

ICAE - International Council for Adult Education
DVV International



ICAE VIRTUAL SEMINAR

"ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT: SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES"





International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

ICAE VIRTUAL SEMINAR

“Adult Education and Development: Skills and Competencies”

Uruguay, Belgrade, 2017



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„ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT: SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES“

Publishers:

Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy,
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade
www.f.bg.ac.rs

Adult Education Society, Belgrade
www.aes.rs

on behalf of:

International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)
<http://icae.global>

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Design and layout:

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Print:

Instant System, Belgrade

250 copies

ISBN:

978-86- 80712-07- 9 (printed book)

978-86- 80712-08- 6 (e-book)

The ICAE Virtual Seminar was done in cooperation with DWV International (<http://www.dvw-international.de>) and the journal Adult Education and Development (<https://www.dvw-international.de/adult-education-and-development/>). The seminar on skills and competencies, forth one in the row of Virtual seminars, was organized in April 2017 in English, French and Spanish, and the webinar, as the part of the Virtual seminar, in May 2017.

This publication is available online on the web pages of ICAE and DWV International, and webinar is available at https://youtu.be/NXLiOAOo_I4.

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Adult Education and Development: Skills and Competencies

EN

Welcome/Bienvenida/Bienvenue

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) continues to inspire dialog, exchange of ideas and critical reflection on highly relevant topics in adult education. Through this virtual seminar ICAE, in cooperation with DVV international, therefore wants to promote a debate and dialogue on selected articles from DVV International's journal Adult Education and Development. This offers the chance to discuss the topics raised in the print issue in a virtual seminar and to go deeper and broaden the analysis. It creates a virtual space as an opportunity to share experiences from different regions and contexts, and to inspire new initiatives.

This years' virtual seminar focuses on skills and competencies. Promoting a holistic approach to adult education, which includes all areas of life and work, ICAE wants to support the discussion about skills for life, work, and citizenship, and foster an integral perspective, which would help avoiding silos way of thinking in adult education. Such an approach could also contribute to the recognition that education is essential for the success of all sustainable development goals.

The following articles of issue 83 of Adult Education and Development will be this years' starting point of the seminar:

1. The 5 skills it takes to build another possible world – Learning from and for the World Social Forum

By Alessio Surian, University of Padova, Italy

2. Enhancing competencies in the Arab world: issues to be considered

By Rabab Tamish, Betlehem University, Palestine

3. The New Skills Agenda for Europe

By Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth, European Commission

4. Soft skills in non-formal education: building capacities of the youth

By Priti Sharma, PRIA International Academy, New Delhi, India

You can already find the articles here: <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-832016-skills-and-competencies/> (in English, French and Spanish) and follow the discussion on the dedicated ICAE Website <http://virtualseminar.icae.global>.

Educación de personas adultas y desarrollo: Habilidades y competencias

E

Welcome/Bienvenida/Bienvenue

El Consejo Internacional para la Educación de Adultos (ICAE) sigue inspirando el diálogo, el intercambio de ideas y la reflexión crítica sobre temas muy relevantes en la educación de personas adultas. A través de este seminario virtual el ICAE, en cooperación con DVV international, quiere promover un debate y diálogo sobre artículos seleccionados de la revista de DVV International Educación y Desarrollo de Adultos. Esto ofrece la oportunidad de discutir los temas planteados en la edición impresa en un seminario virtual y profundizar y ampliar el análisis. Crea un espacio virtual como una oportunidad para compartir experiencias de diferentes regiones y contextos, e inspirar nuevas iniciativas.

El seminario virtual de este año se centra en las habilidades y competencias. Promoviendo un enfoque holístico de la educación de personas adultas que abarca todas las áreas de la vida y el trabajo, el ICAE quiere apoyar la discusión sobre las habilidades para la vida, el trabajo y la ciudadanía, y fomentar una perspectiva integral que ayude a evitar formas compartimentadas de pensamiento en la educación. Este enfoque también podría contribuir a reconocer que la educación es esencial para el éxito de todos los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible.

Los siguientes artículos del número 83 de Educación de Adultos y Desarrollo serán el punto de partida de este año del seminario:

1. Las 5 habilidades necesarias para construir otro mundo posible - Aprender de y para el Foro Social Mundial

Por Alessio Surian, Universidad de Padova, Italia

2. Mejorar las competencias en el mundo árabe: cuestiones que deben considerarse

Por Rabab Tamish, Universidad de Betlehem, Palestina

3. La Nueva Agenda de Habilidades para Europa

Por Dana Bachmann y Paul Holdsworth, Comisión Europea

4. Habilidades interpersonales en la educación no formal: fomentar las capacidades de los jóvenes

Por Priti Sharma, PRIA International Academy, Nueva Delhi, India

Los artículos ya están disponibles aquí: <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-832016-skills-and-competencies/> (en inglés, francés y español) y seguir el debate en el sitio Web del ICAE dedicado para el mismo <http://virtualeseminar.icae.global>.

L'éducation des adultes et le développement: Aptitudes et compétences

FR

Welcome/Bienvenida/Bienvenue

Le Conseil international pour l'éducation des adultes (ICAE) continue d'inspirer un dialogue, un échange d'idées et une réflexion critique sur des sujets très pertinents dans l'éducation des adultes. Grâce à ce séminaire virtuel l'ICAE, en coopération avec DVV international, souhaite donc promouvoir un débat et un dialogue sur des articles sélectionnés de la revue Éducation des Adultes et Développement de DVV International. Cela offre la possibilité de discuter des sujets soulevés dans l'édition imprimée dans un séminaire virtuel et d'approfondir et d'élargir l'analyse. Cela crée un espace virtuel comme une occasion de partager des expériences de différentes régions et contextes et d'inspirer de nouvelles initiatives.

Le séminaire virtuel de cette année se concentre sur les aptitudes et les compétences. En favorisant une approche holistique de l'éducation des adultes, qui comprend tous les domaines de la vie et du travail, l'ICAE veut soutenir la discussion sur les compétences pour la vie, le travail et la citoyenneté et favoriser une perspective intégrale, ce qui aiderait à éviter les pensées cloisonnées dans la formation des adultes. Une telle approche pourrait également contribuer à reconnaître que l'éducation est essentielle à la réussite de tous les objectifs de développement durable.

Les articles suivants du numéro 83 de "Éducation des adultes et développement" seront le point de départ de ce séminaire de cette année :

1. Les 5 compétences nécessaires pour construire un autre monde possible - Apprendre à partir et pour le Forum Social Mondial

Par Alessio Surian, Université de Padova, Italie

2. Renforcer les compétences dans le monde arabe : des questions à considérer

Par Rabab Tamish, Université de Betlehem, Palestine

3. L'Agenda de nouvelles compétences pour l'Europe

Par Dana Bachmann et Paul Holdsworth, Commission Européenne

4. Compétences douces dans l'éducation non formelle : renforcement des capacités de la jeunesse

Par Priti Sharma, PRIA International Academy, New Delhi, Inde

Les articles sont disponibles ici : <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-832016-skills-and-competencies/> (en anglais, en français et en espagnol) et suivre la discussion sur le site Web de l'ICAE <http://virtualseminar.icae.global>.

1 Introduction

by Sandra L. Morrison

*ICAE President and
Associate Professor
University of Waikato*

Skills and competencies

My immediate family is composed of four generations; not unusual by any means but for a short time we were a five generation family. One of my most defining moments was when I was able to look into the eyes of a grandparent with a new-born grandchild playing idly on my knee, both who were completely oblivious to the deeper meaning that I was making of this engagement. The opportunity to look back in time through the experiences and realities of a grandparent and within the same moment to feel the wonderment of a new generation allows one to look forward in time through your progeny – history, destiny and continuity dissolve into a cycle and one feels the responsibility to fulfil a duty of care to the planet, to ongoing peace and to happiness. These are critical life reference points which allow time for self reflection as we morph into becoming the conduit for the knowledge that we have inherited from those who have gone before with the obligation to pass it on to future generations. Reflection extends also to thinking about our future as a global community and exploring and clarifying what are our hopes and dreams for the future generations; how do we equip our children towards ensuring that they have the capacities for the world that awaits them and what are the skills and competencies that they will need ?

Just looking at the events of the last 12 months- Brexit, Trumpism shows how easily popularism

can surface to create fear, incite racism and religious hatred amongst our communities and manipulate public opinion. We are in an era where we are denied dialogue on big issues such as climate change, environmental degradation and possible warfare between nations. Cyber warfare is added to new threats. Presently we are conveniently distracted by tweets, untruths and alternative facts and it takes a lot of manoeuvring and even a stubborn refusal to engage to create a counter hegemonic discourse. Offering a counter opinion can only emerge through an informed mind, an openness to learn and a commitment for a robust democratic society...and it all starts with acquiring basic literacy skills, numeracy skills and now also digital skills. It seems to me that more than ever before we need a lifelong learning society to decipher what is real and what is propaganda. Complex as the world seems now will the future be simpler or even more challenging ? What will the world be like 10 years on; 20 years on and even 50 years on?

Our Virtual Seminar presents an opportunity to reflect on the concept of skills and competencies in adult education and development against the background of an uncertain world. Through the wide thinking of the many contributors from diverse contexts, we are presented with a broad range of informed opinion, theoretical understandings, practical challenges to confront and expand our thinking. Points raised discuss the place of non cognitive skills; the impact of a rapidly increasing technological world, an unpredictable future with new jobs not yet invented. Then we have unique viewpoints on lifelong learning as path to happiness and I was particularly taken by Alessio Surian's account of five skills it takes to build another possible world- very thought provoking. Let us not forget also about the global Sustainable Development Goals and the Educa-

tion 2030 Agenda which is also under examination in this seminar and which took years of persistent advocacy to arrive at a framework in which there has been global agreement.

While increasing our critical awareness is important, we must also think about the known strengths and propensity of communities to work in particular ways and to learn from each other. How can we promote the value of community and encourage community cohesion and collaboration? How can we extend that notion to cohesion and respect across nations, across religions and across ideologies? We are after all stronger standing and working together as collective entities rather than as individuals. In times of challenge resilient communities are built on having social cohesion.

Being able to interact as humans who have a sense of worth, have respect for others and can initiate dialogue and communication are fundamental human values which we no doubt all treasure. Moreover the ability to create and be visionary and entrepreneurial will be important dimensions to our future realities especially as the

availability of paid work decreases. Self reliance and community reliance will be key.

Continuing to be open to learning and creating learning communities requires nothing more than groups of people to come together even in small ways to respond to an identified learning need. Lifelong learning is a mandate and a mantra leading to being critically aware of our self as individuals, our self in our communities, our place in our nation and our place as global citizens. Moreover the ability to co construct solutions to pressing problems will require us to draw on our own strengths and potential to create and take charge of the wellbeing of our communities.

As we read through these articles and join in stimulating discussion with our colleagues through this virtual forum I challenge you to create a legacy of which your progeny will be proud, to be remembered as a good ancestor and to keep the faces of your grandchildren in your heart when you make the decisions for today. I invite you to engage, to challenge, to wonder, to be curious, to question and to share your experiences.

Introducción por Sandra L. Morrison

Presidenta del ICAE y Profesora adjunta de la Universidad de Waikato.

E

Mi familia inmediata está compuesta de cuatro generaciones; no es algo inusual, pero por un corto período de tiempo fuimos una familia de cinco generaciones. Uno de los momentos más decisivos de mi vida fue cuando tuve la posibilidad de mirar a un abuelo a los ojos mientras un nieto recién nacido jugaba inocentemente en mi falda, ambos completamente ajenos al profundo significado que este compromiso producía en mí. La oportunidad de mirar atrás en el tiempo a través de las experiencias y realidades de un abuelo y en el mis-

mo momento sentir el asombro de una nueva generación nos permite mirar hacia adelante en el tiempo a través de nuestra descendencia - la historia, el destino y la continuidad se disuelven en un ciclo y sentimos la responsabilidad de cumplir con un deber de cuidado con el planeta, los procesos de paz y la felicidad. Estos son puntos de referencia de la vida fundamentales que nos conceden tiempo para la autoreflexión a medida que nos transformamos para convertirnos en el conducto para el conocimiento que hemos heredado de quienes han tenido antes la obligación

de transmitirlo a las generaciones futuras. La reflexión se extiende también a pensar en nuestro futuro como una comunidad global y explorar y aclarar cuáles son nuestras esperanzas y nuestros sueños para las generaciones futuras; ¿cómo preparamos a nuestros niños y nuestras niñas y nos aseguramos de que tengan las capacidades para el mundo que los/las espera y cuáles son las habilidades y las competencias que necesitarán?

Los acontecimientos de los últimos 12 meses (el Brexit, el Trumpismo) muestran la facilidad con la que puede surgir el populismo para crear miedo, incitar al racismo y al odio religioso entre nuestras comunidades y manipular a la opinión pública. Estamos en una era en la que se nos niega el diálogo sobre grandes temas como el cambio climático, la degradación ambiental y la posible guerra entre naciones. La guerra cibernética se suma a las nuevas amenazas. En la actualidad nos distraen convenientemente con tweets, falsedades y hechos alternativos y se necesitan muchas maniobras e incluso un obstinado rechazo a comprometerse para crear un discurso contrahegemónico. Una opinión en contra solo puede surgir de una mente informada, una apertura al aprendizaje y un compromiso hacia una sociedad democrática sólida ... y todo comienza con la adquisición de habilidades básicas de alfabetización, habilidades de cálculo y ahora también habilidades digitales. Considero que necesitamos más que nunca una sociedad de aprendizaje de por vida para descifrar lo que es real y lo que es propaganda. Con lo complejo que parece el mundo actualmente, ¿el futuro será más simple o aún más desafiante? ¿Cómo será el mundo dentro de 10, 20 e incluso 50 años?

Nuestro Seminario Virtual ofrece una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre el concepto de habilidades y competencias en la educación y el desarrollo de personas adultas en el contexto de un mundo incierto. A través del pensamiento de los diferentes colaboradores de contextos diversos, nos encontramos frente a una amplia gama de

opinión informada, interpretaciones teóricas, desafíos prácticos para confrontar y expandir nuestro pensamiento. Los puntos planteados analizan el lugar de las habilidades no cognitivas, el impacto de un mundo tecnológico en rápido crecimiento y un futuro impredecible, con nuevos puestos de trabajo aún no inventados. Asimismo, tenemos puntos de vista únicos sobre el aprendizaje durante toda la vida como camino hacia la felicidad, y me atrajo particularmente al relato de Alessio Surian de las cinco habilidades que se necesitan para construir otro mundo posible, muy provocador. No olvidemos tampoco los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible y la Agenda Educativa 2030, que también se examinará en este seminario y que llevó años de persistente trabajo de incidencia para llegar a un marco de acuerdo global.

Si bien es importante aumentar nuestra conciencia crítica, también debemos pensar en las fortalezas conocidas y la propensión de las comunidades a trabajar de maneras particulares y aprender unas de otras. ¿Cómo podemos promover el valor de la comunidad y fomentar la cohesión y la colaboración comunitaria? ¿Cómo podemos extender esa noción a la cohesión y el respeto a través de las naciones, de las religiones y de las ideologías? Después de todo, somos más fuertes si nos mantenemos y trabajamos juntos como entidades colectivas más que como individuos. En tiempos de desafío, las comunidades resilientes se construyen con cohesión social.

Ser capaces de interactuar como seres humanos con sentido de valor y respeto por los demás, y con la capacidad de iniciar el diálogo y la comunicación son valores humanos fundamentales que sin duda todos atesoramos. Por otra parte, la capacidad de crear y ser visionarios y emprendedores serán dimensiones importantes para nuestras realidades futuras, especialmente a medida que la disponibilidad de trabajo remunerado disminuye. La autosuficiencia y la confianza en la comunidad serán fundamentales.

Seguir estando abiertos al aprendizaje y a la creación de comunidades de aprendizaje no requiere nada más que grupos de personas que se reúnan, incluso en pequeños grupos, para responder a una necesidad de aprendizaje identificada. El aprendizaje durante toda la vida es un mandato y un mantra que nos lleva a ser críticamente conscientes de nosotros mismos como individuos, de nosotros mismos en nuestras comunidades, de nuestro lugar en nuestra nación y de nuestro lugar como ciudadanos del mundo. Además, la capacidad de construir juntos soluciones para problemas apremiantes nos demandará que aprovechemos nuestras propias fortalezas y

potencialidades para crear y hacernos cargo del bienestar de nuestras comunidades.

A medida que leamos estos artículos y nos unamos en un estimulante debate con nuestros colegas a través de este foro virtual, los desafío a crear un legado que enorgullezca a sus descendientes y los recuerden como buenos antepasados; tengan presente los rostros de sus nietos en sus corazones cuando tomen las decisiones para hoy. Los invito a participar, desafiar, preguntarse, tener curiosidad, cuestionar y compartir sus experiencias..

Introduction par Sandra L. Morrison

Présidente de l'ICAE et Professeure Agrégée, Université de Waikato.

FR

Ma famille immédiate est composée de quatre générations ; pas inhabituel, mais pour une courte période nous avons été une famille de cinq générations. L'un des moments les plus décisifs de ma vie a été quand j'ai pu regarder dans les yeux d'un grand-parent avec un petit-fils nouveau-né qui jouait sur mes genoux, tous les deux complètement inconscients de la signification plus profonde que je faisais de cet engagement. L'opportunité de regarder dans le passé à travers les expériences et les réalités d'un grand-parent et dans le même moment sentir l'émerveillement d'une nouvelle génération nous permet de regarder dans l'avenir grâce à notre descendance : l'histoire, la destinée et la continuité se dissolvent en un cycle et nous nous sentons responsables d'accomplir un devoir de soin de la planète, la paix en cours et le bonheur. Ceux-ci sont des points de référence de la vie essentiels qui nous donnent du temps pour la réflexion personnelle au fur et à mesure que nous nous transformons pour devenir le conduit pour la connaissance que nous avons hérité de ceux

qui ont eu avant l'obligation de la transmettre aux générations futures. La réflexion s'étend également à penser sur notre avenir en tant que communauté mondiale et à explorer et préciser quels sont nos espoirs et nos rêves pour les générations futures ; comment préparons-nous nos enfants pour garantir qu'ils auront les capacités pour le monde qui les attend et quelles sont les aptitudes et les compétences dont ils auront besoin ?

Les événements des 12 derniers mois (le Brexit, le Trumpisme) montrent à quel point le populisme peut se développer pour créer la peur, inciter au racisme et à la haine religieuse parmi nos communautés et manipuler l'opinion publique. Nous sommes dans une époque où on nous refuse le dialogue sur de grands problèmes tels que le changement climatique, la dégradation de l'environnement et la guerre possible entre les nations. La cyber-guerre est ajoutée aux nouvelles menaces. À l'heure actuelle, comme par hasard, nous sommes distraits par des tweets,

des mensonges et des faits alternatifs, et cela demande beaucoup de manœuvres et même un refus obstiné de s'engager pour créer un discours contre-hégémonique. Une opinion contraire ne peut émerger que d'un esprit informé, une ouverture à apprendre et un engagement pour une société démocratique solide ... et tout commence par l'acquisition de compétences de base en lecture / écriture / calcul et maintenant aussi des compétences numériques. Il me semble que plus que jamais, nous avons besoin d'une société de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie pour déchiffrer ce qui est réel et ce qui est de la propagande. Aussi complexe que le monde semble maintenant, l'avenir sera-t-il plus simple ou représentera-t-il un plus grand défi ? Comment sera le monde dans 10, 20 et même 50 ans ?

Notre séminaire virtuel offre l'occasion de réfléchir sur le concept d'aptitudes et compétences dans l'éducation et le développement des adultes dans le contexte d'un monde incertain. Grâce à la pensée de nombreux collaborateurs de divers contextes, nous avons un large éventail d'opinions éclairées, de compréhensions théoriques, de défis pratiques pour affronter et élargir notre réflexion. Les points soulevés traitent de la place des aptitudes non cognitives ; l'impact d'un monde technologique en croissance rapide, un avenir imprévisible avec de nouveaux emplois qui n'ont pas encore été inventés. Également, nous avons des points de vue uniques sur l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie comme chemin vers le bonheur et j'ai été particulièrement attirée par le récit d'Alessio Surian sur cinq aptitudes nécessaires à construire une autre monde possible qui pousse à la réflexion. N'oublions pas non plus les Objectifs de développement durable et l'agenda pour l'éducation 2030 qui sera également examiné dans ce séminaire et qui n'est parvenue à un cadre d'accord mondial qu'après des années de plaidoyer persistant.

Même s'il est important d'augmenter notre conscience critique, nous devons également ré-

fléchir aux forces connues et à la propension des communautés à travailler de manière particulière et à apprendre les unes des autres. Comment pouvons-nous promouvoir la valeur de la communauté et encourager la cohésion et la collaboration de la communauté ? Comment pouvons-nous étendre cette notion à la cohésion et au respect entre nations, religions et idéologies ? Après tout, nous sommes plus forts si nous restons ensemble et travaillons ensemble en tant qu'entités collectives plutôt que comme individus. En temps de défis, les communautés résilientes sont construites avec la cohésion sociale.

Être capables d'interagir en tant qu'êtres humains qui ont un sens de valeur, du respect des autres et pouvant initier le dialogue et la communication sont des valeurs humaines fondamentales que, sans aucun doute, nous gardons tous précieusement. En outre, la capacité de créer et d'être visionnaire et entrepreneurial seront des dimensions importantes pour nos réalités futures, surtout si la disponibilité de travail rémunéré diminue. L'autosuffisance et la confiance dans la communauté seront essentielles.

Continuer d'être ouverts à l'apprentissage et à créer des communautés d'apprentissage ne demande que des groupes de personnes qui se réunissent, même en petit groupes, pour répondre à un besoin d'apprentissage identifié. L'apprentissage tout au long de la vie est un mandat et un mantra qui nous mène à être conscients de nous-mêmes en tant qu'individus, dans nos communautés, de notre place dans notre pays et de notre place en tant que citoyens du monde. De plus, la capacité de construire ensemble des solutions à des problèmes pressants nous obligera à tirer parti de nos propres forces et de notre potentiel pour créer et prendre en charge le bien-être de nos communautés.

Au fur et à mesure que nous lirons ces articles et nous partagerons un débat stimulant avec nos collègues à travers ce forum virtuel, je vous mets

au défi de créer un héritage dont vos descendants seront fiers et vous rappelleront comme un bon ancêtre, et de garder le visage de vos petits-enfants dans vos cœurs lorsque vous pren-

rez les décisions pour aujourd'hui. Je vous invite à vous engager, à défier, à vous demander, à avoir la curiosité, à interroger et à partager vos expériences.

1.1

Comment by Babacar Diop

EN

PanAfrican Association for Literacy and Adult Education (PAALAE), Senegal

Bravo to Sandra for this poetic and philosophical introduction. It reminds me a strong recommendation by Confintea 5 in Hamburg in 1997 about the dialogue between generations, it is indeed a matter of exploring

with the the dialogue of knowledge, cultures, religions, philosophies, systems, models, actors that can emerge from putrefaction, sometimes bringing new life and moving resolutely towards a better world of progress and solidarity

Commentaire de Babacar Diop

FR

Association Panafricaine d'Alphabétisation et d'Education des Adultes (PAALAE), Senegal

Bravo a Sandra pour cette poetique et philosophique introduction, elle me rappelle une forte recommandation de Confintea 5 a Hambourg en 1997 ayant trait au dialogue des generations,c est effectivement a explorer avec le dialogue des savoirs, des cultures,des re-

ligions,des philosophies,des systemes, modeles, des acteurs qu on pourra sortir de la putrefaction,parfois porteuse de nouvelle vie et avancer resolument vers un monde meilleur fait de progres et de solidarite

2 The five skills it takes to build another possible world – learning from and for the World Social Forum

by **Alessio Surian**

Abstract – Over 35,000 participants from 125 countries took part in the 12th edition of the World Social Forum in Montreal on August 9– 14 2016. Activities were clustered around 13 “axes”. The article focuses on the learning and organisational dimension of activism towards another possible world.



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A social movements forum towards another possible world

Three features marked the worldwide impact (Hammond 2007) of the first World Social Forum in January 2001: it took place at the same time as the World Economic Forum, establishing the opportunity to convey a “social” vs. an “economic” message; it took place in Porto Alegre (Brazil), providing the “social” message with a “South” vs “North” dimension; it was run by a network of social movements and organi-

sations, trying to emphasise the “grassroots” vs. the institutional (i.e. territorial authorities, parties) initiative.

Only the third feature – the grassroots vs. the institutional – was still present in the World Social Forum that took place in Montreal (Quebec) between August 9 and 14, 2016. The WSF acknowledged Montreal as indigenous territory of the Mohawk people. This acknowledgement made visible the colonisation of these territories and encouraged participants to take collective responsibility of the challenges faced today by indigenous peoples, including the Energy East pipeline project that would be instrumental to a rapid expansion of the oil sands complex and would further strengthen the grip of the extraction industries on western Canada. Enhancing the socio-cultural and environmental challenges raised by the in-

indigenous peoples and focusing on issues of patriarchy and colonialism, linked the 2016 WSF to the 2009 WSF held in Belém (Amazonas, Brazil).

Over 35,000 participants from 125 countries took part in this 12th World Social Forum. About 15,000 people participated in the opening march on August 4. The forum was made possible by the work of around 1,000 volunteers. 26 self-managed committees contributed to give shape to the WSF programme: for example, the Democracy Committee, the Committee on Social Protection and Human Rights, and the Committee on Education. Activities were clustered around 13 “axes”:

1. Economic, social and solidarity alternatives facing the capitalist crisis
2. Democratisation of knowledge and right to communication
3. Culture of peace and the struggle for justice and demilitarisation
4. Decolonisation and self-determination of peoples
5. Rights of nature and environmental justice
6. Global struggles and international solidarity
7. Human and social rights, dignity and the fight against inequalities
8. Struggles against racism, xenophobia, patriarchy and fundamentalism
9. Fight against the dictatorship of finance and for resource distribution
10. Migration, refugees and citizenship without borders
11. Democracy, social and citizen movements
12. Workers against neoliberalism
13. Cultural, artistic and philosophical expressions for another possible world

On August 14, the forum organised an Agora of Initiatives that included 26 convergence assemblies, sharing more than a hundred initiatives promoting basic rights such as education as well as the defence and promotion of public services. All of the initiatives are collected online at <https://fsm2016.org/en/> in a calendar where the different actions of social change that were put forward

are presented. This can be used as a guide for citizens worldwide by providing a concrete basis for ideas and events for change, beginning with the World March of Women 10th International Meeting in October in Maputo, Mozambique. One fear concerning the organisation of the WSF in a “northern” country concerned potential visa issues. In fact, according to the organisers, of about 2,000 potential participants who received official invitation letters to attend the Montreal WSF, around 70% had their applications for temporary visas to come to Canada denied.

The WSF Collective declared its commitment to portray all those who were refused to show the government and civil society, what these participants could have brought to the WSF. “We also want to use the case of Montreal in order to question the accessibility of countries of the North”, explained Raphaël Canet from the WSF organising committee. In spite of these denied visas, most well-established social movement networks such as Via Campesina and the World March of Women were able to participate and to discuss and highlight the role played by social movements, the struggles for socio-economic, environmental and political change in different regions of the world.

The WSF was also an opportunity to bring human rights (Frezzo, 2009) to media attention, as well as the murder and disappearance of many activists. Take for example Berta Cáceres, indigenous feminist who in her country, Honduras, struggled against the construction of the Agua Zarca hydro electric dam in Rio Blanco. She was well aware of the dangers involved in her struggle, with threats coming from private security guards working for the company building the dam, as well as the police and army protecting the project: “The army has an assassination list of 18 wanted human rights fighters with my name at the top. I want to live, there are many things I still want to do in this world but I have never once considered giving-up fighting for our territory, for a life with dignity, because our fight is legitimate. I take lots of care but in the end,

in this country where there is total impunity I am vulnerable... when they want to kill me, they will do it," she stated to international press already in 2013. In March this year she was murdered. Two of her daughters, Bertita and Laura participated in numerous WSF activities and made their mother's voice heard: "Berta did not die, she multiplied! Berta lives, the struggles continues!

The Brazilian delegation denounced the coup d'état in Brazil and the sexist, racist, authoritarian features of the new government that has the support of mainstream media who refuse to call it a coup while attempting to criminalise social movements. The diversity of actors represented in the WSF International Council became very evident as the Council failed to reach consensus about condemning the coup.

The educational dimension

In the same way, the final convergence assemblies often encountered challenges in the sharing of common languages and agendas, especially when more "institutional" actors such as labour unions took the lead – focusing on labour issues – in reporting the results of the self-organised activities and workshops.

The educational issues in relation to social movements' agendas were clustered, in the convergence assembly, around three main themes: access to free and equitable education; activism and diversity; co-ordination and exchanges among educational social actors. The World Education Forum (active within and alongside the WSF since 2001, see Surian 2013) addressed issues such as the right to education and popular education.

Another issue was the linking to and involvement of local and international actors such as AELIÉS, the Latin American Council of Adult Education (CEAAL), the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), the educational radio network ALER, the Sao Paulo based Instituto Paulo Freire.

WEF activities provided an opportunity to discuss issues of popular education in adult education and offered insights into inspiring local practices such as the Indigenous Requirement at the University of Winnipeg. Kevin Settee, President of the

University of Winnipeg Students' Association introduced participants to the

Mandatory Indigenous Course Requirements (ICR) at the

University of Winnipeg. The proposal was developed in consultation with Indigenous elders, staff, faculty and students.

The proposal was then passed "in principal" by the Senate in April 2015, introducing the mandatory requirement for all undergraduate students to participate in some form of Indigenous learning prior to their graduation.

The course will be implemented for the first time in the 2016 fall term. According to Kevin Settee, the University of Winnipeg Students' Association has been a driving force in indigenising the university, advocating for popular education and the importance of learning about indigenous culture within the indigenous environment.

Relational and meaning-making skills towards another possible world

The experience at the University of Winnipeg helped to clarify an understanding of all knowledge as "positional" and to take into consideration the capacity of individuals and groups to trigger

We could live in a country powered entirely by renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit, in which the jobs and opportunities of this transition are designed to systematically eliminate racial and gender inequality.

awareness about their own position and the type of abilities that require further development in the quest for creating sustainable conditions for another possible world. An explicit metaphor comes from the Canadian Leap Mani festo:

“We could live in a country powered entirely by renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit, in which the jobs and opportunities of this transition are designed to systematically eliminate racial and gender inequality. Caring for one another and caring for the planet could be the economy’s fastest growing sectors. Many more people could have higher wage jobs with fewer work hours, leaving us ample time to enjoy our loved ones and flourish in our communities. We know that the time for this great transition is short”.

What are the skills that would be instrumental to support such a leap forward? Among the many examples of workshop and campaign materials provided by educational movements it is worth mentioning and quoting five skills clusters suggested by the Global Campaign for Education (2015) at the workshop held in Johannesburg, South Africa, April 2015:

- sharing narratives
- sharing relational commitment
- sharing structure
- sharing strategies
- sharing actions.

Creating a Shared Story

GCE states that: “Stories draw on our emotions and show our values in action, helping us feel

what matters, rather than just thinking about or telling others what matters. Because stories allow us to express our values not as abstract principles, but as lived experience – they have the power to move others”.

Therefore the basis for organising can be found in shared values expressed as public narratives, ways to bring alive the motivation that constitutes the necessary pre-condition to act for change. GCE distinguishes three story dimensions:

- the “story of self”, i.e. the values of the community within which we are embedded
- the “story of us” or what calls us to promote collective leadership, and the
- “story of now”, addressing the challenges to those values that demand present action.

As GCE put it: “By learning how to tell a public narrative that bridges the self, us, and now, organisers enhance their own efficacy and create trust and solidarity within their campaign, equipping them to engage others far more effectively”.

Creating Shared Relational Commitment

A second area of skills concerns the ability to acknowledge that organising for social change is based on relationships and creating mutual commitments to work together. This perspective prioritises collaboration and learning how to recast our individual interests as common interests. It is also a matter of acknowledging the role of one-on-one meetings and small group meetings to create relationships based on trust, to lay the foundation of local campaign committed

By learning how to tell a public narrative that bridges the self, us, and now, organisers enhance their own efficacy and create trust and solidarity within their campaign, equipping them to engage others far more effectively.

teams, enhancing commitments people make to each other, not simply to an idea or a task.

Creating Shared Structure

Effective team building creates the conditions for a third area of skills in relation to shared leadership, focusing on a shared structure instrumental to effective local organising, taking into account the integration of the local action with state-wide, nation-wide and even global purpose. Shared leadership and structure create the conditions that energise activists in tackling challenging work. Key team challenges are concerned with how to strive to meet the standards of those served by the team, learning how to be more effective at meeting outcomes over time, and enhancing the learning and growth of individuals within the team.

According to GCE, team members work to put in place five conditions that lead to effectiveness – real team (bounded, stable and interdependent), engaging direction (clear, consequential and challenging), enabling structure (work that is interdependent), clear group norms, and a diverse team with the skills and talents needed to do the work.

Creating Shared Strategy

While based on broad values, effective activism also means learning how to focus on a clear strategic objective, i.e. how to turn values into action and creative deliberation. The WSF suggested a 4-step process including:

- Announce your initiative: A wide range of actions is needed to change the world (awareness, education, legislation, protests, claims, awareness...). An initiative is a collective action that contributes to social change.
- Join an Assembly of Convergence for Action: 26 convergence assemblies on diverse themes are carried out by or-

ganisations participating at the WSF. By participating in these spaces, you will consolidate and share your ideas with groups working on similar themes to yours.

- Participate in the Agora of Initiatives for Another World to share your initiatives, stimulate citizen commitment and contribute to the construction of the calendar of shared action plans. The WSF Agora will build synergies between the organisations and participants to work together for a better world.
- Contribute to the collective memory of the World Social Forum 2016 and document your activities on the ContActiva platform: [wsf-contactiva.esy.es /](http://wsf-contactiva.esy.es/).

Creating Shared Measurable Action

A final suggestion by GCE is to produce an understanding of activism outcomes that is clear, measurable, and specific in order for progress to be transparent and to be evaluated, accountability practised, and strategy adapted based on experience. Examples of such measures include volunteers recruited, money raised, people at a meeting, voters contacted, pledge cards signed, laws passed, etc. Two key process features are (a) regular reporting of progress to goal in order to create opportunity for feedback, learning, and adaptation; (b) training to be provided for all skills to carry out the programme.

The Indigenous Peoples participation at the 2016 WSF helped to question a purely quantitative approach to the last assessment dimension and helped to highlight the importance of a perspective acknowledging commons and circular relations.

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Further reading

A small selection of tips for further reading and useful online-links:

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- **De Sousa Santos B. (2004):** The World Social Forum: A User's Manual. Available at: http://www.ces.uc.pt/bss/documentos/fsm_eng.pdf
- **The Leap Manifesto.** Available at: <https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/>
- **World Social Forum**, Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Social_Forum#2016_World_Social_Forum

You can find the articles in English, French and Spanish here: <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-832016-skills-and-competencies/>

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I was privileged to be one of the thousands of participants and presenters who converged in Montreal from 9-16 August 2016. We received a 'telephone directory-like' book of events, seminars, workshops, symposia, to choose from – the venues were distributed throughout a part of the city. The area of the city designated for the WSF was punctuated with large marquees, information stands, meeting points, where T-shirts were sold, pamphlets and other paraphernalia distributed, meeting areas designated, street theatre performers prepared. The scale of the event was overwhelming – how to use time effectively, efficiently, with purpose, with fun, with friends, with political intent? How to find your own venue where you were to be one of the presenters or performers or participants? Navigating the geographical, the intellectual, the political, the social spaces was challenging. It took planning, focus, and determination, while not losing sight of the importance of connecting socially with friends, comrades, colleagues.

The WSF started in a big park where thousands gathered to begin to connect, to mobilise people to engage with 'their' issues – there was need to mobilise interest otherwise no people would find their way at the right time and place – those with the most marketing savvy could more easily grab the attention. We heard of at least 2000 comrades who had been refused visas by the Canadian government – there was rage and indignation. Behind our respective banners with drums rolling, chants and songs, we took over several streets of Montreal. The idea was to bring to the attention of the citizens of Montreal that the WSF was alive and well and about to take over their city!

The thirteen organising streams for conversations, debates and actions, as listed by Alesion Surian, indicate the complexities, the divergences and the spread of intellectual and political engagement. These mirror many of the fault lines in society. They are overwhelming and impossible to embrace with any depth – each person therefore, as in life, specialises in an area of particular interest. The streams ran in parallel, with each person mainly staying within their particular area of interest. There were few places where everyone came together, so that the heartbeat of the whole community could be felt – so there was no sense of the whole – there was no visible leadership. Leadership was decentralised and dispersed. This is positive on the one hand, but on the other, how is some cohesion and common vision built? How is 'an alternative world' envisaged collectively?

The last day of the WSF was literally rained out – where everyone was invited to join together, reading out and engaging with the resolutions emanating from each of the streams, few turned up. Most people left with no sense of a bigger picture of 'where to from here'. I left with an overwhelming sense of how complex it is to create any cohesion or sense of common purpose, amongst disparate groups. What the future will be of the WSF is uncertain – it's a noble idea, but what can it really achieve? What do you think its role is, if any, in helping build an alternative world? How possible is it to achieve common purpose putting into action the 'relational and meaning making skills' which Surian points to, across different discursive, disciplinary, or other communities of practice, who have different understandings of knowledge? How are different 'raced', gendered,

classed, religious, language, geographical etc. communities able to 'share' with one another when hierarchies of power and privilege are so entrenched? Should the WSF survive, why and how?

2.2

Comment by Sebastián Vielmas

EN

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The article by Alessio Surian shows the continuing importance of the World Social Forum process and the need for reflection on the skills needed to build another possible world. This intervention in the Virtual Seminar will build on Alessio's work to show challenges that we face as part of the global civil society and the need to take skills development seriously to change the course of the current global political climate.

We have to admit that things are not going, globally, in the direction that the vast majority of adult, youth, non-formal and popular educators want. Everywhere, regimes have been answering the last economic crisis that started in 2008 with an offensive against middle class and working people that have resulted in many negative tendencies that goes against our advocacy for human rights, sustainability and social justice.

It is possible, on what regards our sector, to identify the following disturbing tendencies: the direct or indirect privatisation of resources and public services (Beau-

det 2017); the shrinking of the civic space that NGO's need to organise and act (CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation 2017); and the legitimisation of racism, xenophobia (UNESCO 2017) and patriarchy (as identified and criticised by our friends of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era).

All of these tendencies face resistance all over the globe, some of them being more successful than others. What is clear is that if we want to build another possible world, we need to converge as networks, build common identities between diverse movements and propose alternatives that can inspire. In order to achieve this, the five skills clusters suggested by the Global Campaign for Education (2015) that Alessio presented are key: sharing narratives, sharing relational commitment, sharing structure, sharing strategies and sharing actions.

Now, I would like to propose a reflection on some issues that have to be debated in order to build convergences:

*"The challenges
facing the construc-
tion of another possi-
ble world"*

First, I think that we should get a broader understanding of “the grassroots” and the “big institutionalised NGOs”. This framing of these as being intrinsically confronted is problematic and “institutionalised” has become more of a pejorative adjective than a useful framework to understand collective action. I would advocate for a nuanced understanding of the equal value of the participation of different kinds of organisations around an ecosystem of social movements and civil society organisations.

Second, we should deepen our reflections about what the Global North and Global South is. Often, we overlook the “Global” adjective of this framing, forgetting marginalised communities that are territorially in Global North countries. Moreover, those who come from the Global South but from privileged backgrounds (as myself) have to acknowledge their privileges and the fact that they cannot speak for the marginalised in our societies.

Third, we have to think about the new role of leaders in social movements and civil society organisations in this context of social media and networked societies (Castells 2010). Networked society means that vertical hierarchy is not as important as before, so we have to rethink leadership models. I would present as a key aspect of this rethinking that leaders should take care to frame messages and actions in a way that foster convergences.

Fourth, and at last, interculturality and multilingualism should be at the heart of our actions. In an ideal world, we would be able to communicate in the mother tongue of each activist and organisation. In the real world, the situation is more difficult, but we could start by making available

our materials in the main international languages other than English. Languages have associated academic, cultural and organisational traditions with it, and I lived firsthand the marginalisation of Spanish, Portuguese and French-speaking approaches. I am sure that this also happens to speakers of other languages.

I am sure that the continuing engagement in the World Social Forum and many global, regional and local networked convergences for the right to education will allow us to think, experiment and act. I want to end this text remembering the proposal of Michael Foaleng, participant of the last Virtual Seminar “Education for Global Citizenship”:

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This movement-building effort can only be shaped from the critical building blocks of a pedagogy of transformation, lifelong learning and community-based education.’
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Comentario de Sebastián Vielmas

E

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El artículo de Alessio Surian muestra la continua importancia del proceso del Foro Social Mundial y la necesidad de reflexionar acerca de las habilidades necesarias para construir otro mundo posible. Esta intervención en el *Virtual Seminar* va a formularse en complemento al artículo de Alessio para mostrar desafíos que confrontamos como parte de la sociedad civil global y la necesidad de tomarnos en serio el desarrollo de habilidades para cambiar el rumbo del actual clima político global.

Tenemos que admitir que las cosas no están yendo, globalmente, en la dirección que la vasta mayoría de educadores de adultos, de jóvenes, no formales y populares quisieran. En todos lados, regímenes han estado respondiendo a la última crisis económica que comenzó en 2008 con una ofensiva contra clase media y las clases trabajadoras que ha resultado en diversas tendencias negativas que van en el sentido contrario de nuestro trabajo por los derechos humanos, la sustentabilidad y la justicia social.

Es posible, en lo que se refiere a nuestro sector, identificar las siguientes tendencias peligrosas: la privatización directa o indirecta de recursos naturales y servicios públicos (Beaudet 2017); la obs-

trucción y cierre del espacio cívico que las ONG necesitan para organizarse y actuar (CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation 2017); y la legitimización del racismo, la xenofobia (UNESCO 2017) y el patriarcado (como identifican y critican nuestras amigas de Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, DAWN).

Todas estas tendencias enfrentan resistencias alrededor de todo el mundo, algunas siendo más exitosas que otras. Lo que está claro, es que, si queremos construir otro mundo posible, necesitamos converger en redes, construir identidades comunes entre los diferentes movimientos y proponer alternativas inspiradoras. Para lograr todo esto, los cinco agrupamientos de habilidades propuesto por la Campaña Mundial por la Educación (Global Campaign for Education 2015) que Alessio presentó son claves: compartir narrativas, compartir compromisos relacionales, compartir estructuras, compartir estrategias y compartir acciones.

Ahora, quisiera proponer una reflexión acerca de algunos temas que deben ser debatidos para construir convergencias:

Primero, deberíamos tener una comprensión más amplia de lo que es el "grasroots" u organi-

"Los desafíos para la construcción de otro mundo posible"

zaciones de base y las grandes ONG organizadas. El encuadre de estos como intrínsecamente contradictorios es problemático y “institucionalizado” se ha vuelto más bien un adjetivo peyorativo que un concepto útil para entender la acción colectiva. Propongo pensar una comprensión matizada del valor igualitario de la participación de los diferentes tipos de organizaciones alrededor de un ecosistema de movimientos sociales y organizaciones de la sociedad civil.

Segundo, debemos profundizar nuestras reflexiones acerca de lo que es el “Norte global” y el “Sur global”. A menudo, se nos olvida el adjetivo “Global” de este encuadre, olvidando a comunidades marginalizadas que se encuentran territorialmente en países del Norte global. Más aún, aquellos que vienen del Sur global, pero de contextos privilegiados (como yo) deben reconocer sus privilegios y reconocer que no pueden hablar en lugar de quienes son marginados en nuestras sociedades.

Tercero, tenemos que pensar acerca de los nuevos roles de los líderes en las organizaciones de la sociedad civil y los movimientos sociales en el contexto de los medios sociales y las sociedades en red (Castells, 2010). La sociedad en red implica que la jerarquía vertical no es tan importante como antes, por lo que debemos repensar los modelos de liderazgo. Diría que un aspecto esencial de este repensar debiese ser preocuparse de encuadrar los mensajes y las acciones de una manera que favorezcan las convergencias.

Cuarto, y, por último, la interculturalidad y el multilingüismo debiesen estar en el corazón de

nuestras acciones. En un mundo ideal, seríamos capaces de comunicarnos en la lengua materna de cada activista y organización. En el mundo real, la situación es más difícil, pero podemos comenzar haciendo disponible nuestros materiales en los principales idiomas internacionales distintos al inglés. Los idiomas tienen asociadas tradiciones organizacionales, académicas y culturales, y he vivido en primera persona la marginalización de los enfoques en lengua castellana, portuguesa y francesa. Estoy seguro que esto sucede a quienes hablan otros idiomas.

Estoy seguro que la participación continua en el Foro Social Mundial, y otras convergencias y redes a nivel global, regional y local nos permitirán pensar, experimentar y actuar. Quiero terminar este texto recordando la propuesta de Michael Foaleng, participante del último Seminario Virtual “Educación para la ciudadanía global”:

*“Este es-
fuerzo de construc-
ción de movimiento solo pue-
de ser diseñado desde los bloques
de pensamiento crítico de la pedagogía
de la transformación, el aprendizaje a
lo largo de toda la vida y la educa-
ción basada en la comunidad”
(Foaleng, 2015).*

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2.3

Comment by Ronald Cameron

EN

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Looking back at the results and importance of the WSF 2016 in Montreal, the author argues that the renewal of the WSFs process requires more political action, beyond the establishment of inclusive spaces

and role of social organizations and movements were thus less valued. The nature of the host country and the political context, however, were major obstacles on which the organizing committee had little control.

The project to move the World Social Forum (WSF) into a northern country motivated its holding in Canada. Also, given the climate in January at the time of the World Economic Forum in Davos, it was held in August in 2016, seven months later than usual. This is what makes Alessio Surian (2017) say that the WSF of Montreal was only the aspect of the mobilization of the base of movements, demarcating the more institutional mobilization, whereas WSFs are usually held in January in the South.

The fact of being summer season ended up having an impact on local participation. Like many national and international participants, we observed by far the lowest presence of all similar gatherings. In fact, the figure of 15,000 people is probably the maximum reached at the level of participation, instead of the 35,000 announced in the Collective's assessment. From this point of view, the Montreal WSF did not have the impact that could be expected.

*The WSF
2016 in Mon-
treal: the need to
renew the WSFs
process*

Many hopes have been put into mobilizing the unorganized. The challenge of participation was thought to be met by the spontaneous presence of tens of thousands of citizens. The involvement

The importance of the Montreal WSF

However, we cannot judge the event by trying to compare it, in its results, with the previous editions

of the WSFs. It's holding was crucial to avoid a greater dispersion that would be critical for the future of the process. In particular, it helped to eliminate the hypothesis of burial of WSFs, which had been circulating for some time within the networks. It has also succeeded in mobilizing a diversity of civil society organizations in Quebec, as well as activists from all regions of the world. It has again demonstrated the importance of the establishment of inclusive spaces, as a factor of reinforcement of the movements' resistance.

Thus, the Montreal WSF also highlighted the limits and difficulties of the process, fifteen years after the first gathering in Brazil. The Montreal WSF was a relay in a long way to rebuild the WSFs, which continued in Porto Alegre in January 2017. In short, the importance of the WSF in Montreal lies much more in what it reveals to us about the state of the alterglobalist movement than in its immediate results.

If the idea of setting up "*sharing spaces*" is a necessary condition for the development of "another possible world", the WSF in Montreal tends to show that it is not enough to adequately respond to the economic situation which is currently developing on the planet.

The demands of the new situation

The first WSF was born in a context of rising social struggles in Brazil and with the popular support mobilized for the Workers' Party. There was a desire to export energy from local mobilizations at the global level. At the same time, the international context required a broad unified response in order to propose an alternative to neo-liberal globalization ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Today, the context is no longer the same.

The questioning of democratic reforms in Latin America, the rise of extreme rights in Europe, the increase of austerity policies all over the world and the recent election of Donald Trump require a more daring political response. Without sacrificing the political independence of the movement and its inclusiveness, several trails for renewal were announced in December. To go beyond the one dimension of sharing experiences, to encourage the renewal of the process and to reinforce the relevance and the scope of the event.

Popular education and the future of the WSFs process

The movement for the right to education for all is a founding movement of the WSFs process. Today, with the demands for renewal imposed by the political context on the alterglobalist movement, the movement for the right to education can participate in the debate on the future of WSFs, notably based on the advances made in popular education.

According to the Charter of Principles, a WSF creates open and inclusive spaces on key themes for the development of another possible world. The movement for the right to education for all shares this methodological approach to "bottom-up" pedagogy, but goes further and puts forward an emancipatory action of social transformation.

The education dimension remains essential to the development of the objectives of social justice and sustainable development, but the future of education depends on its assumption by all the components of civil society. The movement for the right to education must maintain its commitment to the WSF processes, in the broadest alliance with the most important movements.

Commentaire de Ronald Cameron

FR

l'Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICÉA), Québec, Canada

En revenant sur les résultats et l'importance du FSM 2016 de Montréal, l'auteur soutient que le renouvellement du processus des FSM exige une action politique plus marquée, au-delà de la mise en place des espaces inclusifs

Le projet de déplacer le Forum social mondial (FSM) dans un pays du Nord a motivé sa tenue au Canada. Aussi, étant donné le climat en janvier au moment de la tenue du Forum économique mondial de Davos, il s'est tenu au mois d'août en 2016, sept mois plus tard qu'à l'habitude. C'est ce qui fait dire d'ailleurs à Alessio Surian (2017) que le FSM de Montréal se résumait au seul aspect de la mobilisation de la base des mouvements, en démarcation de la mobilisation plus institutionnelle, alors que les FSM habituellement se tiennent en janvier dans le Sud.

Beaucoup d'espairs ont été mis dans la mobilisation des non organisés. On pensait relever le défi de la participation par la présence spontanée de dizaines de milliers de citoyennes et de citoyens. L'implication et le rôle des organisations et des mouvements sociaux furent ainsi moins valorisés. La nature du pays hôte et le contexte politique ont toutefois constitué des obstacles majeurs, sur lesquels le comité organisateur avait peu de prise.

La période de l'été a fini par avoir un impact sur la participation locale. À l'instar de plusieurs participants nationaux et internationaux, on constate une présence de loin la plus faible de tous les rassemblements semblables. En fait, le chiffre de 15 000 personnes est probablement le maximum atteint au niveau de la participation, au lieu

des 35 000 annoncés dans le bilan du Collectif. De ce point de vue, le FSM de Montréal n'a pas eu l'impact qu'on pouvait espérer.

L'importance du FSM de Montréal

Néanmoins, on ne peut juger de l'événement en tentant de le rapprocher, dans ses résultats, aux précédentes éditions des FSM. Sa tenue fut cruciale pour éviter une plus grande dispersion qui s'annonçait critique pour l'avenir du processus. Il a notamment contribué à écarter l'hypothèse d'enterrement des FSM qui circulait depuis quelque temps au sein des réseaux. Il a aussi réussi à mobiliser une diversité d'organisations de la société civile du Québec, ainsi que des militantes et des militants de toutes les régions de la planète. Il a démontré à nouveau l'importance de la mise en place d'espaces inclusifs, comme facteur de renforcement de la résistance des mouvements.

Ainsi, le FSM de Montréal a aussi mis en relief les limites et les difficultés du processus, quinze ans après le premier rassemblement au Brésil. Le FSM de Montréal a constitué un relais dans une longue marche de reconstruction des FSM, qui s'est poursuivie notamment à Porto Alegre en janvier 2017. Bref, l'importance du FSM de Montréal se situe beaucoup plus dans ce qu'il nous révèle de l'état des lieux du mouvement altermondialiste, que dans ses résultats immédiats.

Si l'idée de mettre en place des espaces de partage (« *sharing spaces* ») est une condition néces-

*Le FSM 2016
de Montréal: la
nécessité de renou-
veler le processus des
FSM*

saire au développement d'un « autre monde possible », le FSM de Montréal tend à démontrer que ça demeure insuffisant pour répondre adéquatement à la conjoncture politique qui se développe actuellement sur la planète.

Les exigences de la nouvelle conjoncture

Le premier FSM est né dans un contexte de montée des luttes sociales au Brésil et avec l'appui populaire qui se mobilisait pour le Parti des travailleurs. Il existait une volonté d'exporter l'énergie des mobilisations locales au niveau mondial. Parallèlement, le contexte international exigeait une réponse unifiée la plus large en vue de proposer une alternative à la mondialisation néolibérale, dix ans après la chute du mur de Berlin. Aujourd'hui, le contexte n'est plus le même.

Les remises en question des réformes démocratiques en Amérique latine, la montée des droites extrêmes en Europe, l'accentuation des politiques d'austérité un peu partout sur la planète et l'élection récente de Donald Trump exigent une réponse politique plus audacieuse. Sans sacrifier l'indépendance politique du mouvement et son caractère inclusif, plusieurs pistes en vue de permettre un renouvellement furent annoncées au cours en décembre dernier. Aller au-delà de la seule dimension de partage d'expériences, favoriser le renouvellement du processus et renforcer la pertinence et la portée de l'événement.

L'éducation populaire et l'avenir du processus des FSM

Le mouvement pour le droit à l'éducation pour toutes et tous est un mouvement fondateur du processus des FSM. Aujourd'hui, avec les exigences de renouvellement qu'impose la conjoncture politique au mouvement altermondialiste, le mouvement pour le droit à l'éducation peut participer au débat concernant l'avenir des FSM en s'appuyant notamment sur les avancées réalisées en éducation populaire.

Suivant la Charte des principes, un FSM met en place des espaces ouverts et inclusifs sur des thématiques clés au développement d'un autre monde possible. Le mouvement pour le droit à l'éducation pour toutes et tous partage cette approche méthodologique de la pédagogie « bottom up », mais va plus loin, et mets de l'avant une action émancipatrice de transformation sociale.

La dimension éducation demeure essentielle au développement des objectifs de justice sociale et de développement durable, mais l'avenir de l'éducation passe par sa prise en charge par l'ensemble des composantes de la société civile. Le mouvement pour le droit à l'éducation doit maintenir son engagement dans les processus du FSM, en alliance la plus large avec les mouvements les plus importants

2.4

Comment by Jorge Osoria

EN

Chilean educator, former Secretary General and President of CEAAL. Professor of Educational Projects, Education for Citizenship and Research - Action at the University of Valparaíso (Chile) and CREFAL (Mexico)

Our friend and colleague Alessio presents an inspiring article about how anti-globalization social networks and movements are developing a critical education oriented to build capacities for new ways of life. Although Alessio elaborates his text based on the experience of the World Social Forum, what we live in Latin America through practices and programs of youth and adults' popular education within the framework of social movements in the last decade confirms that we are facing an important "pedagogy of capacity building". The paradigm of "lifelong learning" shows that new areas of educational socialization are being as relevant as the school itself. Social networks, community experiences, citizen movements, fair trade and sustainable consumption groups, eco-political organizations, student movements, "waves" (like in Spain) to demand the restoration of the rights of groups working against all forms of discrimination (gender, ethnicity, linguistic, age, or according to the place of residence or national origin (migrants, refugees)) are forming a large field of educational work.

It is important to point out that this educational work is carried out according to different methods including, preferably, non-school forms. However, the systematic nature of its proposals and programs, its theoretical and epistemic pro-

posals, its methodological innovations, the training procedures of their "basic educators", the research-action that is produced in harmony with university and academic scope projects and its ability to influence education policies in the countries are shaping a powerful educational-cultural movement that concretizes the utopia of "lifelong learning" in the life of communities and groups, especially those whose social and political rights are most vulnerable and "precarious" (that is, they are exposed to conditions of vulnerability and precariousness in their living conditions) as a result of the prevailing neoliberal economic policies.

Towards a pedagogy of social movements from the capacity building approach"

We can summarize the orientation of this movement of re-foundation of youth and adult education placed in social movements through the following constituent axes:

- Promoting the knowledge of the history of communities which rights have been violated and their territories, their natural and cultural resources and heritage, recovering the historical memory of their struggles for emancipation and building capacities to write and communicate them
- Promoting communities to identify with collaborative ways of living and educating: a pedagogy of the pro-common - recognizing other communities, establishing alliances

- Promoting an education focused on the life of the individuals and the development of their capacities to read one's own world and that of others, favoring a de-colonial and critical reading of the effects of "control" and domination of neoliberal globalization
- Building capacities for the active participation of the communities in the generation of democratic forms of local and national government through social movements that work in network, that practice a culture of horizontal and distributed leadership and of rejection to all form of discrimination
- Creating citizen leaderships capable of bringing together diverse groups respecting their diversity of gender, ethnicity, cultural and residential background and with particular respect for minorities and

groups affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters, climate change and gender violence.

- Expanding, under neo-school forms (public-community schools run from social movements) and community forms (programs of popular education, citizenship education, non-sexist education, eco-political education), the educational projects to emerging issues having an impact on everyday life, labor and citizenship of people, such as digital and technological literacy, through programs that generate an effective social distribution of knowledge and access to the common goods generated by scientific knowledge ("citizen science for effective advocacy action in public policies from the communities")

Thank you Alessio for your contribution.

Comentario de Jorge Osorio

E

Educador chileno, ex Secretario General y Presidente del CEAAL. Profesor de Proyectos Educativos, Educación para la Ciudadanía e Investigación- Acción en Universidad de Valparaíso (Chile) y CREFAL (México)

Nuestro amigo y colega Alessio nos ofrece un inspirador artículo acerca de cómo los movimientos y redes sociales altermunistas están desarrollando una educación crítica orientada a crear capacidades para nuevas formas de vida. Si bien Alessio desarrolla su texto a partir de la experiencia del Foro Social Mundial, la experiencia que vivimos en América Latina a través de prácticas y programas de educación popular de jóvenes y adultos en el marco de los movimientos sociales de esta última década confirma que estamos ante una importante "pedagogía de creación de capacidades". Si nos situamos en el paradigma del "aprendizaje a lo largo de toda la vida" nuevos ámbitos de socialización educativa

está siendo tan relevante como la escuela misma. Redes sociales, experiencias comunitarias, movimientos ciudadanos, agrupaciones de comercio justo y consumo sustentable, organizaciones eco-políticas, movimientos estudiantiles, "mareas" (como en España) de reivindicación de los derechos de los colectivos que trabajan contra toda forma de discriminación (de género, de etnia, lingüística, etaria o por el lugar de residencia o de origen nacional (migrantes, refugiados) están configurando un gran ámbito de trabajo educativo.

Es relevante señalar que este trabajo educativo se realiza bajo diversas modalidades, que inclu-

yen preferentemente formas no-escolares, sin embargo: la sistematicidad de sus propuestas y programas, sus propuesta teóricas y epistémicas, sus innovaciones metodológicas, los procedimientos de formación de sus “educadores-as de base”, la investigación-acción que se produce en sintonía con proyectos universitarios y de alcance académico y su capacidad de incidir en las políticas de educación en los países están configurando un potente movimiento educativo-cultural que concreta la utopía del “aprendizaje durante toda la vida” en la vida de las comunidades y de los colectivos, en especial de los más vulnerados en sus derechos sociales y políticos y “precarizados” (es decir, llevados a condiciones de vulnerabilidad y precariedad en sus condiciones de vida) por efecto de las políticas económicas neoliberales predominantes.

Podemos resumir la orientación de este movimiento refundacional de la educación de jóvenes y adultos situada en los movimientos sociales a través de los siguientes ejes constituyentes:

- Promoviendo el conocimiento de la historia de las comunidades vulneradas y de sus territorios, sus recursos y patrimonio natural y cultural, recuperando la memoria histórica de sus luchas de emancipación y creando capacidades para escribirlas y comunicarlas
- Promoviendo que las comunidades se identifiquen con formas colaborativas de vivir y educarse: una pedagogía de lo pro-común - reconocer otras comunidades, establecer alianza
- Promoviendo una educación centrada en la vida de los sujetos y en el desarrollo de sus capacidades para “leer el mundo propio y ajeno”, propiciando una lectu-

ra de-colonial y crítica de los efectos de “control” y dominación de la globalización neoliberal

- Creando capacidades para la participación activa de las comunidades en la generación de formas democráticas de gobierno local y nacional a través de movimientos sociales que trabajen en red, que practiquen una cultura de liderazgo horizontal y distribuido y de rechazo a toda forma de discriminación
- Formando liderazgos ciudadanos capaces de convocar a diversos colectivos respetando sus diversidades de género, étnica, procedencia cultural y residencial y con un particular respeto a las minorías y a los grupos que son afectados por causa de los conflictos armados, las catástrofes naturales, los efectos del cambio climático y las violencias de género.
- Ampliando bajo formas neo-escolares (escuelas públicas-comunitarias gestionadas desde movimientos sociales) y comunitarias (programas de educación popular, educación ciudadana, educación no sexista, educación eco-política) los proyectos educativos a temáticas emergentes y de impacto en la vida cotidiana, laboral y ciudadana de las personas, como son la alfabetización digital y tecnológica, a través de programas que generen una distribución social efectiva del saber y el acceso a los bienes comunes que genera el conocimiento científico (“ciencia ciudadana para una acción efectiva de incidencia en las políticas públicas desde las comunidades”)

Gracias, Alessio por tu contribución.

“Hacia una pedagogía de los movimientos sociales desde el enfoque de creación de capacidades”

2.5

Comment by Babacar Diop

EN

PanAfrican Association for Literacy and Adult Education (PAALAE), Senegal

Thank you for this contribution of our colleague Alessio Surian magnifying the opportunities offered by the World Social Forum; indeed, exchanges of experiences can help improve our actions, broaden our perspectives to transform our environments at local, national,

continental and international levels. Here, at the level of our association, the Paalae, we have been experimenting for 6 years a week of incubation in a determined place to take stock and advance; courage and solidarity

Commentaire de Babacar Diop

FR

Association Panafricaine d'Alphabétisation et d'Education des Adultes (PAALAE), Senegal

Merci pour cette contribution de notre collègue Alessio Surian magnifiant les opportunités qu'offre Le forum social mondial; effectivement les échanges d'expériences peuvent aider à améliorer nos actions élargir nos perspectives pour transformer nos envi-

ronnements aux plans local, national continental et international, ici au niveau de notre association la Paalae nous expérimentons depuis 6 ans une semaine d'incubation dans un endroit déterminé pour faire le point et avancer; du courage et solidairement

3 Enhancing competencies in the Arab world: issues to be considered

by Rabab Tamish

Rabab Tamish is Assistant Professor at Bethlehem University in the West Bank. She has rich experiences in developing community programmes with the objective of enhancing the quality of adult learning in Palestine and the Arab world. She is the first Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, which aims to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at the university level.



My modest experience in the field of adult education has taught me a lot about the process of developing training programmes for adult educators, especially when they are implemented in such different contexts as the very varied Arab world. I admit that at the beginning of my engagement in the field, I was naïve enough to assume that enhancing learners' skills and competences was an easy task, especially when these terms are central to the field and thus appear in every report and debate related to adult education. However, during the period in which my colleagues and I conducted a number of initiatives – mostly unsuccessful – we learned a lot more about the field. In the process

Abstract – *It is impossible to develop and foster a global set of skills and competencies for life and work if we do not at the same time look at the contexts in which such a culture should be implemented. While we share many traits and aspirations globally and as individuals, we are also locked into our respective systems. To accomplish change we must understand the realities of the people we want to inspire and help. This article describes some of the history, context and challenges in the Arab region.*

we began to better understand the meanings these terms take in practice in new contexts that in turn reflect a wider picture of adult education in the Arab setting.

Let us now look at the main challenges and concerns that we have encountered during the process of contextualising progressive approaches

to adult education in the Arab region. The process sheds light on issues that I believe are crucial when conducting adult education programmes. One of these concerns the gap between theory and practice. This is related to how competences are presented in the international context and how they are applied in local settings. This gap, I argue, is a result of social-historical and political factors that create diversity in practices and understandings of adult education that in turn lead to different approaches to training adults and determine how competences are presented and assessed.

"Adult education" in the international discourse, mainly in the Western world, is still translated in Arabic as "literacy programmes".

The purpose of adult education

In the last decade, several countries in the Arab world have witnessed dramatic political changes influencing the quality of services provided to citizens, especially in the field of adult education. International and local reports have highlighted serious problems that the Arab world is currently experiencing, such as an increase in the rate of illiteracy (which had reached around 60 million, of which two-thirds are women), lack of employment opportunities among graduates and youth (which reached more than 60% in some countries), and political instability that limits the opportunities to live in situations where human rights and citizenship values are practiced, protected and appreciated.

This has led a number of organisations to initiate intervention plans to help governments and civil society to overcome these difficulties. Most of these efforts focus on literacy programmes, based on the thought that by enhancing literacy skills, adult learners become more engaged within their societies and play an active role in the pro-

cess of development and sustainability. I strongly support this progressive view of the purpose of literacy programmes. It is a view that goes beyond enhancing basic reading and writing skills, so as to include opportunities in which adult learners enhance life competences that improve their self-image as individuals who play an active role in the process of developing their communities. This view echoes the general purpose of adult education, where intervention plans aim to enhance competencies, supporting self-fulfilment, agency, and community engagement. This aim endorses the emphasis made in many reports on the integration of high-level skills, such as critical thinking, reflection, community awareness, and communication in adult education programmes to the extent that these skills become the "terminology" that describes the work of adult educators. However, and based on my work in the field with different organisations in Palestine and the Arab world, I have seen that there are crucial, interrelated challenges standing in the way of the achievement of this objective in practice. Let us have a closer look at three of them.

International versus local terminologies

One of the challenges that adult education activists face in the Arab region is the absence of pedagogical debate about the field as it appears in the international discourse and how it is implemented in the local setting. Let me give an example. For instance, what is called "adult education" in the international discourse, mainly in the Western world, is still translated in Arabic as "literacy programmes". This does not mean that the region lacks investment in other life and professional skills, it is simply that they do not fall under the category of adult education and are mostly

offered by NGOs and civil society organisations. Furthermore, the term “education” in Arabic is linked to “raising children and teaching them to behave and act well.” As a result this literal translation of “adult education” into Arabic gives a negative impression about the type of intervention that adults will receive. Consequently the term “teaching adults” (literal translation) is the common term used in Arabic to refer to “adult education” (which means literacy programmes). Similar differences are noticeable in other concepts such as “learning” (as somehow equivalent to teaching), “adult educator” (as similar to school teacher), and “critical thinking” (as limited to articulating what is wrong with something).

This challenge highlights two issues that cannot be ignored. The first one is related to the influence of different understandings of these terms on practice. I argue that if adult education is limited to “literacy”, then national strategies will pay less attention to other aspects of adult education. If this is the case, what is achieved in terms of the “literacy” rate would be perceived as a successful indicator for improvement in “adult education” and moves towards “sustainability”. As a result, the official investment in other competencies will remain a minor issue left to civil society organisations.

The use of “teaching adults” as a concept is problematic because it reflects the traditional approach to adult education where the focus is on transferring knowledge from experienced “educators” to passive “learners”. This might explain why there is no official institution in the Arab world accredited to qualify literacy teachers in the field, assuming that a person who can read and write (and has basic teaching skills) is qualified to act in this role. As a result, learning is likely to be similar to school teaching without paying attention to

the importance of enhancing critical dialogue, active communication and reflection. This challenge leads to different approaches to adult education.

Progressive methods versus traditional approaches

Arab society is characterised as traditional and conservative, a place where cultural values emanate from religious faith and tribal norms and where individuals are expected, as a result, to follow the majority views and to inherit “common” practices and norms. Furthermore, the influence of Islamic faith creates a situation where religious sayings and texts are constantly referred to in daily life. Thinking beyond (or about) these texts is a taboo, if not a sin. These factors cannot be ignored when presenting progressive methodologies to adult education, as they have a lot to say about a) the educator’s role (as telling learners what is in the text), b) societal expectations of “learning” (as keeping norms and practices as they are), and 3) the status of “knowledge” (as static and not dynamic). Training programmes that challenge these issues will not be easily accepted or implemented, and may be rejected

outright as “imported” rather than emanating from the Arab context. In other words, the integration of critical thinking skills in learning settings, for instance, seems far from the “accepted” traditions.

The hesitation, or even the suspicion of “external” ideas has increased in the last two decades where Arab nations have witnessed different forms of relationships (superior, oppressive and hierarchical), with the international community, mainly the US and the West. Contradictory messages from international society about corruption, violence and violation of human rights in the

In other words, the integration of critical thinking skills in learning settings, for instance, seems far from the “accepted” traditions.

Arab world (where support has never really led to equity and democracy), has increased resistance to the values that the international community has produced. This has created dilemmas between how to react to external intervention (especially when there is no trust in local regimes) and how to reach progress and development. Several Arab activists describe it as the fear of *ghazo' thakafi* (or cultural invasion) rather than openness to *tabadol thakafi* (cultural exchange). This is because the historical experience of colonialism and political oppression led people either to reject or to follow the set practices introduced by such powers. During our work in the field we tried to join the voices that call for the integration of new ideas while critically examining them and not necessarily accepting everything.

Several Arab activists describe it as the fear of ghazo' thakafi (or cultural invasion) rather than openness to tabadol thakafi (cultural exchange).

they are easily measured). Thus investment in advanced competencies is unlikely to be achieved due to the factors cited above but also because learners cannot master them without applying them in new and real life settings. This is something the courses do not provide. That is a pity, because what will be produced in the structured learning “rooms” without connecting to real life settings will result in poor impact. This is a challenge when democracy is not an integral part of the social life of Arabs in different countries. Some people might argue that learners will be able to challenge this gap and act for the development of democratic values within their societies. In theory this may be correct but in practice it is more complicated, because undemocratic regimes in conservative communities have only conditional support from the international community and as a result the possibility of meaningful change becomes limited.

Competences for empowerment versus artificial reform

We cannot ignore the fact that Arab regimes have seldom been characterised as democratic and thus most of the programmes that aim at enhancing competences for empowerment will not be easily “blessed” by the regimes, because their authority may be perceived to be threatened. As a result these regimes limit their support to progressive programmes and cooperate with organisations that “fit” their expectations. Furthermore, since funding is mostly external, it is invested in institutions that work in cooperation with governmental bodies and usually based on the assumption that it will improve the achievement of desired outcomes within a specific period of time. In these cases efforts will focus on meeting the donor’s and regime’s expectations, which in turn will result in investment in basic skills (because

What is needed?

There is no blueprint to overcome the difficulties that have been described above. But there have been some initiatives that have somehow proved successful, conducted by different progressive leaders in the region. One of them is the Ecumenical Popular Education Program (EPEP) that started in Lebanon in 1968 and which currently works with more than 8 Arab countries. The EPEP’s main contribution has been on contextualising the work of Paolo Freire in literacy programmes. The EPEP’s work with other networks in the Arab region has focused on developing a forum for Arab educators to share ideas and to learn from different practices, as well as to contribute to the current discourse about the field. Similar initiatives have been conducted by DVV International

by creating an academy for adult education in the Arab world. Here educators from the region share experiences and contextualise new approaches to adult education that consider the challenges mentioned above. I believe that providing a space for discussion and sharing practices about such approaches and dilemmas could lead to the creation of a community of practice where progressive leaders will be able to influence the wider community.

My voice is an echo of UNESCO's call for networking between government and civil society institutions so both take responsibility for the development process. Of course this requires a clear idea about what should be done and what should not, as well as the approaches that will best result in change.

Breaking the image of educators as "knowledge deliverers" requires training to help them challenge this image of themselves and turn towards facilitating learning rather than transferring knowledge. As long as adult educators do not internalise new images of their work and methods, they will continue acting in the ways they experienced from their teachers as young or adult learners. This requires a different approach to training

adult educators. Since there is no institute in the Arab world that issues an official certificate in the field, it is a time to introduce a new "image" of the adult educator with progressive approaches. However, training programmes should take into consideration the historical context so educators can learn how to criticise and discuss texts and to go beyond them and develop their abilities to plan for their learning. By doing so, there is a possibility for them to play that role with adult learners.

Finally, I believe that the international and local discourses should be enriched. We need to develop more opportunities for engaging educators and strategic leaders in our globe to share experiences and challenges on issues that have not been clarified, such as how to assess different "levels" of competences. I think that the journal *Adult Education and Development* is one of the successful initiatives providing opportunities for educators and activists in the field to share their views, concerns, models and practices.

You can find the articles in English, French and Spanish here: <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-832016-skills-and-competencies/>

*Regional Director South-East Asia,
DVV International, Vice-President of ICAE*

Rabab Tamish's text offers a lot of very valuable thoughts, which in my view are important far beyond the Arab region:

- Language and culture create huge, often widely underestimated challenges for many regions. English is the dominating international language, and we very often forget that concepts, which are clearly defined in English, are in fact not clear in other languages, as they are deeply rooted in the British-American culture thus creating a biased framework. In my project here in Laos, in a regional workshop on soft skill, the trainer used the notion of "stakeholders", alien to the participants from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. It took him 45 minutes just to explain the one word! I guess we should be much more careful in transferring words (concepts) to other languages and cultures without contextualisation!
- The gap between theory and practice is something familiar to us in Asia as well. However, I would rather call it the gap between learned capacities and implementation. We experienced it here in Laos in our training project with a larger group of Master trainers in non-formal education: During the training modules, the passion for interactive- and learner-centred concepts and methods is as high as the motivation to explore them at home. The challenges start after the training. To change your training concept is difficult and the outside world doesn't really support you, especially those persons higher in hierarchy when you are working in a government structure. The Training of Trainers

concept on each level should take into consideration this gap and include elements of coaching, exchange and community of practice into the project design.

- Finally, the concept of soft skills is relevant for adult educators in many regions. Interesting enough, here in Asia, the debate about critical thinking, problem solving skills, teamwork and creativity is not exclusively linked to democracy, but to efficiency and competitiveness as well, as many governments (and the very influential business sector) are convinced that providing soft skills to the next generation will be essential to keep Asia's economy on track.

I fully understand Rabab Tamish's challenge with the term "adult education", the situation she describes actually is true for most of the regions of the world (e.g. here in South-East Asia we are mostly using the term Non-formal Education to describe what we do). While the terms kindergarten, school and university immediately trigger a firm picture within us, the concept of adult education first has to be explained in order to possibly generate an image. Globally, the concept of adult education does not provide an anchor for orientation, there is no recognisable image, and no distinctive associations, which are important for a brand. It lacks the perception of a useful benefit, a positive quality and a specific image related to the *adult education brand*. Maybe, that is one reason, why we face so many difficulties to secure funding for what we are doing?

I strongly believe that some fundamental principles are valid for adult education independently

from cultural patterns. At the core is an understanding that the learner decides what he/she needs and how he/she wants to learn. Adult Educators are facilitators. We should avoid any idea of “we know what is good for you”! Instead, it might be useful to re-consider Malcom Knowles’ assumptions about the adult learner:

- The need to know — adult learners need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
- Learner self-concept —adults need to be responsible for their own decisions and to be treated as capable of self-direction
- Role of learners’ experience —adult learners have a variety of experiences of life, which represent the richest resource for

learning. These experiences are however imbued with bias and presupposition.

- Readiness to learn —adults are ready to learn those things they need to know in order to cope effectively with life situations.
- Orientation to learning —adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks they confront in their life situations.¹

Finally, I agree very much with the author that the adult education community is in need of creating communities of practice, locally and regionally, to ensure more sharing will be possible and contextualisation of global knowledge as well as valuing of local knowledge can become a permanent reality.

1 Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F Holton III, Richard A Swanson: The Adult Learner, London and New York: Routledge, 2015

3.2

Comment by S.Y. Shah

EN

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I enjoyed reading the article - *Enhancing competencies in the Arab world: Issues to be considered* written by Dr. Rabab Tamish. It was academically stimulating as it has raised very pertinent issues generally confronted by most of the adult educators working in developing countries. Drawing on her experiences of working in the field of adult education –specially training of adult educators, Tamish has not only highlighted the challenges of operationalization of progressive adult education approaches and global set of skills and competencies in the Arab region but also argued that without taking into consideration the socio political contexts, it may be difficult to implement them. Besides the adoption of narrow definition of adult education confining it to adult litera-

cy-reading, writing and numeracy has greatly restricted the scope of activities in the Arab world. In the absence of professional institutions, there are not many adult educators in the Arab region having conceptual clarity and understanding of adult education. Since Arab region has several countries, which are at different levels of development and modernization, I am wondering whether the practice of adult education remains the same in all places. Are all Arab countries follow the narrow definition of adult education and confine their programmes to adult basic literacy? Did some of the countries take any initiative in moving from literacy to lifelong learning? What has been the role of UNESCO and impact of global consultations- especially EFA- on the formulation

of adult education policies and programmes in the Arab region?

Since Tamish paper aroused my interest in knowing more about the adult education scenario in the Arab region, I referred to *The state and development of adult learning and education in the Arab States: Regional synthesis report* by Abdel Wahid Abdalla Yousif (2009)* which examines the literacy situation in 17 of the 21 countries in the Arab region. Although the Arab region is made up of 21 countries spread over the two continents of Asia and Africa and has a population of 320 million people, it is estimated that there are nearly 65 million illiterates. However, the literacy rates in the region vary from one country to another, ranging from below 60 per cent in Morocco, Egypt, Mauritania and Sudan to above 90 percent in Kuwait and Palestine and above 95 per cent in Bahrain.

The report observes that:

the literacy and adult education programme in the vast majority of countries is under resourced, with little professional organisation and management, and limited vision and knowledge of how to bring about a substantial improvement in people's lives.....There are many constraints, but the biggest hurdle is the under-estimation of the magnitude of the struggle to achieve literacy. That seems to be a general pattern in most of the countries of the region. There is also a lack of political will to match the challenges posed by globalisation and the needs of the knowledge economy. Despite all the constraints that have put literacy and adult education in a straight-jacket, all countries in the region endeavour to sponsor innovation and good practice, ranging from the use of ICTs in programme delivery (Sudan, Palestine and Egypt) to the design of model learning environments (Saudi Arabia and Oman) where illiteracy-free zones and the learning village models stand out as examples.

As mentioned in the Report, thousands of NGOs are involved in education in general, and litera-

cy and adult education in particular, in Sudan. An important player is Sudan Learning Organisation, one of whose outstanding contributions is the "Building Literacy"- post-literacy project. Its main objective is to build literacy through discussion among learners and through writing of what they discuss. The key strengths of the project are its use of imaginative texts, its employment of well-trained facilitators, and its use of distance learning techniques. According to one source, a new participatory literacy paradigm has emerged in the NGO sector, which neither regards illiteracy as simply a deficit nor speaks of eradicating illiteracy. The acquisition and use of literacy is viewed as part of a long-term process in which a community or a society seeks to effect its own cultural and social transformation. Despite all the constraints that have put literacy and adult education in a straight-jacket, all countries in the region endeavour to sponsor innovation and good practice, ranging from the use of ICTs in programme delivery (Sudan, Palestine and Egypt) to the design of model learning environments (Saudi Arabia and Oman) where illiteracy-free zones and the learning village models stand out as examples. Tunisia's literacy programme has enabled some learners to break through the poverty cycle through income-generating projects; another innovative project has secured the inclusion of a special supplement aimed at neo-literates in a weekly newspaper. There has also been the creation of clubs for self-teaching under the guidance of adult education societies.

Based on the review of the history of education over the last 50 years in the Arab region, the Synthesis Report reveals a deeply-rooted tradition of civil society organisation (CSO) involvement in literacy and adult education drawing inspiration from Islamic religion which encourages learning from cradle to grave and helping others learn. A wide spectrum of CSOs, including trade unions, professional associations, students' unions, women's groups and political parties are working independently or in partnership with government

agencies. They also work closely with regional and international donors who seem to be attracted by their efficiency and sense of innovation and accountability. The contribution of CSOs to literacy and adult education is very wide indeed, ranging from the mobilisation of resources, to teaching and supervising classes, negotiating with donors, the training of instructors, and providing support to poor families. All the national reports assert the valuable and, to some, indispensable role of CSOs in helping programmes to achieve their objectives.

While there is no dearth of adult education programmes in the Arab region, their scope and impact has been very limited. Since several eval-

uation studies of adult education programmes conducted in different parts of the world have traced the ineffectiveness of adult education programme to inadequate and ill-conceived training of adult educators, the challenge is to develop professionally qualified and competent adult educators. Based on my experience of working in the field of training of adult educators, I have realized the importance of professionalization of adult education programme. The initiative needs to be taken by the civil society organizations and universities.

- [*http://uil.unesco.org/adult-learning-and-education/international-conference-confintea/state-and-development-adult-learning](http://uil.unesco.org/adult-learning-and-education/international-conference-confintea/state-and-development-adult-learning).

3.3

Comment by Ayah Abubasheer

EN

Palestinian activist based in Gaza Strip. She holds a master's degree in Global Politics (Global Civil Society) from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She is currently working with UNDP as a civil society coordinator.

Thank you to ICAE for initiating this virtual seminar. I find this article very interesting and I share the opinion that we should contextualize the processes of adult education in the Arab world. Agreeing with the three vital challenges described in the article, I would like to consider the following as key issues to be highlighted in any relevant discussion:

- I emphasize that the political changes happening in the Arab world have badly affected citizens' lives and limited their opportunities in achieving progress and change in life's fields including the field of adult learning and education. As Human Rights and freedom are not integral parts in the social life of Arab societies, such reality has been even intensified amidst the current political and economic instabilities. Due to decades of oppressive

regimes and dictatorships in the Arab World, the political culture is described as more subjective rather than participatory one. Citizens have negative attitudes about their role in their communities, and more importantly, their ability to make a change in their societies at large. How to enhance a political culture where citizens are active and positive about their role, and that they can make a change in their societies? I think this is a main challenge for adult learners. I also believe that this is a mission for civil society organizations to address. So far, it has been addressed through different approaches, mainly through trainings and awareness raising initiatives which lack continuity and not as strategic approach.

- Addressing poverty in a sustainable way. For instance, we need to provide a framework to shift donor assistance from emergency relief to job creation, recovery and social and economic development, particularly focusing to engage women in this process.
- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults by enhancing non-formal learning methods outdoors.
- The writer mentions the gap between theory and practice and discusses the importance of enhancing adult learners' life competencies and skills such as critical thinking. I strongly believe that the educational systems in the Arab world confine students' free and innovative thinking in a very systematic and institutionalized way from basic education stages till graduation from universities. Even after graduation, for a civil servant, for example, who works in an I/NGOs and holds

a Masters or PhD and wishes to give academic courses in the university beside her/his work in a civil society organization, the rules of this organization- or even the university- obstruct that. For instance, priorities in adult education in Palestine is not mainly illiteracy but rather the quality of education (literacy rates reached 94.9 percent for females and 98.5 percent for males in 2015 though gap is still in favor of males by 3.6 percent). To be agents of change we have to get our scopes broadened and to work on shuttering the exciting separation and lack of -or false sometimes- integration between the academic world, from one side, and the civil society sphere and non-governmental education, from the other side.

In Solidarity,
Ayah Abubasheer

4 The new Skills Agenda for Europe

by Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth

Dana Bachmann is Head of the Vocational Education and Training, Apprenticeships and Adult Education Unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.



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Abstract – *The European Commission has published major proposals to tackle a number of challenges faced by the EU in the field of skills and human capital. These aim to improve the quality and relevance of skills formation, make skills and qualifications more visible and comparable, and improve skills intelligence and information for better career choices.*

The European Commission, in June 2016, published a major package of proposals aiming to encourage the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU) and a wide range of stakeholders to work together to increase their efforts to “strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness”: the new Skills Agenda for Europe¹. This new Skills Agenda for Europe sets out to address a number of important challenges and opportunities:

- The digital transformation of the economy is re-shaping the way people work and do business; digital skills are needed for all jobs, from the simplest to the most complex. They are also needed for everyday life, and a lack of digital skills may lead to social exclusion
- The EU workforce is ageing and shrinking, leading in some cases to skills shortages; yet labour markets do not draw on the skills and talents of all; for example, wom-

en's rate of employment remains below that of men.

- The quality and relevance of the education and training available in Member States vary widely, which contributes to increasing disparities in countries' economic and social performance.
- The skills that people acquire outside formal education – online, at work, through professional courses, social activities or volunteering can often go unrecognised.

Furthermore, there are significant skills gaps and skills mismatches: many people work in jobs that do not match their talents, although many employers say they have difficulty finding people with the skills they need to grow and innovate. These skills mismatches hinder productivity and growth.

Most importantly, the Commission also draws attention to the high proportion of European adults who lack adequate reading, writing, numeracy and digital skills, putting them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Around 70 million adults – a quarter of the adult population – are affected. The new Skills Agenda highlights the role of skills as a pathway to employability and prosperity. With the right skills, people are equipped for good-quality jobs and can fulfil their potential as confident, active citizens. In a fast-changing global economy, skills will to a great extent determine competitiveness and the capacity to drive innovation. They are a pull factor for investment and a catalyst in the virtuous circle of job creation and growth. They are key to social cohesion. For all these reasons, the Commission believes that more needs to be done to encourage people to acquire and develop skills throughout their lives. This will require significant changes to policy, reforms of education and training systems and smart investments in human capital.

The new Skills Agenda for Europe is structured around three priority areas, which are quite

self-explanatory. We need more and better skills ("Improve the quality and relevance of skills formation"). We need to put the skills we develop to good use ("Make skills more visible and comparable"). We need to better understand what skills will be demanded to help people choose what skills to develop ("Improve skills intelligence and information for better career choices"). The following sections outline the main challenges identified by the Commission, and its proposals for tackling them.

Improving the quality and relevance of skills formation

Acquiring skills is a lifelong process, and starts when people are very young. More and more, evidence shows that policies to increase attainment alone are not sufficient: the quality and the relevance of what people learn are now centrestage. Many young people leave education and training without being sufficiently prepared to enter the labour market, to start their own business or cope with dynamic changes in society and economy.

The Commission is proposing a set of actions to improve skills formation across all life stages, with actions ranging from strengthening basic skills for adults to mainstreaming digital skills and making VET a first choice.

Strengthening the foundation: basic skills

To support more and better skills, the first step is an appropriate level of basic skills – literacy, numeracy, digital skills – for everybody. It is therefore not surprising that one of the actions proposed by the Commission focuses on this: the proposal for a Skills Guarantee aims to provide low qualified adults access to flexible tailored upskilling pathways to improve these skills or progress towards an upper secondary qualification.

Europe faces a basic skills challenge. More than 65 million people in the EU have not achieved a qualification corresponding to upper secondary level. This rate varies significantly across EU countries, reaching 50% or more in some. Around a quarter of the European adult population struggles with reading and writing, and has poor numeracy and digital skills. Numeracy, literacy and basic digital skills are essential to access good jobs and participate fully in society. These are also the building blocks for further learning and career development. This was recently brought home to Commissioner Marianne Thyssen (who is responsible, amongst other things, for skills) when she and Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands met with Sam Riley [photo], a man who has been able to turn his life around because he received support with his literacy skills. The Commissioner keeps his handwritten letter in her office as a reminder of the importance of helping people to improve their basic skills.

Yet, across the EU, the adults mostly in need of engaging in learning participate very little in life-long learning. On average, only 10.7% of adult Europeans participated in any education and training in 2014, again with significant variation between countries and against an EU target of 15% set to be reached by 2020. But an analysis of the participation of low-qualified adults in education and training shows even lower participation rates, varying from below 1% in some countries to over 20% in others. On average in the EU only 4.3% of low-qualified adults – that is, the group most in need of learning – participate in education and training.

Europe faces a basic skills challenge. More than 65 million people in the EU have not achieved a qualification corresponding to upper secondary level.

To improve the employment opportunities and overall life chances of low-skilled adults in Europe,

the Commission has made a proposal to help low-skilled adults – both in-work and out of work – to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital skills and, where possible, to develop a wider set of skills leading to an upper secondary education qualification or equivalent. The proposal is that Member States should introduce a Skills Guarantee, which would involve offering to low qualified adults: (a) a skills assessment, enabling them to identify their existing skills and their upskilling needs; (b) a package of education or training tailored to the specific learning needs of each individual, and (c) opportunities to have their skills validated and recognised. The proposal was developed based on existing good practices, in EU Member States and beyond, and calls for establishing strong coordination and cooperation mechanisms to make the Skills Guarantee a reality. These new upskilling pathways would take into account the different skills levels and training needs within the very wide group of low-qualified individuals. They would lead to training in literacy, numeracy or digital skills for those who need them. For those who are ready to engage in further learning, the pathways could lead further: to a qualification at EQF level 4 or equivalent certifying the acquisition of a broader set of key competences. The overall aim of the Guarantee is to help people with the weakest skills and educational background to develop the skills they need to access and progress in quality work and actively take part in society, as well as to boost employability, competitiveness and support fair and balanced growth, reaping the full potential of digital and technological advancements. By addressing the needs of this wide target group, the proposed Skills Guarantee would support policies aimed at overcoming social inequalities faced by people with low skills and give them a fair chance to improve their lives and avoid poverty and social exclusion.

Making vocational education and training (VET) a first choice

Forecasts in several Member States indicate that there will be a shortage of people with vocational qualifications in the future. VET is valued for fostering job-specific and transversal skills, facilitating the transition into employment and maintaining and updating the skills of the workforce according to sectoral, regional and local needs. However, for many young people and their parents initial VET remains a second choice. VET needs to increase its attractiveness, for example through quality provision and flexible organisation, allowing progression to higher vocational or academic learning, and closer links with the world of work. Business and social partners should be involved in designing and delivering VET, which should include a strong work-based dimension, whenever possible coupled with an international experience. The Commission will promote opportunities for learners to undertake a work-based learning experience as part of their studies, support partnerships between learning providers, research and business to foster joint work on higher vocational programmes, and launch a first European Vocational Skills Week in 2016 to showcase excellence in VET.

Building resilience: key competences and higher, more complex skills

Formal education and training should equip everyone with a broad range of skills, which opens doors to personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment. These include literacy, numeracy, science and foreign languages, as well as transversal skills and key competences such as digital competences, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, problem solving or learning to learn, and financial literacy. Early acquisition of these skills is the foundation for the development of higher,

more complex skills, which are needed to drive creativity and innovation. These skills need to be strengthened throughout life, and allow people to thrive in fast-evolving workplaces and society, and to cope with complexity and uncertainty. While some of these competences already have an established place in educational systems, this is not typically the case for key competences such as entrepreneurship and citizenship, or transversal skills. Where some Member States have taken steps to incorporate them in curricula, this has not always been done consistently. To promote a shared understanding of two of these competences, the Commission has developed reference frameworks for digital competences (now taken up in 13 Member States) and entrepreneurship.

Under the new Skills Agenda, to help more people acquire a core set of skills, the Commission intends to launch a revision of the European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning². The goal is to develop a shared understanding of key competences and to further foster their introduction in education and training curricula. The revision will also provide support for better developing and assessing these skills. Special attention will be paid to promoting entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mind-sets, including by encouraging practical entrepreneurial experiences.

Getting connected: focus on digital skills

The rapid digital transformation of the economy means that almost all jobs now require some level of digital skills, as does participation in society at large. The collaborative economy is changing business models, opening up opportunities and new routes into work, demanding different skill sets, and bringing challenges such as accessing upskilling opportunities. Robotisation and artificial intelligence are replacing routine jobs, not only on the factory floor, but in the office. Access

to services, including e-services, is changing and requires that users, providers and public administrations have sufficient digital skills. E-health, for instance, is transforming the way people access and receive healthcare. The demand for digital technology professionals has grown by 4% annually in the last ten years. Yet the number of unfilled vacancies for ICT professionals is expected to reach 756,000 by 2020. Furthermore, almost half the EU population lacks basic digital skills; with around 20% of people having none at all. Member States, business and individuals need to rise to the challenge and invest more in digital skills formation (including coding/computer science) across the whole spectrum of education and training. The Commission is launching the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition to develop a large digital talent pool and ensure that individuals and the labour force in Europe are equipped with adequate digital skills.

Making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable

Qualifications signal to employers what people know and are able to do but rarely capture skills acquired outside formal learning institutions, which therefore risk being undervalued. Identifying and validating these skills is particularly important for people with lower qualifications, the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment, for people who need to change career path and for migrants. It helps people better showcase and use their experience and talent, identify further training needs and take up opportunities for re-qualification. Differences between education and training systems, however, make it difficult for employers to assess the knowledge and skills of people with a qualification from another country than their own.

Under the new Skills Agenda for Europe, the Commission proposes actions to improve the transparency and comparability of qualifications and to support the early profiling of migrants' skills and qualifications.

Improving transparency and comparability of qualifications

The European Qualifications Framework³ for lifelong learning (EQF) was established to make it easier to understand and compare what people have actually learned (learning outcomes) while gaining their qualification. It has encouraged actors from different national educational sectors to work together to design coherent national qualification frameworks based on learning outcomes. The Commission has put forward a proposal for revising the EQF in order to make it more effective in helping employers, workers and learners to understand national, international and third-country qualifications. The initiative should thus contribute to a better use of available skills and qualifications for the benefit of individuals, the labour market and the economy.

Early profiling of migrants' skills and qualifications

Understanding the skills, qualifications and professional experiences of newly arrived migrants is a challenge for many countries. Identifying migrants' skills early on can help determine the first steps needed to integrate them into their host society and the labour market. This may involve referring them to appropriate training (including language training, business training or apprenticeships available through the European Alliance for Apprenticeships), or to employment services. The Commission proposes a number of measures to more rapidly integrate third country nationals, including a tool to assist receiving countries to identify and document the skills, qualifications and experience of newly-arrived Third Country Nationals and to support the training of staff in reception facilities as well as making available online language learning for newly arrived migrants.

Improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices

The third priority area focuses on the skills data availability and its usage by policy makers, education and training providers, learners and employers.

Better information for better choices

Whether seeking jobs or deciding what and where to learn, people need to be able to access and make sense of available skills intelligence. People also need to (self-)assess their skills and present their qualifications effectively; and employers need more efficient and effective ways of identifying and recruiting people with the right skills.

The Commission will submit proposals to set up an intuitive and seamless online service platform providing webbased tools for documenting and sharing information on skills and qualifications and free self-assessment tools by building on the good results of the Euro-pass⁴ Framework. It will also further improve data on skills needs and trend by web crawling and big data analysis for offering accurate and realtime information on skills for the use of individuals, employers and policy makers.

Boosting skills intelligence and cooperation in economic sectors

Current and future skills needs vary across different sectors of the economy. New sectors emerge or change radically. The supply of the right skills at the right time is important for competitiveness

and innovation. A major challenge for industry is to better anticipate and manage these changes. To improve skills intelligence and tackle skills shortages in specific economic sectors, the Commission is launching a Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills. It will help mobilise and coordinate key players, encourage private investment and promote more strategic use of relevant EU and national funding programmes. Sectoral skills partnerships, in industry and services, will be set up to identify skills needs and develop concrete solutions, such as joint development of higher VET opportunities and business-education-research partnerships and to promote the recognition of sectoral qualifications and certifications. Sectors targeted in a first stage include automotive, maritime technology, space, defence, textile and tourism.

Better understanding the performance of graduates



Understanding the skills, qualifications and professional experiences of newly arrived migrants is a challenge for many countries.

Universities and VET providers prepare young people for working life, so they need to understand labour market trends, know how easily their alumni find jobs, and adapt their programmes accordingly. Students need this information to make informed choices on what and where to study.

Better information on the labour market outcomes for graduates is needed. Mechanisms for tracking tertiary graduates have been developed in a number of Member States and the Commission plans to support Member States in improving information on how graduates progress on the labour market.

Conclusion

The new Skills Agenda sets out a joint agenda for the EU, Member States and stakeholders. The

goal is to reach a shared vision and commitment to work together on improving the quality and relevance of skills formation in order to keep step with the rapidly changing skills requirements of the labour market, equip everyone with a minimum set of basic skills and make qualifications easier to understand, helping workers and learners to move around more easily within the EU.

The European Commission has invited the European Parliament and the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions to endorse the Agenda and to support its implementation, in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

Notes

- <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>
- <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:c11090>
- [https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f\[0\]=im_field_entity_type%3A97#](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f[0]=im_field_entity_type%3A97#)
- <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>

You can already find the articles in English, French and Spanish here: <https://www.dv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-832016-skills-and-competencies/>

4.1

Comment by Shermaine Barrett

EN

Phd, Senior Lecturer, University of Technology, Jamaica, President, Jamaican Council for Adult Education, Vice-President (Caribbean) International Council for Adult Education

Having read the article written by Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth titled, The New Skills Agenda for Europe I saw several themes that have currency in the international discourse around the topic of skills training, workforce education and training, vocational education and training. These themes include: the influence of the digital transformation of the workplace and its implication for work skills requirements; the challenge of robotisation and artificial intelligence; women employability; disparities in education and training; the need for recognition of non-formal learning; the importance of basic skills such as reading, writing, numeracy for work and further education and training; the link between skills, competitiveness and innovation; labour market intelligence and quality skills training; the need for and importance of quality and relevant training; flexible pathways for up-skilling and progression to higher vocational and academic learning; the need for vocational

training coordination mechanism; the need for training to be validated; skills and quality work; VET as a second choice; the need for higher, more complex skills in vocational education and training; and skill recognition and validation.

The scope of this response will not allow me to comment on all these themes and so I will comment on and present perspectives on a few of the themes drawing on our experience in the Caribbean Region.

The need for Quality and Relevant training

The need to provide quality and relevant skills training is a big issue for policymakers, practitioners and other stakeholders within the Caribbean region. This regional focus on quality and relevant skills

training is seen as a fundamental imperative for regional economic growth. As such this issue formed a key part of the driving force behind the establishment of the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA). This body brings together representatives of National Training Agencies (NTAs), bodies that serve as a single coordinating body, bringing together the disparate agencies and regimes delivering technical vocational education and training (TVET) within countries, and other key stakeholders within the region in a joint and concerted effort to ensure quality workforce training based on established standards. Also enabling the process of quality assurance within the Caribbean are the various National Councils of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) or Accreditation Councils that give focus to accreditation and quality assurance of training programmes. What is evident here is the intricate link between Bachmann and Holdsworth themes of the need for strong coordination mechanisms and the capacity to provide quality and relevant skills training.

The importance of basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy for work and further education and training.

It is accepted knowledge that reading writing and numeracy are foundational skills that form critical building blocks for advancement in work, education and training. The Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) is one example within the Caribbean region of an agency of the government that has as a key function the provision of this basic education for its adult citizens where necessary. However this basic literacy is not seen as an end in itself rather it is treated as only one rung in the ladder of work and education. Consequently, the work of the JFLL is closely aligned to skills training programmes and to entities such as the HEART Trust National Training Agency, the agency charged with the responsibility to govern the development and delivery of technical and vocational education and training in Jamaica and the Career Advancement

Programme (CAP), a programme which provides additional educational and vocational training opportunities for secondary students aged 16 to 18.

Skill recognition and validation

Skills recognition and validation is a very important issue among educators, policymakers, practitioners and other stakeholders in workforce education in the Caribbean. Focus on this issue has resulted in a number of initiatives among which are the Caribbean and National Vocational Qualification certification systems (CVQ and NVQ). The Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) is “an award that represents the achievement of a set of competencies that define the core work practices of an occupational area, consistent with the levels articulated within the Regional Qualifications Framework”. Trainees are expected to demonstrate competence in attaining occupational standards developed by practitioners, industry experts and employers. It is described as a recognized and portable qualification within the region because the associated standards when approved by CARICOM allow for easy movement across the Region. Complimenting the CVQ is the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) which is awarded at the country level as proof that trainees have the skills, knowledge and understanding to perform in accordance to workplace requirements. The award is given based on the trainees’ demonstration of performance outlined in the country’s Competency Standards for a qualification. These measures to recognize and validate vocational training are bolstered by the CARICOM Qualifications Framework and the development of National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) within countries of the region. These frameworks cover the span of qualifications recognizing the most elementary of competencies and performance outcomes (Levels 1 and 2) to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional or vocational education and training (Level 10) as well as experiential learning. Each of the 10 Levels is informed by learning outcomes that can support

a variety of education and career paths (Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission, 2015).

Need to develop higher more complex skills in vocational education and training

We live in an era of continuous and rapid technological advancement that gives rise to and drives knowledge based societies and economies. This phenomenon has led to profound changes in how we live, learn and do business. Occupations of these new economies call for skills referred to as 21st century skills such as: innovation, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, information, computer and media technology literacy. According to the OECD in the knowledge economy, memorization of facts and procedures is not enough for success in such contexts. They make the point that among other things educated workers need a conceptual understanding of complex concepts, and the ability to work with them creatively to generate new ideas, new theories, new products, and new knowledge and to understand scientific and mathematical thinking. For vocational education and training this calls for a transition from the hands on drill and practice approach to more complex higher level learning. One approach that is being used in Jamaica to accomplish this goal of developing more complex skills in TVET students is what is termed STEM integrated TVET. This approach to TVET teaching and learning integrates science technology, engineering and mathematics in the teaching of TVET specializations using the project based, engineering design approach. A major difference in this approach to TVET is the idea of broadly educating the students rather than simply training them to perform particular tasks (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The approach helps students to link the academic content to vocational and technical content and better prepares the student for work and for higher education. From our perspective it is anticipated that the STEM integrated TVET curriculum will also increase the attractiveness of vocational education for students.

Labour Market Intelligence and quality skills training

One of the key goals of vocational education and training is the preparation of students for work. Therefore TVE institutions must establish a close relationship with the industries relevant to the occupational areas students are studying to ensure training is relevant to the needs of the workplace. Additionally, technical vocational education needs to be dynamic and responsive to the constant technological changes in the society and new developments in various fields should be incorporated into the curriculum so that the graduates can compete and succeed in the job market. Labour market intelligence is one tool that enables training institutions to ensure a dynamic and responsive training system. Labour market intelligence aims to strengthen the connections between education and employment. The HEART Trust NTA in Jamaica recently launched its Labour Market Intelligence portal with the main objective to provide Labour Market Intelligence to assist users in:

- Identifying current and future jobs and skills gap
- Help training providers align training programs with labour market needs
- Helping individuals to make decisions about their career development
- Making decisions about upgrading employees' skills
- Accessing information on skills available on the labour market
- (<http://lmip.heart-nta.org/About.aspx>).

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- Although Serbia is not yet a member of the EU the largest number of the identified problems, in the text, relating to the competence and qualifications of the labour force are highly expressed in Serbia. For this reason, the guidelines recommended by the European Commission in the document a new Skills Agenda for Europe (adopted last year), are very useful for Serbia. The need to work in accordance with the recommendations is reinforced by the intention to reduce the unemployment rate in the country. Among the basic reasons of unemployment is the mismatch of needs and demand for personnel of certain occupations, qualifications and competences in the labour market.
- Bearing in mind the proposal for the provision of a Skills Guarantee, a new model of **Functional elementary adult education (FEAE)** can be indicated as an example of good practice from Serbia. FEAE stands for outcome-based education and education oriented towards development of certain sets of competencies. The three years teaching plan and programme of FEAE should lead to a double result: the ending of elementary education (in terms of the key and subject specific competencies) and initial vocational training (which programmes have been prepared in a way to respond to the local labour market needs, attendees' needs, and special jobs/occupations needs).¹
- Experience with the work of training centers - RTCs (for different categories of adults) in secondary vocational schools within the formal education system (have been developed in Serbia since 2003) shows good results in the employment of participants. Training programs of these centers are based on the need analysis for skills and trainings and are oriented towards the learning outcomes, formulated in terms of vocational competences.
- In addition to a whole range of activities that are necessary for the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda, we should particularly emphasize the necessity of professional training of personnel who need to work on their adaptation to the specific context and implementation. First, we think on activities, such as life-long career guidance and counseling; increasing opportunities for participation in formal education; preventing early school leaving; skills and training needs analysis; programming and increase in the supply of vocational training based on the needs analysis; recognition of prior learning, etc.

¹ See more in: *Procena ostvarenosti ciljeva i ishoda Programa ogleda funkcionalnog osnovnog obrazovanja odraslih*, (2013), Beograd: Zavod za vrednovanje kvaliteta obrazovanja i vaspitanja Republike Srbije; *Pravilnik o nastavnom planu i programu osnovnog obrazovanja odraslih*, (2013), Beograd: Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja Republike Srbije

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The paper entitled *The New Skills Agenda for Europe*, written by Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth explains very clearly the most recent political priorities recommended for European countries that belong to European Union (EU) in order to increase the level of mobility of workers in the workplace. Several recommendations are made, either related to the increase of literacy levels of adults, or to the investment in their professional development by fostering the promotion of transversal competencies and skills. The paper is written in a very positive and optimistic way, discussing the challenges for the future in EU in order to not leave anyone behind in the education field and labour market.

Although the principles of such New Agenda are of very high level in terms of intrinsic values to build a better society for all, perhaps the goals are too idealistic because of several factors that I would like to expose, considering mainly the reality of my country:

- The emphasis in economy seems to somehow silence the intrinsic needs and interests of workers as learning subjects, as well as their prior learning experiences. We cannot simply adapt people to respond to new requirements of labour market without considering their propensity to enroll in opportunities of education and training. Such propensity may be affected by previous experiences as adult learners, by their self-concept as learners, by their stereotypes, by their goals in life, etc.
- The *equality of opportunities* to potentially access new career opportunities, to develop new competences for labour market and to increase the literacy levels, including digital ones, doesn't mean equality of opportunities for effective enrollment of adults in such offers, and as a consequence it does not mean equality of opportunities for success. Several aspects may be pointed here for such reflection, from economic and familiar ones (familiar responsibilities of women, for example, with dependent children or older persons) to geographic ones (accessibility to training centres using public transports; the division between rural and urban areas).
- The burden of intersectionality of factors (personal identities and contextual factors) may prevent adults from enjoying the new opportunities for increasing their knowledge, employability and competitiveness. May be this is the reason why the authors of this paper highlights the fact that the participation rate of low-qualified adults in opportunities for enhancing their potential as members of the society is lower than the figures related to higher-qualified workers.
- It is not enough to trace ideal politics to solve actual problems of countries if the emphasis is not based on a systemic view of necessary changes that should occur in the different stakeholders. Focusing the individual within a functionalist view - that suppose that 'equip' (sic) people with skills needed to respond to labour market changing requirements - is the best way to disclaim society responsibilities as a whole.

- The defense of mobility across countries in EU and the integration of migrant people in the receiving countries are major challenges nowadays due to recent political and diplomatic incidents between nations and the fears of terrorism, with the increasing appearance of nationalist movements within each country.

In fact, the new 'political geography of the world' is dragging Europe to unforeseen and undesirable scenarios, and this cannot be absent in the design and implementation of its policies, whether they relate to the labor market or other social rights of people.

4.4

Comment by Farrukh Tyuryaev

EN

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After reading the article by Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth for several times, I caught myself thinking that many of the challenges and solutions presented in this article are both important and relevant to our region. Sometimes it seemed that the experts of the European Commission, who prepared this document also conducted in-depth analysis of the situation in our region. Here are some examples:

- Despite the considerable lag in the economic development of the countries of the region from the European ones, it is important to realize that the general development of the digital transformation of the entire labor market begins to play a significant role on the economies of the countries and on the lives of people of the region. This becomes even more important, given the considerable lag in the sphere of education of the region in the development of digital skills among the elderly and middle-aged people.
- The imbalance of education programs in terms of inclusion and consideration of special needs and characteristics of all groups; including people with different physical and mental limitations, and with

low employment rates among women, also occurs in the region. The efforts of the vocational education system of the region are needed to reduce this imbalance in education programs and in the management of the education system.

- Although, countries of the region have a common Soviet past and general principles and approaches to the development of the vocational education system, over the past 25 years of independent development they have largely developed their own systems. As a result, the systems began to differ in different countries of the region. It is difficult to say whether it is good or bad for each individual country, taking into account the specifics of development. But if one looks at regional integration processes and close links between labor markets and high labor migration in the region, the question of coordinated standards of the quality of vocational education becomes relevant.
- The role of informal and additional education in the region represented by civil society organizations, non-governmental and

non-profitable providers of educational services is quite high. Tens of thousands of people annually study at various trainings, short-term courses and receive various skills. In this regard, there is a rather high need for various forms of formal recognition of these forms of training by both employers and the society as a whole.

- In light of a rather high level of the general education of the population, twenty five years of independent development of the countries of the region, especially the first years of development of the “wild market” has led to the emergence of a huge number of people that are “functionally illiterate”. The needs of the labor market, a sharp imbalance in the level of wages in various spheres of the economy led to the fact that hundreds of thousands of doctors, teachers, engineers were forced either to leave for labor migration, or to change the sphere of activity, and become entrepreneurs.
- But, lacking appropriate professional skills, they needed special forms of additional or new vocational education. All this contributed to a significant extent to the economic regression faced by the Central Asian countries.

Therefore, it is also important for us within the region to understand that the time has come for the development of the co called “The New Skills Agenda for Central Asia”. And this agenda as well as in Europe should take into account three important factors:

- How can we improve the quality and relevance of skills formation?
- How can we make skills more visible and comparable?

- How can we improve intelligence and information skills for better career choices?

Here I would underline several important European lessons, taking from the abstract, which are relevant to our region:

- “To set of actions to improve skills formation across all life stages, with actions ranging from strengthening basic skills for adults to mainstreaming digital skills and making VET a first choice”
- “To develop a package of education or training tailored to the specific learning needs of each individual, and (c) opportunities to have their skills validated and recognised.”
- “Promote opportunities for learners to undertake a work-based learning experience as part of their studies, support partnerships between learning providers, research and business to foster joint work on higher vocational programmes”
- “To launching the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition to develop a large digital talent pool and ensure that individuals and the labour force in Europe are equipped with adequate digital skills”.
- “To propose actions to improve the transparency and comparability of qualifications and to support the early profiling of migrants’ skills and qualifications”.
- “To propose a number of measures to more rapidly integrate third country nationals, including a tool to assist receiving countries to identify and document the skills, qualifications and experience of newly-arrived Third Country Nationals and to support the training of staff in reception facilities as well as making available online language learning for newly arrived migrants.”
- “To develop the sectoral skills partnerships, in industry and services, will be set up to identify skills needs and develop

*The
European
new skills agenda
excellent example for
re-thinking in Central
Asia*

concrete solutions, such as joint development of higher VET opportunities and business-education-research partnerships and to promote the recognition of sectoral qualifications and certifications.”

The use of these ideas in our region significantly improved and raised the level and quality of vo-

cational education, contributing to both horizontal and vertical integration in the countries of the region the new “skills development agenda”. Such developed and jointly adopted policy would be an excellent platform for coordinating the efforts of all actors and stakeholders in the industry across all the countries of the Central Asia.

4.5

Comment by Carole Avande Houndjo

EN

*Coordinator of the Pamoja West Africa networking
(Reflect Network practitioners and supporters)*

The article on ‘The new Skills Agenda for Europe’ is a summary of the arrangements put in place by the European Commission to enable the 25% of the European population who lack adequate reading, writing, numeracy and digital skills to upgrade to standard with a view to fulfillment and effective participation in the development of the continent. In this article, the authors highlight the importance of setting-up relevant and high-quality lifelong skills acquisition and development mechanisms to ensure the technical and vocational training of young people and adults. This is what justifies the adoption of the foundation of basic skills for reading, writing, numeracy and digital technology by the European Commission. Despite the existence of these basic skills and the European certification framework, it is noted that the participation rate of adults in the education and training activities that could enable them to obtain a secondary school qualification is low.

In our view, Africa’s education and training stakeholders should be guided by these strategies of

the European Commission on Skills to reduce the illiteracy rate estimated at 38%¹ on the African continent. African civil society organizations need to pool their advocacy efforts to make decision-makers to design and implement education and training policies that foster the development of lifelong skills that impact on improving the living conditions of populations and serving as a bond for the preservation of social cohesion and peace. The context of globalization in which learners evolve imposes the design of the African framework of certification of learning. It is in this perspective that the ADEA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa) Triennial held in Ouagadougou in 2012 recommended to the Working Group on Non-Formal Education (WGNFE) to carry out a study on the design of a common base of skills integrating non-formal education in Africa. The dimension of non-formal education has been taken into account at the African level as it is a very important sub-sector due to the high proportion of young people and adults lacking basic reading, writing and calculation skills. Thus, the common Base designed by

1 <http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/dakar/education/literacy/>

the WGNFE/ADEA was validated in 2015 by the actors of education in Africa. However, it should be noted that the implementation of this common base of skills depends on a number of conditions, namely²:

- the involvement of all stakeholders in the process of testing the common base of skills (CBS);
- the articulation of the elements of the CBS matrix into intelligible and measurable results, allowing understanding and sharing by all;
- the translation of the general orientations of the CBS matrix into pedagogical terms at the level of classroom practice;
- the consideration of pan-African and multicultural skills in CBS.

Ultimately, we confirm **Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth's** argument that ongoing training of teachers and facilitators and the development of partnerships ensure the quality of relevant vocational education and training. On the other hand, the importance of digital skills is no longer to be demonstrated, even though they are still a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa because of the precariousness and extreme poverty in rural areas. We therefore encourage civil society organizations to offer target populations non-formal education and vocational training programs that are attractive and take into account digital skills and employment skills in a lifelong learning perspective

Commentaire du Carole Avande Houndjo

FR

Coordonnatrice du réseau Pamoja Afrique de l'Ouest (Réseau des praticiens et sympathisants de l'approche Reflect)

L'article sur "*la nouvelle stratégie en matière de compétences pour l'Europe*" est une synthèse du dispositif mis en place par la commission de l'Union Européenne pour permettre aux 25% de la population européenne n'ayant pas le niveau nécessaire en lecture, écriture, calcul et en compétences numériques de se mettre à niveau en vue de leur épanouissement et de leur participation effective au développement du continent. Dans cet article, les auteurs soulignent l'importance de la mise en place des mécanismes d'acquisition et de développement de compétences tout au long de la vie pertinentes et de bonne qualité pour assurer la formation technique et professionnelle des jeunes et adultes. C'est ce

qui justifie l'adoption du socle de compétences de base en lecture, écriture, calcul et numérique par la commission de l'Union Européenne. Malgré l'existence de ce socle de compétence et le cadre européen de certification, on remarque que le taux de participation des adultes est faible aux activités d'éducation et de formation pouvant leur permettre d'obtenir un diplôme de second cycle de l'enseignement secondaire.

A notre avis, les parties prenantes de l'éducation et de la formation professionnelle de l'Afrique devraient s'inspirer de ces stratégies de la commission de l'Union européenne en matière de compétences pour réduire le taux d'analphabétisme

² Extract from the General Report of the Policy Validation Workshop of the ADEA Working Group on Non-Formal Education, December 2015

estimé à 38%³ sur le continent africain. Les organisations de la société civile africaine doivent mutualiser leurs efforts de plaidoyer afin d'amener les décideurs à concevoir et mettre en œuvre des politiques d'éducation et de formation qui favorisent le développement de compétences tout au long de la vie ayant un impact sur l'amélioration des conditions de vie des populations et servant de ciment pour la préservation de la cohésion sociale et de la paix. Le contexte de globalisation dans lequel les apprenants évoluent impose la conception du cadre africain de certification des apprentissages. C'est dans cette perspective que la Triennale de l'ADEA (Association pour le Développement de l'Education en Afrique tenue à Ouagadougou en 2012 avait recommandé au Groupe de Travail de l'Education Non Formelle (GTENF) de mener une étude sur la conception d'un socle commun de compétences intégrant l'éducation non formelle en Afrique. La dimension de l'éducation non formelle a été prise en compte au niveau du continent africain car c'est un sous-secteur très important en raison de la forte proportion de jeunes et d'adultes dépourvus de compétences de base en lecture, en écriture et en calcul. Ainsi, le Socle commun de compétence conçu par le GTENF/ADEA a été validé en 2015 par les acteurs de l'éducation en Afrique. Toutefois il faut noter que la mise en œuvre de ce socle commun de compétence est tributaire d'un certain nombre de conditions à savoir⁴:

- l'implication de toutes les parties prenantes au processus d'expérimentation du socle commun de compétences (SCC) ;
- la déclinaison des éléments de la matrice du SCC en résultats intelligibles et mesurables, permettant la compréhension et le partage par tous ;
- la traduction des orientations générales de la matrice du SCC en termes pédagogiques au niveau de la pratique de la classe;
- la prise en compte des compétences panafricaines et multiculturelles dans le SCC.

En définitive, nous corroborons l'argument de **Dana Bachmann et Paul Holdsworth** qui stipule que la formation continue des enseignants et des facilitateurs et le développement de partenariats assure la qualité d'une éducation/formation professionnelle pertinente. D'autre part, l'importance des compétences numériques n'est plus à démontrer quand bien même elles constituent encore un grand défi en Afrique sub-saharienne à cause de la précarité et de la pauvreté extrême dans les milieux ruraux. Nous encourageons donc les organisations de la société civile à offrir aux populations cibles, des programmes d'éducation non formelle et de formation professionnelle attrayant et prenant en compte les compétences numériques et les compétences de l'emploi dans une perspective d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie.

³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/dakar/education/literacy/>

⁴ Extrait du rapport général de l'atelier de validation politique des études du Groupe de Travail de l'ADEA sur l'Education Non Formelle, décembre 2015

From Ecuador, researcher, international adviser, specialist in literacy and Lifelong Learning, Ex-minister of Education and Cultures

My comments refer to, and are triggered by, “The new Skills Agenda for Europe” by Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth, of the European Commission. I speak from the perspective of “developing countries” and of Latin America in particular. From this perspective it is always useful to see what Europeans are thinking and doing, not necessarily to do the same but rather to understand better our specific realities and needs. In the end, given the strong cultural dependence, our governments end up trying to follow and imitate Europe and/or North America (the classic and persistent “developing”/“developed” notion). Concepts, indicators, ideals, international co-operation, are focused on the global North.

The paper presents the new Skills Agenda for Europe. It sees skills as a pathway to employability and prosperity. It revolves around some problems and data identified as critical:

- A quarter of the European adult population (70 million) struggles with reading and writing, and has poor numeracy and digital skills, putting them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.
- More than 65 million people have not achieved a qualification corresponding to upper secondary level. This rate varies significantly across countries, reaching 50% or more in some.
- The adults mostly in need of engaging in learning participate very little in lifelong learning. On average, only 10.7% of adult Europeans participated in any education and training in 2014, with significant

variation between countries and against an EU target of 15% set to be reached by 2020. An analysis of the participation of low-qualified adults in education and training shows even lower participation rates, varying from below 1% in some countries to over 20% in others. On average in the EU only 4.3% of low-qualified adults – that is, the group most in need of learning – participate in education and training.

To improve the employment opportunities and overall life chances of low-skilled adults, the Commission has made a proposal to help low-skilled adults – both in-work and out of work – to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital skills and, where possible, to develop a wider set of skills leading to an upper secondary education qualification or equivalent.

The proposal is that Member States should introduce a Skills Guarantee, which would involve offering to low qualified adults: (a) a skills assessment, enabling them to identify their existing skills and their upskilling needs; (b) a package of education or training tailored to the specific learning needs of each individual, and (c) opportunities to have their skills validated and recognised.

The new Skills Agenda for Europe is structured around three priority areas: more and better skills; put the skills developed to good use; and better understand what skills will be demanded to help people choose what skills to develop.

Main challenges:

- Improving the quality and relevance of skills formation.
- Strengthening the foundation: basic skills (literacy, numeracy, digital skills) for everybody (“the proposal for a Skills Guarantee aims to provide low qualified adults access to flexible tailored upskilling pathways to improve these skills or progress towards an upper secondary qualification”).
- Making vocational education and training (VET) a first choice. Increasing its attractiveness, through quality provision and flexible organisation, allowing progression to higher vocational or academic learning, and closer links with the world of work.
- Building resilience: key competences and higher, more complex skills. These include literacy, numeracy, science and foreign languages, as well as transversal skills and key competences such as digital competences, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, problem solving or learning to learn, and financial literacy. - Getting connected: focus on digital skills.
- Making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable.- Improving transparency and comparability of qualifications.- Early profiling of migrants’ skills and qualifications.
- Improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices.
- Better information for better choices.
- Boosting skills intelligence and cooperation in economic sectors.
- Better understanding the performance of graduates from Universities and VET.

My comments and suggestions

The diagnosis and the proposal are centred around formal education and training. This remains, in fact, the main international approach to adult education and to education in general. The

“being knowledgeable” dimension of the Human Development Index (HDI) continues to refer to education and to formal education only, all ages: expected years of schooling, adult literacy rate, government expenditure on education, gross enrolment ratio all levels, mean years of schooling, population with at least some secondary education, primary school dropout rate, primary school teachers trained to teach, and pupil-teacher ratio in primary school. (As we see, these are the two indicators related to adult education: adult literacy rate and population with at least some secondary education). It is with these indicators that countries’ educational profile is defined.

Without ignoring the importance of these data and of the formal school system, I would like to stress the need to: revisit some concepts; insist on the critical importance of non-formal education and of informal learning not only in adult life but throughout life; consider other ways of thinking/organizing the question of learning for what; radically rethink - at least in our contexts - the eternal struggle with literacy and numeracy; reconsider adulthood and the adult age.

- Schooling versus education: education exceeds schooling. Many adults are eager to advance their education, not necessarily to get more schooling (i.e. completing primary and secondary education). For many young people and adults, completing secondary education implies a tremendous effort, meeting a bureaucratic requisite rather than having a pleasant and fruitful learning experience, and the economic and social reward may not be the one expected
- Education/training versus learning: Skills are not developed only through deliberate education and training efforts. Most skills are developed through a combination of formal and non-formal education and informal learning (reading, writing, parenting, arts, sports, work, travel, social

participation, volunteering, social service, etc.)

- Literacy and numeracy: They continue to be considered basic skills and they continue to be major problems throughout the world, in both 'developed' and 'developing' countries. In 'developing' countries, it is very common that people counted as 'new literates' often do not read and write autonomously and thus do not get to use reading and writing in their daily life. Also, often there is no evaluation involved, and no follow-up. We must radically rethink and improve the ways we conceptualize and do adult literacy, and stop cheating ourselves with fake statistics.
- Digital skills: In most 'developing countries' access to the Internet is still limited (50% or less of the population). Cell phones are widely used, also by adults and by the poor. But it is the younger generations that make the most use of computers and the internet. Internet policies focus on children and youth. Little is being done, and much more should be done, to offer adults and older adults meaningful access to the digital world.
- Learning for what?: There are many ways to think and deal with this question. Well-being and prosperity mean different things to different people and cultures throughout the world. Sumak Kawsay (Buen Vivir, Good Living), the indigenous paradigm proposed as an alternative to

the development paradigm, understands Buen Vivir as reaching a harmonious relationship between self, others and the environment. Thus, learning for what becomes learning to take care of oneself, learning to take care of others (family, community, peers), and learning to take care of the environment. These three domains lead to a holistic, alternative understanding of the whys, hows, and what fors of education and learning

- Adults and the adult age: Life expectancy has grown all over the world. As a result, the adult age has expanded. However, and despite the lifelong learning rhetoric, adults continue to be denied the right to education and the right to learn. Today, in many countries, education policies and programmes do not go beyond the age of 30 or 35. It is time to organize "adulthood" in different age groups also for education, training and learning purposes. While we oversegment childhood, adolescence and youth, we continue to refer to adults and to adult education as something that covers from 15 year olds to 90 year olds. This is a very effective strategy to ignore mature and older adults and to amputate the lifelong learning concept.

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Dear colleagues, compañeras and compañeros, thank you Sandra for your warm welcome and everyone for their thoughtful contributions. Rejoining the ICAE community brings back many memories from the 70s onward of lively debates and laughter, of wild and wonderful imagining, and of questions, conundrums and challenges that remain true today, only compounded by the current context. That said, the dreams and experiences I have shared with so many colleagues from ICAE, the World Social Forum, and beyond have given me great hope in the wisdom and commitment of social justice organizers, educators and activists. How we galvanize that knowledge and practice for the coming struggles is, for me, an overarching question of our time. Remembering conversations with dear friends and compañeras -- thank you especially Mariela Arce, Nani Zulminarni, Hope Chigudu and Lisa VeneKlasen, -- the fundamental question can be asked -- How do we combine the mighty wisdom of our hearts, minds and bodies in a new alchemy of pedagogy, people, and power?

Living in the aftermath of Trump's victory here in the U.S. and working with feminist activists, educators and social movements around the world, the topic of skills and competencies takes on an ever more urgent meaning -- what combination is needed to ensure a more just and healthy world in these times so that our communities, our countries, families and grandchildren can thrive across the borders and divisions we currently face.

In Just Associates -- JASS, we are confronting a mix of these challenges as we collaborate with

colleagues in strengthening activists, leaders and social movements, often working in contexts of fear, violence and repression. Several questions arise: Looking from an overall perspective -- How does our understanding of the many interactions of power, from oppressive to transformative, contribute to our awareness and actions? What do feminism and other pedagogies offer our approaches?

Looking at immediate threats and violence -- What skills and competencies are needed to create spaces and strategies that help protect, safeguard and inspire people and organizations? How does gender play out in these dynamics and approaches?

Looking at long term sustainability and survival and perhaps the most important question for the future -- What capacities and training initiatives are needed to ensure a new generation of organizers, facilitators, popular educators and catalysts capable of energizing and leading social justice processes of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and action -- loving, life-giving processes that help reinforce the health and well-being of ourselves, our communities and our mother earth? And what can we learn from current and past experiences that respond to this challenge?

ICAE offers a unique place to pursue these questions and dreams.

Thank you and onward,
Valerie Miller,
Just Associates

5 Soft skills in non-formal education: building capacities of the youth

by Priti Sharma



Priti Sharma has over 19 years of work experience in the development sector and has worked on issues related to local governance, civil society engagement, sexual harassment at the workplace and human resource management. She has worked as a researcher, trainer and coordinator. Currently, she is involved with PRIA International Academy (PIA) as Sr. Programme Manager.

Abstract – *This article describes the importance of soft skills with special focus on the youth and the non-formal education system. It takes readers through some of the efforts made by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) in bridging the gaps that exist today with regard to soft skills. Taking a clue from Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the broader discourse at global level, it tries to explain the scope and usefulness of soft skills.*

In recent years, emphasis on the importance of soft skills has grown all over the world. It is no longer enough to know the technical aspects of a job, but how this knowledge will transform into output. Our behaviour, attitude, communication

skills, etc., play an important role in the work place, and when looking for a job.

These have often been called 21st century skills, or soft skills. We are talking about knowledge which includes a broad set of skills, work habits and character traits that are believed – by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others – to be critically important to success in today's world, particularly in contemporary careers and workplaces.

Today, no one works in isolation. We are all connected to each other in a given job scenario. Multidisciplinary teams are needed to complete complex problems. To even address these complex problems or challenges we need soft skills. In this context, excellent knowledge of a subject without

a good relationship with the team and no skills in team leadership will end badly, and everyone will be unhappy.

Soft skills include work ethics, attitude, communication skills, emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes. Sooner or later the discussion on soft skills usually turns to the other variety. Hard skills refer to trade skills and subject matter expertise, e.g. accounting, typing, operating machinery, etc. They are quantifiable and their application is universal. Hard skills are specific teachable abilities that are needed to perform a job.

Why emphasis on the soft skills

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012 of UNESCO suggests putting education to work while talking about the youth and skills. Three skills that everyone needs to learn are presented. They are:

1. foundational skills that include literacy and numeracy and are a prerequisite for further education;
2. technical skills that are needed to do a job, e.g. operating a machine or accounting; and lastly
3. transferable skills that include things like creativity and communication.

Many authors/trainers of soft skills speak about the 4Cs of learning. They are: communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration.

Start with yourself. Look around you. The heterogeneity of groups working together has increased over the years. People, especially the youth, have been moving to other continents in search of better work opportunities. At workplaces, teams with diverse backgrounds work with newer communities and groups. These heterogeneous groups need the technical know-how to do a job as well as be sensitive and empathetic to the teams and groups that they work with.

Focus on the youth

Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education talks about increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. In many places, governments have also been promoting the use of skills through various programmes and policies.

The role of the youth in society has been evolving. Four roles stand out:

1. Civil Role – expectations about the ability to understand and influence civic decision making;
2. Environmental Role – understanding and being sensitive to one's own environmental issues;
3. Economic Role – the youth have to earn their livelihood in today's competitive scenario; and lastly
4. Social Role – understanding and appreciating the social differences of different communities.

Let's take India as an example. A recent economic survey concluded that by 2020, India's population would have an average age of 29. This makes it the only country with a surplus of young people in its population. These young people need to be suitably educated and appropriately skilled so they can participate in society and contribute to economic activities. Existing education systems may, at best, teach technical know-how, but not the soft skills that they still need to learn.

PRIA experience of working with the youth

PRIA has been acting as a facilitator through many of its programmes. These programmes focus on learning for the youth, with their purpose being to make these young people become agents for

change. PRIA also helps build up the capacities of the youth so they can take up various issues for their own communities. Recently, PRIA has focused on two broad thematic areas: first, working with the youth on the issue of prevention of violence against women and girls; second, focusing on a combination of skills for work and life by building capacities to use technology to map their own settlements for basic services such as drinking water, sanitation and electricity, etc. The capacity building approaches include interventions aimed at bringing about attitudinal and personal changes. These programmes have been based on principles of participatory action research to change the mind sets of the communities and challenge stereotypes. The interventions focus on combining skills for work and life.

The work on violence against women and girls has helped build the capacities of the youth to speak about the issue with their families, community, elected representatives and other stakeholders such as the police and health sector personnel. These youth, both men and women, belong to conservative and orthodox societal systems. To bring them together in teams working for common goals requires a lot of effort. The capacity building incorporates a holistic approach to help them face similar challenges on their own later in life. The programme on mapping the service delivery of basic services also uses a similar approach to engage with the youth to build capacities. Building capacities on communication, the importance of working in teams, collaboration and leadership, etc., also plays an important part.

Soft skills in non-formal education

Let's take a look at the importance of soft skills in non-formal education. We are talking about "an organised educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable learning objectives".¹

Non-formal education addresses the gaps in employability skills in numerous ways. Because soft skills are seen as increasingly important, employers also tend to assess these skills through various tests.

Unfortunately the current formal education system doesn't support the learning of soft skills. Formal education systems usually focus on foundational skills like reading, writing and technical skills. That leaves a wide gap. Non-formal education is well placed and prepared to react. This will ultimately facilitate better working environments, and lead to improved productivity.

Building for the region

PRIA and the DVV South and South East Asia regional office recently organised a workshop on promoting skills for the youth. The deliberations focused on things like: What kind of skills are to be emphasised in this region when it comes to working with the youth? Many countries participating in the workshop talked about building soft skills.

In the end, it was decided to work towards developing soft skills, especially for those working in the non-formal education sector. There are expectations that non-formal education could address the gaps in relation to soft skills. To develop this one step further, PRIA facilitated a training programme for the partners of DVV working in the non-formal education sector in Lao PDR. To mainstream the topic better, a manual was developed focusing on enhancing the understanding of practitioners in non-formal education on soft skills. The manual includes steps and activities for facilitating training on soft skills, and can be used as reference material to facilitate trainings on building understanding on soft skills. To reach a wider audience, PRIA and the DVV South and South East Asia regional office also conducted a training of trainers (ToT) in Cambodia which also

included participants from Vietnam and Lao PDR. Some of these participants were from the South-east Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO). This training of trainers was facilitated with an understanding to build on the issue of soft skills for those working in the non-formal education system and thus prepare trainers who would take this issue forward and reach to a larger group of persons.

Conclusion

Looking at the broader picture, the importance and awareness on the issue of soft skills have grown. The increase in mentions and focus on such skills in various reports and scholarly articles only confirms this fact. Looking at Asia, the emphasis on such skills has gained momentum. At the First Regional Central Asian Adult Education Forum Key Skills for Youth in 21st Century², organised by the DVV Central Asia Regional Office, participants emphasised the need to work on the issue of soft skills. Education systems should be in a position to prepare adults, especially youth, to deal with complex problems/challenges. Here the role of the state and other stakeholders is very important in engaging with the youth. It is imperative that the apathy of the

youth towards various systems is addressed on appropriate platforms. It is also important to support youth leadership in defining systems. Young people need to be involved in the decision making. This can be done by addressing the existing gaps and building capacities wherever needed, soft skills being one of the most important. Given this scenario, it is important to understand the existing mechanisms and work with them to promote building capacities on the issue of soft skills. This is especially true for the non-formal education sector due to its flexibility in promoting lifelong learning.

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You can already find the articles in English, French and Spanish here: <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-832016-skills-and-competencies/>

Context

This comment is motivated by Sharma's article titled soft-skills in non-formal education: building capacities of the youth published in the Adult Education and Development Journal by dvv International. It is within the framework of the 2017 ICAE Virtual Seminar based on the journal issue on skills and competencies <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/>. While I admire and subscribe to the justification for soft skills as articulated by Sharma, I argue that the rather controversial blending of developing these skills within a critical pedagogy is paramount.

Uganda just like India and many other developing economies is grappling with a huge population of unskilled young people. They are a generation of almost zero employment and zero descent quality of life due to the increasing unequal political, economic, education, trade and labour market patterns influenced by local and global forces. And as can be extrapolated from writings by Sharma and others, limited soft skills exacerbates the joblessness vulnerability of even the so-called educated young people from colleges and universities.

Understandably education and training interventions to bridge the soft skills-gap are tailored to serve labour market interests whose neoliberal ideological orientations are inherently extractive. The tendency is to mould young people with the

soft-skills to respect, uphold and perpetuate existing systems of generating, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Many times, non-formal and even formal education programmes emphasize soft-skills for maintaining political and socio-cultural systems that entrench inequality.

On one part I subscribe to Sharma's description of soft skills in non-formal education; and indeed wish for an expanded list that includes personal management, dealing with bias and personal prejudices among others. On the other, I argue that non-formal education programmes particularly those located in the adult education tradition needs to reclaim the emancipatory or transformative purpose (Ledwith, 2011; Avis, 2016). This inevitably brings into context the notion of critical pedagogy as espoused by one of the great thinkers of our time, Paulo Freire (Freire, 1993). Robert Jjuuko - Youth soft skills against injustice/ comment/sharma/ICAE Virtual Seminar 2017

The critical thinking that we are talking about should extend beyond good judgement within the bondage of dominant thinking. Young people are not just the future but the present drivers of our existence; I argue therefore that their package of soft skills ought to be blended to develop critical skills to interrogate power structure, policy and politics of our society. Young people's critical consciousness of existing inequalities and all sorts of injustices may not necessarily subordinate job market skills but Africa's long-term trans-

*Youth soft
skills against in-
justice: but of course
not subordinating
job aims*

formation agenda can only succeed if our young talents are truly influencing present and future history.

Our young generation must be supported to develop a deeper understanding of oppressive power bases, and to challenge social arrangements that perpetuate intergenerational poverty and its associated inequalities. For instance, dealing with repressive regimes and fake opposition is one critical thinking skill that young people in many African countries need to navigate manipulation and contribute to struggles for social justice and change. States and some sections of the civil society including the private sector design and implement youth employment or empowerment programmes that instead serve to silence, bribe or indoctrinate young people within a paternalism framework.

Education ought not to get trapped into false generosity and taking advantage of young people's vulnerability created by unfair social systems. Non-formal education programmes should embrace democratic pedagogies to engage young people into real learning dialogues (Hope & Timmel, 1989). These emancipatory learning spaces

can help young people to deepen their critical thinking skills to (i) identify valid political and economic arguments (ii) detect propaganda (iii) detect inconsistencies and hypocrisy (iv) identify and challenge unfair trade systems and slavery work conditions (v) question, critique and deconstruct established gender and sexual discriminatory practices such as female genital mutilation and forced marriages (vi) meaningfully use social media platforms for their personal and career development.

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5.2

Comment by Limbani Eliya Nsapato

EN

Edukans International, Country Representative for Malawi, Lilongwe

I would like to congratulate Priti Sharma for writing a lucid article which describes the importance of soft skills with special focus on the youth and the non-formal education system. I also congratulate the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) for its efforts in bridging the gaps that exist today with regard to soft skills.

I wish to agree that the importance of soft skills cannot be overemphasised. This is based on ev-

idence from various studies and conferences. For instance, in Malawi lack of soft skills or transferrable skills is considered one of the reasons why many graduates are unemployed (AFIDEP, 2016)). A study by Jones *et al* (2016) in Malawi also demonstrated that inspirational talk had a positive effect on HIV testing especially among males. A 2013 global study established that there was general consensus that soft skills are a powerful indicator of long-term success, with 85% success

rate compared to 25% for hard skills (IYC, 2013). The same study also noted that new hires lacked communication skills and struggled with time management skills (organizational and prioritization skills) regardless of their level of education or position. In addition many entry-level employees lacked customer service and interpersonal skills, making collaboration with colleagues and problem-solving among team members difficult (IYC, 2013). The need for soft skills among youth was empathised in a study which showed that one of the reasons unemployment was higher among the youth was that they often lacked of skills (Yu, 2012). A study done in Benin, Senegal, Kenya and Burkina Faso, showed that employers preferred candidates who were better in soft skills (Results for Development, 2012).

In light of the evidence cited above it is imperative that soft skills should be taken seriously. At the same time, however, there is need to strike a balance between soft skills and hard skills, given that all employers look for a varying mix of non-cognitive or technical skills (depending on the sector) (Results for Development, 2012).

The demand for soft skills like in South East Asia is high even in Sub Saharan Africa, given the high illiteracy figures especially among older women and younger girls. A factsheet produced by UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UNESCO UIS) in 2016 showed that 26% of all illiterate adults lived in sub-Saharan Africa, second to South East Asia (51%). And that the GPI was 0.77 among adults and 0.86 among youth, representing the lowest in the world (UNESCO UIS, 2016). The challenge was more acute for the young people, who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and lack the necessary soft skills—communication, teamwork and customer service—to qualify them for available jobs on the market (IYC, 2013).

I would like to say something about the scope of soft skills. I do agree that the range of skills to be promoted should include work ethics, attitude,

communication skills, emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes such as critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. In Africa we need a mix of this but more so the ethics and morals, critical thinking, and leadership given the high levels of corruption and conflict situations on the continent. Corruption, especially, is robbing the continent of the hard earned cash needed for development. Estimates show that African countries annual lose at least \$50 billion annually due to corruption and illicit financial flows (\$148 billion a year (UNECA, 2015). The recent leadership impasse in the Gambia after the presidential election showed that there was need to foster leadership and governance skills among the people of Africa. Furthermore, Africa needs to invest more in entrepreneurship skills to address the high levels of unemployment on the continent and in critical thinking skills to question the often autocratic leaderships in many countries. Thus, the nature and scope of soft skills taught among the youth and others should reflect the country context.

It would be important for education systems to play a critical role in promoting soft skills within the policy and curriculum framework especially for secondary and Technical vocational education and training (TEVET), where much emphasis is on hard skills. Much effort should be given to the informal economy given that most workers are self-employed and have to carry out a very wide range of tasks (Results for Development, 2012). Following the adoption of the 2030 Education Agenda, it will be imperative for governments to undertake policy and curriculum reviews to incorporate soft skills within their education systems. However, once incorporated, the next issue would be the delivery and also assessment of the skills since these require nuanced approaches. For instance, according to a study carried out in Nigeria, assessing soft skills requires a combination of direct and indirect assessment methods, which is not easy for many teachers (Durowoju, 2014). Furthermore, delivery mechanisms should

combine both traditional and non-traditional mechanism like through e-learning which is big challenge in many developing countries especially in Africa where Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) infrastructure is weak (IYC, 2013). Moreover, there is need for education systems to ensure adequate financing for education in general and for incorporation of soft skills programmes in particular, given the challenge of financing rocking many governments.

In conclusion, it should be re-stated that “soft skills” are critical for sustainable development of many countries, and given that such skills are yet to be incorporated in many countries’ education systems there is need for a lot of advocacy (by civil society) and partnership development (with private sector) to ensure full incorporation. Once again, many thanks for this stimulating topic.

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5.3

Comment by Fanny Gómez

EN

Pedagogue. University Javeriana. Bogota

It is very important to consider, in the processes of non-formal education of young people, the acquisition of soft skills, as a way to achieve -with- in SDG 4- the increase of young people having the necessary skills to:

- access to quality employment (paid and stable) which requires, apart from fundamental and technical skills, a spirit of teamwork, communication and solidarity; initiative, leadership, responsibility, productivity and ability to work in diverse, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural groups.
- participate in civic and political life with critical thinking, ability to solve social, economic and environmental problems and decision-making to be agents of change.

The reality of youth unemployment¹ that disproportionately affects young people, as a result of trade liberalization and productive transformation in the last 30 years, is a factor that pushes young people from emerging or developing coun-

"In young people society has placed hope and yet, they are the least supported. They tend to be spoken by society, their voice commonly underestimated, classified in extremes as promise and fatality: they are seen as the great bet of a better future - the vehicle of development in times of crisis. On the other hand, they are perceived as the threat to the present, to the established order"

Ernesto Rodríguez

tries, especially from Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe, to migrate, whether from the countryside to the city or from one country to another, demanding them to adapt fast to the new requirements of soft skills, such as qualification for work. For this reason, the challenge is to foster them in the processes of non-formal education of young people, which are sometimes the only gateway of poor young people to the world of work.

From my experience as a feminist popular educator, member of the Popular Education Network among Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, I believe that we must consider the heterogeneity of situations and groups that make up the category of "young people" and the "modalities of being young" according to the sociocultural and economic context they belong to, where there are variables such as social class, race, gender, urban or rural condition, ... Mentioning the **gender variable**, which defines and values roles and tasks according to sex, reserving mainly for men

¹ The ILO estimates that the global unemployment rate of 13.1 percent in 2016 will remain at that level during 2017 (compared to 12.9 percent in 2015).

the public sphere of production and for women the private sphere of reproduction and caring of others, it is to be regretted the unawareness of domestic work, family work or care work as labor, recognized by international organizations such as ECLAC. Hence, within interpersonal skills should be included all those oriented to the development of learning for the equitable participation of men and women in the world of family work and care.

In the same vein, it is important to recognize that, in general, universal y homogénea, no se considera la diversidad entre los grupo de jóvenes, en razón de la edad, el sexo, la étnia, la clase social, entre otras diversidades.

En este aparte se debería considerar young women are in the reproductive stage and must face entering the world of paid work with gestation and maternity which, for the most part, is a real contradiction for women in the popular sectors. For many of them the dilemma is: to study, to work or to be a mother. The conciliation between family time and working time represents a great

difficulty. Their life project becomes frustrated, the search for welfare restricted and job security lost. Therefore, a differential approach in interpersonal skills should be considered, as well as in other skills. And, both men and women should acquire skills for family development (well-being).

The relevance of the application of a gender perspective and a differential approach to the analysis of youth and training of soft skills to enter the world of work seems unquestionable to me

Regarding the statement "Unfortunately the current formal education system doesn't support the learning of soft skills", this is not entirely true, at least in ALC, since formal curricula, for the most part, include training of social and communicative skills, as well as those for citizens coexistence; what happens is that only some of these skills are taught, the programs and methods used are not adequate, they tend to homogenize learning, ignoring human diversity, previous skills and knowledge and personal projects of school populations.

Comenatario de Fanny Gómez

Pedagogue. University Javeriana. Bogota

E

Es muy relevante considerar en los procesos de educación no formal de las personas jóvenes, la adquisición de habilidades blandas, como camino para lograr dentro el ODS 4 el incremento de jóvenes que poseen las competencias necesarias para:

- acceder a empleo de calidad (asalariado y estable), que requiere además de capacidades fundamentales y técnicas, espíritu de

Habilidades interpersonales en la educación no formal: fomentar las capacidades de los jóvenes"

trabajo en equipo, comunicación y solidaridad; iniciativa, liderazgo, responsabilidad, productividad y capacidad para trabajar en grupos diversos, interdisciplinarios y transculturales.

- participar en la vida ciudadana y política con pensamiento crítico, capacidad de resolución de problemas sociales, económicos y ambientales y de toma de decisiones para ser agentes de cambio.

La realidad de desempleo juvenil ² que afecta de manera desproporcionada a las personas jóvenes, como efecto de la apertura comercial y la transformación productiva en los últimos 30 años, es un factor que empuja a los jóvenes, de países emergentes o en desarrollo sobre todo de América Latina, África y Europa Oriental, a una migración, ya sea del campo a la ciudad o de un país a otros, que exige adaptaciones rápidas a las nuevas exigencias de habilidades blandas, como calificación para el trabajo. Por ello, fomentarlas es el reto, en los procesos de educación no formal de los jóvenes, que a veces son la única puerta de entrada de las personas jóvenes pobres, al mundo del trabajo.

Desde mi experiencia de educadora popular feminista, integrante de la Red de educación Popular entre Mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe, creo que se debe considerar la heterogeneidad de situaciones y grupos que componen la categoría “joven” y las “modalidades de ser joven” según el contexto sociocultural y económico de pertenencia, donde juegan variables como clase social, raza, género, condición urbana o rural, ... Haciendo referencia a la **variable género**, que define y valora roles y tareas de acuerdo al sexo, reservando prioritariamente para el hombre la esfera pública de la producción y para la mujer la esfera privada de la reproducción y el cuidado

de los otros, es de lamentar el desconocimiento del trabajo, doméstico, trabajo familiar o trabajo del cuidado como ámbito laboral, reconocido por los organismos internacionales como la CEPAL. De ahí que se deberían incluir dentro de las habilidades interpersonales, todas aquellas que se orienten al desarrollo de aprendizajes para la participación equitativa entre hombres y mujeres en el mundo del trabajo familiar y del cuidado.

“En los jóvenes la sociedad ha depositado la esperanza y, sin embargo, ellos resultan los menos apoyados. Tienden a ser hablados por la sociedad, comúnmente subestimada su voz, clasificados en extremos como la promesa y la fatalidad: son vistos como la gran apuesta de un mejor futuro -el vehículo del desarrollo en tiempos de crisis-. Por otro lado, se les percibe como la amenaza al presente, al orden establecido”

Ernesto Rodríguez

En la misma línea, es importante reconocer que generalmente universal y homogénea, no se considera la diversidad entre los grupo de jóvenes, en razón de la edad, el sexo, la etnia, la clase social, entre otras diversidades.

En este aparte se debería considerar las mujeres jóvenes, se encuentran en la etapa reproductiva, y deben afrontar el ingreso al mundo del trabajo remunerado con la gestación y la maternidad, lo cual la mayoría de las veces, para las mujeres de sectores populares se constituye en verdadera contradicción. Para muchas de ellas la disyuntiva es: estudiar, trabajar o ser madre. La conciliación entre el tiempo familiar y el tiempo laboral representa una gran dificultad. Se frustra su proyecto de vida, se restringe la búsqueda de bienestar, se pierde seguridad laboral. Por esto se debería considerar un enfoque diferencial en las competencias interpersonales, al igual que en las demás

2 La OIT estima que la tasa mundial de desempleo de 13,1 por ciento en 2016, permanecerá en ese nivel durante 2017 (frente a 12,9 por ciento en 2015).

competencias. Y, tanto hombres como mujeres deberían adquirir competencias para el desarrollo (bienestar) familiar.

La pertinencia de la aplicación de una mirada de género y de un enfoque diferencial al análisis de la juventud y la formación de habilidades blandas para el ingreso al mundo del trabajo me parece incuestionable

En cuanto a la afirmación “Desgraciadamente, el actual sistema de educación formal no respalda

la adquisición de habilidades interpersonales”, no es totalmente cierto, al menos en ALC, ya que los currículos formales, en su mayoría, contemplan la formación de habilidades sociales, comunicativas y para la convivencia ciudadana; lo que sucede es que se inculcan solo algunas de esas habilidades, los programas y métodos empleados para ello no son adecuados, tienden a homogenizar los aprendizajes, desconociendo la diversidad humana, las habilidades y conocimientos previos y los proyectos personales de las poblaciones escolares.

5.4

Bolanle C. Simeon-Fayomi

EN

SCAIS Fellow/Visiting Senior Lecturer/Researcher, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

I find this article particularly of great interest as discuss in literature and education in all its form has being taken a very cursory view of soft skills as structures that are believed to have great impact on the output expected from the youths today. Particularly interesting is the articulation of the efforts of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and gathering of resources about soft skills informally in India. Having worked on researches on soft skills, I found many similarities with my own experience in the informal area on soft skills. The manuscript is well constructed, and with some revisions could make a nice contribution to the related field. To strengthen this article, so it would be ready for publication, I would suggest the following:

1. The language use should be more formalized. “Let’s take...” should be eliminated and also all the type of informal use of words and phrase should be eliminated to give the work more reading appeal in the virtual communities.
2. The abstract should be reconstructed from the inert sense of ‘description’ to

‘appraisal or review’ The abstract should also include the context of the article in order to give direction to readers from initial contact

3. The site of teaching and learning of soft skills seems too broad. India has is a vast collection of complex cultures, ethnicities and to generalize about all these groups oversimplifies the complexity that exist within formal and non formal teaching settings. Also, some mention must be made of what have hitherto be and why PRIA work is innovative and what kind of bridge (s) it is building on what particular gap (s).
4. Since at the later end, the article started focusing on a region, it would be practical to refer to this context early in the work and build the subject of the intervention around it. This will help the author focus on the region which is familiar rather than the whole of India. A knowledge of ‘how the principles of participatory action research to change the mind sets of the

communities and challenge stereotypes' is being done would strengthen the manuscript to provide a short explanation of an example and how this is significant in a nonformal educational experience. Following an inclusion of this example with the review of the literature on it, the using of it make sense of what is happening and could be quite informative.

5. The introduction has some sweeping statements and the opening of the manuscript is not supported by the literature. I would suggest strengthening the introduction with references

6. The conclusion contains a myriad of over-generalizations about the importance of soft skills in education scheme, youth involvement, gaps etc., without any resources or data to support this is quite problematic. Where did the information that soft skills development has /will help to form a better youth come from? Also, although the article is potentially informative, there is still the need to answer questions, include literature where and when necessary and a good bit more explanation.

Thank you.

5.5

Comment by Jose Roberto Guevara

EN

Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University, Australia

Reading Priti Sharma's paper on "Soft skills in non-formal education: building capacities of the youth" published in *Adult Education and Development* 83 (2016) have made me reflect on three challenges that we as adult educators may think about. These challenges are: (1) the dominant notion that soft skills are for employability; (2) the dichotomy between hard and soft skills as they relate to formal and non-formal education, and (3) the challenge for teaching and learning soft skills to be able to 'measure' learning outcomes.

The value of soft skills for young people is indeed not a contested statement. What I would contest is how the value of soft skills continues to narrowly linked to how it is essential if young people are to secure "success in today's world, particularly in contemporary careers and workplaces" (Sharma 2016). This dominant assumption that for skills to

be relevant they must be linked to work is what I would argue diminishes the potential application of soft skills to contribute to both work and life, especially within our rapidly changing world.

However, I appreciate how this link to the world of work helps to promote and advance the teaching of soft skills for young people. Recent research in Australia, by The Foundation for Young Australian (fya) entitled "The New Basics: Big Data reveals the skills young people need for the New Work Order"¹ in 2016 has identified eight transferable skills they have called enterprise skills. These are problem-solving, communication skills, digital literacy, teamwork, financial literacy, creativity, critical thinking and presentation skills. They describe them as "not just for entrepreneurs; they are skills that are required in many jobs." And that these skills have been "found to be a powerful predictor of long term job success." (fya 2016: 5).

1 https://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-New-Basics_Update_Web.pdf

They continue to say that these skills are sometimes called “generic, soft or 21st century skills.” However, they also emphasise, and I wholly agree that they are “a set of skills and characteristics that enable young people to confront the challenges of change and navigate a complex future” (fya 2016:5).

It is this emphasis to confronting change and the ability to navigate the future that I feel needs to be emphasised to young people, rather than emphasising that these skills will promise work. In my university role managing the postgraduate program in International Development at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, I often am asked this question – “What job does this degree promise when I graduate?” I honestly tell them that I am not in any position of promising jobs but instead ask them – “Do you think that when you graduate after two years, there will still be development issues that need to be addressed?” They say, “Yes.” So I say, clearly there is work that needs to be done. But will this work continue to be paid by the same employers, like development NGOs that often seem to be the first choice of students of international development? I inform them that due to the decline in government funding for foreign aid, particularly in Australia, most development NGOs have had to shed staff. However, I explain that part of the knowledge and skills we want young and passionate development workers to learn is the capacity to not just understand the complex nature of development but to also to see how they can begin to find resources to support the kind of work they want to do. So I acknowledge that part of this will require my students to be entrepreneurial, but equally important is for them to be able to understand why they need to learn to be entrepreneurial, if they hope to effectively contribute to achieving sustainable development in our rapidly changing world (not just the world of work).

The second challenge is the tendency to create a dichotomy between formal and non-formal ed-

ucation, often in terms of learning the hard skills in the formal education system and the soft skills in the non-formal education system. I think that emphasising this dichotomy is no longer helpful. Instead, as Priti Sharma mentioned, we should indeed advocate that quality and relevant education must recognise the holistic and interconnected nature of skills, as recognised by the three categories of basic, technical and transferable. They are not just relevant for work and life in the future, but in fact essential if young people are to contribute to shaping a future that does not repeat the same mistakes we have made in the past. Not only will both formal and non-formal education have a role to play, they will need to begin to work more effectively together if we are to ensure an education system that will continue to be relevant to young people in the future.

Finally, one of the challenges we face as adult educators is how to effectively teach young people these soft skills because they are difficult to assess in the traditional approach we “test” skills. And therefore, also difficult for the learner to themselves acknowledge what they are learning or have learned. I would argue that classroom-based methods is no longer appropriate for the teaching, learning and assessment of soft skills.

In conclusion, it is the combination of the recognition that soft skills is not just about work, therefore they can be learned and applied in our daily lives; that both formal and non-formal education have significant roles to play in the teaching and learning of relevant work and life skills, and therefore both formal and non-formal education will need to continue to develop innovative ways of working together to effectively teach and assess the development of these relevant skills, if we are truly to contribute to quality education for sustainable development.

PRIA's training and manual on soft skills, which they have conducted with the DWV South and

South East Asia office, is an example of a valuable contribution to addressing the challenges I have identified. I invite our participants in this virtual seminar to share their own innovative and cre-

ative approaches to helping to advance our practice of teaching and learning soft skills, not just for employability but for the sustainability of our communities.

5.6

Comment by Balázs Nemeth

EN

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The article of Priti Sharma from PRIA on the roles and impact of soft skills collected and developed in non-formal education to develop the capacities of the youth resembles the realities that young generations have to be supported with accessible sources and places of non-formal education so as to found and develop soft skills necessary to successfully integrate into community-based, organisational forms of labour, production and/or services most of potentially employable young people face in the knowledge economies.

In this respect, Sharma provided a convincing approach in bridging the collection, development and sharing of soft skills and related knowledge with potential climate in education, training and, moreover, of labour organisations which can effectively demonstrate soft skills developments amongst the youth by relevant programmes and services for their future employees and clientele.

The aspect I would have raised, according to the above topic, is what the impact of lifelong learning policies and strategic thinking have had on the development of soft skills in non-formal environments since this issue has got an approximately twenty-years of background both in UNESCO and OECD, and EU protocols referring to the development of lifelong learning competences and related skills. Still, what new context we can find in the paper is the connection of the development of soft skills to better positioning of the youth in

the labour market and in the society via stronger and broader soft skills.

I also think that the development of 4Cs, namely, communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration is generally difficult for a great number of youngsters and young adults in most continents for the lack of places, accessible opportunities and even relevant situational learnings. Most employers would basically reject a role to help the youth develop their soft skills while most of the require young employees to hold high level soft skills from the early stages of their career. Sharma correctly refers to the mission and responsibilities of local communities and organisations having been engaged in social capacity building amongst youngsters to get this target group of adult education into accessible and friendly community-based adult learning and education in order to step forward on basic skills without which the 4Cs could not be developed.

It is a significant element of this article to call UNESCO's EFA goals from 2012 into consideration its reference to basic skills, like foundational skills based on literacy and numeracy, technical skills to support job-related working activities, and, thirdly transferable skills like communication and creativity. According to Sharma, not only organisational implications, but also mobility-based intercultural factors influence the success of organisational work, production and understanding. However, not only communication, but also language skills

play, in my understanding, a key role and may be recognised as driver of both economic and social interactions. Although, Sharma reflects mainly to skills-based issues of the youth in the social context, that is why she explains some changing social roles of the youth, but this narrative provides a rather complimentary reasoning about non-formal education and impacts in skills-development, this article must be valued for its attempt to make it clear that it is very important societal challenge to prepare the youth for balanced social interactions. This approach basically gives a totally different aspect of skills development than those provided mainly around and with a direct support of OECD, the World Bank, ILO, and some other employment oriented groups and platforms.

At the same time, next to mobility, migration, it is demographic changes that urges educational and training providers to recognise the choices and barriers for cross-sectoral non-formal education and training, especially for youngsters. The example Sharma brought from India explains the shortages and barriers of educational providers in skills and competence development which, in reality, is not very far away from capacities of educational providers in other continents, for example in Europe.

The PRIA-based case is an outstanding example in that its programmes for the youth focus on engagement of youngsters in education and learning, also on development of skills and competences in the area of crime prevention and to help them discover the capacities of their own settlements in water supply, housing and waste management. Moreover, PRIA's input particularly raises some need-oriented actions upon the

changing roles, status and working and living conditions of women in the scope of equal opportunities and contrasted to organisational provision of non-formal educational services. Issues like collaborations, team work and leadership are also demonstrated through activities in non-formal education of PRIA having formed partnerships with DVV international on youth education to signal soft-skills development for trainers and trainees coming from local societal environments. The move of such programmes into cross-border partnerships raises some distinguished matters referring to professional development of trainers,

Additionally, one may conclude that it is an outstandingly relevant and hot issue to develop the skills and competences of trainers and mentors who work with adult learners wanting to explore the choices of and barriers to their own soft skills to be developed. Yet, another angle beyond professional development of adult learning professionals is the matter is also tackled through special events where useful and practical knowledge can be gathered around the development of soft skills. The focus on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders is a significant input of this article, and that is one can only recommend it to be explored by other ALE (adult learning and education) providers, NGOs and platforms working with young adults across India, Pakistan, and other countries in Indo-China so as to tackle illiteracy, unemployment and social exclusion. Reconfiguration of learning provision can also be an appropriate approach to bridge existing practices of local and regional realities can be related to international trends and issues. That is what makes capacity building meaningful for young adults, both as educators or as lifelong learners.

Colombian National Group of the Network of popular education among women of Latin America and the Caribbean

I am grateful to the ICAE and the DVV for this new opportunity to learn about different ideas, experiences and impacts around the world on adult education and development, particularly on the skills and competencies that the current world projects. The main presentations and the comments of the participants have aroused many ideas in me. I share some of them.

In the first place, I emphasize the complexity of the world shown by the different opinions, in which the characteristic of being diverse and varied of humanity, both in social, political and cultural aspects, is highlighted, which turns the universal proposals of skills and competences more complex and calls for re-dimensioning, that in the critical perspective that guides the social movement for “lifelong” education, tends to restrain the processes of economic globalization that seek to homogenize lifestyles around the planet. Within this framework of complexity, I consider it is very important to recognize the tension between the strength of the logic of the global capitalist market and its laws and the pursuit of human development based on other aspects of human life such as the yearning for knowledge and the freedom to know, which could be irreconcilable according to the trend adopted by global policies of education and development of people.

The documents shared in the seminar show that the realities in the field of education in the Arab, Central Asian and European regions, and certainly all the others, are quite dissimilar among each other and widely complex and heterogeneous in their interior. Keeping this in mind is essential,

especially now that a broad movement of observance has begun on the development of the 2030 Development Agenda, its objectives and goals, for which it has been determined to have indicators of measurement that allow to see the overall general progress along with regional and national particularities, because the diversity indicated excludes the possibility of standardizing expected results outside regional contexts.

Rabab Tamish of Palestine refers to the drastic political, cultural and economic transformations that the Arab world has experienced in the last decade, which brings particular characteristics to that region and incites us to consider different elements when formulating programs of adult education, such as “the indigenous meanings of adult education and the way in which these perceptions influence the quality of the services provided to students” given that, according to Rabab, there have been mismatches between theory and practice in the way competences are presented in the international context and the way in which they are applied at the local level. The increase in the illiteracy rate, the lack of job opportunities among graduates and young people, and the political instability that impedes the exercise of human rights are the context in which the skills and competencies that youth and adult education may project there should insert, as their ideal way to meet the demands for the right to education. Likewise, mention is made of the difficulty of assimilating in the region the concept of education, which is more related to teaching practices for infants than with the teaching offered to adults, which is then equated with processes of

Skills and competences in a world of diverse and complex regions

“literacy”; similarly, other terms used in the international community for adult education processes vary in meaning. The latter indicates that the issue of language and culture are not insignificant when formulating proposals and actions on skills to be implemented globally. The tension between the commitment to the universal enjoyment of cultural goods produced by all humanity and the particular conditions for achieving this in each region and country is one of the pitfalls to be taken into account in the formulation of alternative proposals in education.

Besides, the new Skills Agenda for Europe described by Dana Bachmann and Paul Holdsworth to “strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness” shows a facet of the current concerns of the European Union with regard to adult education, which is much focused on labor force training, labor markets and employment skills. Thus, even if the workforce training proposed includes training in basic skills (reading, writing, calculation and digital knowledge), participation in post-secondary training programs and vocational training is central to this agenda as a regional mark, the development of transversal and specific capacities for work and the transition towards employment, according to sectoral, regional and local needs. In the case of formal education and training that “opens doors to personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment”, mention is made to literacy, numeracy, science and foreign languages as skills for this, as well as key competences such as digital competences, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, problem solving or learning to learn, and basic financial literacy, thereby giving priority to training for work. Cristina María from Portugal notes that the emphasis on economics seems to silence the intrinsic needs and interests of workers as subjects of learning, as well as their previous experiences of learning. The realities of other regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, where together with the needs of labor training the development of humanistic, scientific and

technological capacities and skills is required, in order to allow countries to overcome the backwardness and economic, cultural and political dependence, outlines other agendas for people’s education and development.

Farrukh Tyuryaev from Tajikistan shows another reality of educational possibilities, in this case in countries with a common Soviet past, where 25 years of independent development have resulted in the ups and downs of integration processes in the new labor markets where labor migration is predominant. Coordinating standards of professional quality in this context has been complex and has created an educational problem framed by the fall of a high level of general education of the population, which in its insertion in the “wild market” results in the emergence of functional illiteracy and a labor market with a strong imbalance in the wage level in various areas of the economy, leading many professionals to labor migration, to change of activity and to become entrepreneurs lacking the appropriate professional knowledge and needing additional or new professional education forms. “All this contributed to a significant extent to the economic regression faced by the Central Asian countries”. Farrukh proposes, for the area, to develop a package of education or training tailored to the specific learning needs of each individual, and opportunities to have their skills validated and recognised. This reality of great particularities is revealing and therefore, of the need to deploy greater creativity and innovation in the formulation of global educational agendas.

Secondly, in the midst of such complexity, I wonder why, although in most regions of the world there is concern regarding the low employment rates among women, the higher illiteracy rates among them and the wage disadvantages imposed on them by the labor market, a reflection on skills and competences raises little commitment to change that state of things. In a global labor market characterized by the sexual division of labor, it would have to be weighed if the skills

and competencies for labor offered are undifferentiated for men and women. From an equity perspective, men and women should be empowered for differential competencies that lead to the construction of another possible world, where family and caring work be the equal responsibility of men and women and it be considered by the international community as skills and capacities to be universalized, as well as remunerated labor activities in all fields of knowledge that can be performed and paid more equitably by women and men. It is also important to consider that populations such as the indigenous and Afro-descendant ones, that traditionally perform low-esteem and low-remunerated job services in many

countries may be able to move towards professional activities of greater social recognition and economic remuneration and to assert their contributions to universal culture.

Skills and competences for lifelong education with quality and equity for all should be thought, formulated and developed with a differential perspective. Thus, activities such as lifelong career guidance and counseling, which Aleksandra, from Serbia, rightly proposes to make adult education programs more pertinent, could become guidance activities towards equity between different population groups and the practical universality of the exercise of human rights.

Comentario de Imelda Arana Sáenz

E

Colectivo Nacional de Colombia de la Red de educación popular entre mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe

Agradezco al ICAE y la DWV esta nueva oportunidad de conocer diferentes ideas, experiencias y proyecciones alrededor del mundo sobre la educación de las personas adultas y el desarrollo, particularmente sobre las habilidades y competencias que el mundo actual proyecta. Muchas ideas me han suscitado las ponencias centrales y los comentarios sobre las mismas ofrecidas por las y los participantes. Comparto algunas de ellas.

En primer lugar destaco la complejidad del mundo que nos muestran las diferentes opiniones, en las cuales se destaca la característica diversa y variada de la humanidad, tanto social como política y cultural, lo cual complejiza y convoca a re-dimensionar las propuestas de habilidades y competencias de carácter universal, que en la perspectiva crítica que orienta el movimiento so-

cial por la educación “A lo largo de toda la vida”, propende por frenar los procesos de globalización económica que buscan homogenizar los estilos de vida en todo el planeta. En ese marco de complejidad considero de gran importancia el reconocimiento de la tensión existente entre

la fuerza de la lógica del mercado global capitalista y sus leyes, y la búsqueda de un desarrollo humano basado en otros aspectos de la vida humana como son el anhelo por el conocimiento y la libertad de saber, que al parecer pueden llegar a ser irreconciliables según la tendencia que adopten las políticas globales de educación y desarrollo de las personas.

Los documentos compartidos en el seminario muestran que las realidades en el campo de la educación en las regiones Árabe, de Asia Central y Europa, y seguramente todas las otras, son

Habilidades y competencias en un mundo de regiones diversas y de gran complejidad

bastantes disímiles entre si y ampliamente complejas y heterogéneas en su interior. Tener esto presente es clave, especialmente ahora cuando comienza un amplio movimiento de observancia sobre los desarrollos de la Agenda de Desarrollo 2030, sus objetivos y metas, para lo cual se ha determinado contar con indicadores de medida que permitan ver los avances generales globales junto a las particularidades regionales y nacionales, debido a que la diversidad señalada excluye la eventualidad de estandarizar resultados esperados al margen de los contextos regionales.

Rabab Tamish de Palestina se refiere a las drásticas transformaciones políticas, culturales y económicas que ha vivido el mundo árabe en la última década, lo cual imprime características particulares a esa región y nos incita a considerar diferentes elementos al momento de formular programas de educación de adultos, tales como “los significados autóctonos de educación de adultos y la forma en que estas percepciones influyen en la calidad de los servicios prestados a los alumnos” pues según Rabat han existido desajustes entre la teoría y la práctica en la manera en que se presentan las competencias en el contexto internacional y la forma en que son aplicadas en los ámbitos locales. El incremento en la tasa de analfabetismo, la falta de oportunidades de empleo entre los graduados y los jóvenes y la inestabilidad política que impide vivir el ejercicio de los derechos humanos son el contexto en el cual se han de inscribir las competencias y habilidades que proyecte la educación de personas jóvenes y adultas allí, como su manera idónea de atender las demandas por el derecho a la educación. Igualmente es significativa la mención a la dificultad de asimilar en su región el concepto de educación, más aún a las prácticas de enseñanza para infantes, con la enseñanza que se ofrece a las personas adultas, lo cual allí se equipara con procesos de “alfabetización”; similarmente otros términos con que se alude en la comunidad internacional a los procesos de educación para personas adultas varían de significado. Esto últi-

mo indica que el asunto de la lengua y la cultura no son cosas de poca importancia el momento de formular propuestas y acciones sobre habilidades a ser implementadas globalmente. La tensión entre la apuesta por el disfrute universal de los bienes culturales producidos por toda la humanidad y la condiciones particulares para la concreción de ello en cada región y país, es una de los escollos a tener en cuenta en la formulación de las propuestas alternativas en educación.

Por su parte la agenda de nuevas cualificaciones para Europa, descrita por Dana Bachmann y Paul Holdsworth para “reforzar el capital humano, la empleabilidad y la competitividad” muestra una faceta de las preocupaciones actuales de la Unión Europea con respecto a la educación de personas adultas, muy centrada en la capacitación de fuerza laboral, los mercados laborales y los talentos para el empleo. Así que, aun cuando la formación de fuerza laboral propuesta incluya la formación en capacidades básicas (lectura, escritura, cálculo y digitales), la participación en programas de formación postsecundaria y la formación de tipo profesional, es central en esta agenda, como impronta regional, el desarrollo de capacidades transversales y específicas para el trabajo y la transición hacia el empleo, de acuerdo con las necesidades sectoriales, regionales y locales. En el caso de la educación y formación de tipo formal que “busca dotar a las personas de capacidades que propicien el desarrollo individual y la realización personal, la inclusión social, la ciudadanía activa y el empleo” se mencionan como capacidades para ello la lectura, la escritura, el cálculo, las ciencias y los idiomas extranjeros, al igual que competencias clave, como las habilidades digitales, el espíritu emprendedor, el pensamiento crítico, la resolución de problemas o aprender a aprender, y los conocimientos financieros básicos, con lo cual se está priorizando la formación para el trabajo. Esto lo advierte Cristina María de Portugal al señalar que el énfasis en la economía parece silenciar las necesidades intrínsecas y los intereses de los trabajadores

como sujetos de aprendizaje, así como sus experiencias previas de aprendizaje. Las realidades de otras regiones como América Latina y el Caribe, donde simultáneamente con las necesidades de formación laboral se requiere el desarrollo de capacidades y habilidades humanísticas, científicas y tecnológicas que permiten a los países salir del atraso y la dependencia económica, cultural y política, perfilan otras agendas para la educación y el desarrollo de las personas.

Farrukh Tyuryaev de Tajikistán muestra otra realidad de posibilidades de la educación, en este caso en países con pasado común soviético, donde 25 años de desarrollo independiente han derivado en altibajos en los procesos de integración a los nuevos mercados de trabajo en que la migración de mano de obra es predominante. Coordinar normas de calidad profesional en ese contexto ha sido complejo y ha creado una problemática educativa enmarcada por la caída de un alto nivel de educación general de la población, que en su inserción en el “mercado salvaje” da lugar al surgimiento de analfabetismo funcional y a un mercado de trabajo con fuerte desequilibrio en el nivel de los salarios en diversos ámbitos de la economía, llevando a muchos profesionales a la migración laboral, al cambio de actividad y a convertirse en empresarios careciendo de los conocimientos profesionales adecuados y necesitando formas educación profesional adicionales o nuevas. “Todo ello ha contribuido en gran medida a la regresión económica que enfrentan los países de Asia Central”. Farrukh propone para la zona, desarrollar un paquete de educación o de formación adaptado a las necesidades específicas de aprendizaje de cada individuo y oportunidades para validar sus habilidades y reconocidas. Es reveladora esta realidad de grandes particularidades y por tanto de la necesidad de desplegar mayor creatividad e innovación en la formulación de agendas educativas globales.

En segundo lugar, y en medio de tal complejidad, me pregunto porqué, aún cuando en la

mayoría de regiones del mundo preocupan las bajas tasas de empleo entre las mujeres, las mayores tasas de analfabetismo entre ellas y las desventajas salariales que les impone el mercado laboral, una reflexión sobre habilidades y competencias poco suscita apuestas para cambiar ese estado de cosas. En un mercado laboral mundial caracterizado por la división sexual del trabajo habría de sopesarse si las habilidades y competencias para el trabajo ofrecidas sean indiferenciadas para hombres y mujeres. Desde una perspectiva de equidad, hombres y mujeres deberían ser habilitadas y habilitados para competencias diferenciales que conduzcan a la construcción de otro mundo posible, donde el trabajo familiar y de cuidado sea responsabilidad igualitaria de hombres y mujeres y que ello sea considerado por la comunidad internacional como habilidades y capacidades a universalizar; igualmente que las actividades laborales remuneradas en todos los campos del saber puedan ser desempeñadas y remuneradas con mayor equidad cada día por mujeres y hombres. Igualmente considerar que poblaciones como las indígenas y afrodescendientes que tradicionalmente desempeñan en muchos países oficios de servicio de baja estima y remuneración, puedan transitar hacia a actividades profesionales de mayor reconocimiento social y remuneración económica y hacer valer sus aportes a la cultura universal.

Las habilidades y competencias para una educación a lo largo de toda la vida con calidad y equidad para todas y todos deberían ser pensadas, formuladas y desarrolladas con perspectiva diferencial. Así las actividades como la orientación profesional permanente y el asesoramiento, que con justa razón propone Aleksandra de Serbia para hacer más pertinentes los programas de educación de personas adultas, podrían convertirse en actividades de orientación para la equidad entre los diferentes grupos poblacionales y la universalidad práctica del ejercicio de los derechos humanos.

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When I was younger, so much younger than today, Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* was almost obligatory reading. Despite being written in the 1930s, *Brave New World* continues to speak to a 21st-century world dominated by mass-entertainment, digital technology, medicine and pharmaceuticals, the arts of persuasion, and the hidden influence of elites. Somehow reading the article by Bachmann and Holdsworth on the New Skills Agenda for Europe I was reminded of Huxley's futuristic world and at the same time found myself asking 'more skills and competences, for what?' Employability and prosperity – to "strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness"? The new Skills Agenda highlights the role of skills as a pathway to employability and prosperity but we cannot talk about employability and prosperity in a vacuum. Implicit to this perspective is a specific conception of development. The positive agenda refers to prosperity and social cohesion but there is no mention of well-being, creativity, human fulfilment, good old-fashioned happiness, social justice, decent work and human dignity. And education is framed in the similar terms – skills, competences, competitiveness, digital skills, skills for the labour market, vocational education and training, skills formation. With that I went back to read the other contributions to the debate so far.

The discussions and commentaries on the World Social Forum and the world we want have the advantage of questioning what is the world we

want to live in and suggesting possible skills and competences¹ necessary for building another possible world. However, **what challenged and provoked me were the questions posed by Cristina Maria Coimbra Vieira and Rosa Maria Torres. Cristina Vieira discusses the new agenda from the Portuguese perspective. She raises several important questions, asking whether, for example, "The emphasis in economy seems to somehow silence the intrinsic needs and interests of workers as learning subjects, as well as their prior learning experiences" and stating that "Focusing the individual within a functionalist view - that suppose that 'equip' (sic) people with skills needed to respond to labour market changing requirements - is the best way to disclaim society responsibilities as a whole". This more critical Portuguese perspective would perhaps be supported by Spanish and Greek commentators. Whilst written from an occidental perspective it does suggest that a one-size fits all recipe is not the best way of approaching the cultural diversity so fundamental to Europe.**

Rosa Maria Torres from Ecuador also asks the fundamental question "Learning for what?" And replies that "There are many ways to think and deal with this question. Well-being and prosperity mean different things to different people and cultures throughout the world". She then points to the indigenous concept of *Sumak Kawsay* (*Buen Vivir*, Good Living), as an alternative to the current western development paradigm: al-

Skills and competences in a pluriversal world

¹ We tend to use the terms competence and competency as though they were synonyms. It is worth taking a look at the following definition indicated to me by my colleague Carlos Spezia: <http://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-competence-and-vs-competency/>. On the basis of this, I have adopted the term competence and competences.

ternative in the sense of being radically different and non-occidental. Indeed for Artur Escobar (apud GUDYNAS, 2011), the concept of *buen vivir* does not represent an alternative development but an alternative to development based on the cosmology of the indigenous people. *Buen Vivir* is concerned with achieving a harmonious relationship between self, others and the environment. Nature is deemed to have rights in the same way as human beings have. In Dávalos' (2008) words it "incorporates nature into history (...) not as a productive factor nor as a productive force, but as an inherent part of social being". The skills and competences necessary for achieving this relationship give a new meaning to education and learning.

A second alternative paradigm which I consider worth mentioning places collective happiness and well-being as the goals of development resumed in the concept of the Index of Gross National Happiness, conceived in Bhutan. Whilst the concept of *buen vivir* is inspired by the cosmological vision and cultural values of the Andean indigenous people, the values which provide the foundation for the notion of collective happiness and well-being are profoundly rooted in the social traditions of Bhutan and in its ethical and moral cosmology developed and practiced for centuries. The GNH contributed to the creation of four strategic keys popularly known as the four pillars: (1) sustainable and equitable socio-economic development; 2) preservation of the envi-

ronment; 3) preservation and promotion of culture, and 4) promotion of good governance. Such pillars require skills and competences conducive to achieve this understanding of development.

In this brief commentary, there is no space to attempt to situate this discussion within the context of the 2030 International Development Agenda except to say that the New Skills Agenda for Europe is probably well aligned with the agenda which the SDGs propose. From a non-European perspective, I suggest that it would be important to explore concepts such as diversity, multicultural-ity and intra-culturality and pluriversality when considering the relation between skills and competences and development.

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5.9

Comment by Monica Osorio Simons

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There is no denying that we are on the edge of a civilizing age, with an absolutely unpredictable ending, as it has already happened many other times in human history, but this condition has probably never been as global as it is now.

If this situation, in a certain way, causes us anguish, we can not fail to recognize that we are living a strategic moment in which all structures are being questioned despite the fact that the system, mainly economic, tries to maintain its rules of the game, even if it changes their names by fashionable words like "green economies".

We also know that in all fields, whether political, business, scientific, educational etc., we have always had serious and committed people or professionals, but there have also been those totally focused on personal interests, directly or indirectly damaging the vast majority of the population, then, we also know the transcendent and absolutely strategic role that is expected of lifelong education for all, from the earliest age.

As time goes by, in order to face these urgent demands, the increasing intentionality of local, regional, national and international cooperation, of joint work, of the development of the dialog

in order to reach the realization of the necessary progress becomes more evident; but, on the other hand, in formal education, in a general way, with few exceptions, school curricula still continue to be imposed and copied on models that no longer respond to the current dynamics of society and a world that is changing almost every day and by virtue of virtual reality at such an amazing pace, so it is necessary to question to which extent what is taught today in schools has or will have some use in the coming years.

Seeking transformation from other competencies

The colleagues who preceded me related a series of fundamental items of reflection so that we can move beyond the theorizing of points that I think are quite clear in relation to what are the possible solutions for us to advance in the quality of educational structures that can contribute to the preparation of citizens who can actually build their present and future life, bearing in mind that this task, for a long time now, is not restricted only to the formal field of education. On the contrary, Popular Education, especially in Latin America, and in Brazil in a very special way since Paulo Freire, constitutes a vital and essential tool for the empowerment of communities, being the backbone of the perception that educators must be mediators of processes and not mere conveyors of contents.

This virtual exchange alerts us to the great complexity we are working on, involving many different aspects, such as:

- The diversity of historical, cultural, political, environmental and even religious realities that are decisive and must be taken into account in the face of the **risk of universalization of concepts and strategies** in an attempt to advance so that we all have the same opportunities of personal, family, community and professional fulfillment;
- The concern **not only with the readiness to enter the labor market**, but with other aspects inherent to the exercise of full and mainly active citizenship;
- **The need to motivate people** if we want to produce significant changes. We can not fail to recognize that, considering everything that is happening in the world, hope is not always the common denominator.

That is, we can affirm that, given the present condition of the planet and of humanity, it is increasingly evident that, apart from the points that were already related in previous articles, there are other concomitant and vitally necessary ingredients that we must also pay attention to regarding this construction in which so many have been working to get out of the *status quo*, of incontestable exclusion and socio-environmental injustice and therefore lacking of full realization, quality of life and happiness.

In a certain way, Jorge Osorio's article presents very important reflections in this sense of looking for ways that are not necessarily those offered by the school, generally hostage of the current and dominant neoliberal economic political system.

In our opinion, to talk about the need to invest in "interpersonal skills", as pointed out by Priti Sharma in his article, is a significant progress, but we also understand that for this to be viable there is a previous step that must be fulfilled. We also need to work and universalize the internal devel-

opment of people beyond religious denominations, given that there is something very strong and vital that unites us ancestrally.

We need to work more intensely the sensitivity, the sense of cooperation and siblinghood, the practice of silence not as something imposed but internally desired, the sense and value of internal discipline, the ability to dream and mainly develop the sense of COMPASSION, not only as a consequence of specific actions in extreme situations but in dealing with environmental disasters, for example, and as daily and recurrent practices in all areas of life of people within the family, in working, professional and education environments, whether formal or non-formal, making people better choose what and how to do things, moving to live not only from their personal and selfish needs but from more fair and humane values which, with absolute certainty, only increasing purchasing power of the communities is not a real solution, as we were alerted by the "*indiano*" Economy Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen.

In fact, there are already several examples and practices around the world in this sense, but we need to universalize them so that they are no longer isolated facts and become a common denominator for the entire world population, from the beauty and richness of their diversity.

I want to thank the effort made by the ICAE, of which I am always proud of being an active member, for having organized this new Virtual Seminar which, like the others we already participated in, always help us to work with clearer and more productive focuses.

I think I can conclude my contribution with a phrase from Walter Benjamin that says: "*Not merely does each age dream the next one, but it aims, in so doing, to awaken*", that is, we can not stop dreaming, much less stop working hard to accompany this phase of transition and, as midwives and male midwives, help the Planet to be born for a new time of humanization.

Comentario de Monica Osorio Simons

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CEAG - São Paulo – Brazil

No hay como negar que nos encontramos en el límite de una era civilizatoria, con un final absolutamente imprevisible, así como ya sucedió muchas otras veces en la historia de la humanidad, mas probablemente esta condición nunca se dio de manera tan global como ahora.

Si esta situación, de cierta forma nos provoca angustia, también no podemos dejar de reconocer que estamos viviendo un momento estratégico en el que todas las estructuras están siendo cuestionadas a pesar del sistema, principalmente económico, tratar de mantener sus reglas de juego, aunque le cambien los nombres para palabras de moda como “economías verdes”.

También sabemos que en todos los campos sea político, empresarial, científico, educativo etc., desde siempre, hemos tenido personas o profesionales serios y comprometidos, pero también los ha habido totalmente centrados en intereses personales, perjudicando directa o indirectamente a la gran mayoría de la población, entonces, ya sabemos también cuál es el papel trascendente y absolutamente estratégico que se espera de la educación a lo largo de la vida para todos y todas, desde la más tierna edad.

Según el tiempo va pasando, para hacer frente a estas urgentes demandas, es cada vez más notoria la creciente intencionalidad de cooperación local, regional, nacional e internacional, de trabajo conjunto, del desarrollo del dialogo para tratar de llegar a la concretización de los necesarios avances...mas, por otro lado en la enseñanza formal, de un modo general, salvo raras excepciones, los currículos escolares todavía continúan

siendo impuestos y calcados en modelos que ya no responden más a la actual dinámica de la sociedad y de un mundo que está cambiando casi que diariamente y por fuerza de la realidad virtual a un ritmo tan alucinante siendo entonces necesario cuestionar hasta qué punto lo que se enseña hoy en las escuelas tiene alguna utilidad o la tendrá en los próximos años.

Los compañeros y compañeras que me precedieron, relacionaron una serie de ítems de reflexión fundamentales para que podamos avanzar más allá de la teorización de puntos que me parece están bastante claros con relación a cuales son las posibles soluciones para que avancemos en la calidad de las estructuras educativas que puedan contribuir con la preparación de ciudadanos y ciudadanas que de hecho puedan construir sus presentes y futuros de vida, teniendo en cuenta que esta tarea, ya hace mucho tiempo que no se restringe solamente al ámbito formal de la educación. Muy por el contrario, la Educación Popular, especialmente en América-Latina y en el Brasil de una forma muy especial a partir de Paulo Freire, se constituye en vital y esencial herramienta de empoderamiento de las comunidades, siendo su columna vertebral la percepción de que los educadores debemos ser mediadores de procesos y no meros transmisores de contenidos.

Este intercambio virtual nos alerta para la gran complejidad sobre la que estamos trabajando, envolviendo muy diferentes aspectos, como por ejemplo:

- La diversidad de realidades históricas, culturales, políticas, ambientales y hasta religiosas, que se muestran determinantes y que deben tenerse muy en cuenta frente al

Buscar
la transformación a partir de
otras competencias

riesgo de la universalización de conceptos y estrategias en la tentativa de avanzar para que todos y todas tengamos las mismas oportunidades de realización personal, familiar, comunitaria y profesional;

- Preocupación **no solo con la preparación para ingresar al mercado de trabajo**, mas con otros aspectos inherentes al ejercicio de la ciudadanía plena y principalmente activa;
- **Necesidad de motivar las personas** si queremos producir cambios significativos. No podemos dejar de reconocer que frente a todo lo que está sucediendo en el mundo, la esperanza no siempre es el común denominador.

O sea, podemos afirmar que frente a la actual condición del planeta y de la humanidad, es cada vez más evidente que, fuera los puntos que ya fueron relacionado en los artículos que me precedieron, son otros los ingredientes concomitantes y vitalmente necesarios para los que también debemos prestar atención con relación a esta construcción en la que tantos venimos trabajando para salir del *status quo*, de incontestable exclusión e injusticia socioambiental y por lo tanto falta de plena realización, calidad de vida y felicidad.

De cierta manera, el artículo de Jorge Osorio presenta reflexiones muy importantes en este sentido de buscar caminos que no son necesariamente los que la escuela nos ofrece, generalmente rehén del sistema político económico neoliberal vigente y dominante.

En nuestro entender, es un significativo avance que se hable de la necesidad de invertir en “habilidades interpersonales”, como apunta en su artículo, Priti Sharma, mas entendemos también, que para eso ser viable hay un paso previo a ser cumplido! Precisamos trabajar y universalizar también el desarrollo interno de las personas muy por sobre las denominaciones religiosas, una vez que hay algo muy fuerte y vital que nos une ancestralmente.

Precisamos trabajar más intensamente la sensibilidad, el sentido de cooperación y de hermandad, la práctica del silencio no como algo impuesto más deseado internamente, el sentido y valor de la disciplina interna, la capacidad de soñar y principalmente desarrollar el sentido de la COMPASIÓN, no solo como consecuencia de acciones puntuales en situaciones límite como frente a desastres ambientales, por ejemplo, y si como prácticas cotidianas y recurrentes en todos los ámbitos de la vida de las personas en la familia, en los ambientes laborales, profesionales y en la educación sea formal o no formal, haciendo con que las personas escojan mejor que y como hacer las cosas, pasando a vivir no solo desde su necesidad personal y egoísta más desde valores más justos y humanitarios, lo que con absoluta certeza solamente aumentando el poder de compra de las comunidades no es una solución real, como nos alertó el premio nobel de economía indiano Amartya Sen.

De hecho, ya hay diversos ejemplos y prácticas por el mundo en este sentido, mas precisamos universalizarlos para que dejen de ser hechos aislados y pasen a ser un común denominador para toda la población mundial, desde la belleza y riqueza de su diversidad.

Quiero agradecer este esfuerzo del ICAE, del que me enorgullezco siempre de hacer parte como miembro activo, al haber organizado este nuevo Seminario Virtual, que como los otros de los que ya participamos, siempre nos ayudan a trabajar con focos más claros y productivos.

Creo que puedo concluir este mi aporte con una frase de Walter Benjamín que dice: *“Toda época sueña la siguiente, y al hacerlo la hace despertar”*, o sea no podemos dejar de soñar y mucho menos de continuar trabajando arduamente para acompañar esta fase de transición y como parteros y parteras, ayudar a que el Planeta nazca para un nuevo tiempo de humanización!

Brazilian sociologist and popular educator with a special focus on womens' rights for gender equity and socio-environmental education and action. She is consultant on these issues and director of MV Consultoria Socioambiental, in Toledo-Paraná-Brazil. Moema is involved with different NGOs with women and environment, some of them she contributed to create

I have read all the articles, comments and contributions until last week.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the ICAE on one more virtual seminar, a special possibility of staying connected in reflection and dialogue for lifelong education.

My comment goes mainly in the same direction of Rosa Torres' comment, and I would like to emphasize two aspects:

1. The first one is the meaning of LEARNING: What and for what?
 - From literacy, technical training or even higher education,
 - perhaps the ICAE can be a privileged space to always remember the importance
 - of providing and remembering and practicing THE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES that lead to sustainable societies,
 - regardless of the means and the modality (face-to-face, distance, formal, non-formal, informal).
2. In this sense, digital inclusion, so necessary at the moment, can not be merely technical.

- The Internet opens the information of all worlds, for the good and the bad, for the better and for the worse.
- Learning to move in the virtual world also involves learning how to manage what you want to obtain from this virtual world for the benefit of humanity and of Mother Earth as such.
- And that's a fundamental part of lifelong education, isn't it? Digital inclusion WITH socio-environmental inclusion.

My best regards to everyone who participates in this seminar.

Moema Viezzer

GREAT COMMENT Robert Juuko.

It will be so interesting to share deepening on these questions, close to others e.g. Rosa Maria Torres. Complementing articles and comments. Those are the questions I meant when I wrote insisting on PRINCIPLES AND VALUES education should reinforce when building capacity on skills. Moema Viezzer.

Comentario de Moema L. Viezza

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Moema L. Viezza es una socióloga y educadora popular brasileña preocupada especialmente por los derechos de las mujeres para la equidad de género y la educación y la acción socioambientales. Es consultora en estos temas y directora de MV Consultoria Socioambiental, en Toledo-Paraná-Brasil. Moema está vinculada con diferentes ONG que se ocupan de la temática de las mujeres y el medio ambiente, algunas de las cuales contribuyó a crear.

He leído todos los artículos, comentarios y contribuciones hasta la semana pasada.

En primer lugar, quisiera felicitar al ICAE por un seminario virtual más, una posibilidad tan especial de mantenernos conectados en la reflexión y el diálogo en pro de la educación a lo largo de la vida.

Mi comentario va sobre todo en el mismo sentido de Rosa Torres, y quisiera reforzar dos aspectos:

1. El primero es el significado de APRENDER: ¿qué y para qué?

- Desde la alfabetización, la capacitación técnica o inclusive la educación superior.
- quizás el ICAE pueda ser un espacio privilegiado para recordar siempre la importancia
- de impartir y recordar y practicar LOS PRINCIPIOS Y VALORES que conducen hacia sociedades sustentables

- no importa cual sea el medio y la modalidad (presencial, a distancia, formal, no-formal, informal).
2. En este sentido, la inclusión digital, tan necesaria en este momento, no puede ser algo meramente técnico.
- Internet abre la información de todos los mundos, para lo bueno y lo malo, para lo mejor y para lo peor.
 - Aprender a transitar en el mundo virtual implica aprender también a administrar lo que se quiere obtener de este mundo virtual para beneficio de la humanidad y de la Madre tierra como tal.
 - Y eso es parte fundamental de la educación a lo largo de la vida, ¿verdad? Inclusión digital CON inclusión socioambiental.

Mis mejores saludos a todas y todos quienes participan de este seminario.

Moema Viezza

Dear All,

Thanks for giving the possibility to express my views in this virtual seminar. I will not repeat what has been presented by the colleagues who preceded me. They have referred to issues that need reflection to what are the possible approaches to advance in the quality of educational specially addressed to young people. From REPEM as well as from ICAE I have been presenting at national, regional and international level that education and special non formal education should prepare women (and men) to exercise their citizenship. The curriculum specially in non formal education should prepare young and adults to exercise their human rights. and build future life, I agree very much with the presentation made by Roberto Guevara where he specially refer to the value of soft skills "to secure "success in today's world, particularly in contemporary careers and workplaces" (Sharma 2016)."

I agree soft skills should help young people not only for work but also for life. The Australian research, that Guevara refer to highlight that the eight transferable skills "problem-solving, communication skills, digital literacy, teamwork, financial literacy, creativity, critical thinking and presentation skills". But again these should help for work and life including to exercise their human rights.

In the discussions of the ODS, I did defend that the approach of non formal education should contain a holistic focus to prepare young and adult to exercise their citizenship.

But unfortunately this was not finally introduced ... and as Timothy say currently there is no space to attempt to situate this discussion within the context of the 2030 International Development Agenda". But we hope that during the monitoring and follow-up in country discussion these issues will arise.

Marcela

Social Entrepreneur (Ashoka) An@fa Executive Director , National Association for Adult Literacy and Education), Senegal

ICTs have challenged all benchmarks by forcing men and women to change their ways of living, working, doing business and communicating. Today everything can be digitized (sound, visual, tactile ...). Today we can download/upload, remote-touch, remote-act (remote-surgery) ... remote-bombard and even remote-sabotage. Digital is replacing humans in most of their functions.

Similarly, the flow of information and knowledge has been intensified and accelerated to limiting levels (speed of light), and digital has made its revolution by attacking different formats: paper, disk, film, magnetic tape, etc.

Before digital, whatever the field envisaged, the data and/or the information were processed and exploited on specific, palpable and material supports. In this way, we have the paper for the text, the disc and the audio cassette for the sound, the film for the images... Each type of data had its specific body support with a specific process of production, reproduction, storage and dissemination.

With the advent of digital, all these composite data (sound, text, image, music, video ...) are equally processed and exploited digitally on a single medium with a set of interactive manipulation techniques. This is the appearance of the LOGIC support (the software).

Digital has revolutionized the usual techniques of processing, storing, disseminating and transmitting knowledge. The possibilities for innovation in the various fields have multiplied and, moreover, have become indispensable. With the entrance

of humanity into the new economy of information and knowledge, also known as the "knowledge-based economy", nothing can be done as before.

We must take this huge transformation into account in order to invest it in the field of education. As a result of this change, we are witnessing a transformation of the basic traditional tools of knowledge acquisition (reading and writing), more precisely, teaching tools. Digital technology has dethroned all other media by gathering them and, at the same time, proposes other forms of storing, processing and transmitting knowledge that require different attitudes.

We must understand that we are emerging from the "Gutenberg galaxy" which lasted five centuries. In this galaxy, the main form of communication is written communication. It is for this reason that Paulo Freire said that mastery of writing and reading works as a key to entry into the world of written communication.

In this galaxy, traditional literacy programs have aimed at giving neo-literates basic instrumental skills such as reading and writing in their language. The acquisition of functional skills in order to respond positively to different problem situations in life, as well as the ability to become empowered and to be able to learn throughout life, remained unsolvable problems. Two of the main reasons for this quasi-asymptotic situation have been the lack of acquisition of tools and skills for access to resources provided by ICTs and the lack of availability of relevant and suffi-

African languages, the Gutenberg galaxy and the digital revolution

cient literature in the subject languages of those programs.

The enclosure that resulted has confined the neo-literates to a sphere of rudimentary knowledge which is not effective for the integration of adult people in modern societies. This disabling character of confinement in this “galaxy” also affects people from formal education systems who have not appropriated ICT tools and skills developed in foreign languages of instruction. These people, although instructed, are a kind of “illiterate people of the 21st century” who do not have access to the wealth of knowledge disseminated or stored in the information highways. These two categories are products of the digital divide between the North and the South.

Today, the galaxy to which we migrate is digital. It transcends and includes the typographic, the printed. That is why it is fair to say, to paraphrase Paulo Freire, that computer literacy functions as a key to entering the world of multimedia communication.

Digital is a technological mutation or discontinuity. The evolution of humanity has always been punctuated by technological changes and whenever one of them came, it was a tremendous leap that humanity made.

It has also been noticed that the leaps that humanity makes are always produced at the level of what Régis Debray calls the “technologies of memory”.

This formulation by Régis Debray perfectly illustrates the conclusions of the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall when he writes “The development of language and technology, an interrelated pair, made possible the storing of knowledge (emphasis added). It gave man a lever to pry out the secrets of nature... Well-developed language and technology are somehow closely associated with man in his present form” (The silent language, 1984).

For us, a technology of memory is a tool invented by Humans, at certain moments of their evolution, to “memorize” their history, their ideas, their knowledge, in short, their culture for generations to come. This technology of memory also serves to better communicate in space and time. It is an integral part of human nature.

The last technological mutation or discontinuity, before the advent of digital technology, occurred in the 15th century with the appearance of printing as a process and of print as a technology of memory.

The print has been a factor of enormous progress in the evolution of modern societies. Without this technology, humanity would not be at its current level of development. According to A. de Tocqueville, in his classic work “Democracy in America”, print has led to greater democratization, especially in the areas of reading and writing, acquisition and transmission of knowledge and culture.

Can we imagine, today, the progress of democracy, of the defense of Human Rights and of education without print?

There have been other mutations in memory technologies such as the invention of the phonetic alphabet with the manuscript as the main technology of memory, the invention of hieroglyphics with two memory technologies: stone and papyrus.

The appearance of speech was probably the first mutation and it is biological. The brain was the only medium for storing and spreading culture. Speech is the first engine that has begun to accelerate the evolution of humanity. In fact, technological changes are accelerators of history. When they arise, they make old technologies obsolete, but they include them; they also move traditional points of reference. Nothing is like before any more and nothing can be done as before: they create a situation analogous to that of a visually

impaired person in a new environment: he must necessarily adapt. But while overturning the old environment they open, at the same time, a new virgin field where the possibilities of innovation are enormous. This is currently the case in the field of education where digital technology has created vast possibilities for educational and / or adult educational innovations.

The table below summarizes the technologies used by humanity for five centuries to write,

produce, store and disseminate knowledge. During this period, print was the main memory technology.

At the moment, digital technology can handle all of these tools at the same time on a single medium with huge interactive manipulation possibilities. This set of means of teaching, learning and disseminating can be digitally reduced to a computer with its peripherals.

Means of transcription or reproduction of texts	Written means	Fixed scripto-visual means	Sound means	Audio-visual means
Chalk	Manuals	Blackboard	Tape recorder	Video
Pen	Notebooks	Metal table	radio	Movie
Typewriter	Polycopies	Padex table		Video recorder
Mimeo	Books	Transparencies		
Photocopier		Overhead projector		
Offset-printing		Posters		
		Slides		
		Slide projector		

Source: Serge wagner, Know-how Didactics in literacy, UQAM, 1996

The challenge for us in Africa is the mastery of computers in our languages. This mastery requires access to software in our languages, access to content and production of content. It is by solving these problems that we will be able to exploit the immense possibilities of digital technology in the field of education.

At the beginning of the digital world and the Internet in particular, this challenge also involved all communities that did not speak English. The Net was a field of linguistic exclusion where En-

glish reigned unchallenged. These communities have taken note of this by solving, in their languages, the problems of access to software and by carrying out an intense activity of production of contents. A few decades ago the Francophone community was absent from the Net. It solved this problem by locating the software in French and producing a significant amount of content in that language. All the other linguistic communities (German, Chinese, Japanese ...) have gone through it.

Comentaire de Ousmane Faty Ndongo

FR

*Entrepreneur social (Ashoka), Directeur Exécutif de An@fa,
(Association Nationale pour L'@lphabétisation et la formation des adultes), Sénégal*

Les TIC ont remis en cause tous les repères en obligeant les hommes et les femmes à changer dans les manières de vivre, de travailler, de faire des affaires et de communiquer. Aujourd'hui tout peut être numérisé (le son, le visuel, le tactile...). Aujourd'hui on peut télécharger, télétoucher, téléagir (téléchirurgie)... télébombarder et même télésaboter. Le numérique est en train de remplacer l'être humain dans la plupart de ses fonctions.

De même, la circulation de l'information et des connaissances a été intensifiée et accélérée à des niveaux limites (vitesse de la lumière) et le numérique a fait sa révolution en s'attaquant aux différents supports: papier, disque, film, bande magnétique, etc.

Avant le numérique, quelque soit le champ envisagé, les données et/ou les informations étaient traitées et exploitées sur des supports spécifiques, palpables et matériels. Ainsi nous avons le papier pour le texte, le disque et la cassette audio pour le son, le film pour les images... Chaque type de donnée avait son support corporel spécifique avec un processus de production, de reproduction, de stockage et de diffusion spécifique.

Avec l'avènement du numérique c'est l'ensemble de ces données composites (son, texte, image, musique, vidéo...) qui sont indifféremment traitées et exploitées numériquement sur un même support avec un ensemble de techniques de manipulations interactives. C'est l'apparition du support LOGIQUE (le logiciel).

Le numérique a révolutionné les techniques habituelles de traitement, de stockage, de diffusion et de transmission du savoir. Les possibilités d'innover dans les différents domaines se sont multipliées et, plus, sont devenues indispensables. Rien ne peut plus se faire comme avant, avec l'entrée de l'humanité dans la nouvelle économie qui est celle de l'informationnel et des connaissances ; encore appelée « économie du savoir ».

Nous devons tenir compte de cette mutation énorme pour l'investir dans le champ de l'éducation. En raison de ce changement, nous assistons à une mutation des outils de base traditionnels d'acquisition du savoir (lire et écrire), plus précisément, des outils d'enseignement.

Le numérique a détrôné tous les autres supports en les englobant et nous propose en même temps d'autres formes de stockage, de traitement et de transmission du savoir qui demandent d'autres attitudes.

Il nous faut comprendre que nous sommes en train de sortir de la «galaxie Gutenberg» qui a duré cinq siècles. Dans cette galaxie, la principale forme de communication est la communication écrite. C'est pour cette raison que Paulo Freire disait que la maîtrise de l'écriture et de la lecture fonctionne comme une clé d'entrée dans le monde de la communication écrite.

Dans cette galaxie, les programmes classiques d'alphabétisation ont visé à donner aux néoalphabètes les compétences instrumentales de base telles que savoir lire et écrire dans sa langue. L'acquisition des compétences fonctionnelles leur permettant de répondre positivement aux diffé-

*Les langues
africaines, la
galaxie gutenber et
la révolution numé-
rique*

rentes situations à problème de la vie, de même que la capacité à s'autonomiser et d'être capable d'apprendre tout au long de la vie, sont restés des problèmes demeurés insolubles. Deux des raisons principales à cette situation quasi asymptotique ont été l'absence d'acquisition d'outils et de compétences d'accès aux ressources fournies par les TIC ainsi que la non disponibilité d'une littérature pertinente et suffisante dans les langues objets des dits programmes.

L'enfermement qui en a résulté a confiné les néo alphabètes dans une sphère de connaissances rudimentaires, non efficaces pour l'intégration de l'adulte dans les sociétés modernes. Ce caractère handicapant du confinement dans cette « galaxie » touche tout autant les personnes issues des systèmes formels d'enseignement qui ne se sont pas approprié les outils et compétences en TIC développés dans les langues étrangères d'enseignement. Ces personnes, bien qu'instruites, sont des sortes d' « analphabètes du 21ème siècle » n'ayant pas accès à la mine de connaissances diffusées ou stockées dans les inforoutes. Toutes ces deux catégories sont des produits de la fracture numérique entre le Nord et le Sud.

Aujourd'hui, la galaxie vers laquelle nous migrons est numérique. Elle dépasse et englobe le typographique, l'imprimé. C'est pourquoi, il est juste de dire, pour paraphraser Paulo Freire, que la maîtrise de l'ordinateur fonctionne comme une clé d'entrée dans le monde de la communication multimédia.

Le numérique est une mutation ou discontinuité technologique. L'évolution de l'humanité a toujours été ponctuée par des mutations technologiques et à chaque fois que l'une d'elle survint, ce fut un bond prodigieux que l'humanité effectua.

L'on a aussi remarqué que les bonds que l'humanité effectue se produisent toujours au niveau de ce que Régis Debray nomme les « technologies de la mémoire ».

Cette formulation de Régis Debray illustre parfaitement les conclusions de l'anthropologue américain Edward T. Hall quand il écrit « le développement du langage et de la technologie, qui sont en liaison entre eux, a rendu possible la mise en mémoire des connaissances (nous soulignons), procurant à l'homme un levier pour soulever le couvercle des secrets de la nature...Le langage, dans sa forme élaborée, et la technologie se retrouvent intimement unis dans l'homme d'aujourd'hui » (Le langage silencieux, 1984)

Pour nous, une technologie de la mémoire est un outil inventé par l'Homme, à des moments déterminés de son évolution, pour « mettre en mémoire » son histoire, ses idées, son savoir, bref, sa culture pour les générations à venir. Cette technologie de la mémoire lui sert aussi à mieux communiquer dans l'espace et le temps. Elle est consubstantielle à la nature humaine.

La dernière mutation ou discontinuité technologique, avant l'avènement du numérique, s'est produite au XVème siècle avec l'apparition de l'imprimerie comme procédé et de l'imprimé comme technologie de la mémoire.

L'imprimé a été un facteur de progrès énormes dans l'évolution des sociétés modernes. Sans cette technologie, l'humanité ne serait pas à son niveau actuel de développement. Selon A. de Tocqueville, dans son ouvrage classique « La démocratie en Amérique », l'imprimé a conduit à une plus grande démocratisation notamment, de l'écriture et de la lecture, de l'acquisition et de la transmission du savoir et de la culture.

Peut-on imaginer, aujourd'hui, les progrès de la démocratie, de la défense des Droits de l'Homme, de l'enseignement, sans l'imprimé?

Il y a eu d'autres mutations dans les technologies de la mémoire telles que l'invention de l'alphabet phonétique avec le manuscrit comme principale technologie de la mémoire, l'invention des hiéro-

glyphes avec deux technologies de la mémoire: la pierre et le papyrus.

L'apparition de la parole a été probablement la première mutation et elle est biologique. Le cerveau était le seul support pour le stockage et la diffusion de la culture. La parole est le premier moteur qui a commencé à accélérer l'évolution de l'humanité. En fait, les mutations technologiques sont des accélérateurs de l'histoire. Quand elles surviennent, elles rendent obsolètes, tout en les englobant, les anciennes technologies; elles font bouger aussi les repères traditionnels. Rien n'est plus comme avant et rien ne peut plus se faire comme avant : elles créent une situation analogue à celle d'un malvoyant dans un nouvel environnement, il lui faut nécessairement s'adapter. Mais tout en bouleversant l'ancien environnement elles ouvrent en même temps un nouveau

champ vierge où les possibilités d'innovation sont énormes. C'est le cas actuellement dans le champ de l'éducation où le numérique a créé de vastes possibilités d'innovations pédagogiques et ou andragogique.

Le tableau ci dessous récapitule les technologies utilisées par l'humanité durant cinq siècles pour écrire, produire, stocker et diffuser les connaissances. Durant cette période, l'imprimé a été la principale technologie de la mémoire.


A l'heure actuelle, le numérique peut gérer l'ensemble de ces outils en même temps sur un seul support avec des possibilités de manipulation interactives énormes. Cet ensemble de moyens d'enseigner, d'apprendre et diffuser peut se ramener, numériquement, à un ordinateur avec ses périphériques.

Moyens de transcription ou de reproduction de textes	Moyens écrits	Moyens scriptovisuels fixes	Moyens sonores	Moyens audio visuels
Craie	Manuels	Tableau noir	Magnétophone	Vidéo
Stylo	Cahiers	Tableau métallique	radio	Film
Machine à écrire	Polycopés	Tableau padex		Magnétoscope
Ronéo	Livres	Transparents		
Photocopieur		Rétroprojecteur		
Offset-imprimerie		Affiches		
		Diapositives		
		Projecteur diapo		

Source : Serge wagner, Savoir faire didactique en alphabétisation, UQAM, 1996

Le défi qui se pose, à nous africains, c'est la maîtrise de l'ordinateur dans nos langues. Cette maîtrise passe par l'accès aux logiciels dans nos langues, l'accès aux contenus et la production de contenus. C'est en résolvant ces problèmes que nous pourrions exploiter les immenses possibilités du numérique dans le domaine de l'éducation.

Ce défi concernait aussi, au début du numérique et de l'Internet en particulier, toutes les communautés qui ne parlaient pas l'anglais. Le Net était un champ d'exclusion linguistique où l'anglais régnait sans partage. Ces communautés l'ont relevé en résolvant, dans leurs langues, les problèmes d'accès aux logiciels et en procédant à



une intense activité de production de contenus. Il y a quelques dizaines d'années la communauté francophone était absente du Net. Elle a résolu ce problème en localisant les logiciels en français

et en produisant, dans cette langue, une quantité importante de contenus. Toutes les autres communautés linguistiques (allemande, chinoise, japonaise...) en sont passées par là.

6 Closing thanks

EN

Through this year's **Virtual Seminar**, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and DWV International continued to build global dialogue, support an exchange of ideas and critical reflection on a highly relevant topic in adult education and development. This online forum has provided learning space and learning time to debate the concept of **"Skills and Competencies"**.

We had the opportunity to reflect on this concept in adult education and development against the background of an uncertain world and growing challenges (unemployment, political conflicts and upheavals, shifts and uncertainties, technological developments, intolerance and radicalism, climate change and environmental problems) and have garnered opinions from around the world.

ICAE's aim was to support the discussion about skills for life, work, and citizenship, and to foster an integral perspective, which would help avoiding silos way of thinking in adult education, promoting only one kind of skills and only one area of education. Many successful initiatives, projects and programmes show that a holistic, integrated approach can work for education, the learner and the society as a whole. Practical examples are basic literacy trainings in traditional craft apprenticeships; programmes for young school dropouts that combine basic education with vocational and skills development; as well as technical training options in literacy programmes. Also the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (2016)¹ considers an integrated and holistic approach to

education and training, which promotes a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and competencies for work and life.

Promoting a holistic approach to adult education, which includes all areas of life and work, could also contribute to the recognition that education is essential for the success of all sustainable development goals, and shed additional light on the role of education across the global agenda. An integral approach to education helps to contribute to both sustainable social and economic development, including education for employability and decent work, but never neglecting the principle that education is a human right, and one of the most important ways to empower individuals and the community.

Through the wide thinking of the many contributors from diverse contexts, we were presented with a broad range of informed opinion, theoretical understandings, practical challenges to confront, and expand our thinking about skills and competencies.

In this virtual space we have engaged, challenged, theorised, intellectualised, wondered, been curious, questioned, conceptualised and shared our experiences from different regions and contexts. The virtual seminar offered the chance to discuss, to go deeper, broaden the analysis and to inspire new initiatives.

Reading through the articles and joining in stimulating discussions with colleagues from all over the world, we wish to call for a broad, contextual,

¹ Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO 2016)

integrated approach in/to education and learning - for decent life and work in all areas. We support such approach at all levels of decision-making, implementation and evaluation. It is also about the promotion of skills development for economic prosperity of countries, communities and individuals, for the reduction of poverty, for social well-being, gender equality and sustainable learning societies.

For the first time, this year's edition of the virtual seminar included an online live discussion in the format of a webinar, where over 70 registered participants debated lively with Paul Holdsworth from the European Commission about the "New skills Agenda in Europe". As this format proved very successful, we plan to expand this form of exchange in the coming years of the ICAE virtual seminar.

Thank you for all your contributions and your participation in a virtual dialogue, which has reaffirmed our main values, challenged our ap-

proaches and enriched our practices. In many ways the topic of skills and competencies remain full of complexity, and one of the main challenges of contemporary adult education.

In solidarity,

Katarina Popovic and Ricarda Motschilnig

If you couldn't follow the seminar this time, you can read up the whole discussion on the dedicated ICAE Website <http://virtualseminar.icae.global>.

The virtual seminar was done in cooperation with DVV International. You can read the whole issue of Adult Education and Development on skills and competencies at <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/>. The journal Adult Education and Development is distributed free of charge in English, French and Spanish. You can subscribe to the journal at <https://www.dvv-international.de/aed/subscription>.

Palabras de cierre

E

A través del **Seminario Virtual** de este año, el Consejo Internacional para la Educación de Personas Jóvenes y Adultas (ICAE) <http://www.icae.global/> y DVV International continuaron construyendo un diálogo global, apoyando el intercambio de ideas y la reflexión crítica sobre un tema de gran relevancia en educación y desarrollo de personas adultas. Este foro en línea proporcionó espacio y tiempo de aprendizaje para debatir el concepto de **“Habilidades y competencias”**.

Tuvimos la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre este concepto en la educación y el desarrollo de personas adultas en el contexto de un mundo incierto y de desafíos cada vez mayores (desempleo, conflictos y turbulencias políticas, cambios e incertidumbres, desarrollos tecnológicos, intolerancia y radicalismo, cambio climático y problemas ambientales) y recibimos opiniones de todo el mundo.

El objetivo del ICAE era apoyar la discusión sobre las habilidades para la vida, el trabajo y la ciudadanía, y fomentar una perspectiva integral, que ayudara a evitar formas compartimentadas de pensamiento en la educación de personas adultas, al promover un solo tipo de habilidades y solo un área de educación. Muchas iniciativas, proyectos y programas exitosos demuestran que un enfoque holístico e integrado puede funcionar para la educación, el/la alumno/a y la sociedad en su conjunto. Existen ejemplos prácticos como los cursos básicos de alfabetización en los aprendizajes tradicionales de oficios; programas para jóvenes que abandonan la escuela que combinan la educación básica con el desarrollo profesional y de habilidades, así como opciones de capacitación técnica en programas de alfabetización. Asimismo, la Recomendación de la UNESCO relativa

a la Educación y Formación Técnica y Profesional (EFTP) (2016)¹ considera un enfoque integrado y holístico de la educación y la formación, que promueva un amplio espectro de conocimientos, habilidades y competencias para el trabajo y la vida.

La promoción de un enfoque holístico de la educación de personas adultas, que abarque todos los ámbitos de la vida y el trabajo, podría contribuir también a reconocer que la educación es esencial para el éxito de todos los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible y arrojar más luz sobre el papel de la educación en la agenda mundial. Un enfoque integral de la educación ayuda a contribuir al desarrollo social y económico sostenible, incluida la educación para la empleabilidad y el trabajo decente, pero sin descuidar nunca el principio de que la educación es un derecho humano y una de las maneras más importantes de empoderar a los individuos y a la comunidad.

A través del pensamiento amplio de los muchos colaboradores de contextos diversos, nos encontramos frente a una amplia gama de opinión informada, interpretaciones teóricas, desafíos prácticos para confrontar y expandir nuestro pensamiento sobre las habilidades y competencias.

En este espacio virtual nos comprometimos, desafiamos, teorizamos, intelectualizamos, nos preguntamos, curioseamos, nos cuestionamos, conceptualizamos y compartimos nuestras experiencias de diferentes regiones y contextos. El seminario virtual ofreció la oportunidad de discutir, profundizar, ampliar el análisis e inspirar nuevas iniciativas.

Al leer los artículos y participar en estimulantes discusiones con colegas de todo el mundo, queremos proponer un enfoque amplio, contextual e

1 Recomendación sobre Educación y formación técnica y profesional (UNESCO 2016)

integrado en y para la educación y el aprendizaje, para una vida y un trabajo decentes en todas las áreas. Apoyamos este enfoque en todos los niveles de toma de decisiones, implementación y evaluación. También se trata de fomentar el desarrollo de competencias para la prosperidad económica de los países, las comunidades y los individuos, para la reducción de la pobreza, el bienestar social, la igualdad de género y las sociedades de aprendizaje sostenible.

Por primera vez, la edición de este año del seminario virtual incluyó un debate en línea en vivo en formato de seminario web, en el que más de 70 participantes registrados debatieron animadamente con Paul Holdsworth de la Comisión Europea sobre la “Nueva Agenda de Habilidades para Europa”. Como este formato demostró ser muy exitoso, planeamos ampliar esta forma de intercambio en los próximos años del seminario virtual del ICAE.

Gracias por todas sus contribuciones y su participación en un diálogo virtual que reafirmó nues-

tros principales valores, desafió nuestros enfoques y enriqueció nuestras prácticas. En muchos aspectos, el tema de las habilidades y competencias sigue estando lleno de complejidades y continúa siendo uno de los principales desafíos de la educación de personas adultas contemporánea.

En solidaridad,
Katarina Popovic y Ricarda Motschilnig

Si esta vez no pudo seguir el seminario, puede leer toda la discusión en el sitio web del ICAE dedicado a ello <http://virtualseminar.icae.global>.

El seminario virtual se realizó en colaboración con DWV International. Puede leer todo el tema de Educación de personas adultas y Desarrollo sobre habilidades y competencias en <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/>. La revista Educación de adultos y desarrollo se distribuye gratuitamente en inglés, francés y español. Puede suscribirse a la revista en <https://www.dvv-international.de/aed/subscription>.

Dans le **Séminaire virtuel** de cette année, le Conseil international d'éducation des adultes (ICAE) <http://www.icae.global/> et DVV International ont continué de construire un dialogue mondial, de soutenir un échange d'idées et une réflexion critique sur un sujet particulièrement pertinent dans l'éducation et le développement des adultes. Ce forum en ligne a fourni un espace et un temps d'apprentissage pour débattre du concept d'«Aptitudes et compétences».

Nous avons eu l'occasion de réfléchir à ce concept dans l'éducation et le développement des adultes dans le contexte d'un monde incertain et des défis croissants (chômage, conflits et bouleversements politiques, changements et incertitudes, développements technologiques, intolérance et radicalisme, changement climatique et problèmes environnementaux) et nous avons recueilli des opinions de partout dans le monde.

Le but de l'ICAE était de soutenir la discussion sur les compétences pour la vie, le travail et la citoyenneté, et de favoriser une perspective intégrale, ce qui aiderait à éviter les pensées cloisonnées dans l'éducation des adultes, en promouvant un seul type de compétences et un seul domaine d'éducation. De nombreuses initiatives, projets et programmes réussis montrent qu'une approche holistique et intégrée peut fonctionner pour l'éducation, l'apprenant et la société dans son ensemble. Il y a des exemples pratiques tels que les formations de base en alphabétisation dans l'apprentissage traditionnel des métiers; des programmes pour les jeunes décrocheurs scolaires qui combinent l'éducation de base avec le perfectionnement professionnel et le développement des compétences ; ainsi que des options de formation technique dans les programmes d'alphabétisation. En outre, la Recommandation de

l'UNESCO concernant l'enseignement et la formation techniques et professionnels (EFTP) (2016)¹ considère une approche intégrée et holistique de l'éducation et de la formation qui favorise un large éventail de connaissances, d'aptitudes et de compétences pour le travail et pour la vie.

La promotion d'une approche holistique de l'éducation des adultes, qui comprend tous les domaines de la vie et du travail, pourrait également contribuer à reconnaître que l'éducation est essentielle au succès de tous les objectifs de développement durable et à éclairer davantage le rôle de l'éducation dans l'agenda mondial. Une approche intégrale de l'éducation aide à contribuer au développement social et économique durables, y compris à l'éducation pour l'employabilité et au travail décent, mais ne néglige jamais le principe selon lequel l'éducation est un droit humain et l'une des façons les plus importantes d'autonomiser les individus et la communauté.

Grâce à la pensée de nombreux collaborateurs de divers contextes, nous avons reçu un large éventail d'opinions éclairées, de compréhensions théoriques, de défis pratiques pour affronter et élargir notre réflexion sur les aptitudes et les compétences.

Dans cet espace virtuel, nous nous sommes engagés, nous avons défié, théorisé, intellectualisé, interrogé, nous avons été curieux, nous nous sommes interrogés, nous avons conceptualisé et partagé nos expériences de différentes régions et contextes. Le séminaire virtuel a permis de discuter, d'approfondir, d'élargir l'analyse et d'inspirer de nouvelles initiatives.

En lisant les articles et en participant à des discussions stimulantes avec des collègues du monde

1 Recommandation sur l'enseignement et la formation techniques et professionnels (UNESCO 2016)

entier, nous souhaitons faire un appel à une approche large, contextuelle et intégrée dans et pour l'éducation et l'apprentissage, pour une vie et un travail décents dans tous les domaines. Nous soutenons cette approche à tous les niveaux de prise de décision, de mise en œuvre et d'évaluation. Il s'agit également de promouvoir le développement des compétences pour la prospérité économique des pays, des communautés et des individus, pour la réduction de la pauvreté, le bien-être social, l'égalité entre les sexes et les sociétés d'apprentissage durables.

Pour la première fois, l'édition du séminaire virtuel de cette année a compris un débat en ligne sous la forme d'un webinaire, où plus de 70 participants inscrits ont débattu avec Paul Holdsworth de la Commission européenne sur « L'Agenda de nouvelles compétences pour l'Europe ». Comme ce format a été réussi, nous prévoyons d'étendre cette forme d'échange dans les prochaines années du séminaire virtuel de l'ICAE.

Nous vous remercions de toutes vos contributions et de votre participation à un dialogue virtuel qui a réaffirmé nos principales valeurs, a mis

au défi nos approches et enrichi nos pratiques. À bien des égards, le sujet des aptitudes et compétences reste plein de complexité et l'un des principaux défis de l'éducation contemporaine des adultes.

En solidarité,

Katarina Popovic et Ricarda Motschilnig

Si cette fois-ci vous n'avez pas pu suivre le séminaire, vous pouvez lire toute la discussion sur le site Web de l'ICAE dédié au séminaire <http://virtualseminar.icae.global>.

Le séminaire virtuel a été réalisé en coopération avec DVV International. Suivez ce lien pour lire le sujet complet de l'éducation des adultes et le développement sur les aptitudes et les compétences : <https://www.dvv-international.de/adult-education-and-development/>. La revue L'Éducation des Adultes et Développement est distribuée gratuitement en anglais, en français et en espagnol. Vous pouvez vous abonner à la revue ici : <https://www.dvv-international.de/aed/subscription>.

7 Webinar with Paul Holdsworth The new Skills Agenda for Europe

In the framework of the Virtual seminar 2017 the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and DVV International organised, for the first time, an on-line discussion in the form of a webinar. The virtual seminar as well as the webinar was based on issue 83 of DVV International's journal Adult Education and Development (AED).

During the webinar, Paul Holdsworth presented and discussed his article on The New Skills Agenda for Europe, written together with Dana Bachmann for this year's AED edition. Paul Holdsworth is team leader for Skills for Adults in the Vocational Education and Training, Apprenticeships and Adult Education Unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

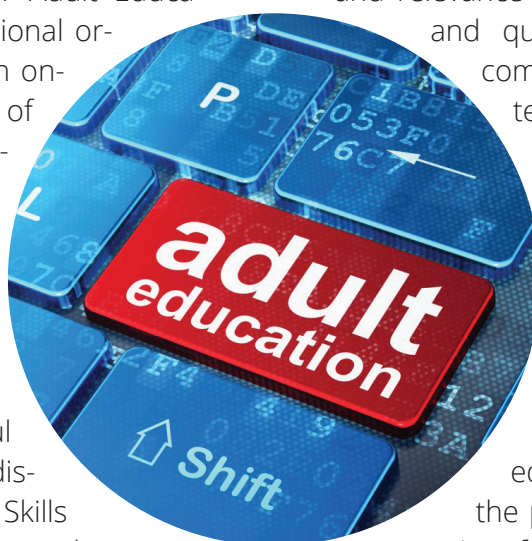
The European Commission has published major proposals to tackle a number of challenges faced by the European Union in the field of skills and

human capital. These aim to improve the quality and relevance of skills formation, make skills and qualifications more visible and comparable, and improve skills intelligence and information for better career choices.

Shermaine Barrett, senior lecturer in the School of Technical and Vocational Education at the University of Technology, Jamaica, and member of the ICAE Board and the AED editorial board, commented on the presentation from a Caribbean point of view.

The webinar was held on 2 May. Over 30 participants from Europe and other parts of the world engaged in the discussion. The webinar is available online at https://youtu.be/NXLiOAOo_I4.

And if you couldn't follow the seminar this time, you can read up the whole discussion on the dedicated ICAE Website <http://virtualseminar.icae.global>.





CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

374.7(082)
37.018.48(082)

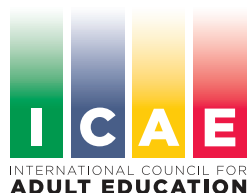
INTERNATIONAL Council for Adult Education (Montevideo). Virtual seminar
(2017)

Adult Education and Development : skills and competencies / ICAE virtual seminar. - Beograd : Faculty of Philosophy University, Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy, : Adult Education Society, 2017 (Beograd : Instant system). - 106 str. : ilustr. ; 30 cm

Tiraž 250.

ISBN 978-86-80712-07-9 (IP)

a) Образовање одраслих - Зборници b) Перманентно образовање - Зборници
COBISS.SR-ID 246658316



ICAE - International Council for Adult Education

DVV International - the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V., DVV)

The ICAE Virtual Seminars are based on the journal "Adult Education and Development" (AED), published once a year by DVV International in English, French and Spanish. Each volume is dedicated to one major topic. The seminar on skills and competencies was organized in April 2017 in three languages.

