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## From social exclusion to lifelong learning in Southern Africa

Boele van Hensbroek, Pieter; Schoenmakers, Hans

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# **From Social Exclusion to Lifelong Learning in Southern Africa**

**Pieter Boele van Hensbroek**

**Hans Schoenmakers**

**(Eds.)**

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## **PREFACE**

Education is a major focus in development planning and development assistance. However, in education for development we tend to focus attention on the formal members of the educational family – especially on formal primary education. This book invites the readers to take a much broader look at education and include, so to say, the stepchildren, adoptive children and even bastards of the educational system in our view of education for development. This book argues for a broad view of learning as a way to take issue with social exclusion, marginalisation and forms of historically, culturally or socially reproduced inequalities. It suggests a culture- and context sensitive approach, sometimes questioning standardised educational recepees and a focus on universal skills (literacy, proficiency in national or international languages and general skills). Furthermore, it suggests a deeper research agenda related to lifelong learning, which traces the ways of thinking and learning of groups involved in learning exercises.

The studies included in this collection derive from remarkable and interesting work in Adult Education at the University of the North in South Africa and the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique. Both universities have taken up the challenge of supporting lifelong learning programmes and policies at the local, provincial and national levels. Both universities are addressing the issues through a combination of research and the development of educational programmes in Adult Education and work together closely with the Department of Adult Education of the University of Groningen. Research and training activities in lifelong learning require an extremely outgoing attitude of university staff – engaging with educational administrators, trainers in educational programmes, as well as with the individuals that should participate in such programmes, discussing their situation and educational needs. This outgoing mentality inspires the research questions and programmes discussed in this book. The most articulated conclusions of this discussion are summarised at the end of this collection.

The contributions to this collection are elaborated versions of papers presented at an international seminar titled: “Lifelong Learning in Southern Africa: research, policies and cooperation” organised by the Centre for Development Studies of the University of Groningen in December 2001. Apart from vital research questions and issues in designing educational programmes for adult educators, this collection also discusses government policies in the field as well

as conditions for effective North-South interuniversity collaboration. The triangular collaborations between Maputo, Polokwane (Pietersburg) and Groningen are both an interesting learning experience and a shining example of what interuniversity North-South and South-South collaboration can achieve. If ever the case is made that Development Cooperation is a waste of money, then this is an example to disprove that case. The contributions to this collection underscore the relevance of lifelong learning as a vital element in educational programmes for development.

Dr. Hans Schoenmakers  
Dr. Pieter Boele van Hensbroek  
(editors)

# **LIFELONG LEARNING AND NORTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION**

Max van der Kamp

## **Lifelong learning as overall framework**

‘Lifelong learning for all’ was the ambitious message of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to the industrialised countries in 1996 (OECD, 1996). ‘Learning the treasure within’ was the more romantic title of a report of a UNESCO committee chaired by Jacques Delors in 1996 (UNESCO, 1996). The European Union declared 1996 to be the ‘European Year of Lifelong Learning’ and the European Union’s ‘Memorandum on Lifelong Learning’ was published in 1998. Not only international organisations addressed the importance of lifelong learning, but also several European countries. ‘The joy of learning’ was the title of the Finnish national policy paper and in the United Kingdom a white paper entitled ‘The learning age, a renaissance for a New Britain’ was published. The Dutch government launched its ‘National Action Programme Lifelong Learning’. Thus lifelong learning appears to be high on the international political and educational agenda, at least at the rhetorical level.

Lifelong learning policies in Western countries are being justified not only on economic grounds but also because individual learning across the entire life-span, from learning in early childhood to learning in retirement, forms the basis for a civil society that is rational, enlightened and democratic. Several developments in contemporary societies are mentioned as factors influencing the need for lifelong learning such as the process of individualisation, technological changes, development of the knowledge and information society, demographic changes and development towards multicultural societies.

In knowledge and learning societies, competence, skills and learning have come to be recognised as fundamental for participation by individuals in modern life as well as the hallmarks of dynamic economic units and thriving social communities. This insight has a less positive side in the current international policy of lifelong learning: the consequences for those individuals or communities who do not keep up in the learning marathon become marginalised and excluded. Thus education, training and learning in general can be seen not only as part of the solution but also as part of the problem. For those who have a successful, positive experience of education, and who see themselves as capable



learners, continuing learning is an enriching experience which increases their sense of control over their own lives and their society. For those who are excluded from this process, however, or who choose not to participate, the generalisation of lifelong learning may have the effect of increasing their isolation from the world of the 'knowledge rich'. The consequences are economic, in terms of under-used human capacity and increased welfare expenditure, and social, in terms of alienation and decaying social infrastructure (OECD, 1999).

Lifelong learning policies, therefore, are doomed to fail as long as segments of the labour force and general population do not seem to be interested in adult learning and as long as conventional pathways of learning are not sufficiently attractive. In this respect the issue of non-participation is especially intriguing because it shows possible discrepancies with lifelong learning policies. International comparative data on adult education participation were published by Bélanger & Valdaviello (1997) and Bélanger & Tuijnman (1997). Table 1 shows the adult education participation rate in various countries.

**Table 1.** Adult Education Participation rate in various countries. Percentage of the population between 16 and 65 years of age participating on a yearly basis in education and training.

Country	Percentage
Sweden	53
New Zealand	48
Switzerland (German speaking)	45
United Kingdom	44
United States	40
Australia	39
Canada	38
Netherlands	37
Switzerland (French speaking)	34
Ireland	24
Belgium (Flanders)	21
Poland	14

Table 1 offers a rough indication of the learning efforts by adults in different countries – a rough indication because it concerns only organised educational

activities; informal types of learning are not included in the table. There are remarkable differences between countries. Sweden is ahead of countries like Belgium and Poland on the road to the learning society. Van der Kamp (1999) analysed Dutch data on adult education participation and revealed large differences both between generations and within generations. He was especially interested in the two out of three adults who do not participate in lifelong learning. The non-participants are overwhelmingly those with a low level of initial education, and – especially among the younger generations – more often women than men. They are more often old than young, are working in vulnerable industrial sectors such as agriculture and elementary occupations, are more often unemployed or homemakers than employed, are less skilled in cognitive domains such as literacy and numeracy, and participate less in social and cultural activities. Ethnic backgrounds also play a role, with the number of dropouts being much higher among migrants than among indigenous people.

On the one hand, the barriers to lifelong learning are related to individuals' backgrounds with regard to lack of motivation, stereotyped perceptions of education, and physical and material obstacles. On the other hand, the barriers have to do with power and with the poor accessibility of institutes offering educational activities for lifelong learning.

In knowledge societies, knowledge means sharing in power and a lack of knowledge implies exclusion.

While much is known about the impact of schooling on young people, the relationships between exclusion and adult education are less well examined (OECD, 1999). To bridge the gap between the learners and the non-learners, it is paramount to explore the nature of these barriers and to design innovative pathways of learning for the hard to reach groups.

As we have seen, UNESCO, the OECD and the European Union (EU) promote lifelong learning as the key to prosperity and democracy in the twenty-first century. Lifelong learning is at the heart of current debates about the knowledge society, sustainable international development and world peace. Although lifelong learning has strong global significance, the challenge is to give it a highly contextual interpretation in different local contexts. The data on participation in lifelong learning show that we are still far from establishing learning societies. In the Western industrialised countries, the distribution of educational activities is rather unequal, and there is no reason to suppose that this situation differs in developing countries. If the non-participants are not stimulated or are excluded from taking part in educational activities, the learning divide between the learning rich and the learning poor will increase. On a different scale these mechanisms can be seen in developed and developing

countries. Processes of social exclusion are the main impediments for the development of a civil society.

Although the concept of lifelong learning is still rhetorical in nature, its use, in both developed and developing countries, has comparative advantages over the concept of adult education (Torres, 2002). There is an overall shift in focus from education to learning, and from lifelong education to lifelong learning. Lifelong learning essentially acknowledges two inter-related facts:

- that learning is *life-long* (not confined to a particular period in life) and
- that learning is *life-wide* (not confined to school or to schooling).

The bond between knowledge and power can only be loosened through new forms of teaching and learning, all of which are central to any credible idea of lifelong learning. Each requires new forms of dialogue and of citizenship to secure change in formal education, renewal of communities, democratisation of employment, and strategies to combat inequality and social exclusion on an international scale. “Lifelong learning both requires and builds a new kind of society” (Williamson, 1998).

The requirements are to enhance lifelong learning in civil society and, more specifically, to combat social exclusion through adult learning.

Academic programmes in lifelong learning should be instrumental in achieving these aims. Sharing this commitment, the University of the North in South Africa, the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands have collaborated in teaching and research in lifelong learning. Although the contexts are different, we share common research questions and a common concept of lifelong learning. We focus, for instance, on the competencies needed for active citizenship and for employability, the role of formal and informal education in lifelong learning, the factors influencing social inclusion and exclusion, and the development of effective new pathways of learning in different contexts. Methodological research issues, such as action research, evaluation research and development research, are also of common interest. In this chapter, and in the reader as a whole, this co-operation will be considered and some of the results, attained by Dutch, South African and Mozambican colleagues, will be shown.

### **Co-operation in lifelong learning: Maputo, Turfloop, Groningen**

“Nothing beyond Groningen” is the slogan used by policymakers and tourist agencies in the city of Groningen. This slogan, however, is not valid for students and teachers of the University of Groningen (RUG). Since the 1980s,

‘internationalisation’ has become one of the priorities of higher education policy. The European harmonisation of diplomas within the new bachelor and master’s structure is one of the measures to facilitate the exchange of students all over Europe. Students are expected to study a certain period in another country or to participate in international educational programmes. Publishing in English in international journals is a ‘must’ for researchers if they want to survive in the scientific arena. International donors try to stimulate scientific co-operation in a global world. Special programmes for higher education have been created for North-South co-operation.

For over a decade, the Department of Adult Education of the University of Groningen has been closely co-operating with both the Eduardo Mondlane University and the University of the North (Van der Kamp, 2000). The overall perspective in this co-operation has changed from staff development for adult education to staff development for *lifelong learning*. How useful is the concept of *lifelong learning* for our co-operation? In the first part of this chapter, our projects in Mozambique and South Africa will be briefly described and the use of the concept of lifelong learning will be introduced. In the second part, the problems and pitfalls of North-South co-operation will be discussed.

Although there was some co-operation between the University of Groningen and the Eduardo Mondlane University in the 1980s, the role of the Department of Adult Education started in the 1990s. In those years, Mozambique was fully immersed in a civil war that started immediately after independence in 1975. From Vasco da Gama to 1975, Mozambique was colonised by the Portuguese. On the day of independence, the prospects for the country were gloomy. As a consequence of the arrival of huge numbers of lower-educated Portuguese people in the 1950s and 60s, the number of skilled labourers and higher educated people of Mozambican origin was negligible. Because the Portuguese left the country en masse just before independence, the availability of the knowledge and expertise needed for rebuilding Mozambique was totally insufficient. Long-term colonial domination, the continuation of apartheid in South Africa and active Soviet diplomacy influenced the strong eastern-block orientation of Frelimo, the Mozambican liberation movement. Frelimo became a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party and developed the country according to classic Eastern European traditions. Companies were nationalised, collective farms were established and village communities were collectivised. Resistance came from Portuguese refugees in South Africa and Portugal. The right-wing governments in South Africa and Rhodesia considered Frelimo a thorn in their flesh. They supported the resistance movement Renamo. Frelimo and Renamo fought each other violently (Hanlon, 1991). Renamo’s treatment of the civilian

population was intensely cruel and the infrastructure of the country was almost completely destroyed. Roads, railways, schools and hospitals were damaged and large parts of the population took refuge from the fighting in the rural areas by moving to the cities or to neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Tanzania. In 1992, finally, the civil war was stopped through international pressure and mediation. Both parties signed a peace agreement in Rome. The armies were demobilised and national elections were held. The process of transition was supervised by a United Nations peacekeeping force. To date there have been two elections, won by Frelimo but with a considerable number of votes for Renamo. After the war, Mozambique – once the poorest country in the world – turned to a free-market economy and the macro-economic figures showed a remarkable recovery: strong economic growth and low inflation. Less pleasant side effects, however, are an increasing rate of criminality, corruption, HIV/aids and environmental problems. The economy of the country remains vulnerable to setbacks, as the floods in 2000 showed.

Within this context, the Eduardo Mondlane University (EMU) has a crucial role to play in assisting the reconstruction of Mozambican society. For a long time the EMU was the only university in Mozambique, but in the last few years other institutes such as the Pedagogical University and some private education bodies such as the Catholic University of Mozambique have also acquired university status. In spite of the immense task that faces these universities, their financial resources have not increased considerably. Priority in Mozambique has been given to primary and secondary education. The whole educational infrastructure has to be rebuilt and the costs of one higher education student are about the same as the costs for nine pupils in primary education. It is therefore not surprising that the Eduardo Mondlane University requires strong support from foreign donors.

Co-operation between the EMU and the University of Groningen started with the so-called STADEP Project. STADEP means staff development project. The aim of this project was the raising of the educational competencies of the mainly young university staff. Dutch educational experts worked closely with their Mozambican colleagues who, among other things, took courses in the Netherlands or worked on a PhD with a Dutch supervisor at the University of Groningen. STADEP offered courses and workshops in curriculum development, assessment, instruction and other subjects relevant to the staff of the EMU. Moreover, contemporary educational issues were discussed, such as problem-based learning and other innovations in comparison with the traditional oral teaching culture. Gradually, building up research capacity became more and more important in relation to the development of a real academic climate. For a

long time STADEP's status was that of a project at the university. From the viewpoint of sustainability, this was not the best organisational set-up. In 2001, however, the Eduardo Mondlane University reopened its Faculty of Education, which had been closed in the 1970s. The development of this Faculty of Education is generously sponsored by Dutch donor support through NUFFIC. The EMU started enthusiastically with the development of three masters trajectories in educational sciences and a '*licenciatura*' in psychology, and STADEP will be transformed into a 'Centre for Academic Development'. The Faculty of Education is supported by a consortium of three Dutch universities: the Free University of Amsterdam, the University of Twente and the University of Groningen. The Groningen Department of Adult Education has been especially involved in the development of the Masters in Adult Education. An extended description of the development process of the Faculty of Education up to May 2002 can be found in the dissertation of Kouwenhoven (2003) who worked for several years as Dutch expert in the STADEP project. The results of an extensive needs analysis, as input for the curriculum development, are reported in this reader by Maaïke Smulders.

Co-operation between the University of the North in South Africa and the University of Groningen developed only after 1992 when the boycott of the South African apartheid regime was lifted. Until 1992 the University of Groningen supported the academic boycott and there were no formal contacts between RUG staff and South African universities, although there was a fund for South African refugees who wished to study at RUG. 1992 was a hectic time in South Africa. Former president De Klerk held a referendum to ask the white people in the country whether they supported his policy of "closing the book of apartheid". In total 68% of the voters said yes. The region of Pietersburg (now Polokwane) however, voted against De Klerk's policy. The University of the North (UNIN) is situated in the impoverished Northern Province, nowadays the Limpopo Province, 20 miles east of Polokwane. It is a former 'black', historically disadvantaged university – a former 'educational prison' in the words of one of our South African colleagues. At the time, UNIN was quite isolated from the international academic community and even from the local community. UNIN was desperately looking forward to international help and long-term academic co-operation. Representatives of the ANC and the Royal Dutch Embassy warmly welcomed the possibility of co-operation between UNIN and RuG, and RuG made money available per annum for activities as part of this co-operation.

Projects were established in the field of English, staff development, adult education, the language centre and chemistry. Staff exchanges between the two

universities occurred on a large scale. About 20 students from RUG completed trainee-ships and master's research studies at UNIN, and RUG awarded special scholarships to staff and students of UNIN to enable them to take part in a master's programme at RUG's Department of English. Two PhD scholarships from RuG PhD Fellowship Programme were awarded to UNIN staff. One doctoral thesis on South African literature was completed and defended in 2002. A second PhD, on the implementation of adult education policy in the Limpopo Province, was defended by Makgwana Rampedi (one of the authors in this reader) in 2003 at RuG (Rampedi, 2003). Co-operation in the field of adult education has been very successful. This was partly due to external funding from the Dutch CENESA programmes (CENESA I and CENESA II) and an incentive subsidy from the National Research Foundation in South Africa, which designated adult education at UNIN (no adult education was offered there in 1993) as a 'focus area'. Jacques Zeelen (another of the authors in this reader), who has played a key role in the co-operation, is currently visiting professor in adult education and will return in 2004 after a five-year stay at UNIN.

### **North-South co-operation: problems and constraints**

This reader shows some of the results of the co-operation between the University of Groningen, the Eduardo Mondlane University and the University of the North, but it also offers an opportunity to discuss the concerns of North-South co-operation in general. It is obvious that such co-operation is not a matter of routine and that success is dependent of all kinds of actors and factors. Let us look at some of these factors.

#### *Dependency on donors and national policy*

Because of the distance, the limited resources of the African universities and the decreasing resources of the Dutch universities, North-South co-operation is nearly impossible without extra (external) financing. In this respect it is a good thing that Dutch foreign policy contains programmes for development co-operation in higher education. NUFFIC, the main intermediary for these programmes in the Netherlands, is totally dependent on the policy changes of the Dutch Government, its selection of countries for co-operation etc., and nowadays higher education has less priority than in the past. Furthermore, the new focus is on direct developmental help with export of Dutch expertise and not on long-term academic co-operation. A more fruitful approach starts with development co-operation leading to academic co-operation on an equal basis, with 'double' diplomas, i.e. degrees obtained at both co-operating universities.

Further dependency has to do with governmental policies in the countries of the South where university policies are often intertwined with governmental policies, thus limiting the development of the co-operation.

### *Continuity*

‘Sustainability’ is the developmental jargon for continuity in the process initiated by the project after the phase of developmental support. It might be obvious that sustainability is also dependent on donors, national policy and the policy of the institutions involved. Dutch partners, for example, have little influence on the salaries and the human resources policy of the higher education institutions abroad, but relatively low salaries might lead to an exodus of qualified personnel or to ‘double jobs’ and too little time for training. Quite a number of staff involved in the collaboration at UNIN left the university to accept jobs at other universities or jobs in the government. The Vice-Rector of the EMU became Minister of Education and Technology. Of course this kind of mobility might be good for the country, but can disturb the co-operation that has been gradually built up.

### *Negative professionalism*

Initially, academic development co-operation was characterised by idealism, sometimes accompanied with amateurism. It is good to notice that nowadays the field of development co-operation shows more professionalism. Institutions for higher education have special departments for internationalisation, where a lot of expertise can be found in management and strategies of development co-operation. During the last decade, however, we also see side effects such as contra-productive competition between institutions in tendering procedures, and ‘forced shopping’ internally for expertise rather than from other universities or institutions in the region. Sometimes, institutions even seem opportunistic, for example when honorary degrees are offered to visiting ministers of a country with which there is co-operation. Gradually, long-term experts that stay for some years are replaced by expensive consultants that visit the country for a short mission and a workshop. The phenomenon of ‘feeling workshoped again’ does not sound like a very fruitful learning experience. Unmistakably, the quality of the expertise needed in developmental universities has been increased considerably during the last years. Experts cannot fall back on routines but have to show real expertise. However, long-term experts working on the spot continue to be important for building an infrastructure for the co-operation and for mediating between the different universities.

Another phenomenon is called ‘academic tourism’. Trips to Europe are not always in the first place seen as a real academic experience, but sometimes



motivated by financial reasons. Embarrassing questions about daily allowances are not always easy to cope with.

### *Bureaucracy*

The number of actors involved in North-South co-operation is much bigger than is common in research projects of a university department. Decision-making is a process along many chains: we have the donor NUFFIC, the partner-university and the university itself, then we have the ministry and its civil servants, and then also the Embassy with a special but often not very clear role in the co-operation. As a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, one can imagine that the decision-making process sometimes halts. The nature of the work, however, is complicated and needs flexible problem solving, which is not always easy. In one of our projects, for example, a desperately needed vehicle stood unused for months and months at the harbour because the required papers had not been completed.

### *University policy*

An important success-factor for projects in the area of North-South co-operation is the support of the university itself. The University of Groningen, for example, supported the co-operation with the University of the North through a modest but specific fund which made staff exchange possible. RuG has both a Centre for Development Studies which stimulates scientific work in the field of development co-operation, and an Office for International Relations which provides more practical and management support to North-South co-operation. However, not only material but also academic support is important, and academic support seems to have become more problematic during recent years. The current academic climate is not very stimulating for development co-operation. Reviewing committees for research are now more focused on outputs, such as publication in international journals with outstanding reputations and the total number of PhDs achieved. Although these criteria are important, they sometimes underestimate the products of North-South co-operation, which may for example demand more time and initial investment in publications with less prestige. After nearly a decade of co-operation, the first South African colleague has defended his PhD at RUG and some Mozambican colleagues will soon follow, but the time they need is longer than that of the young Dutch PhD students. Dutch PhD students are allowed to work full-time on their dissertation research whereas their African counterparts often have many other commitments and responsibilities. The ultimate goal of North-South co-operation is to contribute to international science, but the time and patience needed for capacity building is not always given. One of the consequences is that it is sometimes not easy to find Dutch colleagues with a high academic status who are willing to

invest in North-South co-operation. The academic pressure of ‘publish (in English journals) or perish’ is given too much priority.

*From aid to trade?*

In recent years we have seen a new policy of internationalisation, with higher education increasingly being regarded as a commodity or export item. In the context of globalisation, agreements within the European Union, and initiatives under the WTO/GATT to make higher education a free-market service, institutions for higher education both inside and outside Europe have been trying to recruit students for their master’s courses, partly for substantive reasons (a curriculum with a more international flavour) and partly for financial and personnel-related reasons (less students and lack of researchers in natural sciences). The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is spearheading this development and is seeking to promote it through special scholarship programmes. The University of Groningen is actively responding to this policy and has undertaken PR and recruitment activities in countries such as Brazil, China and Indonesia. The delegation to Indonesia was made up of as many as 12 people, under the command of the Rector of RUG, visiting a variety of Indonesian universities and education fairs to sell – through glossy brochures – the attractions of the University of Groningen.

One can discuss whether this approach could be successful in South Africa. First of all, it is important to point out that experiences in the above countries cannot simply be transferred wholesale to South Africa. At a NUFFIC conference in 2002 entitled ‘The Global Higher Education Market’, the South African Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal, made very critical comments about the change from aid to trade (Van Dale, 2002). Asmal did not reject globalisation, but pointed to the need for a balance between global and local developments. He highlighted as dangers: (a) “the proliferation of foreign higher education institutions establishing operational bases in South Africa either independently or, in some cases, in partnership with local public and private providers”, and (b) “the increasing activities to recruit high-level skills, especially from the public sector. I am thinking here in particular of the aggressive recruiting campaign by many developed countries for doctors, nurses and teachers” (Asmal, in Van Dale 2002, p. 60). Asmal’s standpoint, however, should not be seen as provincialism: “I want to emphasise that this is not motivated by a narrow protectionist agenda or by national chauvinism. On the contrary, we would welcome partnerships that seek to assist in building the teaching and research agenda of our higher education institutions”. But the minister is not particularly enamoured of foreign institutions of higher education that are “narrowly influenced by the need to seek new markets, to generate new sources of income, and in so doing to overcome

the financial constraints that many foreign institutions face in their own countries”. South Africa is therefore the wrong place for a policy aimed solely at financial gain. For a more substantive policy of internationalisation, however, it offers definite opportunities.

### *Perspectives*

With all these constraints, the question is whether it is still worthwhile for higher education institutions in the North to invest in North-South co-operation. The wrong way to proceed would be to place the co-operation in a satellite construction just next to the university – as some universities are inclined to do – because this is the road to specialised expertise centres separated from the primary processes of the university. In our view, North-South co-operation must be an aspect of academic co-operation, and be strongly related to the teaching and research programmes of co-operating universities. We are still of the opinion that such co-operation is inspiring and fruitful for universities both in the South and in the North. Certain basic conditions, however, must be fulfilled if we are to speak about fruitful academic North-South co-operation. First, the academic content must contain sufficient challenges for issues of teaching and research. In our case, the concept of lifelong learning has much to offer students and researchers, both on a global and on a contextual level. Second, the academic co-operation must be productive in relation to the primary processes of the participating universities. Theses on the master’s level, doctoral dissertations, knowledge exchange and common publications should therefore be the visible output of such co-operation. Thirdly, the co-operation is a mutual learning process in itself. In spite of all the constraints mentioned above, academic co-operation must contain the characteristics of a powerful learning environment. Finally, academic North-South co-operation is a continuous dialogue. Kimmerle (1995) introduced the Swahili word ‘*Mazungumzo*’. In Swahili it means dialogue, conversation, a two-sided communication. It is the sound of people who are in conversation (the prefix ‘*Ma*’ indicates people); it sounds like buzzing in a balanced but not identical way. *Mazungumzo* is actually the basis for every co-operation. Without dialogue there is no co-operation! In our department we are happy with a decade of dialogue with our colleagues from the South.

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# FROM SOCIAL EXCLUSION TO LIFELONG LEARNING

## Characteristics of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Southern Africa

Jacques Zeelen

### Introduction

Talking about *globalisation* often seems to create a feeling of excitement, a sense of becoming part of the world community. The strong economic market forces, heavily supported by the revolution in information technology, promise even the most remote areas in the world a place in the sun in the new global village. But, as the history of other utopias has painfully shown us before, with this powerful new utopia one has to ask: Who will really benefit? (See for instance Mengisteab, 1996 and Schugurensky, 1997.)

The same question could be asked about *lifelong learning* (Holford, Jarvis and Griffin, 1998). How wonderful it would be to develop throughout our lives, always stimulated by creative learning environments (Tuijnman and Van der Kamp, 1992). The huge potential of continued learning outside formal school situations has been discovered all over the world. However, Western countries and, even more so, developing countries are confronted with profound challenges and problems, especially as regards the exclusion of large numbers from the mainstream of society (OECD, 1998 and 1999).

In countries like South Africa and Mozambique as elsewhere, the danger is that the promotion of lifelong learning will be, in the end, a rhetorical exercise from which only the highly skilled *happy few* will benefit (Walters (ed), 1997). The issue of social and economic *lifelong exclusion*, especially among different sections of the adult population faced with long-term unemployment and social isolation in rural areas like the Limpopo Province, should therefore be a key concern when developing adult basic education and training.

What implications do such questions have for teaching and research programmes in adult education at a university in a rural area?

To answer this question I will discuss the basic assumptions and research activities of the new Department of Adult Education at the University of the North (UNIN) while making occasional reference to other countries in Southern Africa.

### **Basic assumptions about adult education and lifelong learning in a *rural area***

During the last few years, we have executed several preparatory studies and other activities for the new Department of Adult Education, such as, different forms of *needs analysis* of (potential) learners (Stevens, 1994; Rakoma, 1999), *curriculum development* of adult education programmes (Hulst and Kerkhof, 1996; Hammink, 1998 and 1999; Kerkhof and Rakoma, 1999; Mellema, 1999), *exploration* of possible research topics (Rampedi and Zeelen, 1998; Rampedi, Mthanji and Zeelen, 1999) and *reflection* on adult education theory and research (Wildemeersch, Finger and Jansen, 1998; Belanger and Tuijnman, 1997). Furthermore, we organised conferences and workshops for policy makers and practitioners in the Limpopo Province.

On the basis of these activities and experiences, the following assumptions for adult education and lifelong learning practices have been formulated.

### **Adult Education and Training should not only be about ...**

- *Adult education and training should not only be about ... literacy*

Reading and writing skills are very important but they will fade away if they are not embedded in a repertoire of skills which are used in everyday life. In developing contexts that are affected by enormous poverty like the rural areas of the Limpopo Province and the rural areas in Mozambique, the links between literacy skills and for instance income generation skills, in the formal **and** in the informal labour market, are of vital importance.

- *Adult education and training should not only be about ... English or Portuguese*

Although mastering the English language has, for many South Africans, been regarded so far as the main passport to becoming a successful citizen, it also embodies a permanent stumbling block to becoming a self-confident and self-respecting human being. This situation is similar in Mozambique in relation to Portuguese. To express oneself in one's mother tongue seems to be an important condition for lifelong learning. In adult education more attention should be paid

to the role of the mother tongue and the advantages of multi-lingual approaches (Joseph and Ramani, 1998).

- *Adult education and training should not only be about ... another way to obtain 'matric'*

South Africa seems to suffer from a rebellious illness that can be called the “matric-obsession”. A lot of educational and political attention is paid to matric results and the education in grades 11 and 12. Sometimes matric results seem to be the only criterion for the quality of education. What happens in grades 8 and 9 seems to be less important.

However, when learners drop out of secondary school at the age of 15 or 16 because of teenage pregnancy or juvenile delinquency, or fail four or five times in their matric, or are still at school at the age of 25, or finally pass matric and are unemployed, then questions can be raised about the overall structure, curriculum and guidance systems of the secondary schools. Matric should not be the only way to become a respected citizen. More differentiated streams in secondary schools, with different exit points, could offer many possibilities for learners who are more capable in technical and other non-academic professional domains. Consequently, adult education should not only present itself as a second chance for achieving matric as was often the case in the “night school” past. Vocational education, combinations of work and education or support in establishing income-generating projects could enhance people’s chances to become respected citizens and valuable workers in developing provinces. In Mozambique, the situation is even more problematic. For instance, about 40% of the potential learners, mainly girls, do not attend primary school.

- *Adult basic education and training should not only be about ... skills*

International developments in adult education show a strong emphasis on skills training in connection with the labour market. Although the dimension of skills is important, one should not neglect other important dimensions, such as the issue of social responsibility and other aspects of norms and values (Wildemeersch et al, 1998). For instance, if one would like to improve the participation of parents in schools, attention should not only be paid to literacy skills but also to responsible ways of dealing with pedagogical and guidance problems, which occur on a large scale in many families in the rural areas. Moreover, in areas like the Limpopo Province, where for instance the belief in witchcraft is still very strong, adult education should also address the role of traditional beliefs and the tensions with modernity, including the specific role of gender.



- *Adult basic education and training should not only be about ... lack of competencies*

Only talking about the people's deficits neglects their actual competencies and useful survival strategies. Not being able to write and read does not mean that people do not have a story to tell. Their experiences, wisdom, skills and interests should form the breeding ground for new learning processes. In the first phase of any adult education activity, *conversation space* ought to be created to bring these experiences, competencies and views into the open.

- *Adult basic education and training should not only be about ... women*

In the Limpopo Province (as well as in Mozambique), women form the majority of the participants in adult education programmes. There are several possible reasons for this. First is the fact that many men in this area are migrants and have their jobs in Gauteng Province. Another reason seems to be the belief held by men that taking part in adult education programmes would harm their status as – in their own view – educated human beings. Going to class would implicitly mean that they admit that they still have something to learn. A rather fruitless conclusion of these considerations would be to concentrate mainly on women in adult education programmes. Being gender sensitive should, on the contrary, mean being equally keen on the participation of men, as well as discussing the gender aspects of education and the specific obstacles to participation for both sexes. For instance, it happens frequently that women are not allowed by their husbands to attend adult education programmes. Men's fear of women's empowerment could be at stake here.

- *Adult basic education and training should not only be about ... elderly people*

One common image of adult education in the past has been that it is a facility mostly for elderly people who had not previously benefited from formal education. This image needs correction. It becomes more and more clear that adult education has to play a role for many other age groups, such as the different groups of school dropouts mentioned earlier and the huge number of unemployed adults of different ages with minimal forms of education. This task should, of course, be dealt with not only by adult education and training. Collaboration with secondary school education and further education and training is highly necessary.

- *Adult basic education and training should not only be about ... the learners who are already in the system*

In the process of improving adult education programmes, it might be tempting to concentrate on the learners who are already taking part. However, it is necessary to explore the needs of those who have not yet been reached by the programmes, especially the socially excluded in remote rural areas.

- *Adult basic education and training should not only be about ... individual learners*

The strong belief in outcomes-based education as introduced in South Africa, which is mainly focussed on the individual learner in the school situation, should not lead to a complete neglect of the community perspective and the role of informal education outside class situations. During the apartheid period, adult education in South Africa was much more focussed on social action and social empowerment (Walters, 1998). Although the new democratic South Africa demands new competencies of adult education and training, the potential of collective engagement and *social* learning should not be completely put aside in favour of the purely individualised concept of learning.

- *Adult basic education and training should not only be about ... education*

Programmes in adult education and training can only be effective if they are sensitive to an inter-disciplinary approach. In the Limpopo Province this means that, for instance, because of the immense problems of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and AIDS, collaboration with the sectors of health and agriculture is of vital importance. Such a strategy of linking sectors should not only be developed with respect to the activities of the provincial government, but also extended to the different NGOs and the employers in the province.

## **Key Challenges**

The following concepts seem to be relevant to guide teaching and research activities at the University of the North and to deal with the basic assumptions formulated above. By means of these concepts we want to make a contribution to the battle against lifelong exclusion in the Limpopo Province.

- *Contextualisation*

One of the tasks of the new Department of Adult Education at UNIN is the development of a curriculum for adult educators in the Limpopo Province. After research into the needs of these professionals it became clear that further

training programmes are needed to address the specific problems of this province. Existing training programmes are often too general and not sensitive enough to rural issues like poverty, traditional beliefs and characteristics of local communities which often still suffer from the apartheid legacies.

This means, for instance, that in the core module Community Oriented Adult Education, explicit attention is paid to the specific history of communities in the context of the land issue. Under the apartheid policies of the past, many people had been forcibly removed from their land and had to find new opportunities in mostly less fertile areas. This negatively affected the level of social cohesion of these communities. Social cohesion came under further pressure from the strong development of migrant labour. Many men from the area work in Gauteng Province and return only a few times a year to their home villages in the North. Sometimes they start a new family in their work environment. Furthermore, in the module, the tensions in terms of norms and values between the different generations are discussed. Traditional values around the extended family are still important for the older generation. A growing number of more semi-rural or urban-oriented people, however, struggle more and more with the tension and contradiction between traditional values and more individualistic-oriented modern views. This is especially the case for the younger generation, which has had greater educational opportunities.

- *Theory/Practice/Policy interaction*

To build up programmes which are relevant for the province, it is vital to develop a lively interaction with practitioners, NGOs, policy makers and representatives of the communities. For that reason, an Adult Education Resource Centre has been established. On a regular basis, we organise debates and seminars with the participation of those stakeholders. Recently we have developed a newsletter, which will be published every three months, to function as an information platform for adult education in the Limpopo Province.

- *Practice-oriented research* (programme evaluation, implementation and action research)

The added value of an adult education department at a university should be research which enables contributions to the development of “good practices” and “good policies” in the region. Important epistemological starting points are the concept of *double hermeneutics* (Giddens, 1976), the establishment of a *dialogue* with the researched (Freire, 1972) and the relevance of the creation of *conversation space* for all the involved stakeholders (Zeelen, 1995).

Firstly, we use the approach of action research in developing the curriculum for our training programme for adult educators. We design pilot modules based on the different forms of needs-analysis and the outcomes of regional conferences and workshops. We try these modules out with a group of adult educators who are considered as co-developers of the module. We ask them to bring in relevant examples from their daily work and life, to reflect, for instance, on the tension between tradition and modernity in their communities, as mentioned earlier. After the piloting, we integrate the comments and examples of the adult educators and finalise our module books which are then published in the adult education series of the University of the North.

Secondly, we are developing a regionally oriented research programme called “From Social Exclusion to Lifelong Learning”. A group of 20 Masters and PhD students are working on research activities that are relevant for the development of adult education in the Limpopo Province. Examples include: research into the adult education needs of the cleaners at the University of the North; evaluation of good practices, which are concentrating on skills training for rural women; investigation into why men are not participating in the adult education programmes; research into the regional implementation problems of adult education; research into the needs of young mothers between formal education and the labour market; and last but not least, for instance, investigation into how young prisoners could benefit from adult education programmes.

- *Dealing with indigenous or local knowledge and competencies*

The recent debate about the African Renaissance (Makgoba (ed), 1999) will have implications for the development of adult education. The rediscovering of local competencies and values could have a stimulating influence on the development of new adult education practices. This should not mean, however, that indigenous perspectives should be overly romanticised.

An example is the way we deal with the relationship between indigenous knowledge and Western perspectives in one of our training modules concerning health education. In that module we try to find a balance between the rich tradition of, for instance, herbal medicines and the important contributions of traditional healers on the one hand, and, on the other hand, enhancing awareness that traditional health care is limited in certain areas and that Western approaches also have a lot to offer. The objective of this module is to train adult educators to help their learners to make use of their indigenous knowledge and at the same time to support them to make more informed decisions on when and what approach to use in different circumstances. Items in the module are, for

instance, the deconstruction of myths such as “AIDS can be cured by traditional healers” and “Drinking Coca-Cola can be used as a contraceptive”.

By means of this contribution, I hope to have given you some insight into our present work at the University of the North and the way we try to deal with the tensions between processes of globalisation and the Third-World context of rural provinces. The formulated assumptions and principles, partly supported by our first research results, could lay the foundation for a relevant and scientifically interesting concept of adult education and lifelong learning tailored to the specific conditions of developing countries.

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# **‘EFFECTING’ EFFECTIVE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

## **The case of the Limpopo Province of South Africa**

Makgwana Rampedi

### **Introduction**

The question of the implementation of adult education and lifelong learning policies is highly relevant but given insufficient attention. Though today there is a lot written about the implementation of policies, especially in South Africa, there are a lot of complaints about the failure of implementation. This is not necessarily bad, but it indicates the lack of a serious effort to grapple with the implementation problem. We have to take the study of implementation evaluation much more seriously – study that takes account of the specific situations on the ground and that makes a real contribution to successful programmes. In South Africa this means looking at how policies that promise so much can be implemented to realise the ambitions of the ANC-led government while at the same time addressing the needs of the people.

This paper concentrates on the implementation of adult education policies in South Africa. It focuses on one province, namely the Limpopo Province. It is part of a broader PhD study that aims at *contributing towards a better understanding and appreciation of the “implementation problem” to assist in the development of contextualised, effective, and innovative implementation strategies in adult education.*

The main question of the study is: What are the most important policy implementation considerations for the Limpopo Province of South Africa? The paper proceeds in four steps namely: background, some theoretical and methodological issues, some findings and recommendations.



## **Background**

### *The Old South Africa*

The political struggle against apartheid was also an educational struggle in many ways. This became evident when the Nationalist Party came to power in the 1948 whites-only elections. Besides the elections signalling an intense struggle in the political arena, they also unleashed a struggle of the same intensity in the educational arena. The Nationalist Party government showed a determination never seen before to 'settle' the racial problem and to finally put the black person where he 'belonged' politically, economically and educationally. Draconian laws were passed in all those spheres.

On the one hand they instituted laws to create separate residential areas for different racial groups, laws to prohibit inter-racial marriages, 'pass' laws to control the movement of people from one area to another, especially that of blacks, and a plethora of labour laws; on the other hand, they passed the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Coloured Education Act of 1963, the Indian Education Act of 1965 and, finally, the National Education Act of 1967. These were to be the foundations for the education of blacks, coloureds, Indians and whites respectively.

To further deal with 'die swart gevaar',<sup>1</sup> blacks were further separated according to their ethnicity. Reserves, which later became 'bantustans' and then 'homelands', were legally established for the different ethnic entities. Alongside these, there were 'white areas' for whites where blacks could only work and not reside. Coloureds and Indians had their own residential areas as well, where they could retain and practise their cultures. Blacks could do that in their ten homelands. In all those homelands, the lowest form of education, namely Bantu Education, was offered and was 'policed' by what were known as Departments of Education and Culture. I will briefly describe Bantu Education.

### *Bantu Education<sup>2</sup>*

Bantu Education was the official education in all the homelands and for blacks who lived and worked in the so-called white areas. It was a kind of a 'fit-for-the-

<sup>1</sup> Literally translated: 'The Black Danger'.

<sup>2</sup> Over the years even the apartheid government became uncomfortable with this name. As a result cosmetic changes were effected. The department that became responsible for it was called the Department of Education and Training for blacks in white areas and Education and Culture in the homelands (Bantustans). But the quality remained the same. For me Bantu Education captures this very well.

purpose' education. As long as the 'products' of this system could perform the menial tasks the apartheid system required, that was enough. Issues of quality did not matter. As a result, it was under-funded and ill-equipped. For instance, four times as much was spent on a white child than on a black child, and the educator-learner ratio was on average 1:60 and 1:30 in black education and white education respectively. First, standard (STD) 6 (end of primary school at that time), then STD 8 (end of secondary school) and much later STD 10 (end of high school) were very important marks of achievement in this system. At different times in history one could become a teacher upon completion of those classes. So there was a time when almost all, if not all, teachers had only STD 6, then later STD 8, and much later (even today!) STD 10, with a professional qualification in teaching.<sup>3</sup>

Bantu Education was extended to include university education with the passing of the Extension of University Education Act of 1959.<sup>4</sup> With that Act, separate universities were established for blacks, coloureds and Indians. The then existing universities remained for whites exclusively. Like schools, black universities were not well provided for and the education offered was of the lowest standard – poorly qualified staff, ill-equipped libraries and where the barest minimum was done to qualify for degrees (with no research that could be called that). In addition, universities for blacks were located outside the cities, sometimes even far away in the bush.<sup>5</sup>

That legacy remains important for looking at education in South Africa today. The implications of that legacy are captured by the following:

*The most important effect of unequal education provision is that millions of people have received either no education or very little formal education of very low quality.<sup>6</sup>*

While that could be true of the whole of South Africa, it is even truer of the previous homelands whose respective education systems were organised under

<sup>3</sup> Of course it has to be said that this was the case even before the passing of the Bantu Education Act.

<sup>4</sup> The University of the North, in South Africa, one of the collaboration partners within which this whole study is taking place, was established in 1960.

<sup>5</sup> They came to be known as 'bush' colleges or universities.

<sup>6</sup> See the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) Report, 1992. *Adult Education*. Cape Town Oxford University Press, p. 1.

the Departments of Education and Culture with the Department of Education and Training (DET) in Pretoria<sup>7</sup> as the overseer.

### *The New South Africa*

With the first all-inclusive democratic elections of 1994, South Africa shed her apartheid past. A new state was born amidst optimism akin to the optimism that characterised the American Dream of a Great Society of the 1960s<sup>8</sup>. However, there was one difference. In South Africa, the elections meant a non-reversible parting with the past and a new entry into the world. South Africa had a new constitution and was a country with new demarcations. Where previously there were four provinces and ten homelands, these were replaced by nine provinces, namely, the Limpopo Province (formerly Northern Province), Mpumalanga, Gauteng, North West, Free State, Kwazulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. That meant a political shift, which was to be followed by the legislation of a variety of laws in different spheres and an intense period of policy formulation. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 was one of the first policies that were very revealing of the intentions of the new state – interventions at all levels to address the legacy of apartheid. That spirit of intervention, reconstruction and development was visible in the educational arena as well.

In education, all the apartheid departments and structures were dismantled and replaced by nine provincial departments and the national department of education, which together are functioning as a single national system. Different Acts of law underpin this system. The school system has been brought under one roof through the South African Schools Act (1996); higher education through the Higher Education Act (1997); while the Further Education and Training Act (1998) has brought about a new band known as Further Education and Training (FET). In short, the South African education system consists of three bands established through the South African Qualifications Act (SAQA) of 1995. The lower band is the General Education and Training (GET) band, followed by the FET band, and then the Higher Education band. The Higher Education band includes a range of occupational certificates, national diplomas and degrees, up to and including post-doctoral degrees. The FET is composed of a mix of school education (grades 10-12), college and training certificates (industry-based and

<sup>7</sup> The then and present capital city of South Africa.

<sup>8</sup> The 1960s were years of hope in America. Many laws were passed to address a number of social problems, especially for the poor, mostly black neighbourhoods. Unemployment, homelessness, poor education, poverty and related problems were beginning to receive the attention of one president after another.

non-formal). The GET band incorporates a reception year and school grades up to grade 9, plus Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) consisting of four levels (levels 1-4). These bands form what is known as the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and is provided for by SAQA.

### *Adult Education*

The preoccupation of the apartheid state with structuring education according to their philosophy, coupled with the needs of the economy at the time (namely cheap labour), meant that adult education was never on the agenda. In fact, when the opponents of Bantu Education introduced night schools to offer alternative education, those schools were met with the fullest might of the state. They were crushed and their proponents arrested in some cases. Only when the economy changed and there was a need for a certain level of cheap labour, did the government become interested in some kind of adult education. As a result, a different type of night school was introduced. Unlike the destroyed night school system, this was an extension of the regular Bantu Education system. The same curriculum was offered, the same syllabus followed, and the same textbooks used. But, as in the case of formal schooling, the provisions were minimal.

Alongside the meagre provisions of the state, other providers were industry (who always complained about the 'untrainability' of their workers, mainly blacks) and the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). All in all the government regarded training and other forms of education (outside formal schooling), including adult education, as the responsibility of other parties, particularly employers. So the government saw its role as merely to encourage others, such as industry and NGOs, to undertake adult education.<sup>9</sup>

In their report, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) research group on adult education wrote:

*The quality of millions of South African adults is probably affected because they cannot read and write. People who are marginalized or displaced are further disadvantaged by their inability to participate in the dominant forms of literacy. They are disadvantaged in job-seeking, they are sometimes unable to participate effectively in training or development programmes, they might be unable to provide the support for their own children's learning and they might be unable to*

<sup>9</sup> The NEPI report gives more detail.

*respond to the critical medical and environmental issues which pose direct threats to their existence.*<sup>10</sup>

With that level of provision at the time, the key question for the new state was: What was required to move from small-scale inefficient provision to large-scale effective provision?

Presently adult education is provided for in two bands: as Adult Basic Education in (or parallel to) the GET band, and as Adult Education and Training (AET) in the FET band. This position was arrived at through a policy formulation process that is believed and praised to have been broadly consultative. The process itself produced a number of important discussion and policy documents on adult education. Policy documents such as the National Policy for Adult Education and Training of 1997, the National Multi-year Implementation Plan for Adult Education: Provision and Accreditation of the same year and the ABET Act of 2000 are the foundation for the provision of adult education today. Those are the policies at national level, but they are just a step in dealing with the question posed above. Policies by themselves, though necessary, are not sufficient. It is the *effective implementation* of those policies that would make the difference. That is the concern of this paper and the research on which it is based. The Limpopo Province is a case used to look at the implementation problem.

### *The Limpopo Province*

The Limpopo Province is a product of three homelands brought together – the former Lebowa, Gazankulu and Venda. These were joined with the coloured, Indian and white administrations of the former Northern Transvaal, and the administration structure for blacks living in the former white areas, to form the new province that brings together seven administrations of the past. The Limpopo Province is the fifth largest province in South Africa with a population of about 5.5 million, with blacks making about 97.5% of this total (compared to 2.3% of whites, 0.2% of coloureds and 0.1% of Indian/Asian). About 90% of blacks live in rural areas. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the population are women. The population density is 44 people per square kilometre. It is the third most densely populated province in the country, after Kwazulu-Natal and Gauteng.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See NEPI, op cit., p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> For more information see *South Africa Survey of 2000/2001*.

According to the Provincial Multi-year Implementation Plan, quoting different sources<sup>12</sup>, 41% of the economically active population in the province are unemployed. Employment is mainly in the civil service, agriculture, tourism, small industries and mining sectors. The province has the lowest per capita income of all South Africa's provinces and the highest dependency rate, with an average of 4.8 people living off another person. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the population lives below the minimum level of subsistence. Only 12% of the population have running tap water in their homes and only 13% have access to electricity.

In the educational sphere, restructuring has meant that the province has had to merge seven departments of education. Those were the three Departments of Education and Culture of the former homelands, the Department of Education and Training that was serving blacks in the so-called white areas, and the departments for coloureds, Indians and whites. This meant merging seven differently resourced departments and, more importantly, seven 'different-in-quality' systems of education. The most inferior in terms of funding, resourcing and quality was education in the homelands, with education for blacks in the white areas slightly better off, in terms of funding and resources that is. Therefore, in general, education in the Limpopo Province has been of the poorest kind.

The neglect of education led to a very badly organised system of education characterised by few school buildings, very few qualified teachers, many poorly qualified teachers, overcrowding, high failure and repetition rates, very low motivational levels and associated high drop-out rates.

The sum total of this neglect is that the population of the Limpopo Province has spent an average of 4.6 years in school, compared to 8.6 in Gauteng and the national average of 6.8 years. There are more than one million people who are 15 years and older with less than STD 5, and about 1.4 million with less than STD 7. So there are about one million people who are semi-literate or cannot read and write (less than STD 5), and about 1.4 million who are functionally illiterate.<sup>13</sup>

### *Summary Remarks*

The above section shows the magnitude of the problem and the context within which policy formulation in adult education has taken place. It also shows the context within which *implementation* of those policies must take place. So many

<sup>12</sup> They use the Central Statistics of 1997 and the USAID Needs Assessment of 1997.

<sup>13</sup> See the Provincial Multi-year Implementation Plan, p. 8.

factors are at play and, most importantly, the human resource factor, given the above educational scenario. It is opportune to turn to a few statements about policy formulation.

### **From Policy Formulation to Policy Implementation**

As indicated earlier, the demise of apartheid was followed by excitement and hope everywhere, even at governmental level. Stakeholders in different spheres were invited to consultative conferences and meetings where policy issues were discussed and debated. The policy formulation process culminated in policies that were to guide the future. In adult education, the state was going to play a more interventionist role. In the words of the Deputy Director General for General and Further Education and Training:

*No longer is the State a mere spectator or an obstacle to the development of a strong adult education and training movement in this country.*<sup>14</sup>

These words clearly show the intention of the government as far as adult education is concerned. The aim is clearly to address the legacy of apartheid, especially as far as the role of the state was concerned. In the same document, a statement is made that:

*The Plan correctly identifies Adult Education and Training as the foundation or basis for further and higher education and training, and for entry in the workplace.*<sup>15</sup>

That summarises the government's vision for adult education, but it is also good to read:

*... we wish to say that we look forward to the day when we can proudly announce our successes at the table of nations, joining countries like Cuba, Nicaragua, India, China, Mexico, Brazil and Tanzania, all of whom have made tremendous strides in servicing the need for education and training of adults.*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Department of Education (DOE), 1997. *A Multi-year Implementation Plan*, p. iv.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vi.

This is important because it captures the spirit of the times. It says that South Africa would stand up and be counted. In a way, one can be pardoned for likening this to the spirit of the Great American Dream<sup>17</sup> mentioned earlier. Whether you like to liken this South African situation to that Dream or not, these are good intentions. But, what about their implementation? This is the vital question.

The question is how does one move from policies, that are generally acclaimed to be good, to implementing them? A few implementation considerations are therefore crucial. Before the study began, both formal and informal discussions held with people in the field of adult education indicated that there could be serious implementation problems and difficulties. Implementation was lacking, or slow and even sporadic at times. That is where the interest of the study lies. In a very modest way, the study aims at contributing to a better understanding and appreciation of the implementation problem, as indicated in the introductory section of this paper. A few points on methodology and theoretical issues are appropriate here.

### **Methodological and Theoretical Issues**

As indicated in the introductory part of this paper, the main question of the study is: What are the most important policy implementation considerations for the Limpopo Province of South Africa? To tackle this central question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

- What are the standards and resources of policy documents?
- What are the specific conditions affecting adult education?
- Who is the implementing agency?
- What is the administrative structure of the implementing agency?
- What implementation trials are presently under way?
- What implementation problems are encountered at present?
- What strategies can be suggested as solutions to the problems?

The first important point is the concept of implementation itself. The second point, at least for me, was whether implementation could or can be studied. Different authors have looked at implementation in different ways: as 'a

<sup>17</sup> I was attracted to the American literature on implementation because the failure is well documented. This eventually also influenced the theoretical framework of the whole study.



complexity of joint action' (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973); as 'implementation games' (Bardach, 1977); as 'administrative feedback' (Kaufman, 1973); as 'counter-pressures' (Murphy, 1971). All these attempts, and others not mentioned here, are useful for beginning to grapple with the problem. But the definition that appeals to me most is by Van Horn and Van Meter:<sup>18</sup>

*... policy implementation encompasses those actions by public and private individuals (or groups) that affect the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions.*

For them "studying policy implementation suggests an effort to describe and explain the process by which policies are transformed into public services, directs attention to the processes of delivering public services ... and provides explanations for the realisation or non-realisation of programme objectives."<sup>19</sup>

Based on their definition of implementation, Van Horn and Van Meter developed what they call a model of intergovernmental policy implementation that posits eight variable clusters that affect implementation efforts. In this model, two areas are clearly distinguishable: the policy area and the performance area. A third area in between the two, with no specific name given by the authors, we can safely call the *intervening area*. It is a very important area for the whole study. But equally important is how this area links with the two other areas, especially the policy area. Six of the variable clusters are in this area, namely: *communications, enforcement, implementing agencies, political conditions, social and economic conditions and the dispositions of implementers*; they link to the policy area through *policy standards and resources*.

That is the model adopted as a framework for this study. Interview guidelines were developed with that model in mind. The guidelines were not questions strictly related to each and every cluster. They were rather a tool to start up conversation with the field. The fieldwork consisted of two phases. The first phase, which was more explorative, consisted of group interviews with people in the field of adult education in the province. Interviews were held with the provincial sub-directorate, regional co-ordinators together with district co-ordinators and other important stakeholders in adult education. An invitational conference was then arranged and tentative results were fed back to the field. A

<sup>18</sup> Van Horn, C. E., and Van Meter, D. S. 1977. The Implementation of Intergovernmental Policy in *Policy Studies Review Annual*. Vol. 1: pp 96 – 120.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

draft report was then sent out to the people interviewed and others for further inputs.

The tentative results and particularly the draft report were used to construct an interview schedule for the second phase. Again, although the interview questions were informed by the theoretical framework alluded to above, an attempt was made to make the questions as open as possible; to avoid putting interviewees (who included the sub-directorate, the regional co-ordinators, the district co-ordinators, pilot managers and centre managers) in those boxes that the model would otherwise dictate. In this phase, the interviews were one-to-one and, unlike the first phase, all these interviews were recorded. They were later transcribed and prepared for analysis through the ATLAS.ti computer software programme for qualitative data analysis.

The next step was analysis itself. Without going into the details of the software programme, it suffices to say that the programme allows you to code parts of interviews, which may be words, sentences, paragraphs or large sections. These coded units are called quotations. Through coding, one is able to bring quotations into super-codes, families and memos. Writing memos is the beginning stage of interpretation and writing.

## **Findings**

It is not possible to present all the findings of the whole study here, so I will cover four areas: policy, communication, implementing agency and dispositions of implementers. A study of policy implementation will show: (a) policy objectives (standards and resources); (b) how the objectives are communicated; (c) who the implementing agency is; and (d) the dispositions of implementers towards policy and authority.

### *Policy*

Through documentation it has been established that there is a new concept of adult education in South Africa that departs from the earlier and older concept. The national policy documents, the general ones and the ABET-specific ones, the provincial policy documents and the ABET Act provide both a background for understanding the new concept of adult education and the intentions of the new government about adult education. In point form these are:

- Adult education is a right for everyone
- The quality of life of everyone, especially the poor and marginalised, must improve
- Adult education must provide adults with education and training programmes equivalent to the exit levels in the formal school system
- Opportunities for lifelong learning must be provided and an integrated approach to education and training must be achieved
- An integrated national framework for learning achievements must be created
- The unfair discrimination of the past must be redressed
- The historical lack of support for adult education must be addressed
- An enabling environment for adult education activities must be developed
- Reconstruction and development are essential
- Institutional infrastructure must be provided
- The curriculum and learning materials must be developed
- Research is necessary
- Monitoring and evaluation must be carried out
- Social mobilisation must be promoted
- Practitioner development must be supported
- Partnerships for delivery must be established.

These and other intentions not mentioned here provide a summary of what are, in line with our model, the *Standards and Resources* of the policy documents, without which it is impossible to talk about implementation. They are necessary, but not sufficient for implementation.

To have policies with objectives like these is not enough. These policies need to be available to the field. At the level of fieldwork, questions about policy had to do with awareness and understanding of policy issues. In most of the interviews it became clear that, even before talking about understanding, the point of whether people even have those policy documents (and were reading them) became important. At the level of centre managers, none of the interviewees had in their possession any policy document. Asked about policy, one centre manager responded in the following manner:

*The national one (policy) is very far and the government is not coming to us and highlighting about it. We just come and facilitate and go back to our homes.*

This indicates a certain way of understanding policy that is not consistent with how policy is normally understood. This has been the picture at the centre level. At the district level, some co-ordinators had read the policy documents, while others had not read them. All the regional co-ordinators interviewed had read the documents. So the scarcity of policy documents became progressively more severe as one moved away from the head office to the regions, districts and centres. So too, the reading of policies and the understanding of policy issues became less and less. This raised the question of how else policy objectives were communicated.

### *Communications*

From the above it is clear that the distribution of policy documents, which is the first step in communicating policy messages, has not been what it should have been. This is particularly important in situations where a new concept is introduced. In this case it is a new concept of adult education. Where policy documents are available they need to be read. Where reading of documents is not compulsory, there has to be a way of 'taking the field through the documents'. There are different ways of doing this, but meetings and conferences – where these issues are debated and discussed – seem to be the simplest for a situation like that of the Limpopo Province.<sup>20</sup> It has been established that meetings are very irregular, even where there are official agreements specifying their regularity. For instance, there are supposed to be regular meetings between the provincial ABET sub-directorate and the regions, on the one hand, and between the sub-directorate and the districts, on the other. During the time of this research, such meetings were very irregular. While the regions and districts could only blame the sub-directorate, the sub-directorate itself blamed the lack of meetings on their unavailability in the province due to what they called 'national' duty.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, there are supposed to be official meetings between regions and districts, and between districts and centres, but these are also irregular. The situation differs depending on the regional or district co-ordinators. An interesting finding of this research was the difference that individuals make in the field. Those who were positively motivated (even under very trying conditions) held regular meetings. This was not the case when individuals were negatively motivated. Unofficial meetings to discuss policy issues are unknown; nor even encouraged!

<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere I have tried to give a background of the Province.

<sup>21</sup> This means the provincial ABET officials are called to the national head office to assist there from time to time.

As for conferences, the only known ones are those that were held during the policy formulation phase, especially the conference at Tshipise in Venda<sup>22</sup> in 1997 that provided the impetus for the development of the Provincial Multi-year Implementation Plan. No conference to discuss easier implementation of policies has ever taken place. Workshops have come to be everything, not only in the Province, but in South Africa as a whole. However, most workshops are tailor-made to fit what officials think and decide should be their focus, for example, Outcomes Based Education (OBE).<sup>23</sup> This is hardly surprising in an environment teeming with changes in almost every sphere, but it should not result in the setting aside of adult education issues and concerns. There is a need for an adult education conference in Limpopo Province through which the policy messages can be communicated to the field. If this does not happen, the new concept of adult education will not filter through to the right places, namely the adult education centres where change must happen. This is particularly important because the old concept of adult education has become so ‘imprinted’ in the minds of so many practitioners and officials that it is now even prohibiting any other way of thinking about adult education.

#### *Implementation Agency*

One of the objectives of national adult education policies, as indicated above, is to provide institutional infrastructure, both at national and provincial levels, to make implementation possible. Amongst other things, ABET sub-directorates were established in the provinces. But what was their responsibility?

*They were to develop operational goals for a fully functioning ABET system. And that would require careful co-ordination and an integrated approach towards the work of the different divisions and sections in the Department which are needed by the ABET system.*<sup>24</sup>

The sub-directorates were to implement policies in such a way that Adult Basic Education and Training became a fully functioning system. That system would be part of, and a foundation for, lifelong learning – where lifelong learning is

<sup>22</sup> This is in Region 3 of the Limpopo Province.

<sup>23</sup> For some time workshops were mostly about OBE. Of course even these workshops did not always prove to be successful. In the words of one interviewee: “I mean we can’t be attending workshops, workshops and workshops and we don’t have time for implementation ... why must we go to workshops? The whole of last year we were attending workshops but we were unable to give feedback to the people”.

<sup>24</sup> See Department of Education, 1997. *Policy Document on Adult Education and Training*, Pretoria, pp. 14 – 15.

seen as “a continuous process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to realise their full potential.”<sup>25</sup> To be able to do that the ABET sub-directorates would have to co-ordinate the work of different divisions and sections in the departments, which were needed by the ABET system. Of course this would require the support of the different heads of the provincial Departments of Education and Training. Properly interpreted, this means bringing together all the relevant sections in the departments, and ensuring the support of the departmental heads, to develop an implementing agency for adult education. In a way, the sub-directorates were to be the nuclei of the implementing machinery.

In the Limpopo Province, as in all other provinces, the ABET sub-directorate was meant to be a nucleus around which an implementing agency would be formed or developed. This has not happened, and is not happening. What you see instead is a sub-directorate with such serious levels of understaffing that it would not qualify as a sub-directorate under normal circumstances. There are only three staff members: one permanent staff member assisted by two seconded, non-permanent staff members. It also functions as a lone (lonely?) player with very little support from the whole department, which seems trapped in the old concept of adult education. Currently, the sub-directorate is a single unit with all the functions being performed by the three staff members.<sup>26</sup>

The other levels in the province – the regional and the district – operate in isolation from the sub-directorate. They just play the role of implementers, without feeling part of the total implementing agency. They are connected to the sub-directorate through meetings, which are sometimes very irregular. Furthermore, they are connected to the whole department through this weakened sub-directorate. Given the responsibility of the sub-directorate as described above, it seems reasonable to conclude that it will take a while before adult education enjoys a better status than the low one it has now. This suggests that, if the business of adult education is to be attended to in a more deliberate and purposeful manner rather than in the present accidental manner, a reorganisation of the whole implementing agency is needed. Reorganisation is not only a matter of making an organisational chart (which of course is also important). The demands are much greater than can be promised by a new organisational chart, given that there is a need for a lot of communication, monitoring, site

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> It has to be said that even the permanent staff member keeps moving between two position year - in year - out.

visits, support and guidance. Concerning implementation research, Williams<sup>27</sup> writes: "... an inquiry about implementation ... seeks to determine whether an organisation can bring together men<sup>28</sup> and materials in a cohesive organisational unit and motivate them in such a way as to carry out the organisation's stated objectives." For the Limpopo Province, the implications are enormous if implementation is to take place.

#### *Dispositions of implementers*

Though debatable, everybody in the adult education field in the provinces should be part of an implementation agency because policy making is a national competency. However, the use of the term implementers in this research was restricted to the regional co-ordinators, district co-ordinators and centre managers as currently understood.

The field of adult education in the Province is divided into two 'camps': the experienced, permanent staff, on the one hand, and the new, inexperienced, seconded staff, mostly from the rationalised teacher colleges, on the other. There is a perception that the latter group come to adult education while they are looking elsewhere and that, once they find those greener pastures, they disappear taking with them the training they have obtained in the meantime. A number of cases have been pointed at. The former group of permanent staff who have experience in adult education feel that they are sidelined and that their experience is under-utilised by the Department. In this research, there is evidence of such a layer of experience and training in the regions and especially at the district level. Therefore, there are at least two problems: (a) secondment that brings in people without the necessary training and experience, who need the training, get the training and then leave; and (b) officials with relevant experience who can be trained further but who are under-utilised.

Officials in the regions, districts and adult education centres think that they are not consulted when important decisions are taken. These decisions are only 'relayed' to them through circulars. Today, there is a preponderance of circulars that do not promote the new concept of adult education. The new concept can only be achieved when more people participate in the decision-making or are consulted on issues of substance. *Participation* and *consultation* are very important where the aim is to change people's attitudes and minds.

<sup>27</sup> Williams, W., 1971. *Social Policy Research and Analysis*. New York: Elsevier Publishers, p. 144.

<sup>28</sup> Julia Swierstra, a friend, insists that it must be men and women and I concede.

The adult education field in the Limpopo Province is filled with seconded staff; unemployed but qualified teachers; regional and district co-ordinators who are not properly placed, acting in senior positions for which they are not paid; centre managers who are that in name only because they are not contracted to the department in whatever way. They all think the Department of Education and Training does not care about them even when they are sacrificing a lot for it. They are at work after-hours (regional and district co-ordinators); they use their personal cars and cellular phones for official business; they come back home late and work over weekends, even on Sundays, to talk to community chiefs; they walk long distances on foot. In return for their troubles, they get delayed salaries (centre managers and educators), and they are called curriculum advisors or seconded college staff depending on what the Department wants to do with them (re-deployed college staff) at a particular moment. These groups have mixed feelings about what they are doing and, if an inquiry about implementation seeks to determine whether an organisation can bring together men, women and material in a cohesive organisational unit and *motivate* them in such a way as to carry out the stated objectives, those feelings are important and need attention. A reward system, which is in fact already provided for in the policy documents, has to be introduced. And, besides all their sacrifices, there is also a deep sense of job insecurity.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I have attempted to point to some of the findings of the study and hinted at some of the things that can be done to think differently about implementation. On policy, we have noted that there is a scarcity of policy documents. It can therefore be recommended that the Department of Education and Training makes those documents available. In addition, the Department must ensure that those documents are read and that policy issues are discussed. A conference would be one way in which policy objectives could be discussed and communicated. On communication, we have seen that where there is need for regular meetings to discuss policy issues these meetings are few and far between. To change how people think about anything, meetings are very important. To change to a new concept of adult education, such meetings become even more necessary.

Regarding the implementation agency, there is a need to reorganise the present structure of the sub-directorate, the regions and the districts, which currently function almost independently of each other. In the Department itself, the ABET sub-directorate cannot remain an isolated player. Concerning the dispositions of



implementers, we have seen that they feel neglected by the Department and are negatively disposed towards it. To deal with this, officers who are only seconded could be offered permanent employment after getting the requisite training, and unemployed but qualified teachers could be offered contracts after they are retrained.

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# SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

## Tools for Lifelong Learning

Arlindo Siteo

### Introduction

Ever since, education has been the chief means through which human societies disseminate their culture, that is, the knowledge, skills and values felt to be of particular relevance for their reproduction, continuity and development. Based on that very traditional assumption, the focus of the educational enterprise remained on teaching until quite recently. Thus, emphasis was on training “good teachers” to ensure a “good process of knowledge delivery to the students”. The teacher and his/her teaching were seen to be the critical elements in education.

Developments in educational research over the last 50 years have brought about new theories and practices on the teaching and learning processes. The shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning has become one of the most remarkable assets in nowadays education. Learning has been re-conceptualised as a student driven process rather than a teacher controlled one. Thus, formal, non-formal and informal education are geared to promote and enhance learning.

The advent of rapid communication and information technology has turned the world into a “global village”, imposing new challenges to education. Just learning the already existing knowledge and skills has become not enough for the increasingly demanding professional and personal developments. All over the world, the educational mission has been under revision, so to shift its focus from that of producing a skilled and competent workforce to that of preparing people to be able to keep acquiring and up-dating knowledge and skills on their own, throughout the lifespan. There is a worldwide consensus on that the learner must be made able to adapt him/herself to such a rapidly changing world, where one has to cope with the unexpected, the unpredictable. This new vision of the educational mission encapsulates the concept of **lifelong learning**, whereby “*the educated person is not the one who has achieved a particular standard but*

*rather the person who is committed to learning as part of life*”(Parsuramen, 1999).

Lifelong learning features are seen to care for a diversity of key dimensions, such as personal fulfilment and competence, through the sense of worth and social integration; personal economic stability and security, through employability; national development and prosperity, through well skilled and self-up-datable workforce; social stability, tolerance and cohesion, through social inclusion and participation in community life. Those embedded features of lifelong learning do accommodate the key elements to be found in the missions of most African universities, namely: (i) to train adequately men and women so that they can contribute to the development of the nation and of the community surrounding; (ii) to contribute to widen the world knowledge; (iii) to contribute to the respect of human rights, promote justice, equity and democratic values, and (iv) to contribute for peace, stability and harmony (Matos, 2000). As an example, the mission statement of the Eduardo Mondlane University, in Mozambique, points-out that the institution *“is committed to be a centre of excellence in the educational, scientific, cultural and technological contexts, educating its graduates for life and assuming responsibilities in the process of innovation and knowledge transfer and in sustainable development”*(UEM Strategic Plan, 1998).

Yet, it is known that, in Africa, education, in general, and higher education, in particular, operate under severe constraints, due to shortage of qualified human resources, scarcity of material conditions (premises and equipment) and very reduced budgets. In spite of those constraints, community demands and expectations on higher education remain high. Governments and donors urge schools and universities to operate more efficiently and cost-effectively. It becomes, therefore, crucial to re-think and implement strategies to promote and enhance lifelong learning amongst the students. Self-regulated learning and learning strategies are hypothesised and discussed as tools for enhancing lifelong learning, which, in its turn, is seen as a tool for development.

## **The Context**

The study here reported is being executed at the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), the largest institution of higher education in Mozambique (around 6.000 students, distributed in 22 degree courses, offered in 10 faculties). Established in the capital Maputo, the UEM is a national university, committed to ensure equity and equal opportunities of access and for success, in a country of about

17 million inhabitants and an illiteracy rate of 60.5% (UINDP, 2000). The medium of instruction is Portuguese, the country's official language. Yet, for the majority of the population this is a second language, learnt only at school, as the local 13 main languages and their variations remain the first and the main medium of communication.

From the mid 80's, in partnership with Dutch universities, the UEM introduced two major initiatives aiming at improving its effectiveness. One was a remedial Maths and Science course, termed BUSCEP (Basic University Science Experimental Project), offered in the first-year of science-based degree studies. The second was an educational intervention programme for academic staff development, known as STADEP. Despite those intervention programmes, the institution still presents indicators of low effectiveness. For instance, from a cohort analysis, it was found that, in average, a student spends 6.5 years to complete a 5-years degree course. The graduation rate was also found very low (about 30%) UEM (1999).

Material factors, such as the not ideal living conditions of the majority of the students, the poorly equipped libraries (in addition to the fact that most of the available scientific literature is in English, a language ill-mastered by the students), have been identified as some of the factors hampering efficiency. Not easily observable but not less relevant are those factors related to the teaching and learning processes. Factors of that nature have now been under the attention of some educational researchers. For example, Mutimucio's study (1998) has provided an insight into how 1<sup>st</sup> year students at UEM can be helped developing their understanding of the concept of energy. The study behind the present paper has been particularly inspired by cognitive factors, inextricably linked to the learning process, namely students' conceptions of learning, their self-regulatory skills, and their epistemological beliefs.

## **Theoretical assumptions**

### *Self-regulated learning*

This concept includes actions and processes, involving behaviours, cognitions and affects, consciously, purposefully and systematically activated by the learner in order to successfully attain academic goals. The most common self-regulatory strategies in learning are goal setting and planning, information seeking, organizing/transforming information, rehearsing, seeking assistance, reviewing, keeping records and monitoring, and self-evaluating (Zimmerman, 1990, 1994).

Failure and drop-out rates during and at the end of the first-year of undergraduate studies have been identified as an important indicator of low efficiency of universities (Ferreira, 1992;1995, Romainville, 1994; Tait & Entwistle, 1996). Commonly, apart from a poor knowledge background, first-year students have been found to be unprepared to adapt themselves to the learning approach required at the university level. Not seldom, those students are found to follow learning strategies that are inherited from the “knowledge transmission” approach that still prevails in the teaching practice at school. As seen by Boekaerts’(1997:162) *“most classrooms are populated with students who are not self-regulating their learning (...) and most teachers are not yet equipped to turn students into self-regulated learners. In most cases, teachers are still steering and guiding the learning process, a situation that does not invite students to use or develop their cognitive or motivational self-regulatory skills. Usually, students are expected to reproduce and apply the new information that the teacher has presented or made available”*.

Though it can be described from different perspectives, self-regulation stands as the most comprehensive element of a meta-cognitive approach to learning - the approach embedded in the concept of lifelong learning. Through a conscious and deliberate use of selected self-regulatory strategies, a learner becomes a master of his/her own learning process, as he/she becomes able to, systematically, initiate and maintain his/her cognitions to achieve a meaningful learning (Zimmerman, 1990; 1994). Furthermore, a self-regulated learner remains responsive to feedback regarding learning effectiveness and is prepared to embark on self-initiated efforts to seek opportunities to learn (Ertmer and Newby, 1996). Those axis of self-regulation can be seen as the building blocks of an attitude and aptitude for lifelong learning.

### *Learning Strategies and Conceptions of Learning*

From a theoretical perspective, learning strategies, learning approaches and study skills tend to be consistent with their underlying conceptions of learning (Perry, 1970; Marton & Saljö, 1984). Pioneering studies in this domain (Perry, 1970; Saljö, 1979) have raised awareness to the fact that, to a large extent, most of the learning difficulties experienced by first-year university students may be due to a mismatch between the conceptions of knowledge and learning they bring from school and those required at the university. Learners conceiving learning as *“the increase of knowledge”* or as *“memorising”* or yet as a process of *“acquiring facts or procedures”* were found to be bound to adopt surface approaches in their learning, and being less concerned with the meaning of the factual knowledge they tend to retain. In contrast, those learners conceiving learning as *“abstraction of meaning”* or as *“an interpretative process aiming at*

*an understanding of reality*” where identified as the ones more likely to adopt deep approaches to learning, conducive to the making of meaning, out of the delivered knowledge. Those learners tend also to make appropriate use of the (meaningful) knowledge acquired as a frame of reference to understand reality beyond the teaching and learning context (Saljö, 1979). By their nature, meaning oriented conceptions of learning underlie lifelong learning.

### *Epistemological Beliefs*

Epistemological beliefs have been conceptualised as being a reasonably stable and potent system of one’s beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired (Schoenfeld, 1983; Schommer, 1990, 1993). Individuals’ epistemological beliefs have become an interesting area of research on learning, comprehension and academic performance, under the assumption that what a learner may believe to be the nature of knowledge and learning influences his/her mechanisms of meta-cognition. In other words, beliefs about knowledge are seen to have profound effects on the way in which students plan their strategies, process information and monitor their comprehension, when engaged in a learning task. It can, therefore, be concluded that beliefs about knowledge lie transversely on the whole construct of lifelong learning.

In sum, the central argument of this paper is that, given their structuring components, learning beliefs, learning conceptions and self-regulated learning strategies are fundamental tools of lifelong learning.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

208 students from 15 entire classes of first-year science-based degree courses did participate as informants for the study. At the time, they were at an earlier stage of their basic science remedial semester, a programme thought to be useful in upgrading their mathematics and science background. Being the national university, the sample of 208 Eduardo Mondlane University students included students from different parts of the country and from different socio-economic strata. All were starting higher education studies for the first time. 171 (82%) were male and 37 (18%) female<sup>29</sup> and their modal age was 21. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and students had been informed, weeks in advance, about the objectives and nature of the study.

<sup>29</sup> This very unbalanced distribution may reflect social and culturally rooted gender bias towards Science



### *Instruments*

There were 3 questionnaires, all anonymous and written in Portuguese. The first one was just conceived to collect basic information variables about each student (e.g. age, sex, origin). To elicit students' responses about self-regulated learning strategies and about conceptions of learning, a combined questionnaire was designed, consisting of 8 questions. There were 7 open-ended questions, put in a form of different learning scenarios. Those questions were designed in such a way that, in answering them, students would, somehow, mention the learning strategy(ies) they would use in each of the depicted learning scenarios. An additional question was added to inquire about students' conceptions of learning (see appendix 1). The questionnaire was adapted from the one designed and validated by Purdie et al. (1996), based on the Self-Regulated Learning Interview Schedule, developed by Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons (1986, 1990). A preliminary version of the questionnaire had been pilot-tested in the previous year, on a sample of 30 informants with the same characteristics.

Students' epistemological beliefs were surveyed through a 56 items epistemological questionnaire, supposedly covering four dimensions of beliefs, namely the structure, the certainty, and the source of knowledge, and, finally, the control and speed of knowledge acquisition. This epistemological questionnaire was presented in a form of declarative statements, to which respondents would answer by stating their degree of agreement or disagreement on a 5-points Likert-scale (See appendix 2). The questionnaire was inspired by and adapted from that developed by Schommer (1990, 1993) in her pioneering studies about epistemological beliefs and academic related issues.

### *Procedures*

An arrangement was made with the Head of the Department of Basic Sciences to allow the administration of the questionnaires to the target group in their normal classrooms, using one hour of their "Study Skills" session. Before completing the questionnaires, students were reminded of the objectives of the study and were asked to be frank and honest, as the study was concerned with their genuine views, to which "right" or "wrong" values would not apply.

The questionnaires were anonymous and confidential. Meanwhile, each student was assigned a random code, known just to him/her (e.g. S08, S158), to be entered in his/her questionnaire sheets, so to make sure that, after their completion, the three questionnaires of each student would be attached together for further processing and analysis.

## Analyses and interpretation

The following is a tentative analysis and interpretation. It is drawn from the already available (and still limited) outputs from data processing and pertains to the main variables under consideration. As some methodological pitfalls were identified (e.g. the inapplicability of a Factor Analysis to data of the epistemological questionnaire, due to the sample size) our analyses have to be rather cautious and tentative.

### *On self-regulatory strategies*

The responses given by the students in answering to the questions put in the 7 scenarios were categorised according to a rather wide frame of 21 learning strategies. To accommodate identified non-strategic study behaviours, 3 additional categories were considered, namely one regarding the use of “*will power*”, another to care for “*Cheating*” and the last one accommodating “*Others*” unspecified non-strategic behaviours. Since the study is mostly of an exploratory nature, the basic analysis was based on frequencies and further analysis to be focused on some correlations (e.g. between the self-regulatory strategies and specific characteristics of the students, such as gender, age, school attended).

Irrespective of the appropriateness of the strategy to the scenario (a still ongoing analysis), data reveal that “*Seeking peer assistance*”, “*Goal-setting and planning*”, “*Use will power*” “*Seek teachers assistance*” and “*Others*”, are the mostly mentioned ‘strategies’. In general, this suggests that students tend to be peer or teacher dependent or even to use non-strategic behaviours (“*Will Power*”<sup>30</sup> and “*Other*”). A rough comparison between those preliminary and general findings and those from studies by Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons (1986, 1990) in the USA, provide the following picture about the 4 more used self-regulatory learning strategies in the two settings:

Ongoing Study (Mozambique)	Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons Studies (USA)
– Seek peer assistance	– Reviewing
– Goal-set/Plan	– Seeking information
– <i>Use Will Power</i> (non-strategic)	– Monitoring
– Seek teacher assistance	– Organizing/Transforming

<sup>30</sup> - The use of this non-strategic behaviour was inferred from statements such as: “*I do my best*”, “*I try harder*”

Two striking aspects could be drawn and highlighted from the picture above. One is that Mozambican students seem to be less independent concerning learning strategies. This could reflect teacher/peer dependency, yielded by the teaching tradition and the curriculum as a whole and, probably, exacerbated by the lack of tradition of visiting a library or other source of information. In the Mozambican context, this unfortunate “tradition” cannot be dissociated from the lack of facilities such as labs, libraries, Internet in pre-university schools. The second aspect has to do with the generalised use of will-power by the students, as a behaviour supposedly leading to learning. As a complex construct of mental elements (cognitive, affective and motivational) the *will* is to be considered important in yielding a learning attitude. However, it does not guarantee that the mental predispositions (e.g. for learning effectively) will be actually followed by appropriate actions. To put it simply: *willing* is not *doing* it. In order to promote and foster lifelong learning, which is practice-led and outcome based, appropriate learning strategies should be the ones leading to actual and relevant learning behaviours.

Lifelong learning is about one’s awareness and readiness to use self-learning strategies. Therefore, the outcomes just reported suggest that, in order to become lifelong learners, students entering the university have to embark on study skills that promote and foster independent learning.

#### *On the Conceptions of Learning*

Out of the initial 208 informants, 8 didn’t answer to the questionnaire on conceptions of learning. Other 5 students provided answers that could not be understood or interpreted. Thus, those answers were labelled as “vague or meaningless” and were not considered for further analysis.

In order to identify and analyse students’ conceptions of learning that emerged from their responses, qualitative categories of analysis (codes) were established. These were based on an analytic comparison of similarities, complementarity and differences of the key descriptive words about learning. These were analysed in an iterative and interpretative way, as suggested appropriate for qualitative data analyses (Miles & Huberman, 1994:55-63). Below are listed the key descriptive words and expressions found in students’ responses, that allowed the establishment of frames of reference (codes) for interpretation and analysis:

Key words / expressions	Conception of learning implied
<p><i>“acquire”, “assimilate”, “consume”, “collect” “get knowledge” ,“more knowledge”</i></p>	<p>Learning as an increase of one’s knowledge</p>
<p><i>“studying”, “retaining”, “remembering”</i></p>	<p>Learning as memorising and reproducing</p>
<p><i>“solving problems”, “theory/practice”, “apply knowledge”, “use knowledge for...”, “to know how to ...”</i></p>	<p>Learning as applying</p>
<p><i>“understand”, “interpret”, “research”, “discover”, “how and when to ...”</i></p>	<p>Learning as understanding</p>
<p><i>“get new experience”, “new vision”, “get familiar with”, “get a clear idea about...”</i></p>	<p>Learning as widening one’s view</p>
<p><i>“cultivate myself”, “become aware of...”</i></p>	<p>Learning as changing as a person</p>
<p><i>“being a student, I must learn”, “to live the daily life experience”, “to be submitted to knew knowledge”, “a continuous process since birth to death”, “something important in one’s life”</i></p>	<p>Learning as a duty of ‘fate of life’</p>
<p><i>“to be useful / integrated in the society”, “to get something useful for life”</i></p>	<p>Learning as developing social competence</p>

Frequencies of the responses throughout the types of learning conceptions provided the distribution that follows:

Conception of Learning	Frequency (%)
<i>Increase of Knowledge</i>	40.9
<i>Memorizing and Reproducing</i>	4.3
<i>Applying</i>	14.4
<i>Understanding</i>	9.6
<i>Widening one's views</i>	9.6
<i>Changing as a person</i>	2.9
<i>Duty of Fate of life</i>	8.2
<i>Developing social competence</i>	3.8
(Didn't answer)	3.8
(Vague or meaningless answers)	2.4

Almost half (41%) of the informants of the study seem to conceive learning as increasing one's knowledge. If the informants categorised in the other two lower order conceptions ('*learning as memorising*' and '*learning as applying*') are added, the cumulative frequency of informants likely to belong to the overall group of "reproductivistic" or surface-oriented conceptions of learning comes to about 68,6%.

As suggested by other studies (Marton & Saljo, 1984; Marton et. al, 1993), the dominance of this pattern of learning conception suggests that most of the students in our study are surface-oriented learners. The findings also suggest that, similarly to what happens in other no-western contexts (see Purdie et. al., 1996), conceptions of learning are are culturally conditioned. As a matter of fact, typically non- European/American conceptions of learning, namely "*learning as developing social competence*" and "*learning as duty/fate of life*" have been found amongst the sample of our study. These conceptions of learning seem to be bound to the old, yet still valid African tradition (particularly in the countryside) of assigning real productive roles to all members of the society, including younger children. It is common and culturally "right" to have young boys (from 4 onwards) serving as shepherds, and girls of the same age "baby-carrying" and fetching water from the well or river. Those and other practices are likely to shape children's awareness of the fact that, in life, one has to learn doing and actually do something in order to be useful to the community that he/she belongs to.

A lifelong learner has to be able to go beyond acquiring pre-defined knowledge and skills. He/she has to be a practitioner learner, someone who, apart from understanding the acquired knowledge, uses it for real purposes, including using it as a building block for more purposeful knowledge acquisition. It seems that the conceptions of learning of most of the students entering university are daunting as to their potential to promote lifelong learning.

### *On Epistemological Beliefs*

Apart from the already acknowledged methodological pitfall on the sample size, students' responses to the questionnaire were also found problematic by being rather diffuse. This was illustrated by their weak inter-correlation and low measure of sampling adequacy ( $KMO < 0.60$ ). Because of those problems, data could not be satisfactorily interpreted through Factor Analysis. Even though factored items loaded indicatively on two dimensions, namely '*Certain Knowledge*' and '*Innate Ability*' when exploratory Factor Analysis was performed. Yet, those dimensions were also the ones around which items clustered better when a Cluster Analysis was performed.

If these exploratory findings can be confirmed by methodologically solid replication studies, the conclusion could be drawn that most of the first-year UEM students hold typically two kinds of beliefs. Those would be the following: (1) the belief that knowledge is certain rather than tentative, and (2) the belief that the ability to learn is innate, related to people's IQ, rather than acquired through experience. Then, the relationship between epistemological beliefs, conceptions of learning and self-regulate learning could be empirically explored further. However, in the light of those indicative outcomes, it can be argued that most of the students involved in the study reveal a belief profile that does not seem appropriate for yielding an appropriate attitude towards lifelong learning.

### **Summing up**

Lifelong learning has been seen as the driving principle for development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In recognition of that, 1997 was declared the European Year of Lifelong Learning. In that year, several events took place aiming at promoting, through the concept of lifelong learning, the personal development and sense of initiative of individuals, their integration into working life and society, their participation in the democratic decision making process and their ability to adjust to economic, technological and social change. Apart from being referred

to from the viewpoint of lifelong learning, these policy statements sound very similar to those of many African countries and organizations.

Against all odds, there is still a great deal of expectation and hope that African universities are to play an important role in the development of their respective countries. As universities of many African countries remain the privileged institutions with the knowledgeable and skilled human resources and other facilities (e.g. equipment, sources of information and scientific networks), the role of an university as a developmental engine is more important in Africa than elsewhere (Matos, 2000). Central to that assumption is the idea that universities can or should offer to the younger generations not only the knowledge and skills to face the development challenges of today, but also the tools to become “self-updateable” in order to face the challenges of a fast-reaching tomorrow. Implicitly, it is expected and required that universities promote and encourage lifelong learning on their students.

“Raw materials” of universities are secondary school leavers, who, from the point of view of developmental psychology, are adults. Therefore, they are normally taken as learners having reached the stage of *formal operations*, whereby, by *assimilation* and *accommodation* one is expected to embark successfully on complex cognitive activities. Meanwhile, that linear assumption has been under revision. Specific theories on adult learning have been developed, touching upon internal and external factors that may enhance or hamper effective adult learning (Van Der Kamp, 1992). Therefore, if African universities are to be successful in their noble but cumbersome mission of promoting development through the potential profile of their graduates, it is important that they go beyond the politically and popularly good gesture of offering room for more and more students. As a matter of fact, learning in general, and lifelong learning, in particularly “*critically depends not only on access and opportunity to learn but especially on the willingness and capacity of adults to learn effectively*” (Tuijnman & Van Der Kamp, 1992:viii). Thus, universities should strive do diagnose, identify and enhance students’ attitudes and aptitudes for learning efficiently across the lifespan.

The study which is here reported attempts to argue that the underlying principles of lifelong learning could be conceptually identified in students’ beliefs about knowledge, in their conceptions of learning and in the way the self-regulate their learning. The preliminary outcomes seem to suggest that currently, first-year students at the Eduardo Mondlane University do hold epistemological beliefs, conceptions of learning and learning strategies that are not lifelong learning oriented. To some extent, and in another perspective, this could help tracing the roots of the kind of difficulties first-year students face when confronted with

maths and science subjects at university. Some insight could also be gained into how to make remedial/upgrading programmes more effective, as well as on how to develop and deliver more appropriate academic staff development programmes. Furthermore, under the same perspective, qualitatively new curricula (e.g. the *problem based curriculum*, the *competence based curriculum*) could also be designed and implemented.



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## **THE RIGHT TRACK?**

### **Implementation of a masters in Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University**

Maaike Smulders

#### **Introduction**

*"Why Adult Education as a master study at the University? What for? You do not need a masters in anything to teach adults!"*

This quote is the reaction of a colleague with whom I discussed the plans of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique to start a masters in Adult Education. Such a reaction is typical. It derives from the perception that Adult Education is synonymous with literacy programmes. In Mozambique, Adult Education reminds people of the time, shortly after independence from Portugal (1975), when large numbers of people with little education were mobilised to teach those with a lower or no educational background. This was the way Mozambicans fought the widespread illiteracy in their country.

Fortunately, not everyone in Mozambique subscribes to the views of my colleague. The idea of Adult Education as a broad effort to improve people's capabilities and their effective participation in all spheres of life is very much alive. Adult Education is recognised as an important element in educational policy and its value, not just for economic advancement but also for civil society and democratic politics, is receiving recognition. In 1998, the Eduardo Mondlane University in co-operation with the National Institute for the Development of Education (INDE) organised a seminar about lifelong learning. It was then that important stakeholders underlined the relevance of Adult Education, the need for effective training of trainers in this field, and thus, the need for the development of an advanced curriculum in Adult Education to run at the Faculty of Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University (Stadep/INDE seminar, 1998).

This article presents the story of the adventurous journey towards an Adult Education masters curriculum that can live up to the high expectations of social involvement and relevance. The article also reflects upon the process itself and asks whether we are on the right track with our approach to developing Adult

Education in the context of Southern Africa. First, background information about the situation in Mozambique and about the co-operation in Adult Education between the Eduardo Mondlane University and the University of Groningen is provided. Second, the actions undertaken which led to a curriculum outline are discussed. Subsequently, the curriculum itself, as it is currently being carried out, is analysed. Who are the students? What are their experiences and those of the lecturers? What adjustments are being discussed? Finally, the article looks ahead to future developments.

### **Mozambique: from civil war to civil education**

During the Portuguese colonisation there was hardly any investment in the education of Mozambicans. Most Portuguese in Mozambique had a quite modest educational background themselves. The number of well-educated people in the country was negligible. In the months preceding independence, most Portuguese departed, leaving the country with a very limited number of skilled personnel. At that time, the illiteracy rate among Mozambicans was about 93%.

Frelimo, the Marxist-Leninist oriented liberation movement, adopted the one-party developmental state model according to the classic East European tradition. It nationalised companies, installed state-owned agricultural companies and established co-operatives. The rigorous Frelimo policies evoked resistance, not only by Mozambican refugees in surrounding countries (Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa) but also by the right-wing governments of South Africa and (at that time) Rhodesia. With the support of these countries, the resistance movement RENAMO was founded and a devastating civil war followed. More than five million inhabitants fled to the cities (Maputo, Beira, Nampula) and to neighbouring countries. Roads, railways, hospitals and schools were destroyed. According to the *Diário de Moçambique* (8.09.1999), a Mozambican newspaper, about 3,100 primary schools were destroyed between 1983 and 1991, which was almost half of the then existing school network. Under pressure from the international community, the two parties signed a peace agreement in October 1992 leading to the demobilisation of the armies and the first democratic elections. Despite the presence of the United Nations peace-keepers, it was not until the first elections in 1994 that peaceful conditions were established.

From 1992 onwards, Mozambique developed rapidly and soon lost her 'status' of being the poorest country in the world. The switch to an open market economy has led to growth, a decrease in the inflation rate from 70% in 1995 to 3% in 1999, and improved infrastructure. Industrialisation is developing, especially in

the southern part of the country, and this calls for educated and skilled employees. Nevertheless, the economy is still vulnerable, as was shown by the floods in the first months of 2000. Due to these floods, thousands of people died, lost their homes or had to flee from the water. Cattle drowned, roads, schools and other buildings were damaged and epidemic diseases such as cholera and malaria spread due to the fact that there was shortage of food and medicine.

### **The role of Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University**

In this context, the Eduardo Mondlane University, one of the most authoritative institutions of higher education in Mozambique, wants to commit itself to the development of the country. The university's mission statement declares that:

*"...the Eduardo Mondlane University wants to be a centre of excellence in the educational, scientific and technological context (...) assume responsibility in the process of innovation and knowledge transfer and in sustainable development"* (Eduardo Mondlane University Strategic Plan, 1998).

In the field of education, the challenge for the university is to contribute to providing well-trained teachers and other professionals, such as adult educators, curriculum specialists, educational planners and education policy analysts (Projecto de Reabertura da Faculdade de Educação, 1999). Other universities, like the Pedagogical University (UP) and the Catholic University (UC) and other (private) institutions, mainly concentrate on the formation of primary and secondary school teachers. Subjects like Adult Education, curriculum design and planning are hardly touched upon.

There are approximately 30 graduates in educational science and about 24 bachareis<sup>31</sup> in Adult Education in the country<sup>32</sup>. Thus, the country needs qualified, well-trained personnel to set out policies and create coherence between the various initiatives in the educational field. In this way, the present training provisions and activities in Adult Education training centres can be embedded in a structure with a strategy, mission and vision. It is evident that not all the problems related to education can be solved through initiatives in Adult Education, nor through establishing a curriculum in Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University. However, the development of university level

<sup>31</sup> Bacharel, plural Bachareis. In the educational system of Mozambique, a student acquires a 'bacharel' after successful completion of the first three years of university.

<sup>32</sup> Oral information, various sources

training and research in Adult Education is an essential link in educational development.

This was one of the reasons the management of the Eduardo Mondlane University decided to re-open the Faculty of Education (FoE) and to establish a masters course in Adult Education. For the re-installation of the FoE, the university management asked the University of Groningen, the Free University of Amsterdam and the University of Twente to support them in realising their plans for various educational programmes. In fact, relations between the UEM and the University of Groningen date from the end of the 1980s, the time of the civil war. Van der Kamp describes the early co-operation phase in Beukema et al (2000). Initially it involved teaching skills development for UEM staff within the framework of the Staff Development Project (STADEP).

### **Needs assessment**

The first steps in the implementation of a masters-level curriculum in Adult Education were two needs assessments, carried out by the co-ordinator of the Adult Education programme and University of Groningen staff (Nandja, 2000; Smulders, 2001). Both assessments appeared to be highly compatible. According to faculty guidelines, the curriculum had to be competence based. The aim of the assessments, therefore, was not only to investigate whether or not it would be functional to develop a curriculum in Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University, but also to assess the specific needs of the country concerning competencies to be acquired through Adult Education, and to formulate recommendations about how to develop and implement a masters programme. With respect to the first aims, all the information gathered during the research lead to the conclusion that Mozambique can truly benefit from highly trained personnel in Adult Education and that the Eduardo Mondlane University can play a role in their training.

*“It is a good idea to open the Faculty of Education. There are a lot of areas within the educational field that are not yet touched upon”* (respondent).

Different sources and methods were used to gather information about the possible learning needs of adult educators. In the first phase, literature study gave insight into the history and state of Adult Education in Mozambique. Further information was gathered through interviews, informal conversations with some key figures in Adult Education and through attendance at the National Forum on Non Formal Education (Beira, 1999). An image was

obtained of the context for the masters programme through analysing material and interviewing relevant stakeholders (see figure 1).

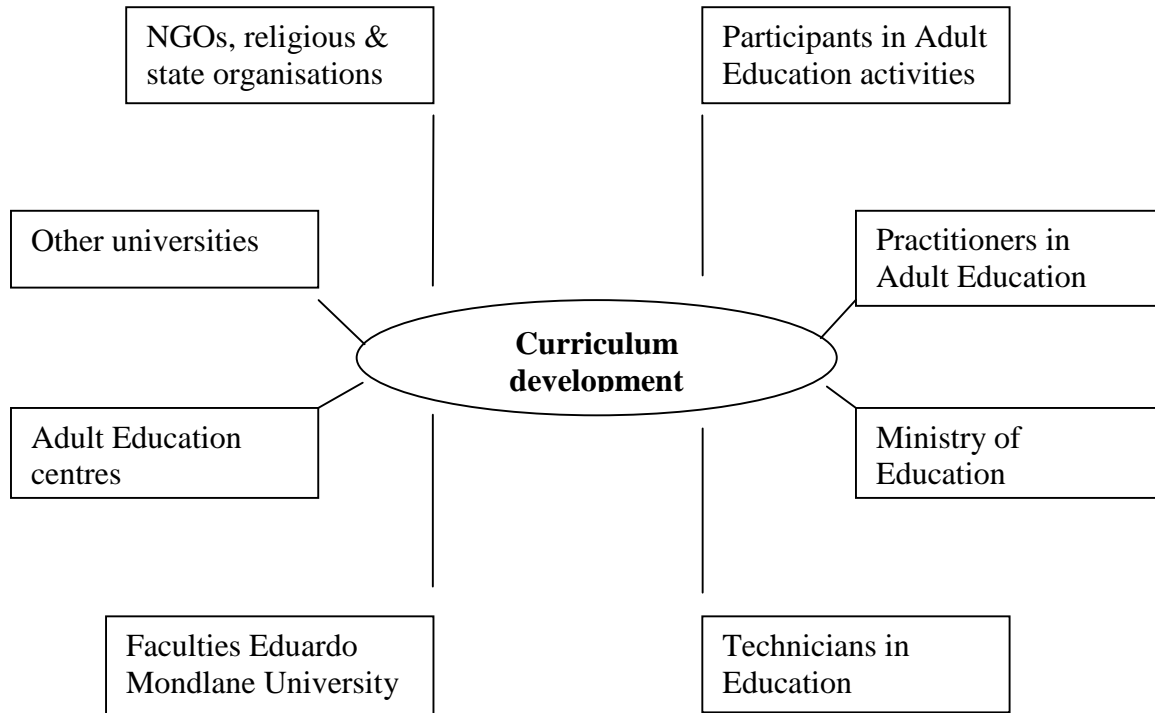


Figure 1: Stakeholders in curriculum development process

After the identification of relevant stakeholders, we aimed at obtaining insight into the competencies (knowledge, abilities, attitudes and skills) needed by (future) adult educators. Thirty-one people working in first or second line positions in Adult Education were interviewed. In first line positions, facilitation and regulation of Adult Education activities are important tasks. Second line positions are more concerned with management, co-ordination and policy making. Respondents worked in NGOs, state or religious organisations or in private or autonomous institutions (see figure 2).



	Kind of organisation respondent works for					Total
	NGO	State organisation	Religious organisation	Private organisation	Autonomous organisation	
First line jobs	1	12	0	0	1	14
Second line jobs	6	8	1	2	0	17
Total	7	20	1	2	1	31

Figure 2: Kind of organisation respondent works for by line of job

For example, professional educators in Adult Education centres, co-ordinators of NGOs, co-ordinators of training centres or projects, and designers of training programmes were interviewed. Information was gathered about the organisation the respondent was working in, about her/his tasks and the occupational problems (see box 1). The respondent was questioned about her/his possible learning needs and the required competencies for workers in Adult Education. We focused on what employees in Adult Education are missing in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes and what their learning needs are.

***Illustrative occupational problems for the context of Adult Education***

- An employee of the education department of Maputo city says that, during field visits to Adult Education centres, they are repeatedly confronted with requests for more, and for up-to-date, didactic material. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the material, but it is not forthcoming. In the meantime, the workers at the department think about how to train people in the education centres to develop their own materials and to exchange material with other centres.
- A co-ordinator of a nationally operating NGO discusses community problems with the pedagogical workers. Problems for peri-urban communities are unemployment and moral degradation. Communities in rural areas face problems like poor communication and information facilities and lack of executives who can guide communities and people. At meetings they discuss how to train local colleagues to deal with these kinds of problems and to think of a strategy for intervention.

- In various organisations the content of didactic materials is discussed, as is the kind of teaching method which should be used.
- In his meetings with colleagues, the director of training in the Ministry of Labour discusses how to raise awareness among people that completion of professional training is important, and how to promote certain vocational courses which are not attracting sufficient people.
- Some people with NGOs and state organisations operating in rural areas discuss how they should introduce and implement new agricultural or educational techniques, and how they can deal with the resistance that goes hand in hand with the introduction of such innovations.

*Box 1: Occupational problems*

For the needs assessment, two examples of ‘good practice’ were identified and visited. In this way, participants in Adult Education activities and their instructors were included in the research. The term ‘good practice’ does not automatically involve a completely positive valuation of the researcher or other actors. It is much more the case that such practices are innovative or illustrative for the context of Adult Education. The good practices were identified based on information from key figures. Of the two examples of good practice, one focused on vocational and on-the-job training, the other on bilingual literacy courses. In the first case, the company was aware that it could benefit from a qualified workforce and was willing to invest in its workers: *“If you think training is expensive, try the costs of ignorance.”* But the company also realised the importance of a satisfactory job and working environment to improve labour satisfaction. In the second case, women were taught to read and write in their mother-tongue before learning Portuguese. Through this second chance in education, the economic and social situation of the women improves:

*“I have learned about the importance of hygiene and wash my hands after using the bathroom and before cooking. And about child care, I now consult a doctor earlier when something is wrong” (respondent).*

*“I can exchange letters with family in Shangaan, or read cards with public information and when I got my identity card I was able to sign it” (respondent).*

These examples demonstrate the wide range of activities undertaken in Adult Education in Mozambique. Hence, contrary to the view quoted in the introduction, Adult Education is *not only* about literacy. Although the illiteracy rate in Mozambique is still high, certainly among women in rural areas, other issues also need attention. As mentioned before, the south of Mozambique is industrialising, pulling many workers towards the city. These workers need training to provide a competent workforce. But lowering moral standards caused by modern city life are also subjects to be addressed. In the rural areas other issues are important, such as agriculture, community life and co-operation. HIV/Aids is an urgent matter, as are other aspects of health care. Adult Education in Mozambique is needed as an instrument for a wide range of developmental issues, from building civil society and creating a competent workforce to rural development. Hence, attention must be paid to basic education and training, health education, community education and vocational training.

*“Adult Education should be seen in a broader sense and also focus on people in prisons, on people who live in the streets and on health issues”* (respondent).

To avoid ‘re-inventing the wheel’, the Pedagogical University and the Catholic University in Mozambique, and the University of the North in South Africa (see elsewhere in this publication) were included in the assessment. Their programmes in education were examined to make use of their knowledge and expertise in designing a curriculum in Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University. Besides their practical value, it is beneficial for the university to have contacts with other universities and departments of Adult Education both within and outside Mozambique. The Eduardo Mondlane University thus plays an activating and pioneering role in this area.

## Outcomes

- *Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University*

As already mentioned, the needs assessment showed that there is a lack of academically qualified personnel, that existing educational institutes do not train academics in Adult Education, and that there is, therefore, a need for training in Adult Education at the level of higher education. Such training should adopt a broad approach towards Adult Education. Furthermore, relevant stakeholders argue that high-level academic training of adult educators will help to improve

the image, prestige and recognition given to the field and may result in a clearer conceptualisation of approaches to Adult Education.

- *Potential student population*

From the various workers who were interviewed and from the wide range of organisations that are working in Adult Education, it is clear that potential students will have divergent backgrounds in respect of educational level, work experience and organisations that they work for. These different experiences can be an asset to be used in the educational programme itself.

- *Content of curriculum*

The university has a specific mission because it is the *national* centre for reflection, production and transmission of educational knowledge. It wants to serve the whole country, where different regions have specific educational needs. The curriculum should provide a common professional identity for those working in Adult Education. It should entail a broad professional profile as well as covering the different key tasks and core competencies in the different functions. Such a professional identity can strengthen the image and prestige of Adult Education in Mozambique in general and the position of those who work in the field in particular.

Subsequently, the balance of theory and practice in the curriculum must be considered. An academic programme should emphasise research methodology and should provide students with skills to work with theoretical concepts. Although based solidly in theory, the link with practice should not be ignored and, as many of the students will probably work in the field of Adult Education, reflection-in-action may play a significant role.

The needs assessments suggest that attention should be paid to the following curriculum areas:

- management and supervision
- curriculum/educational design and planning
- theory of adult learning and teaching
- methods of teaching/working with adults
- training and development
- community development
- development of educational material
- research and evaluation.

- *Organisation*

Since Adult Education is not the only master course run at the Faculty of Education, it was decided that all students will start with a common core of  $\frac{3}{4}$  year, followed by  $\frac{3}{4}$  year specialisation in one masters course. The last half-year is meant for research and thesis writing.

Several other organisational aspects need consideration. Since the FoE wants to attract students from all over the country, the courses offered centrally in Maputo (open for everybody) will, in future, be supplemented by distance education modules. Furthermore, the curriculum has to be competence based, and 'participation' is to be the keyword in selecting teaching methods. The paradigm shift from bank-model education to competence-based education means that the role of the teacher should change from that of the 'sage on the stage' to that of the 'guide at the side'.

Concerning financing, the majority of the potential students that were interviewed think that the organisation they work for would give them time to participate but doubt whether the company would pay their tuition fee. Both needs assessments suggested that the faculty should further investigate this issue.

A last point concerning the organisation of the curriculum is where to find staff to train the masters students. Training at masters level requires PhD-level staff but there are few PhD-holders in Mozambique.

## **The new curriculum in Adult Education**

Since the needs assessments in 1999 and 2000, a lot of work has been done to get the Faculty of Education started. On 26 September 2000, the faculty was officially opened. In August 2001, the first students started the common core courses of the masters in Adult Education, Science and Mathematics Education, Curriculum Development, and Instructional Design.

The needs assessments provided the basis for further development of the curriculum in Adult Education. Needs assessments were undertaken for the other masters subjects and, after comparison of the outcomes, the common core subjects were identified. For instance, subjects like Adult Learning and Curriculum Design are useful subjects for all three masters programmes.

The outcomes of the needs assessments for Adult Education were further used to identify key tasks that future graduates should be prepared for, thus resulting in a professional profile of adult educators. Eventually, the objectives of the specialisation in Adult Education were formulated. According to this document, a graduate should be capable of executing activities in five areas: research,

curriculum design, education and training, production of materials, and management.

### Modules in Adult Education

<i>Common Core</i>	<i>Specialisation phase</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Adult learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Foundations in Adult Education</li><li>- Education of adults and development of the individual</li><li>- Political perspectives of Adult Education</li><li>- Functional adult literacy</li><li>- Management of diversity</li><li>- Community development</li><li>- Vocational/Professional Adult Education</li><li>- Development and evaluation of curricula</li><li>- Development of teaching materials</li><li>- Methodology of investigation I &amp; II</li></ul>

#### *Box 2: Programme for Adult Education*

In addition, the key professional attitudes of a graduate were described as follows: a graduate should be willing to work in rural or (peri-)urban areas, should have an enthusiastic attitude towards working with people of different cultural or educational backgrounds, should have an attitude that enables motivation of learners, should inspire learners to critical thinking and self reflection, and should adopt a professional attitude.

Box 2 shows the curriculum in Adult Education accomplished through carrying out and analysing the needs assessments. The current curriculum will now be discussed on the basis of the following subjects: students, content and organisation of the curriculum. Information is based on oral information. The formal evaluation of the curriculum will be issued before long.

- *Students*

Approximately 45 students enrolled in the first year and about 30 of them continued to their research projects. From this 30, one third chose the Adult Education programme. Among these students are several teachers, several people working at various government ministries, a journalist, a veterinarian and

a secretary general of the Mozambican Airlines. The average age is over 40 years. Most of the students have passed the modules and are now working on their masters thesis. To get an idea of their topics, some are mentioned in box 3.

Topics of research proposals

- To establish a self-organisation programme of food preservation (through community education)
- To develop a programme for farmers on how to build up and manage an agricultural enterprise
- To improve the relevance of education at a commercial school in order to ensure connection to the labour market
- Development of professional competencies of teachers in regular primary education, concerning inclusive education
- Historical overview of Adult Education in Mozambique
- To develop a training programme for cabin crew of the Mozambican airline to ensure quality and to be able to compete with other airlines

Box 3: Topics of research proposals

- *Content*

The new programme of Adult Education consists of nine courses and research activities (see box 2). In the modules, the focus is on theory but an effort is being made to include practice through excursions, inviting guest speakers and executing a needs assessment in the field. There is also ample attention paid to the experiences of the participating students.

For the processing of information by the students, lectures are given in combination with group work and personal assignments. One of the modules was given through the internet to ensure interactivity. Unfortunately, the computers were very slow, making it hard to download information, but use of the internet is a very good and innovative idea. The medium, when improved, will facilitate distance education, which is one of the goals of the faculty.

The faculty staff members are developing a research programme that will focus on social problems and contacts have been established with external stakeholders for this purpose.

- *Organisation*

Courses are given in the afternoon to enable students to combine work and study. The length of the courses varies from one to four weeks. The four local

Adult Education staff members are very committed even though some of them are not available for teaching because of training abroad. The rule is that staff teaching masters-level courses should at least have a PhD. Since it is, as yet, difficult to recruit such qualified staff locally, colleagues are hired from elsewhere, while Mozambican staff members often go for training elsewhere. As a temporary solution, the first cycle of the masters course is taught by foreign experts in association with local experts and regular staff. As a result of the use of foreign experts, most courses are given in English.

Recently, it appeared that some students were having difficulties financing their participation in the course. The tuition fee is \$150 per month, including the holidays. In some cases, the employer organisation pays the fee; in other cases, the students pay for themselves. The university is now trying to address this problem.

- *Remarks*

In general, there is a strong impression that both students and lecturers are positive about the curriculum. As mentioned before, formal evaluation is currently being undertaken. However, based on the information presented in this article, it is notable that the subject of health education is not included in the programme despite the fact that it is an important subject for adult educators in Mozambique.

The second intake of students started in August 2002 and will soon enter their specialisation phase. Of the 20 students that enrolled, it is estimated that five students will chose Adult Education. Compared with the enrolment of the previous year, the student population has been halved. The question is whether there is a specific reason for the downswing in the number of students. Was the number of enrolments in the first year high because the course was new? Is the small enrolment due to people and organisations being unaware of the existence of the course? How can the enrolment of the target group, as identified in the needs assessments, be optimised?

### **The right track?**

*"Why Adult Education as a master study at the University? What for? You do not need a masters in anything to teach adults!"*

This article indicates that it is necessary to implement a masters course in Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University because it can contribute to solving some of the (educational) problems the country is facing. The



development and implementation process of the masters curriculum in Adult Education has been described and the key questions now are: How is the process developing? Is it on the right track? What kinds of opportunities and threats lie ahead?

This article is written by a lecturer from the University of Groningen and, with that angle of incidence, the topics of 'student' and 'content of the curriculum' will be discussed. The item 'organisation' will be by-passed, and instead, 'research' will be examined.

- *Students*

In line with the expectations about sources of potential students as identified in the needs assessments, the students actually enrolled in the programme come from quite different professional backgrounds, such as Airlines, other ministries besides that of Education, journalism, veterinary services, postal services, and so on. The fact that the programme attracts students from such diverse backgrounds indicates that Adult Education is a broad field. Furthermore, it indicates that the pool of potential students may be larger than expected. On the other hand, the enrolment for the coming masters course in Adult Education is estimated at five students. This is less than half of the number of students that enrolled in the specialisation phase of Adult Education in 2002. Why is the number so low? What can be done to raise the number of students for the next intake?

Furthermore, the exact motivation of students to enrol in the curriculum and of organisations to send their employees, is not yet clear and needs to be investigated. Some public relations activities can be started to ensure sufficient enrolment of students; for instance, companies can be approached directly to inform them about the masters programme.

Another point of attention is that the enrolled students come mainly from the Maputo area, whereas the needs assessments showed that people in other parts of the country are also interested in this kind of training and that adult educators are needed in those areas. Further development of e-learning can enable distance education and therefore facilitate participation of those distant people.

- *Content*

Besides the evaluation activities undertaken so far, the complete curriculum should be evaluated. Here, students can participate, as they are co-authors of the curriculum development process. To ensure good connection with the labour market and relevance of the curriculum, evaluative research should be undertaken in combination with close monitoring of the experiences of graduates in the labour market. The outcomes will provide tools to further adjust the programme to the professional practice and to optimise the participation of students.

Another point concerning the content of the masters programme is that it cannot exist without research. The current staff members are working on a research programme. Co-operation with universities, such as the University of Groningen, the University of the North, the Pedagogical University and the Catholic University, can be part of the research planning and the possibility of future PhD studies is relevant in this regard.

- *Research*

In the initial paragraphs of this article, the growing economy of the country, industrialisation and the changing society were mentioned. Training and (adult) education are significant contributory elements in processes of growth and development. A university should be able to respond to changes in society and also to anticipate future developments. Such abilities depend on the establishment of a dynamic research programme in which good field contacts aware of new developments are embedded. In this way, new developments are introduced into the research programme and the contacts and developments, therefore, have a steering function. On the other hand, a good research programme can also steer developments in the field. Thus, in a research programme there is cross-fertilisation between research and practice. But the fertilisation goes further. Since the curriculum is based on needs in the field and oriented at the practice, it can benefit from the dynamic interaction. Through the input of masters students, the curriculum contributes to both research programme and practice. Furthermore, PhD students, the staff and other interested people can work within the programme to ensure capacity building.

To conclude, the curriculum, research programme and PhD studies can be seen as ends in a reciprocal triangle where knowledge is generated. In this way, the track of positive developments in the implementation of a masters in Adult Education at the Eduardo Mondlane University can continue.

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# **DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION AS MUTUAL LEARNING PROCESS**

## **Quality indicators for sustainable development in the collaboration between universities in the South and the North**

Jacques Zeelen

*“It seems, that, in one of the meeting rooms of the Kampala Conference center (in Uganda), there is a painting without ears! When asked why, the artist simply replied: ‘Well, they do not need ears, because they do not use them... they do not listen!’ Some people might find the artist’s opinion overstated... but this illustrates quite clearly the frustration of local people having been overlooked for decades by national decision makers as well as ‘development’ institutions. National scholars, researchers, extension workers all face the same frustration, as the national authorities ‘do not have ears for them’, but rather listen to foreign ‘experts’ or advisers!”*

(Dominique Hounkonnou, 2001: Listen to the Cradle, p. 7)

### **Introduction**

In recent debates about development co-operation several trends can be observed. These include: ‘from aid to support’, ‘from donor driven projects to demand driven programmes’, ‘from “doing it yourself” to capacity building’ and ‘from isolated projects to sectoral approaches embedded in national policies’ (Hoebink, 1988; Grammig, 2002; Zevenbergen, 2002; Commission of the European Communities, 2002).

Universities are also part of these developments which implies that, in existing collaboration programmes between universities in the South and the North, more and more, the relevance of equal partnerships and the importance of mutual learning have been acknowledged (Hulsman-Vejsova and Van der Kraay, 1997; Van der Kamp, 2001).

To deal with these challenges in an informed way, reflections on existing collaboration programmes could contribute to the improvement of their quality. In this article, I would like to formulate such reflections on the basis of my experiences in the collaboration programme between the University of Groningen in the Netherlands and the University of the North in South Africa (Rampedi and Zeelen, 2000; Zeelen, 2002).

Every co-operation between universities of the South and the North has its particular characteristics and specific history. Before embarking on the formulation of indicators for successful co-operation, it is necessary to say a few things about these specifics as well as about my own background.

The collaboration between the University of Groningen (RUG) and the University of the North (UNIN) started in 1992. After the release of Nelson Mandela, the academic boycott against minority rule in South Africa was terminated and RUG was able to establish a collaboration agreement with UNIN. One of the areas of collaboration was adult education, a field totally neglected in the curriculum of the former *apartheid* university. In the first years of collaboration, students of RUG came to South Africa and conducted preparatory research activities to help develop new teaching programmes and research projects. The students did a very good job, however, each time they left activities came to a halt. Because of these problems of sustainability, UNIN asked for more long-term senior input by means of the temporary appointment of a staff member of RUG to hold the Chair of Adult Education. After a year of preparation, I was appointed in September 1998 as Professor of Adult Education, with the support of the Netherlands embassy within the framework of the “Suppletie” programme. Since my appointment, this innovation has been underway for almost four years. New teaching programmes have been developed and implemented. More than 50 postgraduate students are participating this year. The research programme has been acknowledged by the National Research Foundation. A project concerning Youth at Risk (BASWA), which has been established in close collaboration with the Provincial Department of Education, receives financial support for the coming two to three years from the Netherlands in the context of the CENESA programme (Cooperation in Education between the Netherlands and South Africa). Capacity building is on track but needs another two years to become consolidated and sustainable.

In this reflection on development co-operation, it is important to emphasise that I happened to be a newcomer in the development industry, having been more engaged for many years in research and programme development in mental

health and other fields of adult education in the Netherlands. My contribution has to be understood against this background.

The formulated suggestions for quality indicators are not based on a systematic evaluation of various collaboration projects in different circumstances. The main points of reference are my experiences at UNIN in the last four years and some ideas gained in the collaboration with the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, as well as a few insights obtained during visits to other developing countries in Africa and South America.

## **Quality indicators**

- *Contextualisation of expertise without parochialism*

A central indicator should be the tuning of the expertise to the specific conditions, in our case the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Although this sounds quite obvious, it is not always the case. In my experiences with the implementation of the CENESA programme, for instance, the tension is visible between, on the one hand, selling Dutch expertise to South Africa and, on the other hand, being sensitive to the argument that expertise should contribute to sustainable development. Western expertise often lacks sufficient contextualisation. This relates to the knowledge content as well as to the methodology used. Regarding content, for instance, the extremely different labour market in the rural areas of the Limpopo Province is often ignored. Regarding methodology, one often does not give an important place to inputs from local actors. For instance, the involvement of stakeholders and local inputs are essential in the formulation of the objectives of every project. In summary, if we are offering Western expertise abroad, one of the quality criteria should be: To what extent are the history and characteristics of the local situation respected? Another criterion should be: In what ways is the methodology used open to inputs from local actors?

Being sensitive to the local context should not mean, however, that local points of reference are considered to be holy and untouchable. First of all, the local situation is also a dynamic field of different role players with different power relations, agendas and perspectives. Hounkonnou, in his well-documented plea for “listening to the cradle”, also warns against romanticising the local-level institutions (Hounkonnou, 2001, page 241). Secondly, neglecting inputs from outside can lead to *parochialism*, which hinders the development of a productive intercultural dialogue in which learning from each other is a core element.

- *Mutual intercultural competencies*

Learning from each other depends to a great extent on intercultural competencies. Those competencies should play a far more prominent role in the selection and assessment of staff and students from the Netherlands before they leave the North. From my own experience, in the assessment procedure I went through, this area was mainly ignored. Emphasis was much more on a profile of a fast-acting professional who immediately knows what to do, makes decisions right away and is hardly sensitive to other time frames, norms and values, and work and life styles.

These intercultural competencies are not only important for the Dutch side. The fact that we, in our participation at UNIN, have been quite productive so far, has much to do with the intercultural competencies of our South African colleagues. They are empowered enough to be critical of the inputs from the Dutch side without over-romanticising their African roots. A certain level of intercultural competencies, on both sides (which in most cases is not a given!), favours positive dealing with conflicts. Although not without risks, overcoming conflicts can, in my experience, lead to a substantial deepening of the co-operation. However, whatever intercultural competencies have been acquired, a sense of humour, even in tough times, remains indispensable.

The importance of the intercultural dialogue and the reduction of cultural distance in development projects have also been emphasised by Grammig (2002) in his study on development assistance in the field of technology implementation in the South. In his view, these factors play a decisive role in the success of a development project.

- *Start small, take time in an explorative phase and build on alliances between people with a shared vision*

Good communication is a condition *sine qua non* for every innovation. This is even more the case if you, initially, have to work together in a situation where there is more than 10,000 km between the co-operating parties, despite telephone, fax, email and internet. Therefore, it is advisable not to start too ambitiously and to take time for an extensive explorative phase in which transparent small projects are initiated. After getting to know each other, one should not always avoid debates on matters of principle, such as on the direction of the innovation. International co-operation is a costly and time-consuming business. It is preferable to come across fundamental differences in orientation at an early stage. Investing in alliances between people with a shared vision is, of course, not always easy and might again be affected, for instance, by people leaving for other jobs. Those events are not always possible to avoid. However, it is vital to have an open ear for the subjective interests of the local partners

involved. After all, collaboration projects should contribute to their professional and personal development.

- *Capacity building can benefit from long-term inputs of external (senior) staff with a well-defined position in the local organisation*

As indicated, the preparatory phase of the innovation at UNIN took some time. Students from RUG conducted research projects and helped in developing modules. Staff members of UNIN gradually became more and more involved, however, this did not lead to the establishment of institutional capacity.

The decision to establish more long-term senior input was informed by the vulnerable sustainability of the first phase of the innovation.

After my appointment, it became clear that not all the members of the Faculty of Education were happy with the new Chair of Adult Education. The Dean, who played a major role in the co-operation with RUG, formulated an ambitious restructuring plan. Old departments without relevant programmes had to merge and develop more up-to-date programmes. Two new departments were introduced into the restructured faculty: *Maths and Science Education*, and *Adult Education*. These plans turned out to be a threat for a considerable number of academic staff. The resistance to change culminated in political actions that ultimately resulted, after elections, in the removal of the Dean. During the following period, all innovative activities came under pressure. It was possible to defend the implementation of the original objective of new teaching and research programmes in adult education only because the Chair was officially acknowledged and backed by the top management of UNIN within the context of the collaboration with RUG. Had I had to work more in an advisory or consultancy role, the end of the innovation would probably not have been far off.

An alternative to temporary foreign staff input is capacity building through training of staff and students in universities in the North. One example is the growing number of Masters programmes offered in the Netherlands to foreign students from the South. However, this has the implication that students are away from home for long periods of time and run the risk adopting approaches that are not suitable in their home country. A possible *brain drain* of students who prefer to stay in the North could result, which has been observed to be the case in many collaboration programmes: “The brain drain from the South to the North has reached unprecedented levels” (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, page 15). The training-abroad approach, dictated by financial incentives for Dutch universities and other players in the development industry, could become counter-productive in the situation of South African universities which themselves function in a financial reward system that depends



on the number of passed MA and PhD students. The same worry was recently also expressed by the South African Minister of Education, Kader Asmal. During the NUFFIC conference "The Global Higher Education Market: Shifting Roles, Changing Rules" (The Hague, 2002), he made the observation that foreign higher education institutions are often "narrowly influenced by the need to seek new markets, to generate new sources of income, and in so doing to overcome the financial constraints that many foreign institutions face in their own countries". The minister also referred to "the aggressive recruiting campaign by many developed countries for doctors, nurses and teachers". In conclusion, Asmal made a plea for a more balanced relationship between global and local developments to enhance capacity building in the South.

A more promising approach to staff development is the so-called 'sandwich' type of study abroad. The University of Groningen is one of the institutions that offers scholarships for such type of study. Students can do their empirical work in their home country and visit the Northern institution for several periods of three to six months to work on their dissertation. In the near future, the possibility of co-owned PhD graduations should be considered in order to share financial rewards between the South and the North.

This review of possibilities for institution building and staff development shows that foreign staff input can have a positive role. The review points to certain crucial conditions, such as embedding within an active and assertive team, a clear setting of tasks and responsibilities, and a long-term engagement of the foreign staff.

What we can learn from this example is that an innovation in this kind of environment takes time, or in the words of Hounkounnou (2001) "it takes time to listen to the cradle". A period of minimum four and maximum six years looks realistic for this type of innovation. However, the (senior) long-term engagement of a Dutch expert no longer complies with new Dutch policies. From July this year, the Dutch ministry wants only to rely on short-term consultancy input. For my South African colleagues and me, the empirical foundation for this policy change is difficult to understand. As a consequence, innovations like the one discussed, using a mix of long-term staff investment, short missions and the 'sandwich' approach, will likely become *missions impossible*.

- *Research capacity building not by means of isolated research projects but through a (regionally) relevant research programme with collective involvement of Masters and PhD students as well as of academic staff*

Capacity building at universities means not only improving teaching competencies but also improving research capacity. To enhance capacity

building in this area, it seems productive to overcome isolated research projects. On the basis of preparatory research and discussions in the field and consultations with our international partners, we developed at UNIN a research programme “From Social Exclusion to Lifelong Learning”. The research programme has the objectives “to develop a clear conceptualisation and theoretical analysis of social exclusion within the rural context of the Limpopo Province” and “to gain insight into the role and effectiveness of adult learning and adult education in the combat against social exclusion”. Despite the substantially different contexts involved, there is considerable overlap between our UNIN research programme and that of our main Northern partner, the Department of Adult Education at the University of Groningen. Such overlap can be found in the social problems addressed, the research approach used and in the theoretical concepts of the programme. In the long run, this overlap enables possible collective research publications with mutual benefits.

With our research programme as a foundation, we offer our postgraduate candidates possible topics related to the general objectives of the programme that they can study in their own project. Along these lines, we develop research projects that are continuously discussed by staff and students in terms of progress and difficulties. The general goal is to generate a regionally and internationally relevant body of knowledge and to contribute to new intervention strategies in the field of adult education. The establishment of such a research programme is very much in line with new developments in South African higher education and the National Research Foundation (NRF). Eventually this whole process resulted in the fact that our research programme has become one of UNIN’s focus areas and has been acknowledged by the NRF as a research focus area in adult education. Working together in a research programme implies the important tool of *collective learning*. Supervisor-student relations become transparent and fellow students, including the visiting students from the Netherlands, can participate in the collective learning process. It sometimes turns out that students can help each other quite effectively in certain areas.

To improve the research culture, it is important as well to have a *meeting place* where discussions can take place. Fortunately we were able to develop our Adult Education Resource Centre where people meet, consult, read and have access to up-to-date publications. We also use the Centre for debates with representatives from the adult education field and NGOs. All these activities are part of the process of capacity building, which benefits UNIN as a university in the South as well as the partner-university in the North.

In conclusion, our strategy implies that capacity building should not be reduced to producing a certain number of PhDs or Masters. At the end of the day,

students should become competent professionals, within and outside the university, who have an added value by contributing to the improvement of educational opportunities and living conditions in a poor region such as the Limpopo Province. In this manner, we try to fulfil an important part of the mission statement of the University of the North, namely to be not a university in an *ivory tower* but to contribute – in a modest way – through teaching, research and outreach to the elevation of the communities in the province.

- *Contributions to the development of "good practices" with exemplary value and with linkages to policy domains of relevant sectors*

The process of capacity building is not confined to staff and students of the university. Due to the fact that the adult education programmes start mainly at the postgraduate level, most of our students are working as professionals in the educational field. During the initial stage of our activities, we invited interesting professionals to the university to take part in research workshops in order to decide whether they would be motivated to register as part-time students in our programme. This led to the involvement of quite a number of professionals working in provincial departments, secondary schools, adult education provisions, colleges for Further Education and Training (FET) and NGOs. Capacity building has, therefore, a substantial spin-off for the fostering of professionalisation in the educational field. An added advantage is that, through them, we also get up-to-date information about what is happening in the field and are able to develop an interesting network.

An important element in this context is the discovery of "good practices" which can be investigated by practice-oriented research. For instance in the BASWA (Youth at Risk) project, but also in other parts of our research programme, we are trying to contribute to improvements in those practices and to formulate suggestions for policy innovation by describing and investigating interesting practices in the field. Especially in an underdeveloped area such as the Limpopo Province, it is of utmost importance to learn from examples of relevant work in often difficult conditions. Excellent professionals are scarce, both in the context of the provincial department and in the NGOs, so this small group needs support and should be used as qualified informers for policy innovations.

- *Sectoral approaches without linkages to "good practices" lead to severe implementation problems*

Talking about policy innovation leads us to the new policies of the Dutch Minister for Development. "Good governance" and "ownership" are key words in many development policies today. These concepts express a critical attitude towards traditional ways of collaborating, for instance to the support given to

isolated projects with low levels of sustainability and policy embedding. The new approach is to support integrated sectoral plans, drawn up in line with the developing country's own preferences and policies. In the Dutch sectoral policy support, the Netherlands embassy plays an important role. One of the conditions for sectoral support is that a certain level of good governance exists in the receiving country. By involving a whole government sector, for instance education, problems of unsustainable isolated projects could be overcome and ownership by the country itself could be substantially strengthened. In line with this sectoral policy, the earlier mentioned CENESA programme proposes a *system-to-system approach* in which the educational sectors of the Netherlands and South Africa could collaborate, for instance in the area of further education and training.

At first glance, the argument for the sectoral approach looks quite convincing. However, apart from the question of whether countries that receive this sectoral aid really comply with the criteria of good governance, there are other issues. It is not always guaranteed that the financial support eventually ends up at the right level, in the right programme and with the right people, for instance concerning initiatives for poverty reduction. The quality of governance itself is sometimes a real part of the problem. Provincial governmental structures in South Africa, for example, are partly a product of the former apartheid homelands and still continue to suffer from weak management and lack of quality of many civil servants. Latest figures indicate, for instance, a substantial under-utilisation of financial resources in areas such as HIV/AIDS and social welfare programmes. To rely on the governmental structures *only*, which is a tendency in sectoral plans, is therefore risky. The danger is that civil society and local grassroots initiatives become excluded from the process, despite assurances that they will be involved at a certain stage. If collaboration programmes are exclusively executed in the context of national and provincial sectors without connections with good practices in concrete situations, elaborated programmes could easily end up as *paper tigers* on the shelves or, if practically implemented, they may become *white elephants* without real impact or sustainability. The proof of the pudding should always be that policies foster specific programmes, which will be really implemented in a manner that is adjusted to the particular context, making use of the experience and insight of competent professionals and volunteers.

Although in favour of a sectoral strategy, the Commission of the European Communities also warns against exclusive use of the sector-wide approach: "The project approach should not be abandoned, in particular in situations not allowing for large sector programmes. Essential factors for successful education

projects include: a favourable political environment, good governance, ownership of preparation and implementation at local level, flexible programming, technical assistance for institutional change, clear objectives, and a link with a single institution” (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, page 32).

For collaboration between universities in the North and the South, which is also linked to provincial departments, this means contributing to the capacity building of those departments and linking good practices to policy developments at provincial and national level, as well as establishing relationships with NGOs and other local initiatives.

- *Avoid complex arrangements with many collaborating partners – the more collaboration partners, the harder to keep the innovation on track*

Motivated by observations of overlap between activities of several foreign donors and local initiatives, there is a growing preference to tune interventions to each other. Although this is a valid point, too much emphasis on lack of co-ordination could also lead to an overkill of involved partners in certain collaboration agreements and projects. This has the disadvantage that conflicts of interest between the partners could emerge which could slow down the innovation. It seems more productive, especially in the beginning, to keep the complexity of the innovation and the number of involved partners at a modest level. After reaching a more consolidated collaboration, possible co-operation with other partners could be considered.

- *Enhance South-South collaboration and develop funding strategies in the South to gradually reduce dependency on the North*

In collaboration programmes between the South and the North, it is important to be aware of the issue of ownership from the beginning. Financial dependence upon the North should be diminished gradually and local opportunities should come into the picture. In our programme this meant that UNIN itself took a share of the financial responsibility right from the beginning, for example by establishing the Chair of Adult Education. To avoid implementation problems at a later stage, one should embed the innovation in the regular processes of the local organisation. Moreover, opportunities should be explored to add local funding to the foreign aid, as we did by submitting our research programme to the National Research Foundation.

Another important element is possible linkages with other universities in the region that are working in the same field. These should be considered right from

the start. In our case, we benefited a lot from interesting encounters with colleagues from the University of the Western Cape and the University of Natal.

Last but not least, collaboration with other partners outside South Africa is of vital importance. South-South collaboration does not suffer from immense contextual differences as much as North-South collaboration does. In our case, we developed fruitful co-operation with colleagues from the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo in the context of the triangle: *Groningen - Turfloop - Maputo*. It turns out that we can all benefit from each other, for instance in developing an approach to adult education that is tuned to rural conditions. In fact, we share teaching materials, support each other in teaching programmes and prepare collective publications.

- *Avoid academic tourism through transparent output monitoring in staff and student exchanges*

Without giving the impression that I am an extreme exponent of Dutch *Calvinism*, I would say that international collaboration may involve elements of academic tourism, first of all of course, for staff and students from the North. During work and study visits to beautiful countries like South Africa, at least for staff supported by attractive daily allowances, recreation sometimes becomes too prominent in the programme. Without sound preparation, precise monitoring and reporting obligations, collaboration does not go beyond comfortable diplomacy far away from the real problems. The same may also be the case during visits by staff and students from the South to the North entering into a world with new temptations other than professional development.

### **Concluding remarks**

The art of development co-operation is to find a balance between being proactive and being flexible to deal with unforeseen events. Collaboration between universities of the South and the North is not about transferring *existing* knowledge. It is about using Western expertise, in the words of Hounkonnou, as a *triggering* factor to create, together with local actors, a stimulating learning environment with the aim of generating *new* knowledge and learning experiences (Hounkonnou, 2001, page 240). The precondition is indeed “listening to the cradle” and time-consuming investment in a dialogue which is always embedded in a complicated environment of power relations.

To make ownership possible, the Western expert playing the role of the triggering factor should be more than aware that, following a more prominent

role in the first phase of the collaboration, his or her role has to shift more and more towards becoming a coach and later an adviser.

The near future will show whether the expert involved in the discussed example of the collaboration between the University of Groningen and the University of the North will be able to deal with this challenge.

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# LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Hans Schoenmakers

## Introduction

One day, in the early years of the co-operation in adult education between the University of the North and the University of Groningen, one of the members of the co-operation team met a person from the village of Ga-Mothapo, about 8 km away from the university. This person made the following statement when interviewed by the researcher:

*Every day we can see the university buildings. We always wonder if this big institution with all its knowledge cannot help us! But we do not know how to ask and we are afraid they will send us away.*

One could wonder whether, if the villagers would have taken up the courage to enter the university premises, the university would have had much to offer them. Not, at least, in the field of education. The Faculty of Education of the University of the North was not involved at all in community related work, and did not address the educational needs of the lost generations of the apartheid era in the Limpopo Province. However, a few years later, the Faculty of Education formulated the following proud mission to serve the post-Apartheid agenda of change:

*The Faculty of Education is committed to rural regeneration, empowerment, and development through a life-long learning approach to teaching and interdisciplinary research.*

This mission statement defined the parameters of the newly established Department of Adult Education at the faculty<sup>33</sup>. However, within these broad parameters many questions remain to be answered. Questions about the focus, tasks and place of adult education in its relation to academia and society. For instance, the question could be raised:

<sup>33</sup> Makgwana Rampedi & Jacques Zeelen: Adult Education at the University of the North: from social exclusion to lifelong learning. UNIN, South Africa 200

*Why adult education as a master study at the university?! You do not need a master in anything to teach adults!*

This same question was raised in Mozambique during the period of preparation of a Faculty of Education and a study programme in Adult Education at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo. It illustrates the way most people think about adult education, namely as teaching adults how to read and write.

In order to respond to these questions it is necessary to understand the origins of adult education both in Western Europe and in Africa. The equation of adult education with addressing the illiteracy problem dates back to the birth of adult education in Western Europe at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century on the one hand, and to the concept of literacy in rural Africa in the process of development on the other hand. The industrial revolution in Western Europe needed capable people who could at least read and write. Training centres were established to provide basic education to adult workers coming from the rural areas to find a job in the industrialising cities. In modern Africa, education is seen as an essential component in the process of socio-economic development of the masses. Even today, adult basic education and training as it is delivered in training centres is mostly defined in terms of (functional) literacy in connection with training for income generation. Adult education is considered here an instrument to community- or national development and improvement of personal wealth.

Indeed, questions can be posed, such as: what has a university to do with this type of basic education? Is it possible for a university to do anything in this field beyond facilitating standard basic education programmes? And if so, what then should be the dimensions of Adult Education programmes in universities in Southern Africa like the University of the North and the Eduardo Mondlane University? And why is a Dutch university involved in basic and professional education in Southern Africa?

The seminar “*Lifelong Learning in Southern Africa: research, policies, and co-operation*” addressed these questions by discussing them in relation to both development programmes in general, and to North – South academic co-operation in particular. The seminar developed ideas into two directions. It brought forward some of the fundamental academic questions that are brought up by thinking about lifelong learning in development situations, questions of contextualisation and culture, of theory of learning, and of method and style of research and teaching. At the same time it discussed practical problems that

adult education entails, such as practice-related education, implementation of life long learning policies, and North - South co-operation.

The seminar brought together academics from several Dutch and Southern African universities who are involved in developing socially relevant educational programmes and research in lifelong learning. In particular, staff from the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, the University of the North in South Africa, and the Universities of Groningen and Utrecht in the Netherlands, who have been involved in developing research and training in lifelong learning in Southern African and Latin America respectively, and a private educational consultant. A background to the discussions is not only the development of lifelong learning practices in Southern Africa, but also the place of lifelong learning in development co-operation and North-South academic cooperation.

Lifelong learning deserves a solid place in development cooperation next to the priority area of support for basic education, and next to secondary areas like support to professional education and higher education. Participants in the seminar shared a conviction that the radical contextualisation and the orientation towards empowerment of historically disadvantaged and marginalised groups that their approach to lifelong learning entails should make it a corner-stone to development policies in the field of education. More missionary work of adult educationalists within the world of development co-operation is called for.

### **Changing views in Europe: from literacy programmes to employability**

North-South co- operation related to lifelong learning is, however, far from self-evident. When it comes to adult education, the situations in Europe and the industrialised Western world in general seem to be completely different from that of Southern Africa. Such difference is also reflected in the concepts adult education and lifelong learning. While in Western Europe illiteracy was disappearing slowly during the centuries following the beginning of the industrial revolution, in Southern Africa we still see high rates: in Mozambique 59,9% of the adult population, in South Africa 30%. Europe passed through phases of industrialisation to the late modern knowledge society where individuals are learning subjects throughout most of their lives. Southern Africa is still struggling with widespread poverty and illiteracy and millions of people are in danger to be excluded from the globalisation of knowledge and prosperity.

The historical context of adult education in Europe is characterised by the successive phases of industrialisation and the related processes of individual emancipation. The industrial revolution entailed the downfall of the traditional rural society. In the rising modern society there was a strong belief in the possibility of constructing new social realities through actions of governments, industrial enterprises and individuals. Not only children should be educated to further develop modernity, also adults were invited to visit training centres and evening schools to be trained as a capable working class. Even more interesting was the work of trade unions and religious organisations to emancipate the workers to a powerful class and to protect them against the evils of capitalism and of modern urban life, including problems of alcoholism and social disintegration. Together with the increasing complexity of industrial production and the access of the masses to complicated products and services, the societal needs for more sophisticated training and supply of information became urgent. In this context, the struggle against illiteracy evolved from learning adults to read and write to the more comprehensive approach of adult education. This also resulted in the development of agogic disciplines in universities.

Since almost a decade, the concept of lifelong learning is placed at the forefront of academic and political debates. In 1996, the OECD demanded attention to the document “Lifelong learning for all”, followed by “Learning, the treasure within” from UNESCO one year later. National governments in Europe did not want to stay behind. The debate on the importance of continuing training in a rapidly changing society received a face-lift, but this time the message was more powerful and better focussed on what was happening in society than was the case with the idea of “permanent education” in the 1960s.<sup>34</sup> The policy papers of international organisations and national governments reflect a strong consciousness of the revolution in information technology, which introduces fundamental changes in the relations of production and in the social construction of society. We are living in an information society or a knowledge society in which information and knowledge replace natural resources as the basis for production. Knowledge is an instrument of innovation; innovation involves the production and distribution of knowledge by electronic means. Obstacles of time and space seem to be overcome from behind the terminal of a personal computer within seconds. The primacy of knowledge in production processes and socio-economic developments requires a labour force and employees who are willing to undergo continuous training. The knowledge society is also a learning society in which the educational potential of all citizens is used in an optimal way.

<sup>34</sup> Max van der Kamp, Tessa Evers, Linda Ligthart, Koos Toren : Stimulating Pathways of Learning. The evaluation of Hybrid, a European Union project on adult education. 2002.

Lifelong learning is concerned with the motivation of all people but in particular with employees.

In the late modern knowledge society, the concept of adult education seems to be reformulated in terms of lifelong learning and rigged with notions of citizenship and employability. Despite the positive and optimistic language mostly used in the policy documents about the possibilities that lifelong learning can offer to address the uncertainties and risks of the late modern knowledge society, this learning has also to be seen in the perspective of economic growth of companies and a person's opportunities on the labour market. The term "employability" seems to be the most favourite key word in many policy papers nowadays. Employability is seen as a necessary characteristic of employees who have to adapt flexibly to changes in a labour market being subjected to the permanent pressures of changing supply and demand and not hampered by national policies and laws to protect them on this market. In this context, the concept of citizenship is strongly connected to the capacities of the individual person to participate in the labour market. Of course, citizenship is more than only simply being qualified for the labour market. It also refers to the civil and legal status of persons making up the political community and also relates to questions of social cohesion. After all, the late modern knowledge society is also a risky society where not only the old securities of family and church are dissolved but also the recently (in historical terms) gained rights of the labouring masses in the welfare state are seriously contested. In view of these complex relations, many politicians in the Western world suggest a relation between the supposed failures of the multicultural society with the lack of participation of newcomers in society, more particularly in the labour market. In this context, lifelong learning, citizenship and employability find themselves in uneasy company.

### **Lifelong learning and Southern African conditions**

One can wonder what this discussion has to do with the social reality in Southern Africa. Millions of people in rural and urban areas are not included in processes of constructing knowledge societies, they do not have access to personal computers, they do not have access to modern schooling and they do not even have a job. Translating development in terms of knowledge accumulation and application in the way that mainstream conceptions of lifelong learning suggest is not a realistic option for them. Poverty itself is blocking such avenues out of poverty. This situation is testified in this book for the situation in Mozambique by Arlindo Siteo and Maaïke Smulders, and for the situation in

South Africa, more in particular about the problems in Limpopo Province, by Makgwana Rampedi and Jacques Zeelen. Supplemented with data from UNDP reports, the situation can be summarised as follows.

South Africa, with a population of around 43 million inhabitants, is a country in transition with glaring inequalities, with 40% of the households living below the subsistence threshold and 65% cent of the inhabitants living below the poverty line. About half of the population is living in the rural areas. The rate of unemployment is around 37%. Life expectancy at birth is 52 years. In terms of the Human Development Index, South Africa is ranked on place 107 out of 173.<sup>35</sup> Rampedi refers to regional and socio-economical inequalities when it comes to the distribution of wealth and access to education. In the Limpopo Province in particular, poverty is widespread. The unemployment rate is about 40 per cent, and figures for literacy are shocking. (see data in Rampedi's article).

Mozambique is a very poor country with a population of around 16 million people and ranked on place 170 of the world's human development index. Life expectancy at birth is 43,5 years, the adult literacy rate is only 39,5% and school enrolment in general is 32,6%. Unemployment rate is 21% and 70% of the population is living below the poverty line. About 70% of the population is living in the rural areas. The UNDP Report 2000 mentions the following serious problems in the primary education sub-system. Only 37% of the children aged between 6 and 12 are attending primary education, a high level of retention, difficulties with the teaching language which is Portuguese, lack of education infrastructure (no buildings, no teachers) in the rural areas, lack of textbooks and other educational materials, and poor management. In secondary education, the most worrying problem is its low quality and efficiency. In 1999, enrolment rates for the first and second cycle of secondary education were 6% and 1% respectively. Furthermore, the curriculum is very academic and encyclopaedic. The number of qualified teachers is very low. Only 25% of the teachers are qualified to teach at secondary level. The problem of secondary education is made worse by the chronic failure of technical and professional education to adjust teaching programmes to the current characteristics and dynamics of the Mozambican economy<sup>36</sup>. Given this educational situation, there seems to be work for generations of adult educators in Mozambique.

<sup>35</sup> The Courier, nr. 195, (South Africa Special) November-December 2002.

<sup>36</sup> UNDP 2000, Mozambique, Education and Human Development: Trajectory, lessons and challenges for the 21st century

Despite different historical, cultural, and socio-economic environments, Mozambique and South Africa (more in particular the Limpopo Province) share the problem of high numbers of adult people with only a few years of formal education, people with inadequate training for the needs of the labour market, and high numbers of functionally illiterate people. No surprise, therefore, that governments, the educational sector and NGO's look at adult education for solutions. But exactly what type of adult education is asked for in such situations?

### **Towards a contextualised view of lifelong learning in Southern Africa**

Putting adult education on the academic agenda of universities in Mozambique and South Africa must involve raising the complicated question of the specific type of education needed. What should lifelong learning mean in the particular context of Limpopo Province or Mozambique? What is the relative importance there of transmitting knowledge, of teaching skills, of labour market preparation and of social participation. What is the relevance of literacy promotion? Jacques Zeelen answered the answer to these questions, as far as the University of the North is concerned, very clearly when he states that the task of adult education is more than acquiring knowledge and skills, namely also recognizing existing competencies and to connect literacy skills with skills on the labour market. The Department of Adult Education should not only study learning processes but also has to do research into the problems and needs of the region.

In this context, adult education in the sense of lifelong learning is more than participating in the knowledge society, it is more than making up the arrears of specific adult groups. It is a broad mental and social process, a way to combat social exclusion, marginalisation and forms of historically, culturally or socially reproduced inequalities. Standard knowledge systems and educational recipes, as well as the Western idea of lifelong learning as basically a weapon in the struggle to stay involved in the knowledge society have little relevance in such situations. Lifelong learning has to be connected to and even be reinvented in the context of the daily struggle for life and survival. In other words, reinvented in the local languages and cultural imagination of the people who learn. However, such contextualisation does not mean creating isolation in local or regional circumstances. Designing programmes in Mozambique and South Africa for the local community involves including the global world by definition. Cultural orientations of people are developing and changing



continuously in the busy communication traffic of the global village under the influence of media technology<sup>37</sup>.

Such a view on lifelong learning also has implications for the basic assumptions regarding academic teaching and research. Saying that adult education is more than teaching to read and write (in one's mother tongue, in English, or in Portuguese) is at the same time making a statement about a required research agenda. Namely, research into the specific problems and needs of the region, into existing competences, and into linking social competences and awareness with literacy skills and income generation skills. It also involves a statement about style and method of research and teaching, namely that practice-oriented research should be the basis for the development of contextualised curricula and policy advice.<sup>38</sup> Lifelong learning is studying power relations and, at the same time, a methodology of empowerment. Lifelong learning is culturally coloured and the historical and socio-economic context is defining what kind of intellectual and practical skills have to be learned to be able to make a living and to participate as a citizen in the local society which is itself connected in so many ways to the global world, even in the most remote rural areas in Mozambique and South Africa.

A context-sensitive view of lifelong learning as sketched here makes it an exciting academic subject. It brings together research topics such as those of cultural aspects of epistemological beliefs, attitudes about knowledge, authority and power relations, and people's idea of agency and of society. In other words, subjects ranging from largely academic research questions to pragmatic topics of study, such as concerning the design of effective institutions for policy implementation.

## **Globalisation and contextualisation**

In elaborating this context-sensitive view on lifelong learning we need to discuss the relation between globalisation and contextualisation and its consequences for research and teaching practice. Globalisation seems to set slightly different agendas for lifelong learning in Southern Africa as compared to the West. In the West, the challenge is effecting maximum inclusion into the knowledge society. In Africa, it is the struggle against lifelong exclusion of major groups.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques Zeelen: Grensverkeer. De sociale interventie in intercultureel perspectief. In: Beukema 2000

<sup>38</sup> Jacques Zeelen: From Social Exclusion to Lifelong Learning (article in this book)

Globalising is encompassing a wide range of issues, from global financial markets to the internet. It implies the loss of the central position of the nation state and the westernisation of cultures all over the world, and may involve the emergence of a world-wide social, economic and cultural order, steered by economic and technological forces. All these are not necessarily beneficial developments for everyone and in all societies.

Developing countries are confronted with the exclusion of large numbers of persons from the mainstream of socio-economic and cultural developments as well as with a growing digital separation from the Western world. As knowledge and information are playing a more central role in these processes, the accessibility to knowledge is becoming an important factor of power. Power relations at the international and national levels are changing, and the risk of new problems of exclusion emerging is growing. Globalisation is not simply a new translation of the old antithesis between capitalist countries and their colonies, between the industrialised world and developing countries, between the rural and urban areas, between modern and traditional, or between the rich and the poor. This dualist thinking is already been questioned in the past and should be avoided in the contemporary context of globalisation. Even the most far away rural areas in Mozambique with the simplest mode of production and limited market facilities are articulated to the global knowledge societies through numerous social institutions and relations. In many places in Mozambique and in the Limpopo Province one can see people with mobile telephones (locally often called "the African earring") and in quite some places a person can enter an Internet bar. Some local communities may have a satellite TV at their disposal<sup>39</sup>.

But do these societies also benefit from such connections and are people who are living in these areas also invited to participate in educational processes and the production of knowledge? In this perspective, millions of people indeed are not involved and are not participating. For these people, the simple, general idea of lifelong learning as a means of becoming fully included in the knowledge society may not apply; using resources for such a strategy of lifelong learning may even have the effect of increasing peoples isolation from the knowledge society.

So the key question is: How to contextualise teaching and research as well as the practices of adult education? At the University of the North, the starting point of

<sup>39</sup> Jacques Zeelen: Grensverkeer. De sociale interventie in intercultureel perspectief. In: Beukema 2000

the co-operation with the University of Groningen was that of teaching the teachers, which involved the development of a region-specific curriculum to train teachers in adult education. Such an approach implies involving adult educators in curriculum development in order to identify their perception of key social problems and of their training needs. The result being tailor-made modules which are responsive not only to the needs of the educators, but also to the needs of adult learners themselves.

Given these objectives of the new Department of Adult Education of the University of the North, it was a logical step to introduce the principle of action research. This is the study of a social situation with a view to improve the quality of action within it. It is an integrated process of research, learning and acting in which the social context is central and the actors play an important role in the research process itself. Thus, research and design of programmes at the University of the North took place in a two-way interaction process. Research was carried out to identify crucial elements in a contextualized situation and the line of thinking was that the curriculum should also cater for the specific training needs of the educators. It is through involving adult educators in curriculum research and development that this has been realised. It also entails coming up with tailor made modules which are responsive not only to the needs of the educators, but also with the needs of adult learners themselves. In this way, action research can be further described as a multimethod research strategy aimed at empirical results, with the actions of competent actors in their social context as its object. Action research contributes to solving social problems and increases the competencies of the actors involved. It also produces knowledge which can be used in comparable circumstances as those in which the research was conducted.<sup>40</sup>

### **Research foci: between theories of learning and policy implementation**

The view of lifelong learning defended in this book gives a central place to the issue of social exclusion. Social exclusion presents itself in various forms and in widely different contexts. It may result from lack of participation in the school system, but also from culturally shaped patterns of thinking that need to be taken into account in education, or from such down-to-earth factors as institutional failure or stagnating salary structures in the educational sector in the rural areas.

<sup>40</sup> Harry Coenen, Towards a closer definition of action research. In: Theory and practice of action research. (Ben Boog et. al., eds.) Tilburg University Press 1996.

Two highly interesting studies which are exploring such hidden factors leading to social exclusion are presented in some detail in this book.

The Mozambican educationalist Arlindo Siteo points out that all kinds of epistemological beliefs are preventing students and adult learners from adopting approaches to learning that can make them successful in the modern educational and social environment. Such an environment requires the learner to make appropriate use of the knowledge acquired in applying it to understand reality beyond the teaching and learning context. The average learners' concept of learning as a one-way process from teacher to pupil aimed at memorising a certain package of knowledge is an obstacle in a modern learning context. However, both the Portuguese education in Mozambique and Bantu Education in Apartheid South Africa instilled such an idea of learning. Therefore, the learning process requires that old, stable and outmoded ideas about the nature of knowledge are questioned and changed. Adult learners should be seen as competent persons who are reflecting on their social environment and combine reflections with active action taking. Also educators and researchers have to adopt this way of thinking. In order to achieve such a change of attitude of learners and teachers, the curriculum at Eduardo Mondlane University has been made participatory and competence oriented. The academic programme emphasises research and development but the link with practice is never ignored. Students, after their training, should be able to work as policy advisers or trainers of trainers, adopting a “reflection-in-action” approach in their professional practice.

A second, and equally non-standard, way in which issues of social exclusion are addressed in research in adult education in Southern Africa concerns policy implementation. The case study of Magwana Rampedi presented in this book concerns the implementation of lifelong learning and adult education programmes in political and administrative context of the Limpopo province. Beyond the good intentions of those involved, the administrative and political capacity to realise programmes can be so weak that no effect towards eliminating social exclusion can be achieved. The case study discussed in this book concerns policy implementation of adult education programmes in Limpopo Province. It shows how complicated it is to move from small-scale inefficient apartheid facilities to large-scale adequate and effective provisions to support adult learners to become active citizens in a new democratic South Africa. The apartheid state was not very much interested in adult education and saw it as the role of the government to encourage industry and NGOs to do something about the “untrainability” of blacks.

The intention of the new democratic government is to address the legacy of apartheid. In its policies, it identifies adult education as the foundation for further educational development and for entry into the labour market. Adult education is also seen as both part of and as a foundation for lifelong learning. Rampedi's study comes to disturbing conclusions. Meetings with all kinds of specialists in education, educators, policy makers and politicians indicated that people in the field often did not even receive or read important policy documents, and were not prepared to change their ideas, attitudes, and methods in order to support the demanding adult learners in a better way<sup>41</sup>. Indeed, the post-Apartheid state may still be as distant from the simple villagers as the University of the North was depicted in the quote at the beginning of this article. The implementation study also shows the new and even risky situation in which a university can end up when entering the local communities. A successful transformation process of a historically disadvantaged university (in this case the transformation of the Faculty of Education and the creation of a new Department of Adult Education) should result in an independent academic institution training qualified specialists and researching socio-economic, cultural, and political problems in the region. But then, a study which can reveal the failures in policy implementation or even the power play of politicians using policy documents only as instruments to consolidate their positions, appears to be not always welcomed by everybody.

During the conference discussions in Groningen, the different strategic plans of universities, master plans for the educational sector, ten-year plans for economic development, and literacy campaigns were reviewed. The recent history of literacy campaigns in countries like Mozambique and some Latin-American countries shows that lessons can be learned about the level of implementation of those educational policies with a strong ideological inspiration. Important practical aspects were forgotten, such as the rigid timetables of courses, which create problems to peasant-participants, the emphasis on the official national language which biases participation in programmes to city population and middle-class participants. Also poor co-ordination of programme activities, poor preparation and the shortage of qualified teachers, and irrelevant programmes were limiting the success of programmes. Effective support and outreach activities to support lifelong learning programmes from university adult education departments may also be hampered by an unstable situation at the university itself.

<sup>41</sup> Makgwana Rampedi, Article in this book.

Similarly, practice oriented teaching and research becomes entangled in its own problems and contradictions. The examples from South Africa and Mozambique indicate that considerable institutional renewal is necessary for creating a context within the university for the involvement in the training of trainers, practice oriented learning, and carrying out action research. Furthermore, academics from Mozambique and South Africa stressed the need for involvement in local, regional, provincial and national educational policy initiatives, while, at the same time, they stressed the need for maintaining some distance from administration, politics and development agencies. Academics indeed have their own responsibilities in producing critical studies. Academics have to find a mode of collaboration with government and NGO agents without losing their autonomy and while maintaining a space for a critical and academic agenda of their work.

### **North South co-operation and changing donor policies**

There exists a strong relation between education and development. Adult education introduces citizens to a culture of learning and provides them with the foundations for acquiring knowledge and skills needed for social and economic development. Therefore, it is not unexpected that governments all over the world, NGO's, international agencies, and development organisations adopt policy statements to stimulate education. The Worldbank, as an influential organisation in development policy, designs from time to time master plans for the educational sector in developing countries. Ministries of Education and of Development Co-operation in both Western and developing countries try to do their best to translate these plans into policies and action plans to implement these policies in local and regional circumstances.. But policy advise and policy have their own dynamics, policies are changing continuously and not always in line with a good understanding of realities in the educational sector. A case in point is the introduction of the so-called Sector-Wide Approach. Donor support should fit here in a comprehensive sector-wide planning which is conducted basically by donors and the national government. Such planning is a welcome development. However, long-term programmes and collaboration relations aimed at sub sectors of educational institutions are sacrificed for this over-all planning focus or suddenly have to adjust to the priority areas identified at the national level and between government and major donors. This may frustrate ongoing, collaboration efforts which fit a long-term institutional development plan that was elaborated at the local or institutional level. An added problem of the present practice of the Sector-Wide Approach is its stress on flexibility, a tendency to design short term projects and commitments, and the inclusion of a

wide range of private and government agencies into the programmes which make it difficult for any of these to undergo a comprehensive long-term institutional development process.

The experience of co-operation in higher education is that long-term institutional planning and long-term collaboration relations are needed to lead to sustainable results. A long-term perspective and development programmes that allow for such policies and relations are extremely important to co-operating universities. The reason for this is that strengthening the capacity of universities in developing countries, which often lack expertise, proper infrastructure and financial means, is very time consuming. Development of a good staff capacity takes many years. To get acquainted with both the situation of the partner institutes in their own socio-economic, cultural, and political environments is a process which takes a lot of time indeed. Especially, when joint research is involved, this long-term aspect is of primary importance. Such a long term co-operation can substantially contribute to set up a coherent research and teaching programmes, to build up expertise and to execute joint research.<sup>42</sup>

In the Sector-Wide planning approach, the freedom of academics and institutions to define in which way and in what kind of disciplines co-operation will be planned is further limited. Development co-operation and university co-operation are not the same. The objectives of governments or development agencies to support the co-operation between universities in Western and developing countries are not completely overlapping with the objectives of universities themselves to co-operate. The long-term objective of universities is academic co-operation. Ministries of Development Co-operation and development organisations are oriented on capacity and institution building in developing countries. On joint research there seem to exist different views between Ministries and donor organisations on the one hand, and universities on the other hand. Research co-operation is mostly not a target for development agencies. Donors often do not acknowledge the importance to (Western) universities of the imbedding of development related research and co-operation in the core mandate of the universities. And they sometimes convey the impression that they are not very much interested in critical studies. The budgets for research are almost always an underdeveloped aspect in development programmes and policy documents. To universities in the Netherlands (and in Western Europe in general) doing research in developing countries is very expensive. The reality of the long-term perspective of inter-university co-

<sup>42</sup> C. Schweigman & H. Schoenmakers, *Alma Mater Universalis*. Groningen 2000

operation resulting in academic output only in the long run does not stimulate authorities and policy makers to invest in this type of research.

### **Lifelong learning in the global village: the adventure of academic North - South co-operation.**

At the beginning of this article, a villager in the northern part of South Africa was asking himself – about ten years ago – if a university with all its knowledge could do something to help his community. Since then, the Apartheid-era is finished, his community is more closely connected to the global world, and the university is in a process of transformation. Northern European academics are visiting this university and sometimes walking in his village together with South African staff and students. Does the university mean anything to the community nowadays?

These North-South collaboration relations were discussed critically during the Groningen conference. For example, one of the themes was: is it possible to speak of a specific Groningen- Southern Africa model for academic co-operation? The answer is: not really. However, based on experiences in co-operation between the universities of Groningen, Maputo and the University of the North several success indicators were formulated.<sup>43</sup> The interesting point in this discussion is that all debated topics are returning in a new perspective; the question of the global world and local problems, the presentation of local problems in the international academic arena, contextualisation and the risk of parochialism, inter-cultural competencies of the collaborating academics, the problem of the scale of co-operation, the deployment of long-term senior staff, the need to produce (joint) research output, and the enhancement of South-South collaboration. Summarising, two important conditions to successful co-operation were formulated: (1) the establishment of long-term relations, and (2) the ambition to work towards true academic co-operation based on equality, shared research interests and mutual benefits.

It also became clear that these success indicators and favourable conditions are certainly not taken for granted by neither donors nor the academic world. This makes North - South academic co-operation extremely difficult. From within the danger of Western paternalism always lies in wait while the risk of not producing high quality research output is existing. Participants of the South describe the vulnerable position of academics at Southern universities where the

<sup>43</sup> Jacques Zeelen: Development co-operation between universities in the North and the South: etc. See article in this book.



political situation is almost always unstable. Participants of the North stressing that they are not working for a development organisation but in a university where the institutional pressure to publish is always high. The challenges are increasing: inter-university co-operation in a globalising world is even more difficult than in the past notwithstanding the available improved communication possibilities. The present tendency in official development co-operation towards a more commercial and a short-term consultancy approach of involvement of northern universities is hampering North-South academic co-operation.

But again, what does this all mean to the local communities?

Anyhow, the positive point is that academics are visiting villages now and discuss the real social problems with the people. North-South co-operation is functioning and through (action) research the problems of the communities are studied in a comparative way and on global level. However, many times this positive fact is not recognised by governments and development agencies. They seem to be blind to the necessity of research while at the same time the social and cultural problems are accumulating.

Adult education and lifelong learning in the context of North – South interuniversity co-operation is an exciting academic adventure through its multimethod research strategy aimed at contributing to *emancipatory* processes in society. Because of this approach, the concept of lifelong learning is a subject of profound and intriguing research that ranges from cultural aspects of human learning processes to the study of institutions for policy implementation and the design of curricula for the local communities. People in the villages not want to have anything to do with paternalistic advises. They are interested in a new, modern university which can do research that can contribute to the social transformation of the community. In this way, it also means that contextualised lifelong learning on academic level and on practice level is always globalised learning. In this perspective, a university is a go-between between the global world and the local community. An academic is a servant of two masters working in an academic arena and studying local and global problems.<sup>44</sup> In the context of inter-university co-operation, academics are confronted with globalisation problems in the North and South.

<sup>44</sup> Professor Max van der Kamp during the conference discussions.

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## **CONCLUSIONS OF DISCUSSIONS AT THE SEMINAR:**

### **"Lifelong Learning in Southern Africa: research, policies and co-operation" 18 December 2001, University of Groningen**

The idea of lifelong learning should go beyond that of filling gaps in knowledge and skills of specific adult groups. We need an idea of lifelong learning as:

*broad:* lifelong learning as a way to take issue with social exclusion, marginalisation and forms of historically, culturally or socially reproduced inequalities;

*culture/context sensitive:*

lifelong learning does more than design and apply standardised educational recipes and focus on universal skills (literacy, proficiency in national or international languages and general skills). It should seek to connect to the contexts of practical action and survival, local languages etcetera.

*deep:* lifelong learning exercises involve changes in ways of thinking and ideas of learning. Therefore, lifelong learning requires deep understanding of epistemological beliefs, attitudes about knowledge, authority and peoples idea of agency.

Programmes and projects in lifelong learning relate to local, regional or national policies (implementation and/or design), they involve the development of curricula for educators, and various research and survey activities. This raises a number of issues, such as that concerning the gap between policy formulation and their actual implementation, concerning adaptation of Adult Education exercises to the specific contexts of application, and concerning how to effectively relate theory and practical involvement in academic programmes for Adult Educators.

Participatory approaches were identified as a central tool in dealing with such problems of design, contextualisation and implementation. Two-way interaction processes also involve the need for much research and participatory elements in the education of Adult Educators.

Lifelong learning is a vital but often undervalued element in strategies for basic education and for overcoming exclusion, promoting emancipation etcetera. Therefore, development programmes, sector programmes etc. should recognise the need for lifelong learning programmes and the development of institutions and academic programmes for training of trainers.

Interuniversity cooperation, both North - South and South - South, can be a very fruitful way to build relevant institutions, educational programmes and a lively environment for research and outreach activities. An example of such a fruitful process is the ten-year collaboration between the University of the North in South African, the University of Groningen and the Eduardo Mondlane University that resulted in the establishment of departments of adult education, new educational programmes, exchange of students and staff and an emerging research collaboration. The first secret of such a successful collaboration lies in commitments to long-term collaboration. The second lies in the ambition to work towards true academic cooperation based upon equality, overlapping research interests and mutual benefits. Such "co-ownership" can be a basis for sustainable relations. Present changes in development assistance programmes (cancellation of the MHO programme and introduction of the sector approach) do not seem to be favourable for such interuniversity cooperation in three ways: 1. stressing the national planning level (sector plans) takes much autonomy out of the hands of universities; 2) long-term institutional cooperation is not anymore favoured; 3) tendering procedures may lead to a commercialisation of relations, creating less sustainability.

The institutional (university) context of all of the partners in North - South and South - South collaboration in Adult Education requires special attention. Within the Netherlands, departments of Adult Education are not abundant and not large. Institutional pressures, such as measuring output of staff in publications in high-level international academic journals does not fit the field of Adult Education well and tends to undervalue involvement in North - South collaborations. The institutional context of southern partners is again specific. Within the national policy documents the importance of Adult Education is recognised, but implementation can be a different thing. Furthermore critical studies by academics may be considered as a threat. Universities will generally cherish some autonomy and distance from the government. Service to national policies is an important thing, but the universities will like to underline their own responsibilities.

## **The Authors:**

Professor **Max van der Kamp**, Department of Adult Education, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

Professor **Jacques Zeelen**, Department of Adult Education, University of the North, Polokwane (Pietersburg), South Africa

Dr. **Makgwana Rampedi**, staff member at the Department of Adult Education, University the North, Polokwane (Pietersburg), South Africa

Mr. **Arlindo Siteo**, staff member of the rectorate of the Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique

Mrs. **Maaïke Smulders**, staff member at the Department of Adult Education, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

Dr. **Hans Schoenmakers**, staff member of the International Office, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

Dr. **Pieter Boele van Hensbroek**, staff member of the Centre for Development Studies, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands



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