desire to strive forward only grows and becomes even stronger.

Astrid von Kotze, South Africa

Domestic violence on the stage

Astrid von Kotze is a community education and development practitioner in the Popular Education Programme in working class communities, in South Africa. One of her favourite educational tools is popular theatre.

Adult Education and Development: What is “Popular Theatre”?

Astrid von Kotze: Unlike theatre for development, which seeks to raise awareness in order to improve an aspect of a community, popular theatre (like popular education) aims to conscientise. Conscientisation, as proposed by Freire, means identifying, analysing and targeting underlying power relationships and systemic constraints, as well as mobilising participants to act for change. Thus, popular theatre is not about “giving a voice to the voiceless”: It considers both performers and the audience to be subjects, agents of their own development and change, and it encourages and supports them in struggles against oppressive forces. At its best, popular theatre is one strategy in a sustained struggle for justice.

Why do you use the approach in your work?

Theatre is a wonderful space to work on dangerous issues and to “light fires”, that is, to ignite anger and passion – the energy needed to fuel action. Theatre taps into people’s creativity, their imagination. Through experimentation with and improvisations around issues close to their hearts, participants come to see their personal troubles as public issues. Thus, theatre offers a space to explore critically, deeply and playfully new (horizontal) relations and relationships. While participants try out new possibilities of thinking, feeling and behaving, theatre is also a process of story-telling that generates collective ownership, and a tool for mobilising for action.

Can you give us an example of the impact of popular theatre?

In 2016, I worked with a group of women from Delft, a very poor area outside Cape Town. They chose the theme of domestic violence as a persistent and serious issue in their community. In workshops, more than 25 women explored the issue in relation to social, economic and political systems, uncovered how power differentials are deeply gendered and domestic violence is situated within a patriarchal culture of violence. The women shifted perspectives and came to see how men, too, are oppressed by this culture. In the end, six women performed the play – but all 25 of them reported that they had begun to approach their partners and children with

greater empathy, while developing the tools for dialogue in order to transform relationships. After performances, men often came forward in “confessional” speeches, apologising for their behaviour. Importantly, the women in the play began to forge relations of empathy rather than scorn with other women and, collectively, planned ways of countering abuse through acts of solidarity. Two years later, many of them walk children to school in “walking busses” to protect them; they respond to the noise caused by other women’s abuse by publicly supporting the abused; they cook together and meet regularly in support groups.

However, while a small group of women can tinker with change, it would take a social movement and a “long revolutionary breath” to change systems. Plays embedded in social movements have a more realistic chance to create a lasting impact. For example, a play about evictions and land ownership was originally performed to affected community members, educating them about legal aspects and garnering their support. It is currently in rehearsal and will be performed as one of the strategies to raise public awareness for an upcoming court case about public land. In this way, popular theatre is one form of popular education that can communicate with great immediacy to bring issues closer to the public.

Astrid von Kotze



Lasting changes through literacy training in Sierra Leone



Outi Perähuhta
Finnish Refugee Council
Finland

Abstract – *How can one achieve long-lasting changes in people's lives through adult education and motivate them to continue studying on an independent basis? This article discusses the lessons learnt in Sierra Leone, where functional literacy training started by the Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) has been continued by the target communities, years after active FRC support came to an end.*

The West African country of Sierra Leone is among the poorest countries in the world. The Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) began a development cooperation programme there in 2003, after the long civil war which lasted from 1991 to 2002.

When the Sierra Leone programme began, close to 80 percent of the adults in the country were illiterate. Literacy was deemed highly important during the reconstruction period, as economic growth required literate citizens. As a response to the post-conflict situation, and in order to support the social reconstruction of the country, the focus of the programme was set on adult literacy. As an organisation, the FRC operates in protracted refugee contexts as well as in post-conflict and returnee areas. The focus of the work is on adult education and livelihood support.

The work in Sierra Leone was carried out during 2003–2016, in cooperation with eleven partners, including radio stations.¹ All in all, the project reached 620 communities and about 30,000 adult learners. Agricultural and business skills, as well as awareness of health and sanitation, were integrated into literacy and numeracy education. The implementation structure was based on facilitator training and monitoring carried out by the FRC and its partners. Some communities paid for the work done by the facilitators' with labour or through a moderate cash payment.

The approach used was the participatory and discussion-based REFLECT method (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques). This approach centres on adult learning and the generation of broader so-

cial change. The REFLECT approach works by creating an ongoing open space where participants can meet and discuss the topics and issues that are relevant to them. In addition, REFLECT involves several participatory tools and methods which allow the participants themselves to identify and demonstrate the changes that they would like to see happen. The participants decide what they wish to learn, and may prioritise topics according to subjectively-observed relevance. The participants are then taught and supported by local facilitators from their own communities.

The regular REFLECT approach was fine-tuned to ensure compatibility with the national non-formal curriculum, and to introduce levelling tests for learners. In addition, each community formed a management committee to oversee literacy training and to amplify the action points to the whole community whenever relevant. This approach was chosen to make the programme sustainable right from the beginning by enabling communities to continue the project once all funding and support would end. Learning was supported through the compilation and use of “Learner-Generated Materials”, in which all topics, ideas and contents were generated by literacy training participants and community facilitators. Various facilitator and stakeholder training courses, including on agricultural and business skills, were provided for facilitators and community members in the form of TOT training activities. The partner radio stations’ civic education programmes, together with the learning circle visits, also lent a voice to the communities.

“The responses collected provide tangible evidence of the long-term changes stemming from the adult literacy programme.”

Long-lasting results

The programme ended in 2011 in some of the communities. After five years without any support, it was time to conduct an assessment of whether any traces of the project still existed within the targeted communities. We wanted to know what long-term changes had occurred – if any – and what could be learnt from these changes. Part of the reason for this decision was the fact that all public gatherings were banned for more than a year during the Ebola outbreak in 2014–2015, and this had also made the learning circles impracticable. The expectation was that the Ebola outbreak had ruined the programme. We assumed that under normal circumstances (i.e. without Ebola) perhaps in a few communities there would have been some signs of the project left. However, even under normal circumstances, we did not expect any communities to really have continued the learning on their own, without any support, after the partners and FRC had exited.

The assessment was carried out using a participatory method in 12 selected communities, with a total of 403 people



Members of Largo community practice writing in their school building. The presence of such a building was an exception in the rural communities involved in the project

participating in the sessions. Eleven out of the 12 communities assessed, and the one pilot community, had continued the programme until the outbreak of Ebola, and many had restarted it once the epidemic was over. The skills obtained during the programme were in active use in all communities, regardless of whether any learning activities still continued.

These results came as a positive surprise. The responses collected provide tangible evidence of the long-term changes stemming from the adult literacy programme. The most significant and prominent changes were identified as the everyday use of practical literacy, numeracy and business skills, improved agricultural practices, higher self-esteem, support for children’s education, and group farming. In addition, there was a major change in the role of women in the communities, and increased participation in community activities, this being mentioned by both learners and community elders.

Voices of participants:

“Before I was an illiterate housewife and I could not contribute to the development of my community. After participating in adult literacy training, I can make soap. When I sell it, I keep a record of my income and expenses. I know about women’s rights organisations, and I do not let my husband violate my rights. Before I was shy, but now I speak my mind. I am also my community’s chairwoman.”

Kadie Jigba, 38, Tikonko, Sierra Leone

“Before I only did farming. Now I can read, write and do simple calculations. These skills benefit me a lot. Because I am excited to learn more, other students chose me as the chairman of the literary circle. I was encouraged to take out a loan for a motorbike. Due to the motorbike, I have been able to drive a taxi and take care of my family. Thanks to the FRC, I am now no longer dependent on other people’s help.”

Tom Sandy, 25, Bongieya, Sierra Leone

Adult literacy training introduced numerous changes to the lives of the literacy circle participants. Being able to write and read their own names, using a mobile phone without assistance, and participating meaningfully in community meetings, are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the skills that literacy enables one to acquire. The training has also had remarkable effects on the participants' self-esteem. People who had not attended community meetings before, especially women, had the courage to voice their opinions, and several communities ended up selecting previously timid women to leadership positions, thanks to their courage and the hidden potential which had now been unearthed. Additionally, increased awareness of personal rights was reported, and women now knew to tell the authorities about domestic violence.

The learning experience and learning circles brought the communities closer together: Increased social cohesion and conflict resolution skills were frequently reported at both family and community level. Group farming was started and continued in all communities in order to support one another or to raise funds, as a result of the group cohesion formed in the learning circle. Additionally, there were several community development actions that had spontaneously occurred, e.g. clearing the roads, community cleaning days and community construction. There were several communities where the chief and elders reported that the number of disputes that were brought to them had clearly declined after the learning circle had been established in the community. Many mentioned the conflict resolution skills included in the literacy training as a reason for this, but also the fact that everyone could speak up in the circles.

These changes demonstrate strengthened capacity at both individual and community level, as well as improved social cohesion – all of which are pivotal for post-conflict communities. This social cohesion encouraged the community members to support each other and improve their wider communities. This is important with a view to securing the sustainable and peaceful development of the communities.

“The skills that were learnt were found useful by the participants, since they were able to use them in their everyday lives.”

Usefulness in daily livelihood activities

Given the results, we wanted to find out which factors contributed to the continuation of learning even without external support. The main contributing factor was that the issues and topics covered in the learning responded to the communities' true needs: The topics had everyday relevance and importance, and it was possible to put the new skills into practice immediately. The need for literacy was prevalent in people's daily lives: For instance, worries of being cheated

in ordinary monetary transactions were reported to be a limiting factor for income-generating activities. Learners also mentioned that they wanted to assist their children in their school work, but without literacy it was not possible.

The learnt skills were found useful by the participants, since they were able to use them in their everyday lives. Literacy encouraged more and more participants to start up small businesses, as literacy and numeracy allow one to keep a record of income and expenses and reduce the risk of being swindled when selling one's crops. Those who were already running businesses reported increased profits as a result of the skills that they had acquired.

Positive influence on children's education was one of the direct benefits mentioned by the participants time after time. Adults had understood the importance of childhood education, and women in particular expressed their resolve to make sure that their daughters remained in school. There were a great number of participants who were now allocating income for children's education, as well as stating that they were now at last able to monitor their children's performance in school.

The role of the facilitator

As for the independent continuation of learning activities, the most crucial factor was the presence of a trained facilitator in the community. Similarly, the main hindrances to the project and its continuation were cases in which the facilitator had fallen ill, passed away or relocated.

Mutual respect among learners and facilitators was another key contributor. Facilitators were willing to visit learners in their own homes in order to encourage them or enquire about a learner's absence. Facilitators had also gained respect among community members and leaders. Facilitators often became able to influence public opinion, and were also called on to mediate disagreements.

For the facilitators themselves, facilitating literacy groups was a life-changing experience. Some facilitators mentioned that they had been timid and never thought that they could lead a group of other adults. Training and experience however helped them to become confident of their abilities. Several facilitators have also received other work opportunities, and many of them have entered remote teacher training schemes in order to qualify for public primary school teacher positions.

Lessons learnt

When analysing what brought about the changes, two main factors were identified:

1. Tuition responded to the requests and needs of the people.
2. Opting for an implementation strategy that did not require external support after the first few years' investment in training and monitoring, creating a situation in which the cessation of external support did not hinder the activities from continuing.



In many communities the learners chose to hold classes after dark, since daylight hours were spent labouring in the fields. The learners would not let the lack of communal lighting hinder their learning activities, and would bring torches or gas lamps from their homes to illuminate their workbooks

Relevance of the learning, ownership of the learning by communities and the attitude of facilitating, not teaching the adults, all come back to the participatory and rights-based approach applied in the literacy activities. Following these findings, we can see that investment in adult literacy programmes is an effective method for creating tangible, sustainable and long-term changes. These changes take place over and above the level of the individual, and create a significant positive impact on families and communities.

More information:

www.refugeecouncil.fi/materials

Notes

1 / The project partners in Sierra Leone were: Agency for Community Development Initiatives (ACODI), Community Empowerment and Development Agency (CEDA), Community Action for Rural Development (CARD), Hands Empowering Less Privileged in Sierra Leone (HELP-SL), Islamic Action Group (ISLAG), Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), Rehabilitation and Development Agency (RADA), Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA), KISS 104 FM, Radio Bitumani FM 93.7, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS).



About the author

Outi Perähuhta has worked in development cooperation since 2000. She has worked with adult education at the Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) since 2003, when she launched the Sierra Leone country programme as the Country Director. Her expertise includes adult education and the livelihood sector, especially in refugee and fragile contexts. She currently works as an adviser at the FRC head office in Helsinki.

Contact

outi.perahuhta@refugeecouncil.fi



Photography
by Steve Camargo

A day in Cochabamba

Photo reportage



4.30 AM

It's a cold winter morning in Cochabamba, the third city in relevance in Bolivia's economy and population. Nancy starts her day, as any other working day, in the beautiful wooden kitchen built by hand by her husband

Photo reportage

A day in Cochabamba

Photography

by Steve Camargo





5.30 AM

The first cake is almost ready

As the oven starts to heat up, Nancy begins her early baking routine preparing “brazo gitano”, a sweet cake that can be served as breakfast as well as dessert. She learned to bake this cake during her classes at the adult education centre

Nancy is 37 years old and the mother of two children. She lives in the Pacata Alta zone on the Eastern slope of the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Pacata Alta is home to more than 25,000 inhabitants, mostly migrant miners who relocated there in the 1980s.

It is also home to the Edmundo Bojanowski Alternative Education Centre (AEC). This is where Nancy started to take gastronomy classes that changed her life and that of her family.

The Edmundo Bojanowski Alternative Education Centre, with the support of DVV International, offers young people and adults primary education, secondary education, as well as classes in gastronomy, accounting, textile manufacturing and computer systems. Classes are offered in two shifts, in the afternoon and evening. The AEC reaches altogether more than 400 participants between the age of 15 and 50.

Many of the women who participate have children. Some of them are single mothers living in precarious situations. With classes running in the afternoon and in the evening, the centre allows these women to work during the day. Many of

the participants started their own businesses after attending the gastronomy class. This is what Nancy did when she established her family shop and restaurant with the support of her sisters. Today 15 people earn their livelihoods in the enterprise, including children, nephews and other relatives.

Working, learning and caring for a family is a tough job. Nancy is always busy, but also very proud of what she has achieved.

Bolivian photographer Steve Camargo spent a day with Nancy for *Adult Education and Development*, showing us how education has changed her life.



Baking one “brazo gitano” cake takes around 30 minutes. In a good morning, Nancy bakes 4 to 5 cakes. She sells them as full cakes on order to private customers, and by the slice as part of breakfast served in the family restaurant





At 7 am, Nancy arrives at the family restaurant and store located in front of Semapa, a local water treatment company. Each day at least a hundred hungry Semapa workers come for breakfast and lunch



7.30 AM

Together with her niece, Nancy serves around hundred breakfasts and other meals between 7:30 and 9:30, mainly to workers of Semapa and students from the nearby school





12.00 PM

Nancy is taking orders from foremen who are planning the meals for their teams

In the family restaurant, Nancy works as cook, waitress and cashier, depending on the time of the day. When the last guests have left after lunch, she helps to wash the dishes and wash the restaurant floor. She then – sometimes in a rush – leaves for the adult education centre, where she takes cooking classes





4.00 PM

Inside the classroom, Nancy becomes a student again. This is her receiving some advice from her cooking instructor



It is not a quiet classroom, but rather the harmonious sound of a baking friendship. Under guidance, Nancy learns every day, and teaches younger students every day as well. This kind of sharing knowledge, learning and teaching is something very common in Bolivia's traditional culture: You teach the ones you love how to cook



Nancy finished high school in 2016 before joining the gastronomy classes. Her two sons are also in high school

5.30 PM

After a hard working day, Nancy will return home and spend some time with her family. Before bedtime, she will clean and store her baking moulds so that they are ready for the next day, when she will be up before the first sunlight



Section 3

Figuring it out

If you count only heads in the classroom you will know how many turned up, but not what they learned. Deciding what measuring tape to use when collecting data on the impact of adult education will define the results you get. By monitoring the implementation of policies and programmes, we can also improve the impact they have on society.

The challenges regarding data production



César Guadalupe
Universidad del Pacífico
Peru

Abstract – *This article identifies some major issues regarding the generation and availability of data on youth and adult education. It discusses the production of data on programmes and enrolment, as well as financing and issues related to the identification of the target populations. A special focus is set on the realm of testing skills and competences, given their complexity as well as the paramount profile and importance that they have acquired in recent years. The article stresses the fact that technical attributes of data generation endeavours are contingent upon their purposes. A non-technocratic and more politically-sensitive approach to data generation is promoted.*

Systematic data on youth and adult education are scarce, and their quality is often not properly documented or known. This is somewhat typical of a field that is too often overlooked, also in educational policies.

Apart from neglecting practices, there might be other factors preventing the development of a body of evidence that can play a role, not only regarding the analysis and debates on youth and adult education, but also in raising its profile.

This article looks at four areas in which data are scarce or not systematic: (i) programmes and enrolment data; (ii) learning outcomes; (iii) population to be served; and (iv) financing.

Each of these areas faces particular issues. Understanding them will enable stakeholders to better align their data-related activities by having an organised frame of reference.

Educational programmes and enrolment

Youth and adult education programmes are highly diverse in the way they are organised and delivered, as well as which agencies are involved in organising and delivering them. The purposes that they aim to serve are equally diverse. In comparison to regular school programmes for children, however, the world of youth and adult education seems to be much more difficult to grasp.

We can nevertheless sort youth and adult education programmes into three main categories: (i) programmes that

are equivalent to those recognised as “official” in the country, that is leading towards official certifications that open up opportunities for further studies in the formal education system; (ii) programmes with specific purposes that serve specific needs and do not lead to formal certifications; and (iii) a combination of the first two.

The first group of programmes can be mapped into the national qualifications structure, and into the International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO/UIS 2013). The organisation of enrolment and graduation records should facilitate that transfer. The second group of programmes represents a different challenge, since there is no need to map them into formal tracks, unless a standard compilation of data is needed for some specific purposes. In this case, a flexible classification scheme that acknowledges the nature of these programmes (as continuing education not leading to formal certificates) is called for.

In both cases (as well as in those cases that combine the two), agreement among stakeholders is needed. Some might need to accept that data generation might not have the exact form that they would like it to, but that there is a more general benefit stemming from being able to portray a comprehensive and reliable map of youth and adult education programmes in general.

As soon as the previous issue is sorted out, we need to focus on recording enrolment information. Here we must differentiate between two distinct observational units: (i) individuals and (ii) units of service (individuals served by a given programme). A typical issue stems from confounding these two things: An individual can be registered in more than one programme, and this individual should therefore be counted as one (if the focus is placed on headcounts), but there might be many units of service. Adding up participants in different programmes does not necessarily yield a total number of participants as individuals. The only exception is when enrolment in a given programme precludes enrolment in another programme in a given period of time.

“Measuring learning outcomes is probably the most difficult and most debated area of data generation in education.”

Now, recording units of service entails a risk of counting programmes that are extremely diverse as if they were equivalent. For instance, a six-hour programme should not count as equivalent to a one-semester part-time programme. This is especially true if one is interested in acquiring information on financing and allocation of resources. Using some equivalent unit such as credit hours is one way to sort out this problem.

It would therefore ultimately be possible to report participants (as headcounts), as well as units of service in equivalents of participant hours/days/credits.

Learning outcomes

Measuring learning outcomes is probably the most difficult and most debated area of data generation in education. As in any information generation endeavour, the key question is how to identify, from the very beginning, the purpose(s) that the data generation effort is going to serve. If comparison (in time, across groups) is important (to identify progress, or gaps), that purpose should be ensured in every step along the way. This includes the way in which measuring instruments are built and administered.

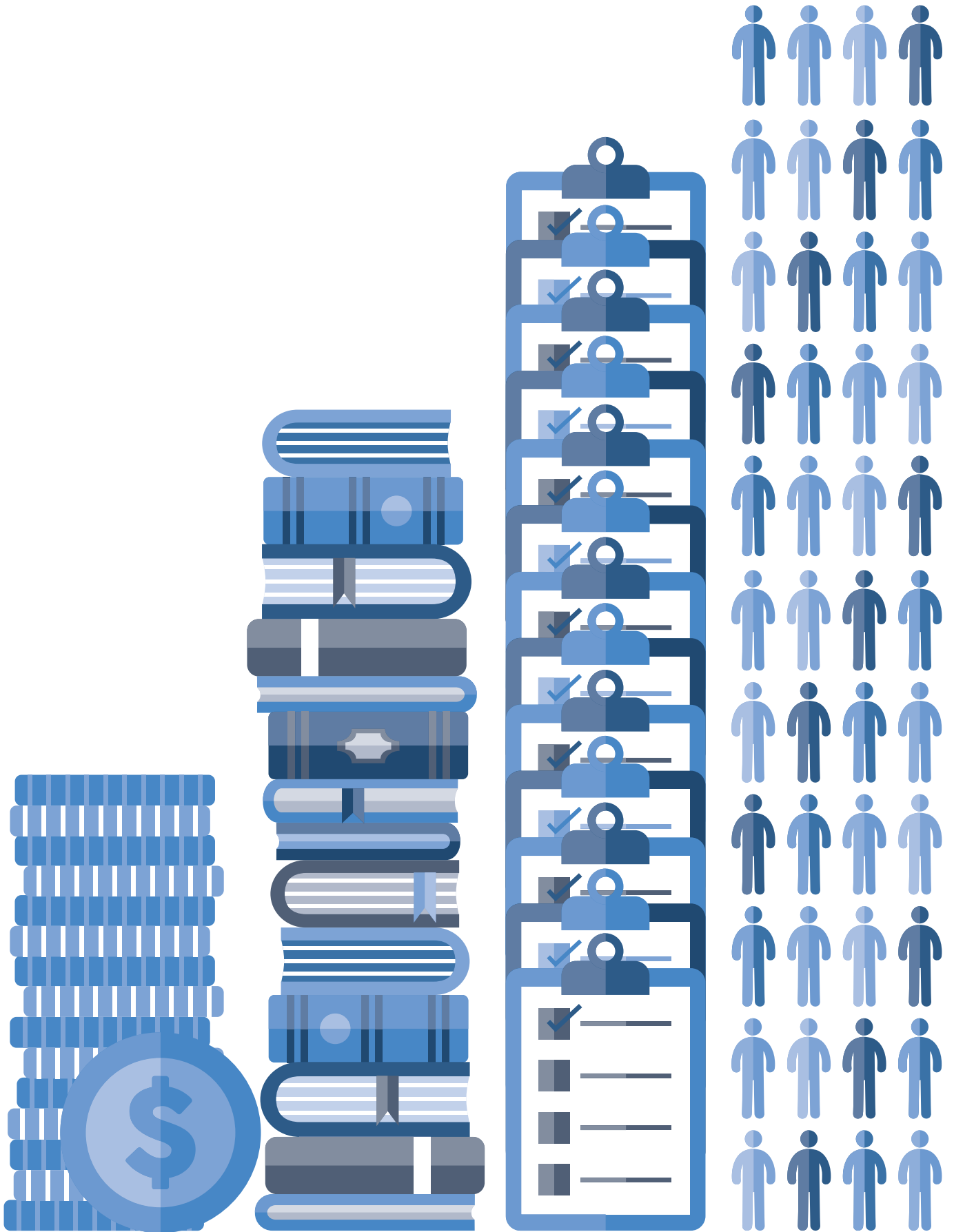
Programmes are usually structured to help teachers or facilitators provide a comprehensive assessment of participants’ progress and achievements. Those assessment efforts are necessarily focused on each particular setting, and therefore mobilise different criteria. This makes it difficult to generate aggregated data that is meaningful beyond a simple (and not very specific) counting of those who pass/fail/complete a programme. We are left without any certainty with regard to the actual competences that attendees have developed. It is also difficult to track progress over time when the actual criteria used for assessing might change (if one wants to measure change, it is important not to change the measure).

From these final elements stems the fact that standardised measures of skills and competences might be needed. However, testing competences is a complex task that poses challenges pertaining to several aspects, including validity and reliability issues. In this regard, it is important to pay due attention to the complexity of testing (American Educational Research Association et al. 2014), and to be wary of proposals that offer a cheap, quick fix to a complex problem.

For instance, a test can be designed in such a way as to rank individuals (differentiating between those who perform better/worse than others, regardless of the performance level that they achieve; this is what is usually known as a norm-referenced test), or to identify how they perform as compared to an expectation explicitly stated as a sort of standard or performance level (this is known as a criterion-references test), or a combination of those (Glaser 1963). This has major consequences on deciding which questions (items that include a stimulus and a question or task) are included in a particular test.

A test should also be able to properly represent what it claims to measure (“construct validity”). It should be able to capture the main components of that construct (“content validity”). It should also be valid in relation to a particular observable behaviour that it is intended to describe (“concurrent validity”) or anticipate (“predictive validity”). Finally, it is important that when designing a measurement mechanism, attention is given to the consequences (“consequential validity”) that it can have on the social setting in which it operates (Zumbo & Hubley 2016).

The last element also points towards considering the overall institutional context and conditions under which a particular test is designed, administered and used. Data can be mobilised for different purposes, including some controversial political ends (Gorur 2015, 2017; Grek 2009, 2015; Guadalupe 2017; Hamilton 2012).



We also need to consider the way in which data will be processed and analysed. Current testing practices tend to rely on mathematical models grouped under the label Item Response Theory (Baker 2001; Hambleton & Jones 1993; Hambleton et al. 1991). This approach allows for a more precise way of addressing the actual attributes that individual questions (items) have when applied to a given population and, therefore, it allows identifying issues pertaining to how different populations respond to different questions which might affect the usability of some items for having reliable comparable data (Zumbo 1999, 2007).

Finally, if a particular test is going to be administered to individuals from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, some specific issues arise in relation to the translation and adaptation of tests (Hambleton 2005; Hambleton et al. 2005).

The target population

Youth and adult education programmes are increasingly important in a world that is becoming progressively aware that education and learning take place along the whole course of life. This frequently makes it tricky to have a definition of the target population to be served, thus making it impossible to properly estimate the coverage of these programmes beyond a simple measure of the “number of participants”.

A first way of addressing this topic requires differentiating according to the intentionality of the programmes: (i) programmes that have a remedial component in relation to failure to complete compulsory education, and (ii) programmes that go beyond remedial purposes.

It is clear that the first group of programmes should have a definite target population: those who did not complete (or even start) compulsory schooling when they were supposed to. Household survey data can be used to estimate this segment of the population (Guadalupe et al. 2016; Guadalupe & Taccari 2004; UNESCO Santiago 2004), and these estimates are of paramount importance to avoid a trend towards self-complacent practices that are too focused on what we do, and neglect what we have to do. At the same time, estimates of the number of people who did not complete compulsory schooling might underestimate the need for remedial programmes since, unfortunately, many people complete schooling without developing the competences and skills that they should. Estimating this additional need can be done by surveying the distribution of competences among adults.

For non-remedial programmes, there is no clear or precise way of identifying a target population; thus, coverage can be estimated only as a proportion of the whole youth and adult population.

Collecting data on financing

This is probably the most problematic area because of the diversity of ways in which information is recorded in governmental sources, but also for the huge practical challenges entailed in trying to compile organised and systematic data from non-governmental sources. Having standard definitions

of major components (current expenditure as opposed to investments; salaries as distinct from other current expenses; overheads or administrative costs) is not always an easy thing to do.

At the same time, information on finance should be read against some sort of benchmark that would provide indications of the level of sufficiency of the resources invested. Establishing a benchmark is difficult (UNESCO Santiago 2007) since it requires one to have a clear estimation of needs (which are diverse, so that addressing them involves diverse costs). We must also disregard the oversimplifications that have populated the world of education for decades, such as establishing a magical (impossible to sustain) fixed percentage of something (production, public expenditure, etc.) that appears as applicable everywhere (as if diversity did not exist), in a world where diversity and change are the rules and for long periods of time (as if change did not exist).

The next move is yours

This article is a quick summary of the major issues pertaining to the realm of data generation in youth and adult education. Data generation (not collection, since data is not a natural element that can be collected like berries, but consists of social constructions based on concepts, interests, ideas, etc.) cannot be taken as a simple issue or as something purely technical, void of political and ideological elements. On the contrary, decisions on what data should be produced, how that data should be generated, compiled, analysed and reported, are fundamentally grounded on the purposes and agendas that a particular agent wants to advance (Guadalupe 2015). Therefore, a substantive and explicit definition of purpose(s) is the cornerstone of any data generation endeavour.

At the same time, the previous point should not be used as an alibi to justify any decision regarding data: There are specific complexities and attributes that need to be properly factored into any data generation effort if sound, useful data is to be produced and reported. Cheap and quick “fixes” usually disregard the scientific properties that sound data have and, therefore, its usability. It is usually better not to have any data and be aware of this lack of evidence than to have poor data and assume that we have something on which we can rely. The first situation leads to careful action (including addressing the information gap), while the second leads to mistakes that affect people’s lives.

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About the author

César Guadalupe is a Doctor of Education (Sussex), M.A. Social and Political Thought (Sussex) and Sociologist (PUCP). He is a Senior Lecturer-Researcher at the Universidad del Pacífico (Peru). Previously he served for eleven years at the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and UNESCO/Santiago. He is a member of the Peruvian National Education Council (2014–2020) and its current Chair (2017–2020).

Contact

ca.guadalupe@up.edu.pe

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True stories



Uwe Gartenschlaeger, Laos

Mobile skills trainers to the rescue

Uwe Gartenschlaeger is the regional director of DVV International in Southeast Asia. The Institute is working with “mobile skills trainers” in Laos, aiming to improve the livelihoods of poor villagers.

Adult Education and Development: DVV International has been sending out mobile skills trainers to remote areas in Laos. Can you give us a little bit of context about the living situation in these areas?

Uwe Gartenschlaeger: These are remote villages, which are classified by the Lao Government as extremely poor. Villagers are engaged mainly in subsistence farming. Many of them belong to ethnic minorities, and the drop-out rate from primary and secondary school is high. As the villages are far from the nearest larger settlement, it is impossible for the villagers to receive skills training, which in the case of Laos are exclusively concentrated in formal TVET schools located in bigger settlements.

What is a mobile skills trainer, and what does he or she do?

These are regular teachers from formal TVET schools. Two of them visit the target villages and discuss with the village authorities the need for skills training, offering the entire portfolio of their TVET school. After that, they design tailor-made training courses of up to two weeks and implement them in the villages. Our experience shows that agricultural skills, the basics of electricity, small engine repairs, tailoring and some construction trades are most popular. More than half of the training is dedicated to practical skills. It is an attempt to bring skills training to the people, as the majority of villagers are not able to join extended skills training in centralised schools far away from their fields and families.

You commissioned a tracer study on this programme in 2017. What were the most important results in your opinion?

The study proves that villagers are interested in this kind of training, and that formal TVET schools are able to deliver it through mobile skills trainers. More than that, it turned out

that two years after the training courses were conducted, improvements in livelihood could be measured (e.g. better nutrition), and a better income was even observed in some cases – although it is a bit risky to identify the training as the main reason for improved income! However, the study proved that mobile skills training is a cost-effective way to deliver needs-orientated TVET to the most marginalised!

How do you think this impact can be made sustainable?

These kinds of training courses should be integrated into the official TVET delivery system. We at DVV International took on the role of demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of these approaches, but it is up to the government to offer these formats on a regular basis and countrywide! We are currently working on mainstreaming mobile skills training within the TVET sector.



Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Reem Eslim, Palestine

“A good trainer is a lifelong learner”

Reem Eslim is a human development trainer and developmental projects officer at the Ministry of Social Development. She attended training that helped her accept and work with different learning styles, perspectives and methods.

Adult Education and Development: Why did you participate in the training of trainers (ToT)?

Reem Eslim: As a trainer, I believe that persons always have the ability to use their potentials effectively. This is why I wanted to increase this ability and make use of new things that I can learn to empower participants. I have been in training courses with participants from various sectors, and what is common among them all is that they join training hoping to achieve more in life as professionals, or just as individuals. They want to be more capable of adapting to difficult life conditions. I joined the ToT programme because of my conviction that I need to develop as a trainer to become someone who believes in their chances to empower others and who acts upon that.

Reem Eslim



What did you learn during the training?

There were multiple benefits. On the personal level, I have noticed the change in how I look at myself as an individual and as a trainer; why I do this, what my roles are, and how I can use my knowledge and skills to assist others in their development. I now have a more open perspective towards my needs and priorities, without being constrained by pre-determined concepts that others may put forward or expect me to put forward. This made me see completely new opportunities for my career that I had never considered before. On the professional level, I have noticed the change in my way of thinking when it comes to group dynamics, and how to approach different “types” of participant. As a trainer, I have learnt how to be more aware of spaces that I can create for participants to think openly and freely, and how to guide them to “liberate” their thoughts about the subject of the training.

What impact did the training have on your work?

I mobilised for and succeeded in delivering training for 100 colleagues to increase their awareness of emancipatory, participative and empowering approaches to training. I also used the new learning I gained to change my own approaches in training with my regular target groups (vocational training centres). I created a new programme within my regular job to target the trainers of these centres with adult education methods and approaches. This programme is considered a new direction at the Ministry, and it is helping to open new horizons and ideas regarding vocational training centres.

What makes a good trainer?

I believe the most important quality of a good trainer is their respect for attendees’ thoughts and concepts, and their ability to show this respect in practice, especially when those thoughts conflict with their own. Another important quality is truly valuing not only the capacities and experiences of participants, but also their limitations, and adapting to those to make sure everyone is part of the learning process. A good trainer needs also to be flexible, capable of dealing with whatever thoughts come up. A good trainer is a trainer who sees themselves as one equal member of a group of learners. And indeed, a good trainer is a lifelong learner who is well equipped with up to date knowledge in their own field.

Kebeh Kollie, Liberia

“As soon as you learn, you are different”

Kebeh Kollie attended literacy and numeracy classes as an adult. Today her business is thriving – she has paid back her loan and successfully runs her dry goods market. Literacy with a goal produces miracles!

Adult Education and Development: Why did you not learn to read and write as a child?

Kebeh Kollie: I never had the opportunity as a child. My parents, especially my mother, never had the money to send my brother and me to school at the same time. So my brother was supported to learn instead of me. Our people say that the man is the one who stays in the family and takes care of the family. The woman always goes to another family. This is why they preferred my brother to go to school instead of me. Now, my brother is not doing much for me. He started helping me before the war, when he had a job. Presently, he does not have a job and things are hard on him. I believe that if I had been the one sent to school, things would be much better. Women have a lot of chances when they learn.

Why did you want to learn?

I wanted to learn because as time went by, I understood that education is the most valuable action for anyone who wants to be successful. Education changes one's life and status among friends. I found out that as soon as you learn, you are different. First, I thought that it was too late. But then my friends were learning. So I took up the challenge.

How has literacy changed your life?

The first thing is that it has improved my life immensely by helping me to identify numbers. I think anyone without an education is partly blind. Secondly, with the identification of numbers, I can use my cellphone effectively because I call customers up and inform them of any new commodity I have and tell them that when they come my way a certain day, I will offer a discount. Thirdly, I am practicing keeping records by tracking profits and losses. I know some numbers. Not all. I sometimes feel sorry that I was not sent to school as a child. But it is better late than never. And I will continue to learn to read and write till I die.

What did you like most about the REFLECT approach of teaching reading and writing?

I am impressed with the teamwork with other women of my age and how easily the lessons related to our lives. We are not learning like children do. Most of the lessons are about what we do in our communities and homes. When I first started with this method, it was funny and I thought it was all just a joke. When some of our friends from other literacy schools said that they were taking exams in the learning classes, I became afraid. But REFLECT did not give us any test. The method is simple and talks about reading and writing and about our family and community lives.



Kebeh Kollie

Made to measure: using INAF to check literacy levels



Roberto Catelli Jr.
Ação Educativa
Brazil

Abstract – *The article analyses the experience of creating and putting into practice the Functional Literacy Indicator (INAF) in Brazil as an instrument to measure levels of literacy. This methodology makes it easier to discuss illiteracy, and can be used to improve public education policies for young people and adults. The study identified a reduction in absolute illiteracy in Brazil from 2001 to 2015, but also identified a significant number of people who are at a rudimentary level of literacy.*

New research on learning levels began in Europe and the US in the 1980s. The debate was related to the economic and social changes that have taken place since the second half of the 20th Century. Many production processes and conditions of inclusion in the labour market changed during this period. This happened both in rich countries and in peripheral economies, particularly in Latin America. The change stimulated a revamping of educational processes, highlighting the problem of low levels of education. Research led to international strategies aimed at advancing the teaching and evaluation processes that would serve as a basis for information on the knowledge acquired in an effective manner by young people and adults, taking into account their personal and professional needs.

International organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) formulated concepts, evaluation methodologies and policies regarding literacy and adult education, especially after the adoption of the concept of lifelong education, replacing a vision that perceived the education of young people and adults as merely a policy of compensation.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)¹ presented the results of its first International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) in 1995. This evaluation was carried out in 1994 with young people and adults aged between 16 and 65 from Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, Ireland and the United States.

Table 1 – Levels of literacy in Brazil according to INAF, 2001–2015

	2001 2002	2002 2003	2003 2004	2004 2005	2007	2009	2011	2015
Illiterates	12 %	13 %	12 %	11 %	9 %	7 %	6 %	4 %
Rudimentary	27 %	26 %	26 %	26 %	25 %	20 %	21 %	23 %
Basic/elementary (2015)*	34 %	36 %	37 %	38 %	38 %	46 %	47 %	23 % *
Complete/intermediate (2015)*	26 %	25 %	25 %	26 %	28 %	27 %	26 %	42 % *
Competent (2015)*								8 % *
Functionally illiterate	39 %	39 %	38 %	37 %	34 %	27 %	27 %	27 %
Functionally literate	61 %	61 %	62 %	63 %	66 %	73 %	73 %	73 %

* The range of interpretation of the results of the INAF was restructured in 2015 in order to measure the results better. The basic and full levels were therefore eliminated, and were organised as elementary, intermediate and competent.

IALS became the first literacy profile of the adult population, allowing for a comparison between several countries.

The first results indicated that many countries needed to develop strategies to improve the level of literacy of the population. In Poland, in French-speaking Canada and in the United States, half of the population or more was placed on the two lowest levels of the *Document literacy*² domain. French-speaking Canada, Poland and Switzerland were negatively highlighted in the domain of *Prose literacy*. Finally, the worst results in the *Quantitative literacy*³ domain were from Poland and French-speaking Canada. However, all countries showed a high percentage of people with low levels of literacy in general, which confirmed the need for new strategies to raise the literacy level of the general population, with special attention being paid to the new demands of the labour market.

The creation of INAF in Brazil

The OECD's findings, along with the UNESCO initiative to study what was known as functional literacy in Latin America, contributed in Brazil to the creation of the Functional Literacy Indicator (INAF), coordinated by the Ação Educativa NGO and the Paulo Montenegro Institute.

In 1998, Ação Educativa participated in the Regional Workshop of the Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC) in order to study the levels of literacy in the region, with a focus on adults. Since then, Ação Educativa has developed a methodology to measure

“INAF analyses the level of literacy with the aim of influencing the debate on the educational development of the country, and discusses the meaning of illiteracy, which cannot be restricted to a binary vision of reading and writing.”

the literacy levels of people from 15 to 64 years of age, in collaboration with the Paulo Montenegro Institute. INAF was not created to analyse the process of insertion of Brazilians into the Brazilian labour market, but rather to create an instrument that could contribute to the defence of the educational rights of the Brazilian people and broaden the educational debate in the country (Ribeiro 2015).

INAF analyses the level of literacy with the aim of influencing the debate on the educational development of the country and discussing the meaning of illiteracy, which cannot be restricted to a binary vision of reading and writing (i.e. *x No. of people* who cannot read and write). Instruments which sought to encompass the complexity of the phenomenon were formulated both in the dimension of cognitive abilities, as well as in social practices, in different contexts of the life experiences of young people and adults. These instruments were used in the field for the first time in 2001, generating information on the literacy situation of people in Brazil.

The study is organised around a cognitive test and a contextual questionnaire. The interviews were conducted for the first time in 2002, in the whole country, covering urban and rural areas with people aged between 15 and 64. The interviews are carried out in the respondent's home, and the results are produced based on the Item Response Theory⁴ in order to build a measuring scale of competences.

The items that make up the literacy test involve reading and interpreting everyday texts (news, instructions, narrative texts, graphics, tables, maps and advertisements). The context questionnaire addresses the sociodemographic characteristics and the reading, writing and arithmetic practices that people perform in their daily lives.

What the numbers show

The surveys were conducted annually from 2001 to 2005, alternating the focus between reading, writing and arithmetic. Since 2007, the methodological advances have allowed the integration of these two dimensions in the same bank of items and on the same competence scale. Since then, the national survey has been carried out every two years, with the range of application being extended to three years beginning with 2011.

Through looking at the historical series of INAF results, one can reflect on the meaning that adult education could have for young people and adults, and it is also possible to make some inferences about the construction of curricula and learning proposals for this group.

The results obtained over more than a decade show a significant reduction in the number of illiterates, which fell from 12 % to 4 %. This means from the point of view of the level of literacy that a significantly greater number of Brazilians are managing to use reading, writing and arithmetic operations in their daily tasks, albeit at a rudimentary level. There was a verification in this period of a small reduction from 27 % to 23 % in the percentage of people who are at the rudimentary level. This means in turn that more than a quarter of the population had considerable difficulties when it came to making use of reading, writing and arithmetic operations in order to solve problems related to everyday life – such as recognising the information in a poster or brochure, or even knowing how to calculate the price of a commodity and also predicting the lowest interest in a purchase.

It is also worth noting that we observed a stagnation, starting in 2009, in the increase in the population that could be considered functionally literate in terms of reading and writing. In the 2001–2002 study, 61 % of the respondents were considered functionally literate, rising to 66 % in 2007. In the three studies carried out between 2009 and 2015, the percentage of functional literates remained stagnant at 73 %,

“The results indicated that reading and writing are used very little in the workplace by the majority of Brazilians.”

that is 27 % of the population was functionally illiterate according to the INAF in 2015.

School is no guarantee

The INAF from 2015 also indicates that, among those who have never attended school, 46 % of respondents were at a rudimentary or elementary level of literacy (8 %). That is, they are able to use reading and writing for some activities of daily life, although they learned this in non-school settings, which may be related to family life, vocational or non-formal education areas.

On the other hand, only 40 % of those respondents who had secondary education were in the two highest levels of the INAF literacy scales, which shows that having attended school does not guarantee that one can have enough skills to use reading and writing in the various contexts of everyday life.

A special study conducted by INAF in 2015 was given over to an investigation of whether labour market activities could also contribute to an increase in literacy levels. The results indicated that reading and writing are used very little in the workplace by the majority of Brazilians. 41.5 % of the respondents had not read anything at work in the previous three months, while 21 % said they had not read anything at home in the previous three months. Only 3 % of respondents were using e-mail at work; 21 % used agenda and calendar functions; only 2 % read forms, and 3.5 % read tickets and messages. It is evident that the workplace does not constitute a space in which the use of reading and writing can contribute to raising individuals' level of literacy for a majority of Brazilians.

The tough questions

The evaluations produced by the OECD since the 1990s have as their main objective the integration of citizens into the labour market, based on their level of literacy. INAF has already produced results which contribute to the debate on people's rights to gain access to the literate society. We can ask ourselves how these studies can shed light on the debate on the formulation of curricula or non-school programmes for young people and adults: How can curricula for young people and adults also place a greater focus on the real problems arising in people's lives without the need to return to fashioning learning itineraries designed as teaching strategies for children? How can we make it possible for the great number of people identified as functionally illiterate to make use of reading, writing and arithmetic operations, as well as scientific knowledge and human sciences, to expand their opportunities for life in a literate society?

The answers are certainly not simple, but a more precise analysis of the reports produced based on these evaluations, an analysis of some of its evidentiary elements, and the profiles of the people involved, can contribute to an understanding of the characteristics of adult learners in the country and of what skills are lacking in order for people to be able to live

in a literate society in a more autonomous manner. This might make it possible to build more relevant proposals for young people and adults, both in the school context, in non-school contexts, and in work contexts. The latter could also be an area rich in training offers, or could even lead to the creation of strategies that make greater use of reading and writing to carry out tasks in various fields of action.

Notes

1 / The OECD, founded in 1948, is an international organisation made up of 34 countries. In Latin America, Mexico and Chile are part of the OECD. The institution advocates for a free market, with the objective of creating solutions to the problems faced in common by its members. To this end, comparative studies are carried out in various areas of economic life, including its relationship with education.

2 / The knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts

3 / Beyond arithmetic and geometry, *quantitative literacy* also requires logic, data analysis and probability. It enables individuals to analyse evidence, to read graphs, to understand logical arguments, to detect logical fallacies, to understand evidence and to evaluate risks. Quantitative literacy means knowing how to reason and how to think.

4 / Item Response Theory (IRT) is a way to analyse responses to tests or questionnaires with the goal of improving measurement *accuracy* and *reliability*. If you want your test to actually measure what it is supposed to measure (i.e. mathematical ability, a student's reading ability or historical knowledge), IRT is one way to develop your tests.

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About the author

Roberto Catelli Jr. has a Masters degree in Economic History from the University of São Paulo (1993) and a Doctorate in Education from the Faculty of Education of the University of São Paulo. He is a coordinator in the Education Programme for Youth and Adults of the Ação Educativa, coordinator of the Functional Literacy Indicator (INAF), and a book editor.

Contact

catelli.roberto@gmail.com

How to study the impact of adult education: The EduMAP example



From left to right:

Francesca Endrizzi
DVV International
Germany

Beate Schmidt-Behlau
DVV International
Germany

Abstract – *How can the effectiveness, achievements and shortcomings of educational initiatives be identified? That is the key research question explored by the European EduMAP – Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship project. This article describes how the project was designed to identify impact, and it presents some early findings.*

Adult education is a complex field. It can be quite an overwhelming challenge to identify factors that impact on transformation, change and even empowerment for people in situations at risk. The potential payoff is well worth the effort. If successful, a project like EduMAP can help us understand how different parts of a system fit together that consists of policy makers, institutional providers, practitioners and learners. In other words, it helps analyse the impact had by adult education in policy and practice.

Asking the right questions

The research project entitled “Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP)” studies policies and practices in adult education providing services to young people across Europe who are aged 16 to 30 and at risk of social exclusion.¹ The project involves research teams from Finland, Estonia, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece and Turkey, with one group developing a prototype of an Intelligent Decision Support System. We, the authors, from one of the organisations leading the data collection and analysis phase, are involved in developing the overall research design and in carrying out the research.

How can adult education contribute to building resilience among individuals and communities at risk, and how can young people become more active and participatory in society? The project looks at a range of programmes that reach out, for example to NEETs (“Not in Education, Employment or

Research questions

R.Q.1.1 What practices are needed in the field of adult education to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship in Europe?

R.Q.1.2 What policies are needed in the field of adult education to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship in Europe?

R.Q.2 How can adult education programmes and practices be better communicated

- to reach out to and connect effectively with young adults at risk of social exclusion?
- to enhance interaction and learners' engagement?
- to enhance engagement and collaboration within the adult education organisation and with relevant external actors?

R.Q.3 What kind of information is needed for policy-makers, educational authorities and adult education practitioners in order to increase their ability to design or shape adult education policies and programmes so that they respond to the needs of vulnerable young adults?

Training”), migrants and refugees, Roma and other ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, school drop-outs, or the homeless and prison inmates.

“The study on data availability, accessibility and usability revealed varying practices and policies which reflect differences in data collection procedures.”

Setting up the data collection

The research project is organised through different work phases. The first step was to gain a general understanding of the state-of-the-art by creating an inventory of the adult education policies related to young vulnerable adults in the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU) and Turkey. The availability and accessibility of data was also studied in order to gain a preliminary insight into the purposes of developing a database. The study on data availability, accessibility and usability revealed varying practices and policies which reflect differences in data collection procedures. Successful educational practices in 20 countries² were identified by selecting cases. 40 such cases were investigated in total, assessing more than 800 respondents through individual inter-

views and focus groups among policymakers, adult education practitioners and the young people attending the educational programmes. In parallel, the “communicative ecologies” of the providers and the potential beneficiaries of the education practices were studied and mapped in order to understand information flows, communication needs and the channels used by selected groups of young adults (more on that later).

The research process

The research process is a journey through the challenges of social research and investigating the varied and cross-sectoral field of adult education. It was clear from the beginning that there are country-related and context-specific settings, starting from the identification of relevant policies and practices in adult education. Based on a background of very diverse policies and a highly-partialised statistical data situation across EU Member States and Turkey, caused by our complex theme, we decided to adopt an investigative inductive approach for the fieldwork.

To study impact you need comparable data. Working in different settings and countries makes the research design and guidance documents particularly important. These were developed in EduMAP to allow for collecting data jointly for all research questions (see box on the left). The aim of the semi-structured interviews used in the field phase was to examine the effectiveness, achievements and shortcomings of educational initiatives in enabling learners to participate in social, political and economic life, and to map and study the varied communicative ecologies that exist in adult education among the providers of educational initiatives and young people in vulnerable situations. The research design had been previously piloted in Romania. This piloting was necessary not only in the interest of fine-tuning the research design and interview questions, but also to gain an insight into the potential challenges to be encountered in the field by the research teams. To create a common understanding and approach, an additional training workshop with all researchers was organised before entering the field work phase in April 2017.

Research design, tools and analysis

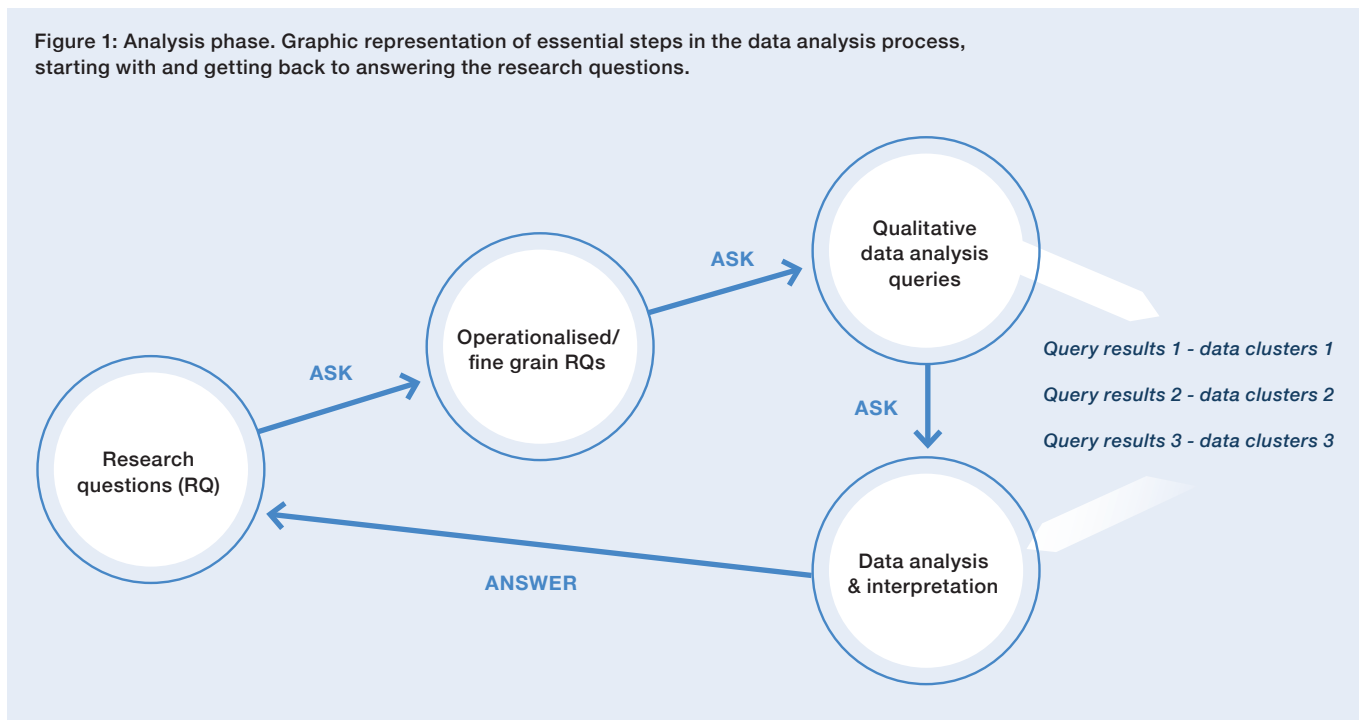
The final research design consisted of three strands.

Strand#1 Context analysis. This phase was essential, as it provided deep context and validation for the educational programmes identified. It allowed for exploration of accessibility for research purposes and to negotiate research access.

Strand#2 Targeted research on selected cases. This is where the project went to the field, conducted individual semi-structured interviews, and convened focus groups among three categories of respondents:

1. policy-makers³, including educational authorities, politicians, policy offers, policy experts and national programme coordinators,

Figure 1: Analysis phase. Graphic representation of essential steps in the data analysis process, starting with and getting back to answering the research questions.



2. adult education practitioners, such as teachers and educators, as well as social assistance, counsellors and coaches,
3. adult education participants (aged 16–30).

Strand#3 Targeted research on young adults at risk: communicative ecologies mapping. This strand of research focused on young adults rather than on educational programmes, and included at least some individuals who are not – or have never been – in adult education. The intention was to understand their life situations, communicative practices and assemblages, experiences, barriers, attitudes and aspirations related to adult education and active participatory citizenship. Data was collected through communicative ecologies mapping.

Communicative ecologies mapping is a conceptual and methodological tool that is applied in order to understand how young adults in a specific situation of risk are accessing general information about adult education. Embedded in an ethnographic approach, this mapping allows us to examine communication practices and needs in the context of people's lives and social and cultural structures (Lennie & Tacchi 2013). The method helped to shed light on interconnections and mismatches between the supply and user sides of adult education, and to identify potential untapped communication opportunities.

At the time of writing, we are in the middle of the data analysis phase. Data analysis was conducted adopting a hybrid approach, blending deductive and inductive coding in iterative cycles (see Figure 1). This means that emergent elements, the findings of the pilot studies, and our conceptual framework, have guided us in the development of a library

Some initial findings

- Learners' needs matter. Education programmes adopting a learner-centred approach prove to have a noticeable impact and to be more effective when it comes to better responding to young people's needs and enhancing the development of their skills to practice active participatory citizenship.
- A network of supportive services, be they integrated into or external to the educational practices, adds to the impact of adult education. Supporting participants in their learning process, offering them tailored services, for instance financial, psychological and social support, help them cope better with the difficult situations that they are facing.
- Professional teams involved in adult education should be multi-disciplinary. Besides technical trainers and traditional teachers, other domain experts such as psychologists, coaches and career counsellors working for or collaborating with the education providers contribute to success.
- A set of soft skills makes the difference. Adult education practitioners agreed on the importance of empathy, listening and communication skills, positive attitude, flexibility and previous experience in the sector as key competences that can enhance impact and outcomes.

Figure 2: Some of the codes developed to answer R.Q.2., part of the master codebook applied for data analysis by EduMAP consortium

R.Q.1.2 What policies are needed in the field of adult education to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship in Europe?

Adult Education field	Adult Education policies	Other relevant policies
AE field descriptions	Local policies	Policy descriptions (other)
Unfavourable conditions & challenges	Regional policies	Enabling policies (other)
Favourable conditions	National policies	Challenging policies (other)
Professional roles	International policies	
Organisations	Policy descriptions	
AE collaborations (inside one organisation)	Enabling policies & factors	
AE collaborations (among organisations)	Challenging policies & factors	

of codes (master codebook) across the partners' consortium (see Figure 2 for an example). On the basis of the master codebook, we then coded collected data using Qualitative Data Analysis Software, and selected and clustered the necessary data to answer the research questions.

Data will be analysed on a country level, with a particular focus being placed on the peculiarities and impact of each investigated case. The final results will be used to draw conclusions about enabling policies and favourable field conditions, as well as about the design of adult education programmes to include young adults who are at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship, thus aiming to help enhance the impact had by adult education.

Without being a direct research tool, the communication process enables researchers to participate in developing the research design and create a sense of ownership that is crucial to keeping everybody "in the loop". Regular discussion and reflections on emerging data, as well as shared insights and experiences, were conducted through virtual meetings among the team. Field notes were taken during the fieldwork, in the form of a notebook to record factual events and conversations, but also impressions and interpretations about what happened and what was said. Field notes were a valuable support for better understanding the data and theorising about the research over time.

Challenges and lessons learnt

Multifarious challenges arose throughout the process, but they also fuelled the motivation to investigate the complex and valuable role and impact of adult education. Three are worth mentioning here:

1. Conceptual challenges

The first issue was related to the definition and use of the terms *vulnerability*, in relation to the research target group, as well as the *active participatory citizenship*, which are both interrelated.

The group clearly opposed the use of the expression "vulnerable groups". Grouping people in this manner contributes to the production of stigmatising and labelling effects. Vulnerability could be considered as forming part of the human condition, potentially affecting every individual uniquely, based on his or her personal and social situation. Having adopted this perspective, we decided to define it in relation to a *restriction of people's choices and capabilities* (Abrisketa et al. 2015). In this sense, the concept used in the EduMAP project is closely aligned with the idea of "disadvantaged people", having certain disadvantages or possibly lacking opportunities.

We defined active participatory citizenship in relation to three dimensions: the *political-legal* dimension – incorporating civic and political participation, standing for election to committees and similar boards, being actively involved in neighbourhood activities, or leading community-based projects – the *socio-cultural* dimension – incorporating the development of social skills and/or social capital; being active in networks and cultural activities, promoting arts-based activities – and the *economic* dimension – relating to the development of all types of employability skills and knowledge about rights and available support, focusing on the job sector. We take the view in EduMAP that education contributes to strengthening social cohesion and active citizenship. Linked to the concept of human resilience, the counterpart to vulnerability, we try

to understand how fostering active participatory citizenship helps young people cope better with risks and setbacks.⁴

2. The accessibility challenge

A more practical challenge was the exploration of the cases' accessibility and negotiation of research access. The context analysis phase was fundamental in this regard. We started from existing contacts and networks, such as adult education organisations and experts, who suggested good practices on the basis of their knowledge and experience in the sector. Once the contact was established with the "gatekeeper", who could be the director of the organisation or the programme coordinator, access was guaranteed. Other relevant stakeholders were identified using snowballing, while potential respondents among young people were indicated by the practitioners.

3. Methodological challenges

The interaction with the young people was also challenging. The use of semi-structured interviews for data collection did not emerge as the most effective method for gathering information from young adults in a particularly disadvantaged position. Furthermore, there was no time to build up a relationship of trust, or even to conduct the interview, as most of the young adults had time constraints. There were positive experiences using communicative ecologies mapping, and the involvement of people in drawing the map turned out to be a more appropriate tool, being interactive and more practical, which enabled young respondents to overcome the uncomfortable interview situation.

Conclusions

Qualitative data analysis has proved to be an effective tool for an in-depth investigation of adult education programmes. Studying the different experiences and points of view of the main stakeholders involved, including the direct beneficiaries, allowed us to gain a comprehensive picture of the systemic nature of each case, and to better evaluate their impact.

Notes

1 / The research project is funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme.

2 / The case studies were investigated in Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

3 / We endorsed the definition of policy-maker provided in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2003), which defines a policy-maker as "a person with the authority to influence or determine policies and practices at an international, national or local level".

4 / For a greater insight into the conceptualisation of vulnerability and active participatory citizenship in the EduMAP project, see Adult Educa-

tion as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship: A Concept Note. <https://bit.ly/2pWyBT2>

More about the project

The results and activities of the EduMAP project can be accessed via the project's website: www.uta.fi/edumap

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About the authors

Dr. **Beate Schmidt-Behlau** has a background in educational sciences and has been working in different positions with DVV International since 2002. She is currently senior desk officer for South America and local research coordinator in the EduMAP project.

Contact

schmidt-behlau@dvv-international.de

Francesca Endrizzi has been working as a junior researcher at DVV International since 2017. Prior to this, she researched in the areas of institutional development and social innovation policy.

Contact

endrizzi@dvv-international.de

Linking adult education and development

Global development entered a new era with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goals now apply to all countries, and no longer to developing and emerging countries alone. The footprint of education has also been considerably expanded. Goal 4 of the Agenda places the spotlight on lifelong learning. This also includes (non-formal) adult education, which is implicitly covered in several sub-goals. Adult education therefore attracts greater attention when it comes to achieving the sub-goals such as literacy and numeracy, the elimination of gender disparities, vocational skills provision and education for sustainable development.

Education is pivotal to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals. This particularly applies to non-formal skill-building and educational activities. The holistic understanding of education in the Agenda 2030 provides a potentially wider playing field for adult education. Thus, adult education and development come closer together. The SDGs provide adult education with a unique opportunity to play a larger role – both within the education sector and as part of the Agenda 2030 as a whole. The intersectoral approach pursued in the Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III) takes a major step in this direction, revealing the contributions that adult education makes towards other areas of development such as health and well-being, employment and the labour market and social, civic and community life. The current debate however does not yet sufficiently illustrate how integrated approaches can simultaneously promote education and other goals that are anchored in the Agenda 2030. This is a matter not only of correlation, but also of direct interaction, when for instance

literacy is linked with vocational skill-building, income-generating activities or political education.

Adult education and development are closely intertwined. Just look at key concepts and objectives followed by both: poverty alleviation, participation, the promotion of democracy, gender equality and health, conflict prevention and sustainability. Assuming the involvement of a strong civil society, adult education provides extremely important contributions and solutions to many development-related issues, in particular for people with disadvantages living in more remote areas. We need to better examine this context in an evidence-based manner and communicate it – far beyond the adult education scene.

Adult education matters. But today we need specific proof, both in the shape of measurable short-term results, and of long-term effects. We must focus on central aspects, despite the diversity of areas of activity and differences between regions. There is a need for clearly-understandable key messages and quantitatively-substantiated statements. This is a language understood by donors and governments. Gathering valid data is a particular challenge in light of the large numbers of small civil-society players. One solution might be to provide greater support to networks in order to be able to collect, aggregate and communicate results more systematically. Interdisciplinary studies should show more precisely what connections exist between adult education and development. Only if we are better able to present the potential offered by adult education in the context of the SDGs will it have a chance to attract the attention and funding which it deserves.



Christoph Jost is the director of DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association.

Contact
jost@dvv-international.de

Measuring the impact of adult education policies



Shermaine Barrett
University of Technology
Jamaica

Abstract – *This article explores factors, issues and recommendations that must be considered when measuring the impact of adult education policies. It is based on a study that polled the perspectives of adult education practitioners, academics and policy decision-makers on the critical principles and appropriate measures necessary to determine the impact of adult education policies.*

Adult education is rich in regional, national and international policy papers, outlining aims and setting targets. Among these are the Belem Framework for Action, the Education 2030 Framework for Action, and the various country-level adult education and/or lifelong learning policies. However, as Heck (2004) pointed out, “policies may set directions and provide a framework for change, but they do not determine the outcome directly”. Therefore, a critical aspect in the policy implementation process is the policy evaluation stage. Studying the impact of adult education policies is about evaluating policies, through a robust and systematic process, to determine the extent to which policies have achieved their intended outcomes, to identify notable shortcomings, and to assess whether the policies can be sustained.

This article is based on reflections from eight adult education specialists from Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean on how to assess impact.

Definition, scope and purpose of adult education

The Belem Framework for Action (2010) defines 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” (p.1). This definition reveals the breadth and scope of adult education, and therefore

its complexity. Consequently, there is no single conceptual framework, basic assumptions or principles from which all adult educators view the field. UNESCO and many civil society organisations such as the International Council for Adult Education view adult education from a rights perspective, while other entities, including many international funding agencies, take a more economic view of adult education.

A wide range of thoughts and ideas characterise the purpose of adult education. As countries seek to address the increasing demands they face in meeting a number of often conflicting goals driven by the needs of individuals, businesses, and society at large, tensions arise around the purpose of adult education (Alfred, Robinson & Alfred 2011). Issues such as the: i) economic concerns for equipping adults with appropriate workplace competences and skills that would allow nations to compete in the global markets; ii) civic concerns for an education agenda that would prepare adults to participate more fully in public life; and iii) individual concerns for self-development through lifelong education, contend in the debates about the purpose of adult education (Kubow & Fossum 2007). Despite these varied concerns most agree that education [including adult education] creates improved citizens and as such aids in the improvement of the general standard of living in a society (Olaniyan and Okemakinde 2008; McGrath 2010).

Policies: their role and function

According to a UNESCO (2018) online posting, “solid coherent policies and plans are the bedrock on which to build sustainable education systems, achieve educational development goals and contribute effectively to lifelong learning.” Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthen (2012) define policy as the broader act of a public organisation or a branch of government that is designed to achieve some outcome or change. A policy may be articulated as a law or a regulation that provides the guidelines and regulations to enable the change.

Why should we assess impact?

Impact assessment is the collection, analysis and interpretation of information that sheds light on the effects of a policy change on a set of outcomes of interest, including unintended outcomes. Impact assessment is important to demonstrate the relevance, efficiency, quality and effectiveness of the policy. One respondent noted that: “Policies are established to create an enabling environment to address a need, especially of under-served populations. Therefore, assessing adult education policies becomes important to measure the extent to which the: i) needs of the population have been met; ii) intended goals, objectives, and outcomes of the policy were achieved; iii) fidelity of the policy was met; iv) adequate resources were in place; and v) adjustments that must be made to the policy” (Res.1).

At another level, policy impact assessment is important because – as governments struggle with scarce resources and in many instances budget deficits amidst competing so-

cial issues – they need information about the relative effectiveness of programmes and policies in order to make intelligent choices and decisions (Fitzpatrick et.al. 2012). One respondent noted that “impact is important for the legitimization of public spending” (Res.7). It is through policy impact studies that governments can decide which policy is working and which ones are not. Questions such as: i) What is working well? ii) What is failing?, and iii) What can be done to improve the situation? are key drivers of such assessment. This further speaks to the issue of accountability which those polled in this survey felt was an essential reason for conducting adult education impact studies.

Another important but less discussed reason for assessing policy that arose in the study is that the results can be used as an advocacy tool. One respondent noted that “the proof of impact is crucial for advocacy, especially as ALE faces the challenges that many decision-makers think about it as a ‘nice to have’, with a limited impact compared to schooling.” (Res.7)

“Three themes influencing policy outcomes emerged from the practitioners surveyed for this article. They are context, type of policy and the goal of the policy.”

How should we assess impact?

Another key question of this article is: How should impact assessment be conducted? This includes: i) the types of outcomes to be evaluated, ii) how to infer impact, iii) data collection methods, iv) types of evidence to be used, and v) how the evaluation should be financed.

Three themes influencing policy outcomes emerged from the practitioners surveyed for this article. They are context, type of policy and the goal of the policy. In terms of context, the idea is that social policy, such as an adult education policy, cannot be divorced from its social context. One respondent noted that “types of outcome would be context dependent. A generic one-size-fits-all may not do” (Res.3). In terms of type of policy, the general direction is that what is evaluated is dependent on whether the policy was sector wide or specific to one segment of the educational sector. One respondent said that the outcomes to be assessed depend a lot on the type of policy and how broad the policy “intervention” is: Does it refer to all adult education sectors, or only some of its segments? Is it about certain target groups, or certain issues, or set of principles that need to be established? (Res 2). Another respondent said that impact “will clearly depend on the objectives established for the policy. Goals should generate impacts.” (Res.6)

Taking into consideration the three elements discussed above, outcomes identified include educational outcomes, economic outcomes, well-being and social outcomes. One respondent noted that outcomes should include the following:

- Educational outcomes – What percentage of the adult population has attained basic literacy skills such as reading, writing, numeracy and computer skills? What percentage of adults have upgraded their educational level?
- Economic outcomes – How many adult learners have gained employment with higher wages and income due to participation in adult education programmes? Attention should be placed on the attainment of improved standards of living.
- Well-being outcomes – Have adults gained improvements in self-confidence, communication skills, emotional and physical health, and soft skills?
- Social outcomes – How have adult learners acquired improved civic attitudes? Have they become active citizens as a result of their engagement in adult learning programmes?
- Environmental outcomes – To what extent [has] adult learners' knowledge of the environment and its impacts increased? (Res.8)

Turning to how we infer impact, one respondent argued that “impact would be a clear indication of the measures that indicate change in the problem based on what obtained at the beginning and later on at the point of measuring” (Res.4). This suggests that to be able to infer impact there must be a set of agreed indicators of success or lack thereof. Outcome indicators are the quantitative or qualitative variables that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement and to reflect the changes connected to an intervention (Kusek & Rist 2004).

“It is very important to be aware of the paradigm behind our assessment approach [...] since it will determine the results.”

Respondent 2

Measuring the right things

In terms of measures that indicate change, the Belem Framework for Action (2010) provides a set of reliable performance indicators: i) enabling policy environment and adequately resourced policy established; ii) good governance structures established; iii) quality provisions established; iv) increased participation, inclusion and equity for the under-served population; and v) adequate financing in place. However, use of these indicators is dependent on one's views on the purpose of adult education. This is because one's beliefs about the purpose, role and function of adult education will undoubtedly impact the perception of what indicates impact. One respondent summarised the importance of perspective on decisions about indicators very well by noting that: “It is very important to be aware of the paradigm behind our as-

essment approach (which includes methodology, indicators...), since it will determine the results. Exclusive use of one approach (for example – the human capital approach) may reduce our perception of the effects and impact and even create a false image of the policy. Critical discourse analysis is helpful in preparing the impact evaluation, and in collecting data we should be aware of the goals, methodologies and indicators based on certain paradigms (positivist, interpretative, transformative or critical-emancipatory). This may also shed light on different kinds of biases that may influence the analysis”. (Res.2)

In terms of the type of evidence that would demonstrate impact, the respondents felt that these included both statistical measures as well as qualitative data. One respondent puts it this way: “Evidence collected from both quantitative data (statistics in education but also in other sectors, depending on the scope of evaluation), various statistical measures and various qualitative data, as indicators should inform about the positive changes caused by the policy intervention and prove that they happened because of it ... Indicators should be chosen before the implementation, but some new, not-planned indicators and unintended consequences can be included.” (Res.2)

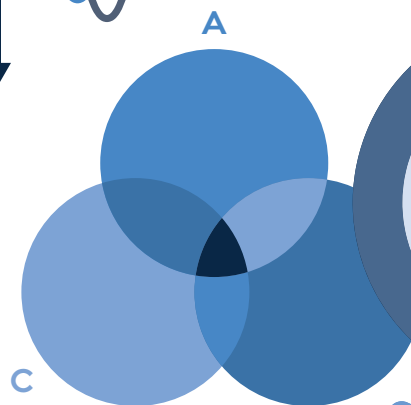
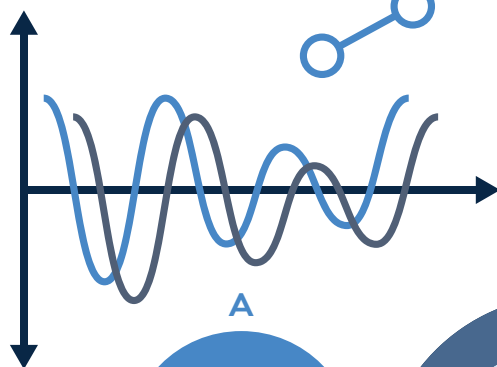
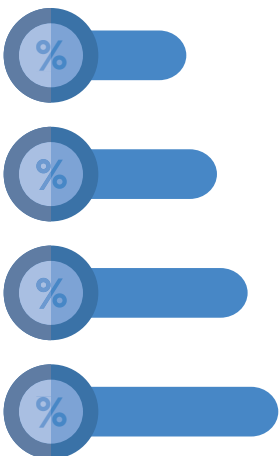
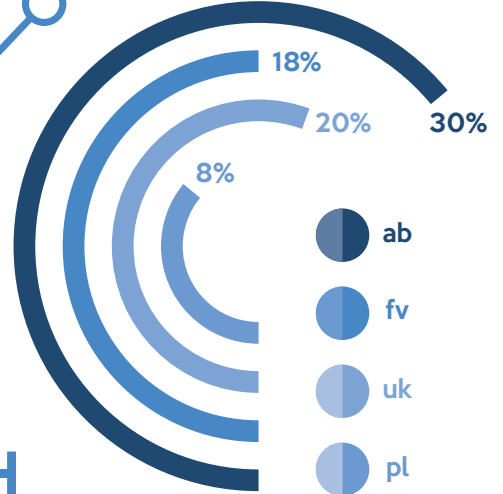
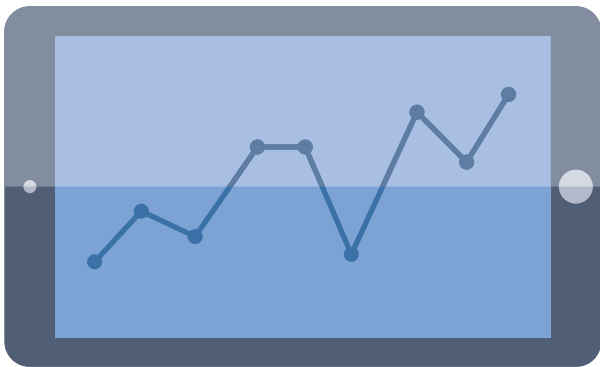
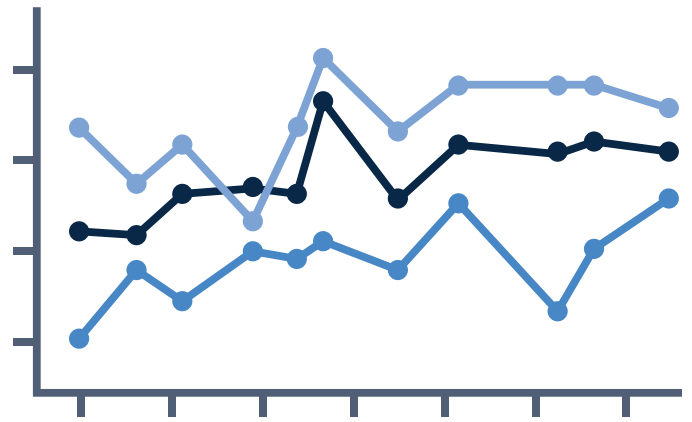
Another participant cautioned that “it is important to stay mindful that impact can be favourable and unfavourable” (Res.3). In keeping with this thought another noted that “evidence on all aspects of both positive and negative feedback would be necessary to demonstrate impact.” (Res.8)

When to conduct impact assessment

When to conduct policy impact assessment is an important question to be considered when thinking about how to measure policy impact. It is the agreed position of the respondents that assessment should be done during and after the life of the policy. In other words, it should be continuous. It was noted by one respondent that “results-based monitoring and evaluation of policy recommends that “impact” assessment be done at the end of the policy implementation cycle; however, a process of formative evaluation should be employed during the implementation of the policy” (Res.1). The idea of continuous assessment was supported by Heck (2004) who recommended that effectiveness of policy studies be done using a longitudinal approach collecting data at several points during the implementation and effect stages.

Who should sit at the assessment table?

How we collect the impact assessment data and from whom are other concerns that must be addressed when planning. Public policies usually have the citizens or groups of them as their target depending on the scope of the policy. Therefore, any evaluation of such policies should include the targets of those policies. Learners, who are the targets of adult education policies, must be included. They are the persons who are either directly or indirectly impacted by the policy interventions.



Additionally, the various stakeholders “such as governments/ education ministries/departments funding agencies, institutes that promote and deliver adult education programmes, programme administrators and facilitators” (Res.8) should be included. Further, depending on the nature of the policy, the stakeholder group may include the private sector and various civil society entities.

Collecting data from such a wide cross-section of persons will undoubtedly call for methods beyond numbers and statistics as agreed by the respondents in this study. A mixed method approach to data collection was advanced by all. In support of this point one respondent said “I think quantitative (e.g. surveys, online and other), as well as more qualitative type data (e.g. interviews), along with unobtrusive measures, are needed to afford a comprehensive analysis” (Res.3). In a more detailed response, another respondent said: “Different approaches can be used: observation, interviews, questionnaires, surveys, comparison (between the groups affected by the policy intervention and those not affected; multiple data points – same groups between pre- and post-intervention; between the regions, sectors ...), experiments, testing, report analysis, focus groups, study visits, targeted meetings, narrative data, personal stories, case studies etc.” (Res.2)

These points are supported by the views of Streatfield (2009), who advocated for both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative data being useful in gathering data related to effectiveness while quantitative data is necessary to assess efficiency.

“To the extent possible, it would be helpful to stay mindful that all is not amenable to measurement.”

Respondent 3

The issue of financing impact assessment is vital, as it has the potential to influence who is engaged, how the study is conducted, which areas of the policy are targeted and, importantly, how the results are used. In addressing this aspect there was agreement among the respondents that governments should be a key source of funding since they should have a vested interest in the results. One respondent noted that “a study about the impact of adult education policies is very important to the development of any country. Thus ... it should be financed by the Government/Ministry of Education.” (Res.8)

In addition to governments, it was also felt that the private sector and international development partners could be other sources of funding and that the scope and type of policy would influence the source of funding. In this regard, one respondent said that: “it depends on the type and scope of policy intervention – it could be some governmental body (as it is probably the main actor in policy planning and implementation) that will bear the costs, but for certain aspects of impact the groups involved or affected could participate in evaluation (for example the private sector that takes part in

VET [vocational education and training] policy creation and implementation). ODA [Overseas Development Agencies] might [also] be one of the financial sources.” (Res.2)

Other thoughts included the idea that “in an ideal world, when policy is promulgated, funds should be set aside by whoever is promulgating the policy” (Res.5). Similarly another respondent noted that the policy assessment should be “a percentage of the policy budget [and] it should be budgeted into the original project.” (Res.6)

Challenges

One respondent highlighted the point that: “Measuring the impact of policies in general, and particularly in adult education, can be a messy process. To the extent possible, it would be helpful to stay mindful that all is not amenable to measurement. For example, insights may be equally important to guide understanding. Such information may come in the form of change stories from key stakeholders. Other relevant considerations include political influences, how the policy was understood, communicated, and implemented, etc. Identifying key knowledgeable informants who can provide insights into potential unseen dynamics such as attitudes or relationships that could have influenced impact is also relevant.” (Res.3)

Another respondent alerts us to a challenge that may be more noticeable in some jurisdictions than others and it is that “researchers may encounter difficulties as there may be no specific written policies with regard to adult learning and education, and there may be a lack of official records of work actually done in adult learning and education.” (Res.8)

Two things to keep in mind

In conclusion, I would like to take us back to two points made earlier in this article. Firstly, “solid coherent policies and plans are the bedrock on which to build sustainable education systems, achieve educational development goals and contribute effectively to lifelong learning” (UNESCO 2018). However, policies may set directions and provide a framework for change, but they do not determine the outcomes directly (Heck 2004). Therefore, the periodic study of the effectiveness of such policies is vital in ensuring that the policies are accomplishing what they set out to do. In conducting such studies, however, it is absolutely important that attention be given to issues of how, when, and who should participate. We should carefully articulate our objectives, consider the impact indicators, decide on the evidence to be collected, and then, how to use that evidence to establish the impact and ultimately the value of the policy.

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About the author

Shermaine Barrett (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Technology, Jamaica. She currently serves as Vice President for the Caribbean Region of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and President of the Jamaican Council for Adult Education (JACAE). Her research interests include adult teaching and learning, workforce education and teacher professional development.

Contact

shermainebarrett@gmail.com

Online extras

Our journal continues online! You can read some extra materials on the role and impact of adult education, written exclusively for the digital version of *Adult Education and Development*. They are available at www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development. Just choose edition 85 and look for the online-extra section in the content list.

Planting the seeds in a Moringa cooperative

Nthakoana Jemina
Maliehe-Arko
TEFL Academy
South Africa

Lineo R. Johnson
University of
South Africa

Abstract – *Sedikong sa Lerato Cooperative Enterprise in Limpopo Province, South Africa, showcases the role and impact of adult education in empowering communities who cultivate the “Moringa” oleifera. The cooperative uses interventions in its various projects such as literacy and basic education learning activities to generate income. The findings indicate that this adult education initiative has been able to empower rural and marginalised communities in rural South Africa.*

From literacy training to articulated learning

Jorge F. V. Viapiano
Universidad Nacional de Moreno
Argentina

Abstract – *Young people and adults in Argentina gather at centres and schools in search of training. They need answers to the challenges that are constantly posed by their social environment. This article looks at how adult education faces up to the challenge of designing the tools leading to a job, and to a better life.*

How adult education rescued girls from the jaws of suicide

Wanga Weluzani Chakanika
Chalimbana University
Zambia

Davies Phiri
University of
Zambia

Nelson Sakala
Ministry of Chiefs and
Traditional Affairs
Zambia

Phyllis I. Sumbwa
University of
Zambia

Abstract – *The practice of child marriage in Zambia has blossomed into a pandemic that perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Chief Madzimawe applies adult education to curtail child marriage practices in his chieftdom. The article demonstrates how these principles of andragogy have helped to re-introduce pupils who have been liberated from child marriage to various levels of education.*

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Issue 86

The good adult educator

The next issue of *Adult Education and Development* is about professionalisation in adult education. Currently we have more questions than answers. What makes a good adult educator? How do we train for that? Should we make adult education a compulsory element of initial teacher training? How to deal with the many teachers who are highly skilled but who have never taken qualifications in teaching? We need your help.

We are looking for contributions along the lines of:

- Theoretical and empirical research perspectives on the profession of adult education, its dilemmas and challenges
- Models of adult educators' professional development – approaches towards training in adult education that influence the qualifications held by professionals in the field, such as digitalisation, ethics and values – examples of teacher training that creates great teachers (institutions and curriculums)
- Examples of validating adult educators who have many years of experience but no formal qualifications
- Examples of well-functioning professional development programmes for adult educators
- Examples of national adult educator training programmes, funding schemes and financial support

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Call for
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86
2019

If you are interested in submitting an article or case study paper, we would be happy to receive an abstract (no more than 100 words) describing the main content of your article. Please send it before 1 April 2019 to editor-in-chief Johanni Larjanko at johanni.larjanko@gmail.com and managing editor Ruth Sarrazin at sarrazin@dvv-international.de

Get involved!

Inclusion and diversity – Variations on the theme of life. The virtual seminar 2018



Timothy D. Ireland is professor of Adult Education at the Federal University of Paraiba, in João Pessoa (Brazil).

Contact
ireland.timothy@gmail.com

The challenges of inclusion and diversity in adult education are profoundly complex. Yet this was the topic of our latest issue of AED, and of the virtual seminar that was held in March 2018. We discussed inclusive teaching methodology, the use of narratives and biography as ways of helping women express their sexual identity, theatre as a tool for development, and the composition of staff employed in adult education. The authors came from Palestine, Austria, Zambia and Jamaica – four women and one man. Their texts provoked a wide range of responses. On the basis of these discussions, how do I understand the relationship between inclusion and diversity and adult education?

The grape of life

My point of departure is that we are all the same, just as we are all different. We are all the same because “life” is the common denominator, the common element that we all share and which makes us equal: But the way in which that life succeeds in expressing itself also makes us all different. Thus, we cannot limit our discussion of inclusion and diversity to a narrow view of education as a neutral space, unaffected by what goes on around it. As Paulo Freire argued in his “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” when discussing literacy methodology, “It is not sufficient to read that Eve saw the grape. It is necessary to understand what position Eve occupied in her social context, who works to produce the grapes and who profits from that work”.

Education takes place in the context of globalisation, and globalisation is not a homogeneous process which treats all countries or even different regions in the same country equally. Globalisation is not inclusive, however it is presented.

Relationships between the global North and South, or between developed and developing nations, are also not inclusive. They represent relationships of power which permeate all our actions and relationships, be they economic, cultural, social or educational in nature. As Meenu Vadera stated in her contribution: "(...) it's not just that people are different, but that there exist definite power relations which ensure that the difference is preserved and maintained for the benefit of the few". Manzoor Ahmed continues in a similar vein, affirming that "Class status and circumstances cut across the layers of diversity (...) and colour the perceptions, mind-set, self-esteem, self-confidence and the expectations about one's life".

Integration does not equal inclusion

The power structure on which our class societies are built does not permit inclusiveness – and we should not confuse integration and inclusion. They are premised upon exclusion, or on what might be called tutored inclusion. Inclusion does not mean being included on another group's terms. Inclusion forms part of our human right to equality and human dignity. In our unequal world, inclusion frequently means being accepted and following the rules established by the insiders. In theory, we are all born equal, although in practice we have to admit that a black child born in Soweto in South Africa may not have the same life chances as his or her white peer born to a middle class family in Boston in the USA.

Hence, we cannot expect education alone to "fix" exclusion, or to guarantee or generate inclusion; nor can it neutralise the sort of discrimination which our societies foster. Education can, and frequently does, exacerbate exclusion or lead to qualified inclusion only. Adult education in many countries is second-chance or compensatory education for those who have become second-class citizens. Education is frequently a process which denies diversity in the name of methodology and attempts to homogenise in the name of a false consensus, or what is called social cohesion.

"The right to education should not depend upon being included."

How then can we attempt to include and not at the same time negate diversity? How to bring diversity into the classroom and into our educational practices? Freire wrote that even if education alone does not transform society, society would nonetheless not change without it. He goes on to add "It is not systematic education which somehow moulds society, but, on the contrary, society which, according to its particular structure, shapes education in relation to the ends and interests of those who control the power in that society". However, as he also says "Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world".

Virtual Seminar 2018

All the contributions of the virtual seminar can be read online at <http://virtualeseminar.icae.global/>

Video recordings of the webinars are available on Youtube:

Webinar with Shermaine Barrett (University of Technology, Jamaica) on the concept of "Reflexivity": <https://bit.ly/2NTMw64>

Webinar with Selina Banda (Zambian Open University) on "Theatre for Development": <https://bit.ly/2PGyUfS>

Adult Education and Development

Issue 84 >

"Inclusion and Diversity"

Free print copies of *Adult Education and Development*, issue 84 on "Inclusion and Diversity" are still available and can be ordered at info@dvv-international.de



What the struggle is really about

This leads us back to what Rima Abboud from Aswat in Palestine says about education being part of a larger struggle for justice and freedom. "We believe that one cannot promote LGBTQI+ issues without taking a stance against oppression, occupation and discrimination of other groups and peoples or by being complicit in orders that perpetuate oppressive and discriminative mechanisms." This is why Freire constantly emphasised the political nature of education. Education is never neutral. It is a political process which serves a political agenda, which furthers either oppression or emancipation. Hence adult education can be used to bring sheep into the fold, as is the case in many mass literacy campaigns, or it can be developed as a means of attempting to raise critical awareness, to strengthen autonomy and participation.

The right to education should not depend upon being included. However, given the class structure prevailing in our societies, which are exclusive rather than inclusive, education can only succeed in including people on equal terms if it contributes to making us critically aware of our differences – in all our diversity – as a fundamental dimension of our humanity. We do not learn to live, but learn by living or live by learning.

Get Involved! ICAE Virtual Seminar 2019

Following each issue of *Adult Education and Development*, our cooperation partner, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), offers you the chance to discuss the topics raised in the print issue in a virtual seminar.

The next virtual seminar, on the role and impact of adult education, will start at the end of February 2019 and will last for approximately four weeks. The following articles of this issue will be the starting point of the seminar:

How adult education can save your life

Henrique Lopes, Portugal
(see page 16)

The keys to a peaceful and prosperous Africa

Samuel Asnake Wollie, Ethiopia
(see page 49)

Impact beyond the tests: adult education that makes a real difference

Chanell Butler-Morello, USA
(see page 50)

The challenges regarding data production

César Guadalupe, Peru
(see page 72)

The seminar is free of charge and open to anyone. Do you want to participate?

Send an e-mail to policy@icae.global. Registration is open now and until the beginning of the seminar.

The virtual seminar will run via e-mail in English. Your contributions can be sent in English, French or Spanish, and will then be translated into English where necessary.

If you have any questions ahead of the seminar, do not hesitate to contact Ricarda Motschilnig (policy@icae.global).

Additional webinars: In addition to the virtual seminar, ICAE will organise online discussions in the form of webinars. The topics and dates of these webinars will be announced during the virtual seminar.



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Questionnaire on *Adult Education and Development* 85: Role and Impact of Adult Education

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements

Please put only one cross on each line

	1	2	3	4
	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	strongly agree
I am satisfied with the <i>Adult Education and Development</i> journal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like that the issue has a particular main topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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In total, I feel well informed through the journal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The journal gives me a good overview of development in the different countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information content of the individual contributions is good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The journal has an appropriate number of articles containing material relevant for practical use in education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Now please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding each category of the journal

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The interviews with well-known personalities are interesting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The illustrations are thought-provoking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The photo reportage visualises the topic well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected “somewhat disagree” or “strongly disagree” for any of the statements above, please explain in more detail here. Your comments will help us to improve our publication.

What I really liked about this issue...

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Many thanks for your support!

Artists in this issue

Shira Bentley Cover artist and illustrator



Shira Bentley is an illustrator based in Sydney, Australia. Shira began her career as a print artist exhibiting her work around Australia. Her love of collaborative storytelling quickly drew her to illustration, where she honed her superpower for transforming ideas into engaging visual stories filled with colour, humour and snippets of daily life.

Contact

E-mail: info@shirabentley.com

Website: <http://shirabentley.com/>

Shira Bentley on how her understanding of the role of adult education changed as she was doing the graphical work for this issue: “Working on these illustrations significantly expanded my understanding of the role and impact of adult education, particularly in regards to post-conflict areas. What struck me the most was seeing how many areas of daily life are impacted by having access to education through every stage of life. I’m very fortunate to live in a country where education is so heavily subsidised by the government and so many initiatives are in place to encourage individuals to acquire new skills and knowledge. I hope to see a similar trend globally, as it is very clear that the solution to many of our greatest challenges is education.”

Steve Joseph Camargo Zenteno Photographer



Steve Camargo is a Bolivian-U.S. photographer and documentarist based in Cochabamba, Bolivia. His work has been exhibited and published in America, Europe and Asia. He currently works as a freelance photographer and University professor.

Contact

E-mail: contacto@stevecamargo.com

Website: <http://www.stevecamargo.com/>

Steve Camargo on what he learned when making the photo reportage: “I have been fortunate to be able to witness that the old formula of human determination plus the right opportunities and education still makes a difference in people’s lives.”

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2018

Adult Education and Development

Role and Impact of Adult Education

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