ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

www.dvv-international.de

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

dvv international
Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes

dvv international

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

76
2011

eLearning and Modern Media
Environmental Education
Women's Empowerment
Popular Education and Reflect
Policy

76
2011

Updating

Dear Readers, we are updating our subscription list.

Please answer the questions below and send us the completed questionnaire by post or email (waschek@dvv-international.de) by 30 October 2011. If we do not hear from you by the date requested, we will assume that you no longer want to receive the journal.

- ☐ I do not want to receive the journal
- ☐ The electronic version of the magazine on the website is sufficient for me
- ☐ I wish to continue receiving the journal

Name _____

Institution _____

Address _____

Street _____

City _____

Country _____

E-mail _____

I want to receive the journal in the following languages:

☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ French

dvv international
Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes

dvv international

Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes

stamp it

dvv international
Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes

Mrs Waschek

Obere Wilhelmstraße 32

D-53225 Bonn

Updating

76
2011

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

Preface

Dear Readers,

As the new head of *dvv international*, I have quickly discovered with what professionalism and passion the Adult Education and Development journal is produced and commented on by its readers. It is a showcase for the many aspects of Adult Education, and its contributions from around the world inspire all educators of adults, constantly reflecting their activities in the context of scientific and political developments of non-formal and informal education. At least this is the assessment we received as feedback from the evaluation that was conducted last year and in which many of our readers took part – those we could sample through email and by post. I would like to greatly thank everyone who took the time to answer the questions the evaluators asked. It is the proposals which have come from the evaluation, which Prof. Joachim H. Knoll, a member of the Board of Trustees of *dvv international*, formed into guiding principles that led to the changes you will notice now in this first edition with the new structure.

A particular concern of ours was to set up an editorial advisory board with persons and institutions represented that *dvv international* has been closely connected with for many years and whose different perspectives on all facets of Adult Education will ensure a diversity of reading material. I would like to extend a special thanks to Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo from UIL Hamburg and Ana Agostino of ICAE in Montevideo for their willingness to bring with them their contacts and experience in the design of AED. From the ranks of *dvv international*, the longtime editor of AED, Heribert Hinzen, chipped in with all his experience in the design of the magazine before the copy editor in Bonn, Michael Samlowski, along with Gisela Waschek, looked over all the proposals and translated them into a printable format. In the preparation of this issue, the cosmopolitan composition of this team has already proven itself.

In response to the interests expressed in the evaluation by our readers there will be contributions in the magazine consistently related to three fields: politics, science and practice, with the contributions related to practice accounting for half of the content. This will securely anchor *dvv international* as a practice-oriented purveyor of Adult Education, which aligns its commitment with scientific developments and reflects and molds the political discourse. In order to give each issue a clear profile, in the practice section a maximum of three topics will be treated from as different regional and thematic perspectives as possible. Preference will be given to authors

who come from our project regions and their neighboring countries. All the other small changes, including visual ones, you will quickly discover for yourself.

There is still one important thing for me to ask you, and that is to send us the enclosed reply card. Due to high postage costs, we are being forced to reduce the mailing list – which has grown steadily over the years – to people and institutions who signal us with feedback indicating that the magazine is reaching its intended recipients and is spurring the interest we intended. At the same time, we will also strive to improve the Internet availability of the magazine.

In conclusion, a brief look forward. In the world of Adult Education, 2010 was certainly not a key year. In order to have made it a very special year, CONFINTEA VI would have had to have the greater impetus expected by optimists and hoped for by realists. At least with GRALE it was possible for the first time to present a report on Adult Education around the world, which is a reaction against the sparse data base on Adult Education. The importance of a reliable data base for scientific and political intervention will be clear again during these weeks of preparation for the EFA – Global Monitoring Report 2012 on *"Expanding opportunities for the marginalized through skills development."* Although in the field of vocational training (VET) there is relatively good statistical data, for basic Adult Education and training (Basic Skills) this is not the case. All readers who do not want to see *"skills"* reduced to the components of vocational training should present quantitative research case studies in terms of their effect on *"Basic Skills"* either by directly contacting the GMR team in Paris or to the editor of AED. We believe the GMR 2012 subject so important that we want to give it a special place in the form of a special issue of AED.

And now I hope you enjoy reading the 76th Edition, which has been modified according to your wishes.

Yours,

Roland Schwartz

Editorial

"There is no other comparable professional journal in the world that provides such broad and comprehensive coverage around themes of Adult Education in theory and practice and their relation to issues of development policy." This conclusion was reached in the external evaluation of our journal *"Adult Education and Development"*. An article on the report is included in this issue. The statement is certainly cause for pride in our work and a job well done. But it is also reason for us to renew our efforts to live up to the positive evaluation that we have received. For this we need your support.

The aim of an evaluation, of course, is not simply to offer praise, but also to make recommendations. One of the recommendations we were given was to devote each separate issue of the journal to a single topic, or at least to a restricted number of central topics. This seems to be a sensible proposal considering that it would allow for a more systematic and representative treatment of each theme, and would accordingly lend each issue a distinctive character.

But it is not an easy recommendation to implement. Adult Education in practice, which our journal aims to document, is a highly complex process. It almost always involves the blending of many different goals through a variety of different instruments and methods. This integral approach is a cornerstone of our work, a process which takes place within the complex realities of life where problems and issues interconnect with one another. If, while analyzing their mutual situation, the members of a women's group in Mali come to the realization not only that they are being forced to walk increasing distances to find sufficient firewood because the lands around their village are being deforested, but also that ongoing deforestation is causing the rivers in the surrounding area to run dry for months at a time, making their fields more and more barren, and if their analysis leads them to plant trees and build energy-saving stoves to counteract the problem, an account of their activities might be considered just as much an example of women's education as environmental education, skills acquisition to improve living conditions, or an experience in the implementation of the REFLECT approach. And if at the same time the members of the group discuss the difficulties they face in securing land tenure and begin to examine possibilities for changing traditional land ownership and inheritance systems, the experience might also be classified under the heading of social policy. For each contribution about such concerted experiences in learning and taking action, we have to decide which theme stands out the most, or which

aspect we particularly want to emphasize. In this respect there is always a subjective element in the decision.

For the present issue we have selected three central themes which themselves often have direct bearing on one another:

- the relevance and role of e-learning (including modern teaching materials and distance learning programmes)
- climate change – the role of youth and Adult Education, and
- women's empowerment

Adult Education efforts which seek to empower women or to promote ecologically sustainable ways of life and work using all possible proven methods, while at the same time following innovative approaches, are not being discussed here for the first time. And they will certainly appear on the agenda again and again, because they are key focuses in the work of our field.

Another recommendation made by the evaluation report was that we encourage feedback and interaction with our readers and open up more space in our journal for dialogue. This recommendation is very much in line with our own ideas and intentions. Accordingly, we gladly take this opportunity to invite you to participate in dialogue over the contents of the journal, and to send us your questions, comments, suggestions, and to share your experiences with us. We will also be designing space for reader interaction on our website.

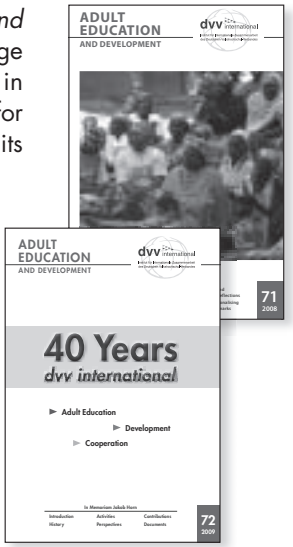
Under the direction of Heribert Hinzen for more than two decades, *"Adult Education and Development"* has established a strong international reputation. As his successor, I would like to thank him for leading the journal to its present position of high standing. The countless details involved in producing a publication such as ours remain in the reliable hands of Gisela Waschek. Special thanks to her as well for her expert editorial support. Finally, I would like to thank the new Board of Editors for their active cooperation in organizing the present issue: Roland Schwartz, the new director of *dvv international* and publisher of our journal, Ana Agostino of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Carolyn Medel Añonuevo of UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and also Heribert Hinzen, who continues to support us from *dvv international's* regional project in distant Laos. Their input has been invaluable, and I have enjoyed working with them.

Michael Samlowski

Last year dvv international commissioned an independent agency to critically evaluate the Institute's publications, and especially journal, "Adult Education and Development". The most important results of the evaluation are summarized here by Monika Bayr, the person in charge of monitoring and evaluation at the Institute, and Gisela Waschek, who has been the journal's editorial assistant for many years.

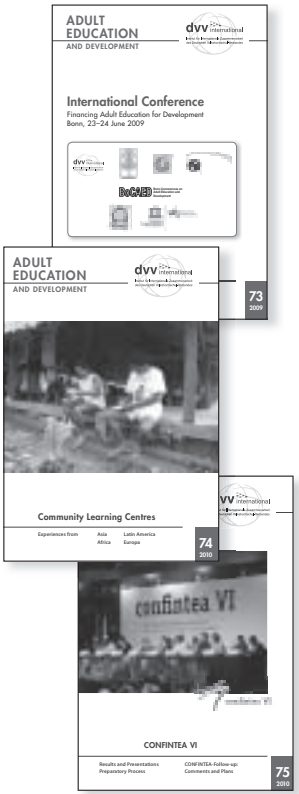
Monika Bayr/Gisela Waschek

Evaluation of the Journal Adult Education and Development



For the past 38 years, the journal *Adult Education and Development* has served as a platform for the exchange of experience between adult educators, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development supports its publication in order to improve the quality of Adult Education and thus make a contribution to global poverty reduction.

During the many years since the beginning of the publication of the journal, the editors have received much positive as well as critical feedback and many suggestions from readers and taken all this into account where it was possible. Lately, however, the need has grown to let an external expert work out a systematic positioning in order to get future recommendations based on it.



Thus, in February 2010, an appraiser was contracted who, in the context of an evaluation, should find answers in particular to the following key issues:

- Who belongs to the audience and for what purpose is the journal being read?
- Are the content and the appearance right for the time and the target groups or would additions and modifications be appropriate?
- Does the journal contribute to the improvement of Adult Education offers and the development of Adult Education structures?

For this, the journal itself and the background documents were analyzed, experts were interviewed and comparisons with similar publications were made. The main method for obtaining this information was, however, questioning the recipients about what should be retained and what should be changed and for what purpose the journal is used.

For this purpose, a questionnaire was sent by e-mail and by regular mail; from the 3,500 questionnaires sent, a total of 255 were completed and returned. At this point, the editorial staff would like to thank the readers for their support.

The evaluation results are so encouraging that the expert came to the conclusion to unconditionally recommend the continuation of the journal because the evidence showed that it contributes to the improvement of the practice of Adult Education worldwide and that its thematic orientation is unique.

In general, the readers of the journal appreciate the fact they are kept technically up to date and informed about interesting projects and trends. However, a large part of the readership said they were in favor of a greater proportion of practice-oriented contributions.

There was also a lot of encouragement to provide space for feedback and discussion, e.g. in the form of a section for letters to the editor to allow communication within the readership. And to ensure the frequently expressed desire for more participation is satisfied, there should be the introduction of additional sections

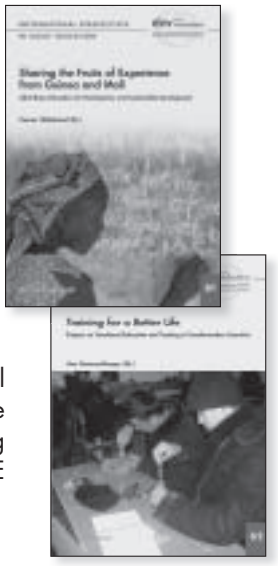
and a service section for readers' opinions, new publications, contacts, as well as important web links.

In addition, the possibilities offered by digital communications should be used increasingly: As before, all the publications by the Institute will be published on the Internet. Because the half-year cycle of the publication makes a timely feedback in the journal itself more difficult, the possibility of setting up a forum on the website will be considered in the course of the year. This would also allow readers to promptly share comments with each other on the subject-matter in the journal.

The usefulness of the journal for activities in the practice of Adult Education was not put in question. The contributions help many readers to develop educational materials, to design or to improve workshops and other events. It was also clear that the journal positively reinforces the project work of *dvv international*.

A major concern of the subscribers is that the journal will continue to be published as a print medium in all three previous language versions. The download service on the *dvv international* site is regarded as a complementary offering since in many regions access to information technologies is not adequately provided.

It often happened that copies of the journal were sent back to us as undeliverable. This makes it necessary to update the distribution list of the journal to ensure that the issues actually reach the addressee. Therefore in this issue we are including a questionnaire with a request to all readers who are interested in receiving the journal in paper form, to return this completed form by e-mail or by post. This is not just important for those who do not have access to the Internet, but also for institutions such as NGOs and libraries where a copy can be made available to several readers. In the future, the international project and regional offices of *dvv international* should be more involved in the dissemination of the journal and, for example, use it more intensively at events.



The evaluation recommended the editorial work be provided on a broader basis and to also use external expertise. We gladly complied with this recommendation: The editorial team is now supported by an editorial advisory board in which, along with the Director and the former Editor, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and the International Council for Adult Education ICAE are represented.

To stimulate and facilitate a wider participation of authors in future editions of the journal, the evaluation recommended to determine the issues long beforehand and then solicit appropriate contributions. We are following these recommendations and selecting the main topics – a mix of reports on Adult Education practice, theory and research, and educational policy debate – one year in advance and making it known in the journal itself and on the Institute website.

The editorial board feels that the outcome of the evaluation, that of the *E+E* journal and the publication work of *dvv international*, has in general resulted in a positive report which reinforces the basic concept of their work. The board are grateful for the recommendations that will help us to ensure the quality of our journal and to improve it.

What is crucial is that the journal answers the needs and wishes of you, our readers. Therefore, we invite you to participate with criticism and suggestions on its future development, not only when we ask your opinion in the context of an evaluation, but whenever you want to participate in and enrich the global debate with your thoughts and experiences about our common work area, Adult Education.

eLEARNING AND MODERN MEDIA

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCAT
MENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADU
DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOP

eLearning and Modern Media in Adult Education

Electronic media, and especially the Internet, pervade every aspect of daily life. It is hard to imagine the world of work without the massive use of computers. Computer systems control industrial manufacturing processes, commercial transactions, the global flow of capital and finance, and the dissemination of news and information. More and more entertainment is being produced and consumed electronically. More and more communication and social contacts are taking place through email and social networking services such as Facebook and Twitter. In earlier days, people would glance at the sky or watch the behaviour patterns of birds to predict the weather. Today, weather forecasting is the product of complex data processing and simulations that require powerful computer systems.

Electronic media have become increasingly important in education, and, accordingly, in adult education as well. The Internet is an inexhaustible source of knowledge and information. Moreover, it can be a tool to communicate knowledge and practice skills, and, as such, is instrumental for learning and work. UNESCO has pointed out the relevance of new information and communication technologies for adult education. *"Adult learning, culture, media and new information technologies"* was the seventh point on the agenda of CONFINTEA VI at Belém.

Despite limited technical infrastructure, substandard equipment, and unreliable Internet access, the new media are also growing more and more important in the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This is evident from the wide-ranging popularity of the regional conference *"eLearning Africa"*, which is held annually in alternate countries. It attracts not only thousands of IT specialists, who come to exchange information about the possibilities for using countless software products in the economic sector, but also small merchants from the informal sector and providers of training and basic education. Creative solutions are tested for their feasibility to overcome infrastructure deficits and persisting problems with access and availability. One of the more interesting solutions is the so-called 100 dollar laptop, the product of an initiative led by Professor Nicholas Negroponte of MIT. To realize the idea of *"One Laptop per Child"*, his project developed a simple robust machine equipped with free software for every area of computer use (word processing, graphics, communication). Integrated technology for the sending and receiving of information blocks allows the laptops to interconnect even in regions where there is limited or no access to the Internet. The laptops run on rechargeable batteries, and, as such, are independent from commercial power lines. They

can even be charged with a hand crank if need be. And where no computers are available for information and learning, mobile phones offer a useful alternative. Mobile learning, often referred to as *"m-learning"*, is already being employed in many schools and training programmes in Africa.

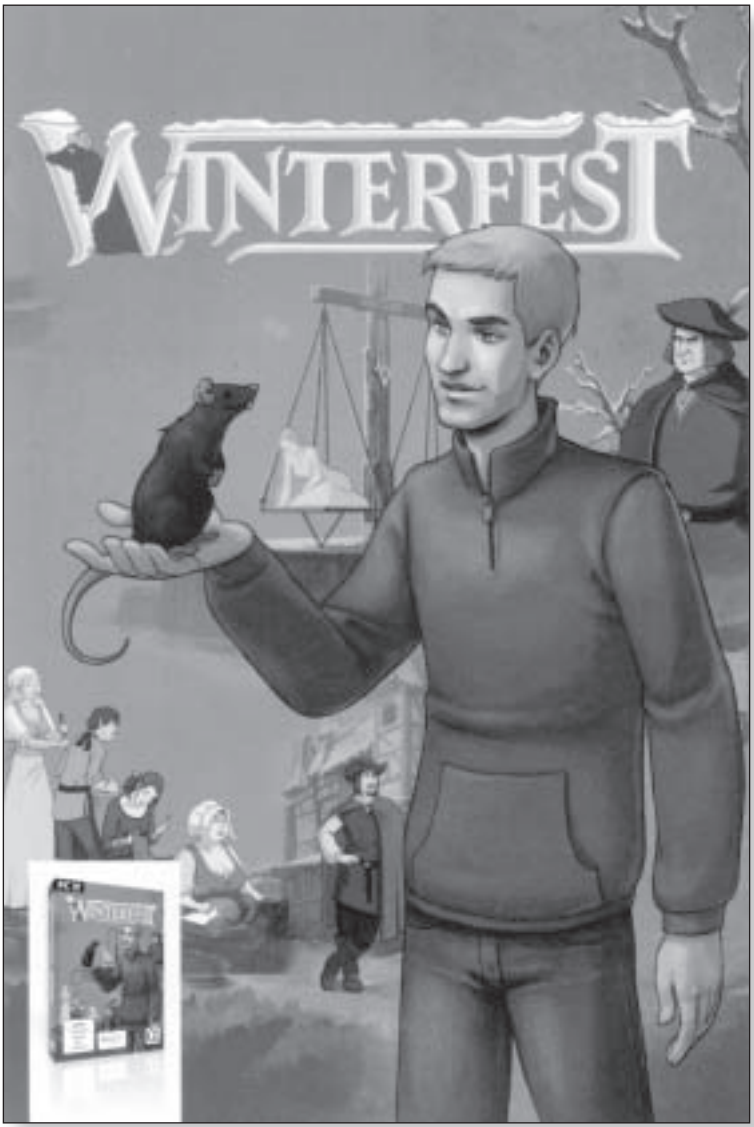
In Germany, and other advanced industrial countries, the rate of functional illiteracy is substantially higher than generally assumed. Literacy initiatives are consequently looking to computers to motivate individuals who have come to associate school and school-type programmes with failure. The **German Adult Education Association** has achieved good results with computer-aided literacy courses. One of its projects, a computer game called *"Winterfest"*, was the recipient of the 2011 European E-Learning Award (eureleA) in the category *"Best Technology Supported Learning"* as well as this year's Serious Games Award in the category *"Gold"*. In 2010 it was distinguished with the LARA Education Award. In this issue we are including an article by the coordinator of the project, **Angela Rustemeyer**, who describes how the program works.

Also introduced in this issue are two of the many ICT initiatives presented at the 5th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education, and Training (eLearning Africa), which was held in May 2010, in Zambia. **Crystal Kigoni**, founder of the Nairobi-based NGO *"Voices of Africa for Social Development"*, which was a winner of the World Summit Youth Award in the category *"Education for All"*, describes the solar-powered *"Rural Internet Kiosks"*. For a wealth of further interesting information, we highly recommend a visit to the organization's Internet site at <http://www.voicesofafrica.info/>. **Nnenna Nwakanma** is the co-founder and deputy chair of the **Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa**, and a high-profile advocate for barrier-free access to computers and the Internet for the people of Africa, and especially for women. The contribution is an interview from the website of the International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training (eLearning Africa) <http://www.elearning-africa.com/newsportal/english/index.php>, which contains detailed documentation on this important event.

As demonstrated by the Swiss organizations **Avallain** and the **Biovision Foundation** in their work with partners in East Africa, ICTs can also change the working conditions of fishermen and small farmers if those conditions are adapted to cultural surroundings. Avallain specializes in the development of computer-assisted teaching software, while the Biovision Foundation seeks to support African farmers in the sustainable improvement of their lives and the conservation of their environment. **Infonet Biovision** is a project of the Biovision Foundation in East Africa. The project is described in a report written by **Ursula Suter Seuling**, manager of Avallain AG,

and **Ignaz Heintz**, the organization's founder, both of whom have extensive experience in the implementation of computer-assisted learning in East Africa

Distance training courses were developed to create basic and advanced training opportunities for people who live and work in outlying districts far from any education institutions, and who would have to either interrupt their jobs for longer periods of time to participate in residential training programmes, or go without training. Such courses made it possible for training programmes to expand their coverage and to reduce the costs. There were a number of inherent weaknesses in their methodology, however. As examples from India and Zimbabwe demonstrate, these weaknesses can be overcome by using the Internet. The first of these two examples is an article on an Internet-based further training course developed and supervised by **Martha Farrell,** the director of the **PRIA International Academy of Lifelong Learning (PIALL)**, the academic wing of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and **Mandakini Pant,** a programme coordinator at PRIA. The second example – a contribution by **Stanley Mpofu,** the director of the Center for Continuing Education (CCE) of the **National University of Science and Technology (NUST)** in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and **Christina Müller** of the **German Institute for Adult Education (DIE)** and the **University of Duisburg-Essen** – describes the structure of online courses at NUST.



Winter Festival *Source: DVV*

In Germany, according to recent estimates, about four million adults with German as their mother tongue cannot read and write sufficiently enough to have a chance for employment with a living wage and to participate in social, cultural and political life. In 2011, research results are expected that will probably correct this number upwards. Winter Festival, a new computer learning-game should motivate young adults who have difficulties in reading, writing and arithmetic, to learn.

Angela Rustemeyer

Reading, Writing and Arithmetic as a Digital Adventure

An Educational Game for the Functionally Illiterate

"Travel is educational", says a German proverb. Therefore if a person goes to a foreign country and learns interculturally there, then nothing new is happening: Alexander von Humboldt already did that.

His modern namesake, Alex, who discovers a different world in the **Winter Festival** game, is no typical traveler. He finds himself in a strange place without wanting to be there, and he doesn't travel in space but in time. At home he has nothing but bad luck, trouble and difficulties: no job, no money, and soon perhaps, no home. When reading a letter which announces his eviction for his rent arrears, he faints. He wakes up almost five hundred years before our time in a medieval city. Its ancient residents don't regard the man dressed in jeans and sneakers as hostile, but on the contrary quite suspiciously. Alex quickly finds out that they all have one problem: they can hardly read, write or count. In order make them friendly toward him, Alex helps them with his knowledge – and becomes more and more entangled in an adventure that will require a clear view and tactics. When he finally returns to his own world, he has gotten rid of his own insecurity and awkwardness.

Winter Festival takes advantage of the familiar and doesn't shy away from clichés. Snowflakes fall across the screen onto the dark walls of a town. A witch languishes in the tower of shame, nuns guard secrets in the monastery. Players know these things from the medieval novels and medieval spectacles with which the entertainment industry has blanketed Germany over the past few years. But it

is still exotic enough to allow for an escape from reality. Some people may be too enlightened to be able to do this. But even for those who may not fully engage in the story, the game still has something to offer. For example, the subtle humor in the pictures: **Winter Festival** fills the immaterial digital space with the heavy matter of earlier times, with stone and wood. And thus the smooth display always shows rough grained beams, which almost leave behind the smell of resin.

Strange and Familiar

When a computer game is being developed, making something both strange and familiarly appealing is important, explain Barbara Cramm and Maik Neudorf from the German Adult Education Association. They are responsible for the content and the teaching methods in **Winter Festival** and had to ensure that the game would be well received with those who will use it. The players should be adults who cannot read or write properly. In order to provide them with a new learning resource, the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research funded the development of **Winter Festival**.

Game creators need to know their clientele. So the first order of business for Cramm and Neudorf was to find out as much as possible about the potential users and what they want from a computer game. It was clear that the game would appeal to people who have at least rudimentary skills in reading and writing. This is the case for most adults in Germany who have literacy problems: they are not primary illiterates; they have partially learned to read and write but without really commanding it. They are thus classified as functional illiterates. Because of negative experiences at school, at first they are often reluctant to get involved in classical teaching in a course. Cramm, Neudorf and their colleagues assumed that especially younger people with deficits in reading, writing and arithmetic would be much more prepared and able to cope with computer games.

The new game does not claim from the beginning to be teaching people reading, writing and arithmetic. Rather it is giving an opportunity to those who already have low skills to train and consolidate them. However, it also encourages people, with the help of a computer, to learn more, for example at *ich-will-lernen.de*, the German Adult Education Association learning portal for the low-skilled. It can also be used to support learning for people who already attend a course at an educational institution in order to make it more attractive in spite of bad memories they might have from their time in school.

In order for the game to be a success, the team had to respond creatively to the specific experiences of people with literacy problems. They even had to orient themselves regarding the decision on the setting of the game. The choice of the

medieval city setting was not arrived at by accident: The idea was to find a location that differs significantly from the here and now. To depict the real lives of people with deficits in reading and writing would be a contradiction. This limited the options for action and actors: Aliens visiting Germany in 2010 was discarded because of the realistic connection to place. Through Alex, the time traveler to the Middle Ages, an avatar was finally found that presented opportunities for identification. Alex is more advanced in reading, writing and mathematics than the people he meets. In the present he is not among the winners. But in the historical context he is a sought-after expert, and the players, who slip into his role, will be it with him.

Winter Festival brings the players into specific situations where daily life and work life mirror the post-industrial society at the beginning of the 21st Century. But only mirror: melancholic realism is avoided; scenes that people with reading and numeracy problems experience in the real world as oppressive or even threatening are humorously transformed. For example, if travelers in the medieval town need to operate a ticket machine, then the device is similar to the ticket machines in German railway stations of the present, but – of course – is made of wood, and the tickets are for carriage rides and are paid for with *talers* (old German coins).

In order to verify the possible acceptance for those that **Winter Festival** is intended for, the authors let the game be tested in the various stages of its preparation by people who, as adults, were learning to read and write. Even the choice of the graphic style was a result of a survey on *Ich-will-lernen.de*, the learning platform of the German Adult Education Association, where many people make up for their lack of basic education. In usability testing, the developing **Winter Festival** was then tested and commented upon by participants in literacy courses. Thus the game could be improved even further – not according to the mainstream in the gaming industry, but according to the interests of the intended users.

The Games within the Game

Winter Festival pulls the players into its narrative flow. It appears as an organic whole. But a number of separate learning sequences are integrated in the story. This makes the game a flexible learning and teaching medium.

Winter Festival is based on the knowledge that situations trained for in computer games can more easily be solved in reality. In the course of the story, Alex continually lands in a difficult situation. To master it, the player has to use his/her reading, writing and mathematical skills. Even at the gate of Bronnberg (the city) a guard waits who only grants Alex admission after he has worked out a math problem with him, whose solution will bring him a lot of money. And so it goes: In a total of thirteen mini-games Alex (aka the player) helps an innkeeper, a journey-

man carpenter, a nun in the infirmary of the monastery and many others, and in turn gets support from them and thus progresses during the course of the game. Everything fits into the story, but is well-calculated: In an entertaining way, the players get insight into areas of employment in which low-skilled workers in Germany today have opportunities, such as gastronomy, simple craft activities or care. Work materials for the use of **Winter Festival** in classes, among many other explanatory notes accompanying the game, support its transfer to the working world of today.

Winter Festival adheres to the principle of not punishing or frustrating its players. The difficulty-level of the mini-game is variable and is fit unnoticed to the skill of the player: Depending on how often the player of a mini game requests the solution, the following challenges of the game are either increased or reduced.

The games within the game are fun because they are not child's play: All interaction is graphically designed to conform to adult language and content requirements. That is what makes **Winter Festival** so different from older educational software that was transferred directly from primary school education for adult functional illiterates.

Award-winning – no Borders?

Thanks to the support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research **Winter Festival** is available for free in Germany. In the year it was completed, the game was already requested thousands of times by students and educational institutions. Three years of intensive cooperation between the German Adult Education Association, the umbrella organization of the largest provider of Lifelong Learning in Germany, the Adult Education Association Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Fraunhofer Institute, the Institute for Adult Education and the game producers Daedalic has been worthwhile.

Can **Winter Festival** be used globally? The answer is not easy for its authors. A special attraction lies precisely in the post-industrial perspective and the playful alienation through the jump into a pre-industrial world. This works especially where the information society has already been established. Elements of *Winter Festival* are surely universally transferable. This is especially true for the mini-games: With a little creativity they can even be adapted to an environment in which computer-based learning is not possible. *"When we planned Winter Festival, we had only one very simple, timeless form of play in mind, not virtual learning,"* said Barbara Cramm. *"That's what the mini-games build on, and they can also be reduced to that again."*

Only through investments in education and knowledge will it be possible to overcome global inequality. The influence of the internet in this connection is decisive. In the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, however, where the greater majority of the population is excluded from access to the new technologies, existing disparities are growing even wider. The Rural Internet Kiosk addresses this digital divide. As an independent, self-contained, and solar-powered station, it offers rural communities access to communication, information, and knowledge, and is consequently an invaluable resource for helping people to overcome disadvantages in practically every relevant area of their lives.

Crystal Kigoni

The Rural Internet Kiosks – Information Empowerment for Rural Africa

We live in a globalized world where everyone is interconnected. The food supply for the United States is connected to production in Africa and the pollution unleashed by developed nations has caused climate change worldwide. Globalization has come under the model of unfettered free market capitalism and we have seen the faltering of such ideologies, such as the Washington Consensus fail during implementation. The Washington Consensus ideology is based on the theory of the market economy that presumes perfect information, perfect competition, and perfect risk markets. It is an idealization of a reality which rarely happens in developing countries. Globalized markets have completely failed to produce efficient outcomes with the top 20% of the world's population owning more than 75% of the world's capital. Simply put, the economic system makes some people rich while it leaves others dying in poverty. The only way to correct this imbalance

of power is to invest in education which leads to skills development, information and communications technologies, and capital formation at the grassroots level. According to Joseph Stiglitz, past president of the World Bank and globalization researcher,

> *"What separates developed from less developed countries is not a gap in resources but a gap in knowledge, which is why investments in education and technology are so important."*[1]

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have the power to change the way we practice development throughout the world and how knowledge is diffused to people internationally. In rural sub-Saharan Africa lack of access to these educational and ICT development solutions places already isolated and marginalized populations at a further disadvantage at a time when information technologies are revolutionizing the way the majority of the world relates and operates. Though African countries are highly contextualized and no one truth holds unanimously, there are general trends that provide some stark truths. The lack of opportunity to access and utilize existing information, popularly referred to as the digital divide, continues to cripple progress towards sustainable development across the continent. This is most easily seen in the rural agricultural areas where up to 60% of all sub-Saharan Africans are employed.

This is an abstract about one information and communication technology solution and its objective for sustainable development to reach rural, remote, and isolated communities across the African continent. With the knowledge that nothing happens in a vacuum, Voices of Africa for Sustainable Development is rising to the challenge to meet the information and communications needs of rural communities, using a multi-sectoral social business approach to achieve universal, affordable and equitable access through the implementation of the Rural Internet Kiosk. The Rural Internet Kiosk (RIK) is an independent self-contained 100% solar powered kiosk featuring three industrial design computer terminals, an administrator terminal, and broadband wireless Internet connectivity. RIK has been designed to help bridge the digital divide in Africa by being completely independent from any established infrastructure. The kiosks are designed for deployment in any location in rural Africa, from the farming village to the desert. By using solar panels and satellite Internet access through Astra2Connect, we are able to reach those people waiting on the other side of the digital divide.

In rural areas, the need for information cannot be overestimated as it is a major contributing factor to the lack of progress and the high levels of youth

1 Joseph Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work*, p.28.

Internet Kiosk *Source: Crystal Kigoni*

unemployment. In the remote countryside, there are few schools with adequate resources and almost no community libraries. The few libraries that do exist often have outdated materials and, in the case of farmers, it is important for them to have new and up-to-date information on crops prices and weather reports. The lifesaving knowledge that can be disseminated through ICT has until now been beyond the people's grasp. Access to the Internet can answer questions and provide solutions within minutes. As one rural woman in the Western province of Kenya exclaimed, *"It is like being brought from the darkness into the light."*

Material poverty, poor health, low levels of sanitation, low levels of education, lack of access to government services, and lack of access to finance are a few core issues found in rural communities. These issues are all addressed through information and communications. Information poverty is a widespread social problem throughout developing countries that is a major contributing factor to the lack of development progress. The RIKs can provide the following development solutions to communities: eAgriculture, eCommerce, eHealth, eGovernment, eBank-

ing, eLearning, relief services, local content creation, skills training, employment opportunities, independent local media, and knowledge diffusion from the North to the South and from the South to the North. With access to ICT and the Internet the people can determine for themselves what type of development they want to pursue in their communities.

The two greatest needs in sub-Saharan Africa are not food and water but knowledge and capital. Without these basic elements, the African people cannot actively participate in the economic system that controls their lives. Rather than ignoring the actual causes of the suffering and poverty, we should utilize ICTs to build the information and capital base of the people through program design and widespread implementation. Using a participatory-based approach with an emphasis on social enterprise the Rural Internet Kiosk can help the people to overcome the challenges which have plagued Africa for generations. It is the next step in the journey to equity and empowerment.

Infrastructure Challenges and Solutions

One of the greatest challenges to ICT diffusion in Africa is the lack of electricity. Grid-based rural electrification in most African Countries is around 2-8%, which leaves upward of 90% of rural Africans in the dark.[2] Without electricity, the challenges to full deployment and use of computers and information technologies are considerable. Rather than stumbling over this hurdle and forgetting those in need, VOA4SD and Intersat Africa began testing the capabilities of solar energy to run various computing solutions. The best solutions are found in the RIK.

Beyond lack of electrical infrastructure posed by a lack of grid power, we also faced the challenge of where to locate the computers due to the lack of permanent structures. The majority of buildings in Africa are raised using mixtures of natural materials: straw, mud and cow dung. In the absence of permanent buildings, we realized that we would have to build a structure that was easily transportable, structurally sound and able to withstand challenging environments. The kiosk structure can also be easily disassembled in case of conflict situations and political instabilities.

Every unemployed, hungry youth is a possible conspirator to violence and instability. Someone who is young and able-bodied, but denied any opportunities for advancement, moves into hopelessness and becomes a victim of the system when these youth are offered a week's wages to commit violence and convinced they are striking out at those blockading their progress. Yet if these same youth are given

2 Energy Information Administration, International Energy Annual, 2004.

employment, access to education and business capital, they will be the development leaders in their communities. The implementation model being used for the RIKs implementations in East Africa is one that encourages youth to work together with their communities to ensure their mutual benefit. The Concentric Circles of Impact shown below in Figure 1 illustrates how the RIK impacts at its center the youth who become the kiosk operators and are co-owners with the community. The youth operators are all members of a local youth group. The youth operators are paid a base salary and the remaining profits are invested into additional social business enterprises for the youth. The youth group owns the kiosk as a business venture in partnership with a local community-based organization. The co-ownership model allows for the community-based organizations to make investments into agricultural projects that generate an income for the wider community. A remaining portion of the profits will be utilized by the youth group and community-based organization to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community, in most cases HIV/AIDS care, orphans, widows, and vulnerable children. By contributing to the economic activity of the area, the RIK brings with it more opportunities for the youth in employment and through its educational training program, encourages entrepreneurship. This affects the entire youth population as information spreads quickly through this subset of the community. As the youth are more productive and active members of their community, they will be able to greatly influence and impact the socioeconomic status of their villages.

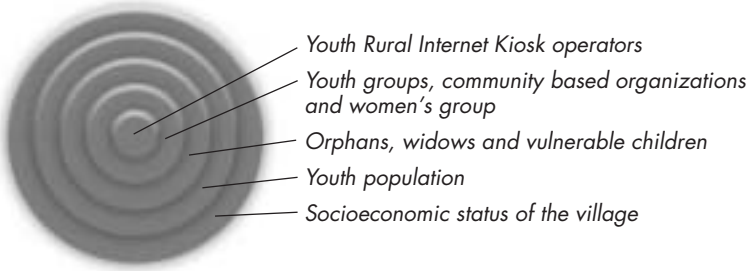


Figure 1.0 *Concentric Circles of Impact*

Voices of Africa for Sustainable Development and Intersat Africa are committed to bringing innovative ICT4D projects throughout sub-Saharan Africa and to creating an international knowledge-sharing network for sustainable development. Along with other strategic partners we will empower development innovators to create tangible, on the ground evidence of the social, political, and economic change possible through ICT4D and Internet access. We can eradicate poverty in our lifetime and level the playing field for future generations.

www.elearning-africa.com/conference.php

ICT and women are not mutually exclusive subjects in Africa. Nnenna Nwakanma – herself a successful business woman in the ICT industry – describes how chances are growing for women to use the potential offered them by the new technologies to facilitate communication, manage small enterprises, participate in joint decision-making processes, and preserve African heritage. The greatest benefit that women can derive from information and communication technology, however, is in furthering their own education and that of their children. This improves their capacity to achieve human rights, promote political stability, and secure gender justice.

Nnenna Nwakanma

Moving Things Forward – Step By Step

Empowering Women Through ICT

A successful businesswoman with her own consulting company, Nnenna Nwakanma operates internationally and is also a recognised authority within the world of ICT and development. Her company advises private firms, governments, large businesses and international development, as well as civil society organisations. Nwakanma is one of the founding members of various important and active ICT initiatives in Africa and was recently nominated for the Graça Machel Award for Prominent Women in Technology as part of the African Women Excel Awards. Continue reading to discover more about this dynamic woman.

eLA: You were recently nominated for the "Graça Machel Award for Prominent Women in Technology". What excites you most about working in this male-dominated field?

Nnenna Nwakanma: Trailblazing, though difficult, brings with it lots of excitement. There is also the satisfaction of achieving your aims, especially when working alongside people who share the same vision as you. I maintain that technology is the best thing that can happen to a woman. Naturally, women are a multi-tasking species, so a good Internet connection at home will multiply the capacity of any woman who has the skills needed to make optimum use of it.

Nnenna Nwakanma

eLA: Where do you see the greatest potential for African women in ICT and how is it possible to strengthen their position in this field?

Nnenna Nwakanma: Their potential lies in entrepreneurship, in building communication skills and management capacities, in increased participation in governance, in encouraging transparency in processes, documentation and mobilisation. Women also play an important role as the guardians of African culture and heritage, and ICT provides the means by which to do this. By digitising our collective memories, transforming the oral into the written and by creating our own content, telling our own stories and painting our own pictures, African heritage lives on.

However, where ICT can really help women realise their potential is in terms of education, both for themselves and for their children. Through eLearning and online knowledge acquisition, women can qualify themselves for global challenges. This also helps to establish the necessary framework to ensure our children's education.

eLA: In your role as a consultant, what are some of the recurring questions asked by your African clients when planning to implement eLearning solutions?

Nnenna Nwakanma: Firstly, many of the questions that arise revolve around infrastructure, electricity being the main concern. Secondly, the question of human skills is often brought up as teachers are generally poorly remunerated and have not had basic IT training. Thirdly, there are also issues concerning the lack of hardware, funding and sustainability. As you can see, there are lots of questions, but not yet enough answers.

eLA: How do these questions vary depending on the region your clients are from?

Nnenna Nwakanma: In reference to the e-readiness evaluation of Africa, analysis shows that the key issues include: level of democracy; openness and transparency in government; IT procurement processes; government budgeting; economic, social

and political stability and the respect of human rights. Thus, it may not necessarily be a 'regional' issue but rather one that is country-specific.

eLA: Your other fields of interest include human rights, conflict management and gender mainstreaming. To what extent and in what ways do they overlap with ICT?

Nnenna Nwakanma: I am still surprised to be classified as an ICT person. I see myself more as a human development activist who uses ICT to drive her passions.

ICT is a cross-cutting enabler for development. Ignorance, illiteracy and exploited religious beliefs are some of the issues that lead to human rights abuse, political instability and gender discrimination. The role of ICT in counteracting these issues, by supporting education and good governance, cannot be over-emphasised. In Africa, interactive technology-enabled media, mobile and hand-held devices, social media, residential Internet connectivity and the speeding-up of the spread of information are all key in raising our levels of development.

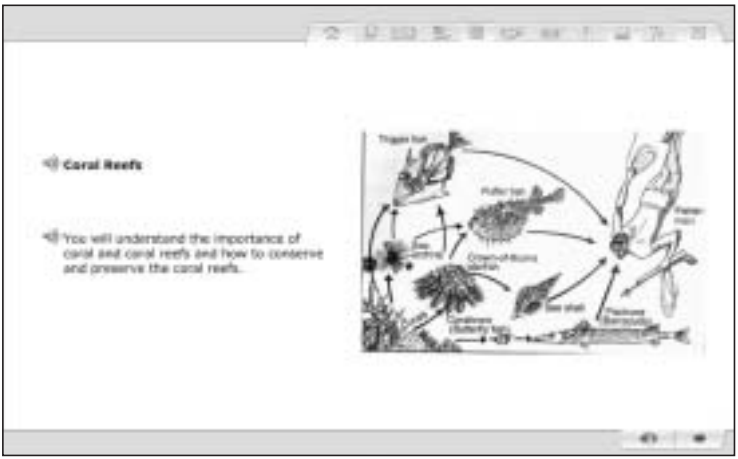
eLA: In the heated debate about technology in education at the last eLearning Africa conference in Dakar, you emphasised the urgency of enabling all Africans to have access to ICT. How are you pursuing this goal?

Nnenna Nwakanma: Within the framework of my roles and responsibilities, I do my best to move things forward. I am actively involved with the Digital Solidarity Fund, the Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA) and the Open Source Initiative, amongst others. At NNENNA.ORG, we remain committed to contributing our expertise in ICT policies, implementation and evaluation with governments, as well as in building the necessary skill sets across all sectors of the population in a gender-balanced manner.

Recently, I have been involved in projects centered around eLearning, eGovernment and quality assurance in education and I hope that by the time eLearning Africa 2010 arrives, we will be able to look back and count a reasonable number of accomplishments. As Nelson Mandela says: 'It is a long walk,' but I believe that continually putting one step in front of the other will keep us moving.

eLA: Thank you very much for your time, Ms Nwakanma!

October 8, 2009



Coastal Learning Platform *Source: Ignatz Heinz*

Fish stocks are being depleted as the result of growing population densities and the destructive impact of climate change on natural coral reefs. For Kenya's coastal population, the loss of their main traditional food and livelihood base has created a critical need for alternative forms of work and new sources of income. People must be trained accordingly. Using an integral approach, CORDIO and Avallain are collaborating to link ICTs with traditional African techniques such as storytelling.

Ignatz Heinz

eLearning for Healthy Communities and Coral Reefs

Origins

CORDIO East Africa – an organization focusing on education of coastal communities as part of their overall mission to preserve marine environments – and Avallain have been working together since finding common interests at the e-learning Africa conference in Ghana in 2008. CORDIO was seeking ways to efficiently create interactive literacy and environmental content for community training sessions. Avallain was interested in finding new applications for the *"100$ Laptop"* and on using the *"Avallain Author"*, a system capable of creating interactive eLearning content for diverse subject matters starting from basic literacy. The particular strength of the *"Avallain Author"* is an education-focused concept. Trainers and content experts with basic computer know-how and no programming skills are enabled to create interactive content, *"learning activities"*, in sensible modular packages focusing on the learner's needs and the didactical approach rather than the technology. From a learner perspective, the resulting learning material is engaging and easily accessible, even for users with a low affinity to formal learning. This has been proven in usability studies in various settings around the world.

CORDIO

Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) was initiated in 1999 as a direct response to the El-Niño related mass bleaching and

mortality of corals in the Indian Ocean in 1998, focusing initially on Eastern Africa, Western Indian Ocean Islands and South Asia. Since the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 the programme also covers the Andaman Sea, and from 2007 has started work in the Red Sea.

Donors and supporters of CORDIO include the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the World Bank, the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) while partnerships cover mostly scientific research collaboration efforts with entities such as the Cambridge Coastal Research Unit, the Academia Sinica in Taiwan, Google Ocean, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and many more.

Today, CORDIO's goals for the next decade include research, assessment, a better integration of science, practice and policy. Ultimately, CORDIO endeavours to educate and build the capacity of coastal people to improve their livelihoods and long term well-being. These objectives are shared by Avallain, so that the two organisations developed a partnership based on common interests.

The challenges faced by developing countries in the 2010s dwarf those of previous decades as the footprint of the world's population exceeds the size of the planet. Global climate change is one of the most pressing illustrations of this, signaled clearly by degrading coral reefs.

The challenges facing the marine environment can be summarized in three broad areas:

Biophysical challenges (habitat fragmentation, loss of species and reduced productivity),

Social challenges (overpopulation and high consumption, poverty, lack of alternatives, low awareness and poor governance) and

Contextual drivers (low technical capacity, synergistic problems, globalization and perverse economic and political incentives).

Again, education can play an obvious role in alleviating the social challenges, and in this aspect a collaboration with Avallain suited CORDIO.

Avallain

Avallain, founded in 2002 and headquartered in Switzerland, describes itself as a social enterprise offering tools and services for educational publishing in the increasingly digitised 21st century. Experts in eLearning and ePublishing, Avallain aims at using ICT in Education to achieve a maximum positive impact on human

The main menu of the Coastal Learning Pathways eLearning suite *Source: Ignatz Heinz*

development. The goal is to assure that the Internet is a tool for inclusion rather than an accelerating agent of the digital divide.

Avallain's staff, an international team of experts, drawing on experience from 15 years of high profile projects in learning and internet technology for clients, works with a small group of high-impact customers and partners.

Typical projects include language and curriculum based learning platforms such as *"Career Express"* and *"Studienstarter"* for Cornelsen Verlag, as well as the *"Ich will schreiben lernen"* System for the German Adult Education Association (*Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband*). In both cases, customized learning platforms provide large amounts of interactive self-learning and tutor-guided content to individuals that learn at home, in schools, or in tertiary education facilities.

Operating Non Profit Literacy systems in four countries, investing in local capacity in Kenya, and partnering with the One Laptop per Child Initiative and Google Africa, Avallain develops innovative solutions and processes that benefit traditional publishing customers, while, together with its partners, providing free efficient education to those who need it most.

Since 2009, Avallain has a sister company in Nairobi, Kenya, and is building local capacity for projects focused on the same educational goals in an African context.

Impressions from the preliminary workshop
Source: Ignatz Heinz

The Target Audience

An ideal opportunity for collaboration presented itself with a training series that CORDIO was preparing for coastal communities on the south coast (this is the Kenyan coast south of Mombasa). In villages around Diani and Tiwi Beach, CORDIO planned to conduct ICT (similar to the ECDL – European Computers Drivers License) trainings for fishermen and fisher-women, in the context of opening varied sources of income (e.g. jobs in the tourism industry) in the face of declining fish populations and therefore fishing yields.

As the pure ICT training often seemed remote to the actual needs and living conditions or the audience, the collaboration between CORDIO and Avallain focused on providing e-learning content on relevant subjects and turning the ICT-training aspect into an *"accidental"* side-effect rather than the core purpose of the training sessions.

The trainings were held on location in the communities (see image) by CORDIO field workers who facilitated and guided the usage of the e-learning equipped computers.

Rationale

Performing isolated ICT training, such as general PC use or *"Windows"* training for audiences in rural settings and with little or no basic literacy capacity, is always problematic. Motivating the learners to learn instruments that are so extremely unrelated to their daily life and activities is hard, and the efficiency is questionable,

as at least 80 % of the content will remain irrelevant even when the learners adopt more ICT use subsequently.

An integrated approach, where the ICT skills come more or less accidentally through the fact that the training on some other subject matter is conducted with ICT tools, often makes more sense. This is a widely acknowledged fact in literature and in practice.

Consequently, the focus was set on literacy and numeracy, environmental and English language training (which is very relevant for coastal people to get a chance for a job in the tourism sector) – the biggest needs for the communities concerned.

Creating the Content

The actual content was then prepared by Avallain's team in Kenya and in Switzerland, with original input of the base content by CORDIO, the Ministry of Education, and from generic sources.

The didactic approach was story telling, adopting a traditional training technique of the communities. Locally researched examples from the daily needs in Kenya were used as the building blocks for the stories and tasks. Instead of just learning chapter by chapter, each chapter, e.g. about filling in forms, starts with a context story: Saumu; Khadijas older sister works as a cleaner in Furaha beach hotel and is learning a lot from her friends…wants to use Mpesa (a well known service of the local telecoms to send money via mobile phones). She thinks this would be a good service to pay for fish purchase for her mother….. The learners are now guiding Saumu step by step through the registration process. They are practicing to fill in forms with basic information and help Saumu to get registered and use Mpesa. In order to be as close to practical use as possible, real paper forms from the Telecoms are used for training.

Computer room Source: Ignatz Heinz

In collaboration with local researchers, Avallain also made use of a unique Swahili text-to-speech system which allowed for full audio support without the (in this project) prohibitive cost and time requirements of studio recording. The Kenyans love audio – and it was very motivating to listen to the context story while the text was displayed on the screen sentence by sentence.

Executing the trainings

Initially, three day joint workshops in Diani were held to assess the group's response to the new tools and content. After this, regular trainings were conducted using the equipment and interactive content. The participants enjoyed the completely new way of learning and the friendly equipment (among the interesting and unexpected results was the preference for the laptops because they allow a traditional sitting group rather than the imported class-room structure with PC posts known from other trainings).

Outlook

The field workers reported particularly positive results in terms of participants' motivation and consistent quality of the material in contrast to previous experience with copied and manually compiled sources. Based on the success, CORDIO is looking to expand the project and content production using the *"Avallain Author"* at the next possible occasion.

Further Information

http://www.cordioea.org/
http://avallain.blogspot.com/search?q=cordio
www.avallain.com

Avallain and the Bionet Foundation maintain an Internet platform for farmers and rural communities to support the sustainable development of their farming activities. Environmentally relevant data is compiled and available there. Interested parties can share their own experiences and learn about agricultural techniques, methods of pest and weed control, or prices of agricultural products. At the same time they learn to work with ICT techniques. The 100 dollar laptop, which is independent of urban infrastructures, has been introduced in more remote regions.

Ursula Suter-Seuling

ICTs at the Service of Small Farmers in Kenya

The INFONET-BioVision Information Platform aims to strengthen sustainable development of farmers and rural communities in Africa by making information on key topics available through an Internet platform and other creative solutions and dissemination strategies.

The Internet based platform represents the third pillar to an established mix of informative media – the TOF (The Organic Farmer) Print Magazine, and the TOR Radio (The Organic Farmer Radio show).

The information platform is used as a resource pool for disseminating information inside and outside the Internet through active cooperation with partner organizations and local farmer's and women groups and with information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Origins

The idea for an information system dates back to 2005 and originated in a remote area around Lake Victoria in a discussion with a local farmer group. Farmer groups are self-organized associations where farmers exchange information. The farmers complained that obviously there was much valuable information in existence at the government and research institutions in Nairobi, but that it hardly ever reaches them.

One of the farmers described how he traveled far (expensive and strenuous in rural areas) to access the Internet in an Internet cafe, only to find nothing really

usable and applicable. This story was the starting impulse and Biovision organized funding.

The original goal was defined as

> *"actively supporting dissemination initiatives at the ICIPE (African Insect Science for Food and Health, a leading research institute based in Nairobi) and other organizations in the area of agriculture and health, ... in order to begin preliminary work on an Internet platform whose purpose is to act as a tool for information sharing and dissemination of knowledge and experience gained in ... pilot projects."*

Later the Liechtenstein Development Service provided funding to proceed with the work for Phase I (2005-2007) of implementation.

The design of Infonet-BioVision incorporates a bottom-up approach in the sense that the topics, content and structure of the platform are defined in consultation with local farmer groups and communities. Infonet-BioVision also encourages user's feedback on experiences and on the situation on-the-ground, which eventually is fed back to the board of advisory scientists so that the information presented can be continuously adapted and expanded. This two-way flow of information is an integral aspect of ensuring the applicability, relevancy and usefulness of the platform.

Biovision

The effort grew organically out of Biovision Foundation's long-term engagement in research for natural methods to fight pests and increase agricultural output. The Biovision Foundation was founded in 1998 by Swiss World Food Prize recipient Dr. Hans Rudolf Herren, with the aim of sustainably improving life for people in Africa while conserving the environment as the basis for all life.

Navigating corps by images
Source: Ursula Suter-Seuling

Dr. Herren originally developed a non-chemical biological control for the mealybug insect in the 1980s, which at the time was threatening cassava production across Africa (a main food crop, comparable in importance to potatoes in Europe). In doing so, he averted a disastrous famine and initiated a broader research effort in science-based natural remedies for pests.

A farmer field day where the Infonet and the Infonet Stations are presented together with the Organic Farmer Magazine *Source: Ursula Suter-Seuling*

Due to these origins, a main task of the system is the transformation of scientific, academic research into usable and accessible information for small scale, mostly subsistence, farmers in rural Africa.

Avallain

Avallain, founded in 2002 and headquartered in Switzerland, describes itself as a social enterprise offering tools and services for educational publishing in the increasingly digitised 21st century. Experts in eLearning and ePublishing, Avallain is aiming at using ICT in Education to achieve a maximum positive impact on human development. Further information on Avallain may be found in the article *"eLearning for healthy communities and coral reefs"* in this issue of *"Adult Education and Development"*, or on its web pages at www.avallain.com.

Avallain approached Biovision in 2005, searching generally for opportunities to engage in Development Aid and offering its expertise for free. At this time, Biovision was already searching for potential partners with know-how in the field of audience-specific IT information systems. Infonet is a result of the ensuing cooperation.

Audience

The target audience are ultimately the farmers themselves, but the reality of Internet and generally ICT availability in rural Africa calls for an elaborate dissemination structure, for which the knowledge management system and web-site can only be one pillar.

Very good groundwork for dissemination was laid by The Organic Farmer Magazine (TOF), which is a traditional print magazine established by Peter Baumgartner, the former Africa correspondent of the leading Swiss daily *"Tagesanzeiger"*. TOF has a reading audience of about 100,000 farmers, and information about the new website was spread through the magazine. Today, the TOF is an important anchor

for the Infonet. The CD version can be ordered by contacting the magazine, an opportunity that is being used by many farmer groups.

Using the Infonet on the Internet is free, and through usability studies on location, the interface was made easy enough to allow the average farmer with no prior exposure to computers to navigate the content. The key to this usability success is the reliance on detailed image material. By just hovering the mouse over the recognizable image of e.g. a diseased tomato, usable information is already shown to the users.

A very popular option is the printing feature. Typical of the varied functional literacy levels, older users are often capable to navigate to interesting bits of information, but then ask their children or other farmers to read the printed bulk of instructions to them at a later time.

For the farmers, the value of this kind of information is significant. From simply assuring subsistence in the absence of funds for chemical pest prevention, to creating income on the emerging high value organic produce market, alternative farming methods can break through a static pattern of problems that persists for decades in African farming.

Why ICT

Traditionally, the kind of information now made available on the Infonet has been delivered by individual trainers or extension farmers, or been captured in books and conference papers. Unfortunately, this kind of information reaches only a small subset of the vast farming population for reasons that can be as simple as the lack of infrastructure to transport books from A to B or simply organizational problems that cause books to be kept locked up centrally as a means of exercising power.

The Role of the System

The core concept of Infonet-BioVision is the database with its processed information and pre-defined structure which facilitates the rapid and easy incorporation of new data. As the needs of users with varying levels of knowledge and experience ought to be catered to, the platform around the database is conceived in such a way that the users can access its content through different entry points. These include databases on sustainable pest and crop management, animal, human and environment as well as training modules in these areas.

In essence, the system is a *"content capturing"* knowledge management system. It allows editors at various positions in the editorial work-flow to interactively

A farmer field day where the Infonet and the Infonet Stations are presented together with the Organic Farmer Magazine *Source: Ursula Suter-Seuling*

and remotely carry the original scientific input to a state that can be used by trainers or farmers as simple how-to instructions. It makes sure that the content is captured in a *"semantic"* manner, meaning that relationships between e.g. pests and crops and remedies are identified in the data, and that the content is clean from proprietary technology, so that it can easily be re-used in mobile systems or future technologies.

How Is it Used?

The most popular way of accessing information is via the images, which are used as a simple visual dialogue. The importance of the visual access in the light of low literacy levels at least in the older farmer generations is very high. A user can navigate from the image of a certain crop, e.g. a banana, to an image of a specific *"problem banana"* and from there continue to a short instructive chapter on *"How to remedy"*.

Trainers and extension workers use the system in a different manner, searching by keyword or topic to prepare printouts for their training sessions.

Dissemination Channels

Since the inception of Infonet, the market forces have been working with great effect to improve the access situation. In 2010, Kenya was connected to the global Internet backbone with two undersea cables. This instantly increased the countries' (and the continents') Internet capacity by a factor of thousands. At the same time,

the mobile data market is growing strongly with more and more competitors fighting a price war. In the end, in the rural areas, this means that more Internet cafes and similar Internet access points are created, as the connection costs go down all the time and the speed goes up.

But for the farmers who are still just too far away from such opportunities, the i-TOF initiative was launched. i-TOFs are basically contact points/persons that travel to remote areas and, equipped with a mobile computer stations (based on the sturdy *"100$"* Laptop), can help farmers with questions on location. The management of these i-TOFs is linked to the TOF magazine, and farmer groups may book training days through the TOF office.

The core of the i-TOF again represents a pre-installed version of the Infonet.

Local radio stations are another very important way of getting information to rural areas in Africa, and so the TOF team broadcasts audio versions of information based on articles in the TOF and information from the Infonet on various local channels, and offers the recordings as Podcasts for download.

On a pure mobile phone base, two dissemination paths have been opened:

- In collaboration with Google Africa, the content of the Infonet has been reduced to a Q&A set of small information snippets, and these are now available in Uganda on a free SMS-based query service. This service is similar to a Google search, and although the resulting answers can be re-defined by an automated dialogue, it remains completely machine-based.
- The TOF office itself offers a human Q&A service in Kenya, where readers can SMS their messages to a central number, and then receive a call or an SMS answer from a member of the TOF team.

Finally, with the surprising but undeniable popularity of Facebook in Kenya, a user group with already more than 2000 users has been created and is operated as a further means of Q&A and news-style information by the TOF team.

Further Information

http://avallain.blogspot.com/2007/10/infonet-biovisionorg-fr-farmer-in-kenia.html

http://ictupdate.cta.int/index.php/en/Links/Projects/INFONET-BioVision

www.biovision.ch

www.avallain.com

www.theorganicfarmermagazine.org

www.infonet-biovision.org

One of the programmes conducted by PRIA is a post-graduate training course for practitioners, public officials, donor organization staff, politicians, and scientists who use participatory methods of research and work. The original distance learning programme – a correspondence course combined with supplementary phases of classroom training – has meanwhile been converted into an eLearning course. This allows for a more open teaching plan which can be updated on an ongoing basis and expanded independently by the learners themselves. It also facilitates continuous communication between learners and course supervisors.

Martha Farrell/Mandakini Pant

Open Distance Learning through the Internet – New Challenges and Potentials

Introduction

Distance education or **distance learning** delivers education to learners who are not physically *"on site"* as in a traditional classroom or campus. The source of information and the learners are separated by both time and distance. In its original version, the distance education was designed through correspondence and it implied that the learner and instructor interacted through the mail as the only means of communication. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is a modern version of Correspondence Education, which has been enhanced by the explosive growth of the Internet and the myriad possibilities of innovations in making education a lifelong experience. While the world has shrunk with the Internet, it has also expanded the body of knowledge that exists in every corner of the world.

ODL through the Internet goes beyond its counterpart of Correspondence Education to create a Virtual Classroom through which learners from across the world can interact with each other in cyberspace, in *"real time"* or *"virtual time"*. This can also be an exciting and stimulating experience, as a learner from Brazil may be interacting with learners from the USA, Angola and Nepal. The timing may be

synchronous or asynchronous but it is suited to the pace, convenience and location of each learner.

A range of tools and different methods are deployed, encouraging and enabling different styles of the learners to absorb lessons in the manner that suits them the most. More importantly, ODL is used as a means of connecting individuals who would never ever meet in the span of their own lives, to share views, experiences and perspectives, as well as debate different standpoints in order to develop a holistic and comprehensive understanding on specific issues.

Open Distance Learning (ODL) assumes that the learner is capable of self-direction. It is consistent with the precepts of Lifelong Learning. As an instructional strategy, it allows the adult learners to engage in interactive and collaborative activities with their peers and instructors without being physically present in the same location as the instructor or peers. It offers them the opportunity to interact with the instructor and fellow learners as they apply new knowledge in authentic contexts. But perhaps the most powerful impact of the ODL experience is that the interactions and collaborations within the virtual classroom create a new body of knowledge with insights and experiences from a range of individuals from different backgrounds and in different contexts.

The **Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)** is an international centre for learning and promotion of participation and democratic governance. Since its inception in 1982, PRIA has embarked on a set of key initiatives focusing on participatory research, citizen-centric development, capacity building, knowledge building and policy advocacy. With a combination of training, research and consultancy, it has grounded its work with conceptual rigour and understanding of social reality to command the strategic direction of interventions.

The academic wing of PRIA, PRIA International Academy of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning (PIALL) has used the principles of ODL to transfer PRIA's experience, learning and competencies acquired over the years in various development themes to develop learning packages and launch these as online courses the world over. These three-month long courses known as Certificate Courses cover learning in areas of:

- Participatory Research
- Participatory Development
- Civil Society Building
- Governance
- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Citizenship

- Occupational Health and Safety
- International Adult Education

By synthesising and packaging this vast body of knowledge and learning into social-development based continuing education programmes, PIALL endeavours to expand the knowledge, skills and upgrade the professional expertise of learners.

The unique feature of the Lifelong Education Programmes of PIALL is that they are a harmonious blend of theory and practice. **Theory** which is drawn from the expertise of academics and intellectuals, as well as PRIA's own knowledge in the form of its vast research and **Practice** from the insights and diverse experiences of field based interventions of PRIA and its partners, are merged together into learning programmes. These carefully developed course contents have successfully broken the uni-dimensional construct of knowledge, and reach out both to the academician as well as the grassroot activist, recreating learning for each and allowing for the additional dimension of creating a new body of knowledge.

This paper highlights the strategies of PRIA International Academy for Lifelong Learning (PIALL) towards developing an online course for adult learning communities.

Towards Building an Effective Online Course: Initiatives of PIALL

The first and foremost concern in the development of any online course is to understand the need for development of a particular course and its content. When we finally take a decision to develop and launch the course, we then start with answering these questions in reference to our specific course. For example;

- Are there similar courses that are available online?
- What is the targeted clientele that these courses are reaching out to?
- Are they country, region or global audiences?
- What is the language of instruction?

We also then ask ourselves:

- What do we want the learners to imbibe through the course material?
- What skills and abilities should they develop after they complete the course?
- What is the period of instruction to project the depth of course content?
- How many assignments should be given to the learner?
- Assessment criteria – what would this include? Is online participation evaluated?

Objectives and Outcomes

PIALL's intention in launching online certificate courses at a postgraduate level was manifold. It aimed to reach the learners from multi disciplinary backgrounds such as practitioners (Civil Society Organizations); government officials; staff of bilateral and multilateral donor institutions; policy makers, educators and scholars in countries of both North and South regions. The courses encompassed a range of concepts and theories, as well as practical issues faced by practitioners, adult educators, researchers, resource providers and policy makers in varied settings. These included participatory monitoring & evaluation, strengthening citizenship, democracy and accountability, understanding of gender in society, civil society building, international perspectives on participatory research and international dimensions on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning.

The courses aimed to facilitate critical analysis and develop new perspectives on these themes as well as encourage the development of innovative practices in the field. On completion of the certificate course, the learners would gain an understanding of the concepts along with practical approaches for strengthening practices in the grassroots. The international exemplars as an integral component of learning materials in each course aimed to equip the learners to apply their learning in diverse settings.

Online Curriculum Development

An online curriculum tends to be more open, allowing the learners the scope for exploration. It includes broad topic headings for discussion, expectations for participation and the ways in which the classroom will be evaluated. Broad topic headings give the learners an idea of what will be considered and discussed in the course. Clear-cut learning objectives for the overall course as well as an outline for each unit of study is defined, preparing the learner for what lies ahead.

Curriculum development is key to the development of course material. Given the fact that these are online courses, there is a need to ensure that all basic concepts of a theme are covered, as learners may have different backgrounds and limited exposure to a specific theme. Further, the mode of teaching will also have an impact on flow of matter and andragogy to be adopted for a particular topic.

PIALL took a decision to give an adequate focus on curriculum development of its courses. As a first step it developed a blueprint for the curriculum following intensive research on the issues, brainstorming and discussion with in-house subject experts. An advisory committee for each course was constituted, with national and international representation from academia of institutions of higher education, as

well as practitioners from civil society organizations. A daylong discussion on the blueprint included course contents, delivery, readings, assessment and other multiple dimensions of the programme.

In cases where courses had a *"global"* character, two or three core readings were prepared which outlined key issues and debates around selected concepts to give the learners a sense of the diversity of meanings and approaches to concepts like rights, democracy, inclusive citizenship and accountability, civil society, monitoring and evaluation, gender etc. A list of terminology used in the course was developed so that the course writers were aware of the diverse connotations of terms used by students in both the North and the South. Select case studies were also used to explore the core concepts and debates, allowing learners to engage with the conceptual material through empirically grounded work.

The content of each course was divided into six units. Each unit had specific learning objectives with interlinkages between them, giving a continuity to the flow of thoughts and a clear sequence to the themes. Further, before a new unit of study was started, the instructor summarized the highlights of the discussions of the previous unit and juxtaposed these with the new contents, adding questions or a reflective point for the unit under study.

Course material for each unit was developed in the form of printed booklets. The booklets were *self-instructional* in nature and included various techniques to provide a wider perspective of the different aspects of the theme being explored. For instance, *Think Tank* comprised of comments, statements and questions to reinforce pivotal issues. *Note Bank* or learning exercises guided the learners to reflect and jot down their thoughts as they proceeded with studying each unit. *Required readings* comprised of selected chapters from the textbook and other articles or chapters reproduced specifically for the units in this course.

CD-ROMs (sent as a part of the learning package) featuring talks by guest speakers delivered in PRIA or other PRIA organized programmes, brought alive the issues being debated. Online Small Group Discussions and Quizzes based on topics related to the course added to more intensive and in-depth discussions between the learners. CDs or DVDs which contained short videos made by PRIA and/or other organizations were also sent to the learners to elaborate further on related aspects of the course. Multimedia formats of the course allowed learners to develop new ideas, exercise critical thinking and analytical skills. On several occasions there were also opportunities where students from across different courses, addressed issues to each other (through their instructors), to get a perspective that would give an added dimension to their own subject area. For example learners from the Gender course posed a question to the counterparts in the Citizenship course

related to the challenges that women political leaders faced in their roles and how the issue was being addressed. They then related this to their own understanding of gender in workplaces.

Course Delivery

The online courses adopted the distance learning mode to reach geographically dispersed groups of learners, both nationally and internationally, who participated at a time and location of their own convenience. The course delivery included *self-instructional printed materials* comprising *instructional guidelines* for navigating through each step of the course**,** and *six booklets*, textbooks and where applicable, CD-ROMs featuring talks by guest speakers, documentary or other educational films. The web-enabled *Bulletin Board Services* (BBS) for online participation in the course was the key feature for interaction amongst learners and the instructors in the delivery of the course content.

In recognition of the fact that a face-to-face interaction was not possible during this short three-month period, some measures were taken to reach out to each student in order to give a human touch to the entire process of learning.

A welcome address by the course instructor and short overview to each course was put into a CD as a part of each learning package. In the event where a learner did not log onto the Bulletin Board within the first week, personalized letters were sent to their email addresses, requesting them to introduce themselves to the group. In the event that a student reported technical difficulties, efforts were made to contact them by phone and help them to go over the step-by-step procedure in logging into the BBS. At times this meant coordinating with a time zone in another country, in order that support be given. In a few cases where students did not have email addresses, the team supported them in setting up one and training them on its use and applicability.

Bulletin Board Services (BBS)

The core of the online course is the *Bulletin Board Service* which could be defined as a customised online course site through which the learners engage with the course material and with course instructors, guest faculty and fellow learners. The better the organisation of the course site, the easier the use of technology for the learners.

The strength of the PIALL run courses lay in the structure and organisation of this virtual space as a meeting point between instructors, learners and subject experts. The BBS provided learners the opportunity to post their questions as well as review the questions and perspectives of other students participating in the course. The

course instructors answered queries, provided clarifications, additional information and addressed the learner's specific needs.

Whenever relevant, the instructor would give current information from newspapers or magazine articles in the form of a web link. At times, learners themselves would send a web link with additional information or send a copy of text-based information to the instructors who would prepare a web link making it accessible for their fellow learners. The BBS also generated interesting conversations and dialogue amongst the students themselves, who expressed their opinions as well as sought additional information for a specific posting by their fellow students. (See appendix 1 for discussions in BBS).

Guest faculty who are renowned subject matter experts come on once or twice during the course delivery for the period of a week to address specific issues or engage in dialogue with the learners. At times, these experts may be the very same individuals whose writings the learners are using as course materials and it is a matter of privilege to be able to interact with them personally.

The BBS screen displays a list of subject headings called *Forums* which cater to the different needs of the course delivery. These include, but are not limited to

- Announcements
- Introductions
- Queries regarding the course
- Units I-VI (covering different aspects of the course content)
- Conversations with Guest Faculty

Assignments and Evaluation

Evaluation of the students takes place at different levels, and their performance is evaluated on the basis of written assignments, the quality of content and frequency of online participation with the guest faculty, course instructor and other learners.

The efficacy of the course material and the role of instructors in course delivery are best highlighted in the assignments that the learners were expected to prepare as a prerequisite for the successful completion of the course. The assignments include (a) a reflection paper to measure the learners' existing understanding of the topic in its practical application; and (b) designing a project to assess the application of concepts and methods in a project or organizational context. Towards achieving the objectives of the assignments, each student raises, explores and analyses diverse issues in their contexts and also reflects on suggested strategies for overcoming problems in their local settings. The challenge is to ensure that both the learners

and course instructors demonstrate a critical approach so as not to reproduce inequitable global hierarchies.

Innovative Online Teaching Techniques

Even in a short duration course, it is essential to vary the learning activities in an online class. These activities may be directed at the individual learner or to involve small group learning processes. Some learning activities may also be designed to ensure that a learner is compelled to read carefully some crucial aspects of course content. Scheduling of these activities is very important, as they must achieve their objective and to the fullest contribution of the learner as well a holistic understanding of the key issue being examined.

The BBS is the mainstay of course delivery and teaching of the entire group. However, the use of Quiz as a method is widely used in course teaching to stimulate the individual to recall key learning but also as a tool wherein it enables the learner to raise his/her score in the final evaluation. This is an individual exercise which is also time bound.

Case Study Analysis is also used as a technique for students to discuss an issue in a smaller space with fewer students. The instructor identifies small groups and their team leaders based on several criteria such as

- Participation in classroom – mixing the more active with the less active
- Gender – balance of men and women
- Region or country – to ensure inclusion of experiences and views
- Experience in the field – emphasizing the value of practice-based knowledge

Assessment is based on involvement in the discussion as well as quality of the report submitted. Those who do not participate at all are not given a grade, while the participating members are given the same grade.

Online Teaching Roles

Following the concept of R. M. Palloff and K. Pratt, who in 1999 discussed effective strategies for the online classroom, tasks and roles demanded of online instructors could be categorized into four general areas: pedagogical, social, managerial and technical. The pedagogical function revolves around educational facilitation. The social function is the promotion of a friendly social environment essential to online learning. The managerial function involves norms in agenda setting, rule making and decision-making. The technical function depends first on the instructor

becoming comfortable and proficient with the technology being used and then being able to transfer that level of comfort to the learners.

In the context of courses being run through PIALL, the instructors have multi-dimensional roles.

Educational facilitation: Pedagogical role

The course instructors are facilitators enhancing students' learning by encouraging their participation in discussions. They are also subject experts providing core ideas and concepts as well as stimulating discussions.

Community building: Social role

The course instructor encourages community building in open community spaces in the discussion forums. Towards this, a space is created in BBS, like the forum on introduction where students and course instructors begin to know and be comfortable in each others' virtual presence throughout the course.

Administration: Managerial role

The course instructors also exert their authority by establishing boundaries of teaching and learning, including acceptable conduct in the virtual classroom, participation in discussions, timely submission of assignments, etc..

As in any classroom setting, instructors have to take the initiative in specifically calling some learners *"out of the classroom"* and tell them to participate in the learning. In the context of a virtual space, this is done by sending them a separate email, rather than an announcement on the BBS. At other times, using the same procedure, students are also asked not to overcrowd and/or dominate the learning space by posting long and verbose discussions.

Co-creation of knowledge: Technical role

The wide range of different learners that participate in the course, in terms of their professional backgrounds, ages, experience, current job description, geographical location, level of understanding on the issue, have critical implications for teaching the course. It is possible for learners to quote international examples or cite information that the instructor might not be familiar with. This then requires the course instructors to undertake some additional research in order to understand the specific aspect being alluded to and link it to the virtual debate. Thus, the course instructors become co-investigators and co-creators of knowledge along with the learners.

Online Learning of the Learners

The successful learner in online learning is active and engaged in knowledge generation and seeks solutions and insights into the issues being explored. Learners view issues from multiple perspectives, including those of their co-learners and guest faculty.

In doing so, they are generating envisaged learning outcomes from the course and developing new perspectives on the themes of citizenship, democracy and accountability. They are learning new concepts, as well as gaining research and critical thinking skills. Learners are collaborating with each other at deeper levels of understanding of the materials under study.

Course Evaluation

In the process of the online learning environment, it is assumed that learners take responsibility for their own learning, growth and development. In this process they gain a new view of themselves and a sense of confidence in their ability to interact with new knowledge. The learners' feedback is an important indicator to assess course material, andragogy, skills of instructor, relevance of assignments, use of technology, value of a virtual classroom. For most cases, evaluation of a course reveals that learners benefited immensely from the learning process. The concepts taught sharpen their knowledge and consequently their articulation skills, as well as an application of their knowledge in a community setting. The BBS especially has proven to be an effective learning strategy for the students.

Challenges

Self directed learning in an online environment is based on the core belief that instructors do not teach but rather facilitate the acquisition of knowledge. Yet, online course teaching is not an easy task. The courses are fraught with many challenges, which can be categorized as related to course development, teaching, evaluation, language and retention of students. Detailed descriptions of each challenge are given below.

Course Development, Layout and Design

When developing a curriculum, subject matter experts are invited to comment and finalise the blueprint for the specific course. However, most of these experts are not familiar with the concepts and andragogy related to online teaching or principles

of Adult Education, therefore discussions can tend to get diverted to issues related to the delivery of course content as opposed to the content in itself.

Copyright issues related to articles and case studies being used in preparation of course content are always a challenge. As material is being used in a format that is open to the public, permission needs to be secured from the publishers and this can also come at a price, which has to be renewed for each course offering. With such constraints, students may only be given access to some parts of publications and this can limit their understanding of the issue at hand. Besides, it is important to understand that it must be ensured that all required readings are available to the student as part of the text-based material and must be easily available online.

Crucial to the learning process is the level and pitch of the selected material as well as the specific text used in conveying of the concepts being taught. Each learner must be able to understand and feel comfortable with the style, language, flow and sequencing of content, especially as there is no immediate support available in the form of further explanations or illustrations, as in a face-to-face classroom.

The curriculum must be broken into short learning packages which the learner should be able to finish reading in the span of one to two hours. The matter must be presented in a crisp and concise manner and laid out in an interesting style, interspersed with boxes, graphs and illustrations rather than a straight flow of pages of dense reading matter. Course material can be so designed that a column at the side enables learners to make their own notes for further discussion or referencing. Given the fact that the learner may carry learning material with them to read during a long journey to and from office, lunch break or other spare time, the size of text material may be compact and easy to handle.

Online Teaching

While the BBS increased the sense of community among the learners and provided a shared environment for reflection, the difficulties in online communication were apparent.

Some learners participated and voiced their concerns rather actively, while others did not, despite prompting from instructors. It was impossible to understand why some students were silent, as there was no means of judging the core issue for their lack of interaction. It was difficult to assess whether the lack of response was due to occupational commitments, simply an oversight or act of negligence, lack of self-confidence, language, indifference or any other reason.

Another challenge faced in online teaching is a seemingly lower level of seriousness and commitment to schedules and deadlines when as compared to regular learning programmes.

Very often assignments are submitted well after the deadline, without any prior communication or reason for the delay. There seems to be a mistaken assumption that the online course does not have a start and a finish, and there is an inability to comprehend that all learning cannot be based solely on individual needs.

Given the fact that learners have a range of different situations and contexts, methods to address these have to be innovative and meet the requirements of individuals but without affecting the procedures of the institution.

Evaluation of Assignments

The evaluation of the assignments proves to be a challenging task. There are several cases of misinterpretation of assignments. At times it becomes difficult to fathom, whether it is a genuine case of lack of comprehension or whether the learner perceived that there would be some marks assigned, irrespective of what the contents of the assignment.

Cheating on assignments is another issue that instructors have to contend with, as is plagiarism, and it needs to be dealt with firmly. An alert instructor will be able to identify those cases where learners use a language and a style that is different to the usual interaction on the BBS. In one case a learner when asked to conduct a gender audit and prepare a report on the same, submitted one so perfect that the instructor herself, a seasoned *"auditor"*, knew that it was the job of a professional team of auditors. Since the learner was from a UN organisation, the instructor went into the online archives and in a matter of seconds located the source of the plagiarized article!! A decision was taken not to issue the learner a certificate.

Language

The integration of students from diverse backgrounds implies that they vary in age, education levels, language abilities and country of origin. As course content can sometimes highlight complex issues, difficulties in communication can take place. Students not well versed in the language of instruction are challenged in putting across their ideas effectively. Further, their messages could be misinterpreted and therefore the instructor needs to take the lead in picking out key concepts and reframing the same, seeking clarifications in the course of discussions in order that discussions are meaningful and there is a deep learning from the powerful insights and relevant experiences of all the members of the class.

Dropouts

Retaining the students in the course is another challenge. There are instances of students who take up more than one course without realizing the intensity of the learning process and cannot do justice to both. There are others whose personal and professional circumstances undergo unanticipated changes and they are unable to cope with these demands and complete the course. Such cases have to be evaluated and resolved individually. Irrespective of the reason for dropping out or the solution offered, what is important is that the instructor has to be in constant touch with all the learners and create an environment where they can share their personal difficulties, which have a significant impact upon their participation and quality of learning.

Technological Challenges

While most of the younger generation of learners is adept at understanding and using technology to its fullest advantage, this may become a major challenge for an older learner – an activist based in a grassroots setting. Access to technology may be a barrier to the learning of a younger person who has limited hands-on experience with computers and the Internet.

Additional support must be given to these learners to be able to navigate through the BBS and gain confidence in being able to conquer these challenges in order for other learners to gain the value of his/her field experiences and insights.

While such interventions are powerful in ensuring the inclusion of each and every learner, they may also draw upon the resources of the institutions. Innovations such as the use of Skype, or a carefully designed page with Hyperlinks that navigate the learner through a learning process will have to be seriously considered.

Challenges Related to Teaching Faculty

Instructors within PIALL also play out a host of other institutional roles such as conducting research programmes, trainings on specific issues, speakers and panelists on areas of expertise etc. This could mean taking them out to remote locations of the country or in parts of the world where Internet access may not be available. Personal matters may also take them away from the office for more than a few days. As this could have a negative impact on the learning process of the student, alternative arrangements have to be in place for such situations. Turnover of faculty is also a cause for concern in the course instruction.

At PIALL we have devised a relatively simple method to deal with such issues. This has the advantage of ensuring that courses run smoothly and that the student gets complete attention of at least one instructor.

Each course is run and taught by a team of two persons, a senior faculty and a junior. As a part of the initiation into the process of teaching, the junior instructor will have participated in the course as a learner prior to teaching the course. Such a team ensures proper orientation as well as the ability for one instructor to complete other tasks of the organisation or fulfill unexpected personal commitments.

Ways Forward

Inclusion of Alumni is a powerful tool in the growth and vision of any educational programme, including one that is online, and innovation is the key to any programme of inclusion of learners. At PIALL we have developed some methods of continued interaction and are always in search of new approaches to strengthen our alumni and its network. These include

- A quarterly newsletter giving information on the programmes of the Division
- Suggestions from learners on new courses to be developed
- Information and invitations related to lectures, talks seminars, training programmes of the division
- Standing invitations to meet with instructors and other divisional personnel when in Delhi
- Invitation to be guest faculty on courses being taught online, in areas of their expertise as well as the course they were enrolled in (these are offered to those who performed well)
- Printing of excellent assignments as articles in PRIA journal or recommending them to other journals and magazines

Conclusion

Learning for professional development is based on purposes linked to a broader vision of growth in the profession. ODL in an online learning environment has the potential to promote empowered learners who are able to meet the demands of ever-changing knowledge in society.

It offers them an opportunity to interact with the instructor and fellow learners as they apply new knowledge in authentic contexts. Such collaborative and transformative learning has the potential to contribute to better learning outcomes, including the development of critical thinking and competencies.

Online education is an extension of distance education. It goes beyond computer-based education in which learners receive and complete learning assignments in digital form. Online education demands internet-based communication, interactive participation, and collaboration. The Center for Continuing Education of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Zimbabwe has been entrusted with the task of providing further online education opportunities of this nature. The following contribution describes the chances and difficulties connected with this type of learning.

Stanley Mpofu/Christina Müller

From Réchauffé to Recherche – Online Education in Zimbabwe

About the National University of Science and Technology

The National University of Science and Technology (NUST), the second university in Zimbabwe (after the University of Zimbabwe), opened its doors in the second largest city, Bulawayo, in 1991. With an initial intake of 256 students, NUST came into being not only as an elite institution but also as a centre of excellence in teaching and learning, and research and community service in the fields of Science and Technology. The proliferation of universities in the country (currently 13 altogether, with plans for an additional two) and the massification of students at NUST (currently at 4500) have not dented the University's image as a centre of excellence, nor have they diminished the institution's resolve for excellence.

In the 20 years of its existence, NUST has established itself, both nationally and internationally, as a key provider of high quality academic and professional tertiary education and training programmes. In addition, the University has made a name as a key promoter of basic, applied and developmental research and the disseminator of that research through extensive outreach programmes.

The University enjoys close ties with the industrial and commercial sectors both of which have expressed great satisfaction with its products. The University also enjoys excellent ties with other universities on the African continent and beyond.

The What and Whence of Online Education

Progressive institutions of higher learning worldwide are actively embracing online education in programme and course delivery for both on-campus and distance learning provision. There are obvious prospects and challenges for universities in Zimbabwe in this endeavour. Issues of relevance, feasibility and sustainability determine the route to the adoption of a new technology, requiring cautious and informed decisions and approaches.

In line with trends in similar institutions locally and elsewhere, NUST is seriously considering the use of online learning for many programmes and courses that would be suitable for such a mode of delivery.

Online education is computer-mediated and its primary mode of communication is the Internet (Ko and Rosen, 2001). Accordingly, it is a form of education that offers and conducts educational courses or activities partially or entirely through the Internet. In this regard, online education depends on three primary capabilities that are available through the Internet. Firstly, there is electronic mail (email) that links the learner to the instructor and other course participants. Secondly, there is the bulletin board or discussion forum that provides for cumulative group discussion. Thirdly, the Internet makes provision for real-time conferencing which is basically synchronous interaction requiring the simultaneous participation of all the participants, including the instructors.

Online education has its roots in distance education ((Ko and Rosen, 2001). Distance education is *"an educational system in which the learner is autonomous and separated from the teacher by space and time, so that communication is by print, electronic, or other non-human medium"* (Moore, 1995).

It covers

> *"the various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organisation."* (Holmberg, 1995: 1)

In essence, distance education is the anti-thesis of *classroom (face-to-face)* instruction, where the teacher and the students meet regularly for lectures, demonstrations and class discussions.

Online Symposium *Source: Stanley Mpofu*

Traditionally, distance education is a one-way or two-way audio/video teleconference or self–study via print material. Oftentimes it does not involve multi-interaction via discussion boards. Multi-interaction is a major characteristic of online education. Evidently, online education brings a new dimension to the whole field of distance education. As Harasim (1991) aptly observes, *"Internet technologies offer opportunities to improve the distance education model through increased communication, interactivity, and collaborative activities"*. He sums up the characteristics of online education as *"place and time independence, many-to-many communication, collaborative learning and dependence on text-based communication to promote thoughtful and reflective learning."*

Negative Descriptor

Like everything else that is associated with open learning, online education is a *"negative descriptor"* in that it is much easier to explain what it is not than what it is. In this regard, it cannot be explained fully without an explanation of related terms. It is, therefore, important to distinguish between online education and other traditional forms of computer-based training.

In most traditional forms of computer-based training the student does not interact with other people. Instead, the student interacts with the programme content via the computer. The interaction takes many forms and includes tutorials, drills, quizzes simulations or games. Needless to say, computer-based training is (like online education) a form of distance education. However, computer-based training is

perfect for self-study and, as such, is more consistent (than online education) with the traditional perspective of distance education. Be that as it may, it is important to note that an online education programme may incorporate some elements of computer–based training.

From about the mid 90s, the Internet rapidly became the most common mode of delivery for distance education material in developed countries (Simon, 1999). The developing world has just about reached this stage of computer-mediated communication hence many African universities have started using the Internet to deliver distance education course materials to selected groups of students. And, in accordance with this trend, pockets of computer-based training now exist at NUST, particularly to complement postgraduate block release programmes such as the Executive Master of Business Administration.

Literature abounds with terms that have been used as synonyms of computer-mediated communication (CMC), namely, the aforementioned computer-based training (CBT); internet-based training (IBT); and web-based training (WBT). These terms have also been used as synonyms eLearning, along with its variations elearning, Elearning, and eLearning. All these variations (together with online education) are forms of distance education. Similarly, all these variations (together with online education) are forms of computer-mediated communication. Yet, none of these variations are eligible to be labeled online education. Why? As it has been pointed out before, unlike online education, these traditional forms of CMC are devoid of multi-interaction via discussion forums.

Not Yet Online Education

Most of these traditional forms of *CMC* have become the norm at most of our higher education institutions. And, almost without exception, they are all characterised by what Fraser (1999) calls *"shovelware"*. Shovelware refers to the practice of shoveling content from one communication medium to another with little regard for the appearance, ease of use, or capabilities of the second medium. Most of our institutions are using the Web as nothing but *"shovelware"* in that they have taken the materials that were meant for the face-to-face mode and placed them on the Web verbatim, without due regard to the capabilities of the Web vis-à-vis those of face-to-face interaction. The intention is simply to widen the sources of information for students by using a wide variety of modes to deliver the same information. Without any doubt there is value in the broad distribution of learning material. There is also value in the associated online administrative structures that have been set up to facilitate the exchange of assignments and the feedback thereof. But, as Fraser aptly asks, *"what pedagogical value is added to the learning situation if*

we merely distribute virtually the same course resources through a computer rather than on paper or by word of mouth?" That sort of *"unimaginative computerization"* is what (according to Fraser) the French call **réchauffé**. **Réchauffé** simply means reproducing for another medium material which was initially produced for one medium. This suggests failure to take advantage of the expanded horizons for communication offered by the new medium. And, it is tantamount to warming up leftovers from the previous night's dinner and serving them as brunch on Sunday afternoon. As Fraser aptly observes, this is *"insipid and pedagogically pointless"*.

We at NUST have sought to move beyond **réchauffé** to what the French call **recherché**.

From réchauffé to recherché

The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) has been mandated to facilitate the provision of online education at the University. The need for greater access to educational opportunities, particularly for the previously disadvantaged, was the main reason for the establishment of the CCE in 2001. The CCE organises continuing education programmes that are aimed at updating participants' knowledge or skills in a particular field.

Irrespective of whether they are undertaken for credit or non-credit purposes, continuing education programmes at NUST have one common objective: to enable workers at all levels to keep abreast of rapidly changing working environments and advancing technologies.

Online Symposium *Source: Stanley Mpofu*

Continuing education at NUST takes two major forms, namely, professional development and block release programmes.

Professional development programmes are short term purposefully designed non-credit courses, workshops and seminars for specified in-service personnel in the public and private sectors. They are premised on the major objective of continuing education, namely, to enable working people to put in practice on Monday what they learnt at school on Friday. The training programmes come in two shapes. First, there are regular short-term programmes that are meant to respond to general needs in the business and industrial environment. These programmes, which are reviewed from time-to-time, provide management training to organisations on a long term basis. Examples include Risk Assessment, and Production Planning and Control. Secondly, there are context specific programmes that are developed at the behest of organizations and thus tailor-made to suit specific organisational needs. Such progammes include Supply Chain Management and information and computer- based information on technology skills (ICTs).

On the other hand, block release programmes are long term and intermediate credit programmes that are designed to accommodate those workers who want to upgrade their professional qualifications without having to take extended leave of absence from work. Normally, block release programmes are modularised. Learners attend one to four-week block sessions two to three times in each academic year. Ideally, each block session is a complete entity. At the end of the block period, students write examinations to determine whether they can proceed to the next module/block. Some variations allow for individualised modularised learning, whereby failure does not necessarily mean withdrawal from the programme.

The NUST brand of block release programmes is not modularised. Modularisation is a process that takes time. Due to the urgent need to put in place block release programmes of some sort, the institution improvised. The improvisation resulted in a programme where the learners undertake a crash programme of teaching and learning during a prescribed block session. The objective is to accommodate all the teaching that would otherwise be done in one term or semester into one or two block sessions. Naturally, the process spills over to the period after the session and students are required to continue with their school work after the sessions. This arrangement enables students to continue working on assignments long after the session has ended. And, the tutor continues to facilitate learning telephonically and through the provision of additional resource material by whatever expedient means. The advent of computer-mediated communication has added a new dimension to the implementation of block release programmes at NUST.

Block release programmes at NUST are essentially designed for part-time study and are, accordingly, offered through distance education. In this regard, they present an opportunity for piloting online education and thus enable the institution to make the necessary transition from **réchauffé** to *recherché.*

The journey from **réchauffé** to *recherché* is fraught with challenges. First, the educational market is suspicious of education that takes place outside the classroom. Higher education is becoming more and more market driven. Accordingly, higher education administrators tend to embrace those programmes that have the potential to bring more dividends to the institution. Conversely, they tend to shun those programmes that are not likely to attract large numbers. Secondly, limited access to computer technology (an essential component of online learning) militates against a wholesale offer and indulgence in online education programmes. Third and, perhaps more importantly, the paucity of knowledge and expertise in online education poses the greatest threat to its adoption and proper implementation. This paper is essentially an outline of what is being done at NUST to overcome the three challenges and thus lay the foundation for the provision of quality online education.

Pilot Project Implementation

The facilitation of the provision of online education at NUST has taken place at three levels, namely, information, showcase and pilot levels.

Information level

A series of seminars were lined up for academic staff and computer technicians at NUST and several other tertiary institutions in Bulawayo. However, in the final analysis one low key seminar was held at NUST and was attended by a few largely curious academic staff and a handful of administrators and computer personnel who probably had nothing better to do at the time. This was during the 2007/08 academic year when the economic meltdown in the country was at its peak. It was therefore not surprising that many people considered the seminar a luxury they could not afford. Be that as it may, the seminar served to showcase the few pockets of computer-mediated teaching that existed at NUST at the time. In particular, it served as a barometer for the degree of appreciation of online learning at NUST. Perhaps, more importantly, the seminar provided the necessary platform for networking that would open the way for cooperation at the implementation stage.

Showcase level

A 3-week "un-moderated" online discussion forum entitled "*Online Education at NUST: from concept to practice"* was planned to take place in June and July 2008. Initial thinking was that this would involve academics nationwide. Ultimately, due to ICT logistics invitations were only sent to academics at NUST. It was hoped that the forum would be an open discussion affair where participants would post comments, reply to the comments of others, ask questions and/or give answers to others' questions on issues pertaining to online education. It was also hoped that there would be sufficient interest by the University academic community to make the discussion forum a lively online discussion that would constitute the genesis of online education at NUST. At the end, the forum fell victim to the economic meltdown and attracted a handful of enthusiasts who were curious about the capability of the CCE to mount such an event. The discussion was also dogged by the erratic Internet connectivity that bedeviled the institution (and the country as a whole) during this period.

However, all was not lost. Like the seminar before it, the discussion forum indicated the potential candidates for the pioneer online education programme. Above all, the forum served to show the University's ICT capability to implement such a programme. Clearly, the NUST network was at the time not capable of hosting such a highly demanding programme. This was largely due to power outages that rendered the network totally unreliable. A separate network would be needed to implement the pilot online education programme at NUST. Accordingly, an independent network was established for the Centre for Continuing Education. The Centre is currently located at the Bulawayo Eye Clinic in the city centre. The city centre is the hub of any economic activity that is left in Bulawayo and, as such, is not susceptible to power outages like the other parts of the city.

Pilot level

a) **The learning management system**

The pilot level was more of a process than an event. It entailed the development and design of a course that would teach academic staff members at NUST how to develop, design and deliver courses on line. To this end, the CCE team considered several learning management systems (LMSs) that would facilitate not only the development and design of such a course but also the management and delivery of the course. In the final analysis, the choice came down to affordability rather than capability. Accordingly, commercial LMSs such as WebCT and Blackboard were ruled out. From the three freely available LMSs, viz., Moodle, Claroline and ATutor that were considered, the CCE team

settled for ATutor largely because the resident technician (who would provide the necessary technical support) was more familiar with it than the other two.

Needless to say, quality in both the management and the delivery of instruction is compromised when you settle for a freely available LMS. The instructor has to manually make up for the missing automated capabilities that would otherwise be provided by a commercial LMS. Be that as it may, the less *"sophisticated"* free LMS provides more room for learning than the commercial LMSs that tend to spoil instructors by automatically doing things that they (instructors) should be doing manually.

The ATutor LMS possesses the basic capabilities that are essential for the design and delivery of an online course as follows. First, it controls access to the learning material (which, in this case, is NUST's intellectual property). Secondly, it provides a means of viewing the learning material. Thirdly, it enables a student to take part in online discussions with other students and tutors. Fourthly, it enables the administration of online quizzes, assignments, tests and examinations. Fifthly, it provides a group email system which is confidential to the unit. And, lastly, it provides a calendar of events for the course. Also, the ATutor LMS (like any other) is accessible and available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week at NUST, at home (if one has a computer, modem and Internet service provider), from Internet cafes and from anywhere in the world. And, above all, the ATutor system is quite flexible. In this regard, it enables the tutor(s) to choose what aspects of the LMS to use for a particular module

Online Symposium *Source: Stanley Mpofu*

and how much of a module/unit should be available through the course site and how much should be available through websites linked to the course site.

The pioneer online education programme at NUST was accordingly developed, designed and delivered as per the dictates of the ATutor system.

b) **Modules for the course**

Twelve (12) modules were developed for the course.

A working knowledge of the Internet and the Web is essential for any form of online learning. Accordingly, Module 1 was essentially an introduction to the Internet and the Web. Module 2 was aimed at developing the participants' readiness for online teaching and learning. To this end, it was designed to help participants take stock of the knowledge and skills they had for online teaching and learning and to help them develop whatever of these they needed. Module 3 provided a critical analysis of the online learner. The online learner is essentially a distant learner. Distant learners tend to be more diverse than conventional face-to-face learners. Accordingly, this module was intended to help participants understand their role as distant learners.

Modules 4 to 6 dealt with the pedagogies of online education. Accordingly, Module 4 discussed the nature of online teaching and distinguished it from traditional classroom instruction. To this end, the module did several things. First, it differentiated between learner-centred and teacher-centred education models. Secondly, it explained the role of the online tutor in a learner-centred teaching/learning environment. Thirdly, the module discussed appropriate strategies for creating and maintaining learner-instructor interaction and learner-learner interaction. Fourthly, it explained strategies for dealing with lagging and non-participation. Fifthly, it showed the role of feedback in distance education. And, lastly, the module explained strategies to cope with online workload. Module 5 examined issues pertaining to the evaluation of online courses, online learning, and the online instructor. To this end, the module explained some of the challenges of evaluation in an online environment. In this regard, it distinguished between measurement, assessment and evaluation and showed when it is most appropriate to use each. It also distinguished between evaluating student learning on the one hand and evaluating the effectiveness of the course and the online instructor on the other. In addition, the module explained the various methods for evaluating student learning, the effectiveness of the course, and that of the online instructor. Module 6 focused on instructional design. Accordingly, it examined key issues that ought to be taken into consideration in the development of an online course and explained the key design principles for online instruction and the purpose of each.

Modules 7 and 8 examined issues pertaining to authoring and management tools on one hand, and the management and support of online learning on the other. Module 7, which dealt with the former, examined the various tools at the disposal of the online tutor. Accordingly, the module differentiated among the various course authoring and management tools. It also explained the merits and demerits of the various tools and showed when it is most appropriate to use the various tools, individually or in combination. Module 8 focused on the latter and thus explained the importance of proper management and adequate support for effective online learning. To this end it examined the strengths and weaknesses of existing support services for online learning and the strategies that could be used to mitigate the effects of weaknesses and optimize strengths in support services.

Module 9 and 10 dealt with key considerations involved in the development and design of an online course. In this regard, Module 9 explored key ethical and legal issues associated with education, and their implications for online learning. And Module 10 provided an array of additional considerations involved in authoring and implementing an online course.

Combining classroom and online instruction was the subject of Module 11. It is very rare to find a University course that is delivered entirely online. Most common are courses that involve some combination of online and classroom activities. Accordingly, this module examined how online instruction can be used in conjunction with traditional classroom instruction and other media of instruction to enhance learning.

Lastly, Module 12 was essentially an attempt to touch the future by examining what online education is likely to look like in the years to come. To this end, this module explored prospective changes in ICT that are likely to influence the direction of online learning in higher education.

c) **Course modalities**

Each module was a self contained entity that was scheduled to run for a full week, from Sunday to Saturday. Each did not only constitute a basic lecture on the subject matter, but it also provided links to other relevant sites for additional information on the subject matter at hand. It featured a test and several assignments. Above all, each module set the stage for discussion and interaction among the learners and between the learners and the tutors.

The course was scheduled to run for 12 weeks, beginning August 2 and ending October 24, 2009. Three online educators were appointed (one from NUST, one from the University of South Africa and the third from the University

of Duisburg, Essen, Germany) to teach the course. And, altogether, 33 academics and administrators from NUST started the course. In the final analysis, the course missed the 12 week target by a huge margin and spilled over to the first quarter of 2010. Also, only two of the three tutors totally fulfilled their commitments. And, of the 33 who started the course only 10 completed it. These rather unfortunate developments can be attributed to several factors that dogged the implementation of the course from day one. First, frequent power outages which have become a common feature in Zimbabwe made the one week deadline per module totally unsustainable. Lagging became the order of the day and adjustments had to be done from time to time here and there in order to keep the numbers of completers of each module at a sustainable level. Compounding this problem was the erratic Internet connectivity for the participants (who largely relied on the NUST network which was down every other day due to power outages). Secondly, the constant postponements of the commencement and the subsequent endings of each module perpetuated the problem of adjustments. This automatically meant that the three tutors could not fulfill all their commitments as per the original timetable which shifted widely and inevitably clashed with other commitments that could not be shifted to suit constant changes in the course timetable. The unscheduled unavailability of one of the tutors shifted most of her responsibilities to the resident tutor. This lumbered the resident tutor with facilitation chores and, as such, he could not keep up not only with the learners' posts but also with the marking of tests and assignments. This necessitated further postponements thus automatically perpetuating the problem. Thirdly, the rigours of the course (which was competency based) contributed tremendously to the attrition rate, which in the final analysis stood at 70 percent.

The odds that had to be overcome make the achievements of the ten completers a big milestone in the history of NUST. They had to contend with rigourous demands under very trying conditions and are without any doubt certified online tutors. It is hoped that they will become the nuclei of online training not only for their respective units but for the University as a whole.

The Way Forward

The way forward for NUST re online education is not going to be smooth. Virtually all the challenges outlined above are still very much in place and will continue to adversely affect the progress towards the wholesome provision of online education at NUST. While the institution cannot totally overcome these challenges, it can

Online Symposium
Source: Stanley Mpofu

mitigate their negative effects on the efforts that are being made to promote online education.

To counter the challenge poised by the scarcity of computer technology, the institution can and has started a technological support scheme that seeks to achieve two things. First, the scheme seeks to put a computer laptop in the hands of all academic members of staff and senior administrators. Secondly, the scheme seeks to facilitate the procurement of individual mobile phone Internet services for all those academics and administrators who need them. Over and above this NUST has put in place measures to improve Internet connectivity on campus and at its three satellites, viz., the Library, the CCE and the Medical School at Mpilo Central Hospital. These measures will involve the installation of a fibre optic network and the installation of a wireless Internet service on campus.

As regards the suspicious minds in the educational market, the institution must be seen to be embracing online education with both hands. This can be done at both the information and practice levels. At the information level, this could entail the hosting of regular online learning symposia and sending relevant personnel to symposia elsewhere, on a regular basis. The recent online symposium (November, 3-5, 2010) which was meant to showcase the ten pioneer online educators is a case in point. Also, appropriate public utterances and pronouncements by the University management at the various forums can go a long way in placating the education market with regard to online education. The Vice-Chancellor's statement at the 2010 Graduation Ceremony (October 29) in which he implored the public to appreciate the virtues of online education is a case in point.

At the practice level, the institution has to move beyond isolated and uncoordinated online education provision that is undertaken by a few enthusiasts, to concerted online education provision across all programmes that is coordinated by the Registry. Using a few selected block release programmes the institution could slowly ease online education onto the provision of higher education at NUST.

The first stage of this process will of necessity entail the modularisation of the chosen block release programmes. To this end, module writers ought to be hired to write modules for the chosen programmes. This step is necessary to avoid a situation whereby online education programmes at NUST become conduits for the transfer of other people's creations to the learners. A home-grown online education programme is founded on home-grown knowledge bases for local learning needs. This is not to say that the online education programmes should not utilize the many other resource materials that are available for the subject matter at hand. The module writers and other relevant personnel in the field should identify relevant additional material that will, together with the modules, be uploaded onto the management system of the online education programmes. Of course, the necessary permission should be sought before the material in question is posted on the course site.

The module writing process takes at least twelve months. However, the first stage should not wait for the modules to be written. The identification and the uploading of the supplementary material should begin soon after the necessary Senate endorsement for online education (for the selected programmes) has been granted. The supplementary material that shall be made available online shall immediately begin to complement the block release sessions during and after the sessions. The construction of **bulletin boards** should begin during this initial stage of the pilot project. By the end of the first year, limited group discussions should be taking place online.

The second stage shall entail the uploading of the modules and additional reading material and, more importantly, the establishment of fully-fledged **bulletin boards** that will, in due course, enable entire courses to be held online.

Finally, to counter the lack of knowledge and expertise in online education at NUST and beyond, the institution should build onto the successes of the pioneer project and strive to train an average of 30 new online tutors every year. The 10 pioneer graduates should constitute the assistant tutors for the expanded online education programme that should initially adopt a nationwide outlook and subsequently a regional outlook.

For accreditation purposes, it is hoped that this training will be conducted by NUST in collaboration with another university of repute that is familiar with the subject matter.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCAT
MENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADU
DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOP

Environmental Education

Never before was it possible for the whole world to so closely follow a disaster unfolding step-by-step with such compelling logic: first an earthquake of inconceivable magnitude, then a devastating tsunami that washed cars into the ocean and tossed ships on shore like toys, destroying houses, bridges, and roads, and extinguishing entire cities like a Tibetan sand mandala that once completed is swept away. More than 20,000 people lost their lives, hundreds of thousands lost their homes and property. What came next may develop into an even greater catastrophe: the shut down of cooling systems at key nuclear power plants. All back-up systems failed, especially at the Fukushima nuclear complex, a plant with several reactors. All heroic efforts to prevent, or at least to contain or postpone, the worst scenario of core meltdown have made it clear that it becomes humanly impossible to manage a nuclear reactor once it runs out of control.

With radioactive particles already contaminating Japan's water and food supplies, and with a nuclear cloud threatening to drift toward Tokyo and beyond, protesters who have warned against nuclear power unfortunately cannot derive any feeling of satisfaction from the fact that they have been proven right. On the contrary, there is reason to fear that even the clear lessons learned from Japan's nuclear crisis will not suffice to motivate any lasting transitions in the use of energy and natural resources. Policymakers tend to be too dependent on the energy industry that is driven by powerful profit-motives and commands an influential lobby with all too effective spin machinery. Hope in the promise of atomic energy to stimulate economic potential is too deeply rooted all over the world. Especially the large emerging countries such as China, India, and Brazil are banking on nuclear power – and nuclear power alone – to satisfy their growing energy needs. Expectations are too high among the people of these countries that economic development will bring them employment and prosperity. At the same time, they are too poorly informed to be sufficiently aware of the potential risks and dangers involved.

It is this same logic of economic growth driven by the interests of private capital that leads to the excessive logging of rain forests, the overfishing of the world's oceans, the warming of the earth's climate, the genetic manipulation of plants, the chemical adulteration of food, and the mass production of animals for food under conditions that give rise to mad cow disease and swine fever. What we are talking about here is the indiscriminate exploitation of the earth, the rape of nature in the interest of short-term profit for the few at the cost of the many and the future. It is the arrogant assumption that human technology is capable of outwitting and taming the forces of nature.

Moralizing doesn't help, but it is obvious that nothing has changed to diminish the relevance of the *"Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and global Responsibility"*, which was ratified in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro at a conference that was held parallel to the Second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The text of the Treaty was published in issue number 40 of *"Adult Education and Development"*. It can be found in various places on the Internet, for example: http://csdngo.igc.org/alttreaties/AT05.htm

It is an expression of hope that thousands of local initiatives can develop awareness and translate into action based on mutual respect and respect for the environment, on better chances for the disadvantaged to take part in society, on the recognition of gender equality, on a local and global culture of care and solidarity.

Individual or small group actions can hardly have significant bearing on global trends. But neither are they insignificant. Many individual actions add up and combine, step by step, toward changes in the knowledge and convictions of entire nations. The hope is that in the end they will also serve to shape the policies that give direction to industry and the economy.

Ecology and global warming are priority issues in the Asian region, particularly in view of the geographic conditions there and the large numbers of people threatened by storms and floods. NGOs from the Philippines, India, Korea, New Zealand, Samoa, and Laos have combined forces in an initiative called **CLIMATE** to focus attention and concerted action on climate change. Through its regional office in Laos, which covers the Asian-Pacific region, *dvv international* is a partner in this initiative. Other organizations are invited to join the call for action.

Hillary J Musarurwa is one of the founding trustees und director of the NGO **Penya Trust** in Zimbabwe. One of his co-workers is **Lawrence Hoba,** who is making a name for himself in Africa as a budding writer. PENYA is an acronym which stands for *"Practical Empowerment and Networking Youth Association"*. But it is also a Shona word that means *"shine"*. It is a call for the children and young people in Zimbabwe's rural communities to *"shine"* despite the difficulties they face in the wake of deforestation, erosion, diminishing biodiversity, increasing soil infertility, and the complex social problems accompanying the process of ecological impoverishment.

The next article is also concerned with the *"Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility"*. **REAJA** is another acronym with a double meaning. Besides being a call to react and take action, it is derived from the first letters of the Latin American network for environmental education of young people and adults, the *"Red de Educação Ambiental de Jovens e Adultos"*, which is coordinated by **Marcos Sorrentino**, the former director of adult education

at the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment, **Simone Portugal**, a Brazilian Professor who uses her talents in art in the interest of environmental education, and **Moema Viezzer**, a Brazilian sociologist, educator, and international advisor for gender and environmental education, who has been an active and prominent figure in the field for decades.

The text *"Learning with story and metaphor"* is included in this issue with the kind permission of *"Equals"*, the newsletter published by **Beyond Access,** a project launched in the year 2003 by Oxfam, the Institute of Education of the University of London, together with the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The paper is based on a study carried out by **Siân Davies** under the supervision of **Heila Lotz-Sisitka** and **Rob O'Donoghue** in fulfilment of his Master's degree at Rhodes University's Faculty of Education in Grahamstown, South Africa.

Moema Viezzer, who we already briefly introduced above, is the author of another article in this issue – one that focuses on the themes of gender justice and equal diversity on the one hand, and ecology, climate, environmental protection, and sustainable living on the other. Arguing with conviction that acting sustainably calls for responsible management, she shows how closely gender relates to ecology.

The Asian-Pacific region is particularly susceptible to the effects of global climate change. It is not just an ecological problem, however, but also a social problem, considering that it is generally the poorest members of society who are affected the most. Despite this fact, they rarely receive any government assistance or support. NGOs and adult educators in the region have therefore joined forces to launch an education campaign. Their work to increase awareness about ecological aspects of the climate crisis is also a contribution toward combating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

Climate Asia Pacific – Why Climate Change Education

Statement of Purpose

Climate Change is a looming global threat. It endangers not only all of our ecosystems, communities, and cultures, but the future of humanity itself.

The grave impacts of global warming are differentiated across countries and hemispheres. The hardest hit are the geographically and economically vulnerable communities, which have little resources and the least access to support, technology, basic social services and financial resources to respond to impacts of Climate Change.

This is a stark reality in the Asia-Pacific region, the largest and most populous continent worldwide with almost 4 billion people or 60% of the world's population. Here, a significant portion of the population live in low-lying areas or in dangerous hilly terrains and small islands which are most vulnerable to sea level rise, flooding, diseases, drought, super typhoons and other extreme weather events. These areas are often home to the most destitute peoples of the globe, such as peasants, rural women, indigenous peoples, fisher folk, and urban poor, already reeling from the negative impacts of globalization.

Policies, programs and funds to help alleviate their plight are hardly coming to these people. They are left to fend for their own survival and parry the blows that these challenges have dealt on the natural resources, their livelihoods, and ways of

living. The current climate negotiations, controlled by powerful world leaders who represent the world's top emitters, have likewise failed to arrive at genuine solutions to lower greenhouse gas emissions to levels needed to stabilize our climate.

It is in this context that we bind ourselves together to promote learning and action on global environmental concerns to keep the fire of sustainable development burning.

Who We Are

We are environmental educators in the Asia-Pacific, coming from civil society, people's organizations, academic institutions, and government. Our work ranges from analyzing development issues and programs, forging scientific and technological knowledge and breakthroughs, and fostering values and actions to affirm equity, human rights, and ecological defense.

We come from diverse contexts, but share the collective concern over growing poverty, underdevelopment and vulnerability of the people amid the depletion and destruction of the region's rich resources. We are compelled to act upon these problems, confront their root causes, and create measures to address the situation.

We believe much more has to be done in the field of education for addressing Climate Change and achieving sustainable development. By working together to help bridge knowledge, values and skill gaps among the peoples of the world, especially among the poor people of the region, we hope to understand and effectively address serious environmental challenges of our time.

Why Climate Change Education

The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in September 2009 finds a bridge in education to address the global realities of our time, to wit:

> *"Despite unprecedented economic growth in the 20th century, persistent poverty and inequality still affect too many people, especially those who are most vulnerable. Conflicts continue to draw attention to the need for building a culture of peace. The global financial and economic crises highlight the risks of unsustainable economic development models and practices based on short-term gains. The food crisis and world hunger are an increasingly serious issue. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns are creating ecological impacts that compromise the options of current and future generations and the sustainability of life on Earth, as climate change is showing."*

"…All countries will need to work collaboratively to ensure sustainable development now and in the future. Investment in education for sustainable development (ESD) is an investment in the future, and can be a life-saving measure, especially in post-conflict and least developed countries…"[1]

As early as 1992, the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro that yielded the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), while unequivocally declaring that *"that change in the Earth's climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of mankind,"*[2] recognized the key role of education, training and public awareness,[3] in the fulfillment of the commitments of countries who are parties to the Convention.

Agenda 21, another Earth Summit document emphasized that the climate crisis is not solely an ecological problem; it acknowledged that the world's peoples are additionally "confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being."[4]

The importance of education as a response to these interrelated problems is summed up in the 1992 Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility, which states that:

"…[E]nvironmental education for equitable sustainability is a continuous learning process based on respect for all life. Such education affirms values and actions which contribute to human and social transformation and ecological preservation. It fosters ecologically sound and equitable societies that live together in interdependence and diversity. This requires individual and collective responsibility at local, national and planetary level."

"[P]reparing ourselves for the required changes depends on advancing collective understanding of the systemic nature of the crisis that threatens the world's future. The root causes of such problems as increasing poverty, environmental deterioration and communal violence can be found in the dominant socio-economic system. This system is based in over-production and over-consumption for some and under-consumption and inadequate conditions to produce for the great majority."

1 Bonn Declaration, UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, April 2009.
2 Preamble, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992.
3 Annex 6, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992.
4 Preamble, Agenda 21, 1992.

Still, with the situation of underdevelopment and environmental destruction unabated, governments in 2000 adopted the achievement of environmental sustainability[5] as its seventh goal in the global Millennium Development Goals to be ultimately assessed five years from now.

Yet, alarming is the silence about education for sustainable development of the global documents on the current Climate Change discourse. Surely education on the issue about Climate Change is not just about building capacities on emerging technologies. Education on the issue of Climate Change is Education for Sustainable Development. It is the development of awareness of peoples on continuing causes and effects of the problem, and harnessing context-specific knowledge and practices and melding this with viable technological advances whenever possible, all in the hope of finding the most effective solutions to the global problem.

What We Want to Achieve

In order to attain equitable and sustainable development and address Climate Change, our work shall be guided by the following goals:

1. To work for capacity building of peoples to understand and respond to impacts of climate change;
2. To facilitate dialogues between peoples and informed engagement with their respective governments for effective Climate Change mitigation, adaptation, risk reduction and disaster preparedness;
3. To build a network of environmental educators from civil society, peoples organizations, academe, and government, who can act as catalyst in bringing about changes in their respective communities and countries as well as to the global community towards the elimination of the causes of Climate Change.

The Conveners

1. Frances Quimpo, Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines (CEC)
2. Dominic D'Souza, Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change (INECC)
3. Jang Mee-jeong, Korea Environmental Education Center (KEEC)
4. Heribert Hinzen, *dvv international* Asia
5. Mua Vermeulen, Matualeoo Environment Trust (METI), Samoa
6. Roberto Guevarra, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)
7. Timotei Vaioleti, Prof. University of Waikato

5 Goal 7, United Nations Millennium Development Goals, 2000.

Deforestation, erosion, and depleted farmland that must produce food for a growing number of families are only a few of the problems facing the people in the region along the Mpufure River in Zimbabwe. Ecologically compatible farming methods, relocation of plots, new and more efficient sources of energy, appropriate technologies, crop diversification, and reforestation are strategies which "Penya Trust" combines with methods of the "Reflect" approach in efforts developed together with rural communities to address these problems and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Lawrence Hoba/Hillary J. Musarurwa

PENYA – Fighting Climate Change through Knowledge

Who We are and Who We Work With?

The journey to effective youth involvement and participation in development initiatives within communities in which we operate has never been an easy task, and continues to be an uneven and bumpy road. This is mainly because the youth remain a largely contested constituency in developing countries, including Zimbabwe, with various activities and organisations, including political parties, targeting their attention. And yet this journey can be one of the most fulfilling for any development worker, as you find an enthusiastic and active group, willing to walk and work with you during a project's period, and take over once you have finished implementing and have to leave the area. And this has been the journey that PENYA has traversed so far since 2006, one that is so fulfilling and yet has its challenges.

PENYA means *"TO SHINE"* in the local indigenous Shona language, and thus our motto says: *"making them shine."* It is the organisation's desire to make children and youth in our community shine regardless of the hardships they face. Thus our main targets are youths, i.e. persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years, and children, mainly orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). Not only does the leadership of PENYA identify with this group (as they are all youth), it sees great potential in them. Whilst it is undeniable that youth the world over are an important

source of energy for anything to move (anyone being in this prime age is eager and anxious to make an impact in society), we are convinced that if this energy is properly harnessed (like a dammed hydro-generation plant) it can bring tremendous positive change in Zimbabwe.

However, over the past years, experience has proven that the youth, due to their vulnerability through not owning any means to economic emancipation, are exposed to exploitation by the rich, powerful and those who are politically strong. They have been used as fronts for crime, political violence and disruptions that have created a bad name for the youth constituency. It is our vision to undo this labelling that has taken place over the past years and paint a different picture of youth in the community. We foresee ourselves activating and mobilising a critical mass of youth who can be catalysts for positive community development. These youth will participate directly and indirectly in our activities as they rebuild their communities whilst identifying ways to sustain their livelihoods.

The word PENYA is, however, an acronym for Practical Empowerment and Networking Youth Association, which gives the impetus to all our programming and activities. Our driving force is: If something doesn't result in practical empowerment directly or indirectly, then its not worth doing! This has also driven our vision which is *"To practically empower children and youth in all aspects of life to ensure total independence."*

To achieve the work with the youth and children, PENYA recognises the indivisibility of the community in which they live, and engages all community members and age groups. We work mainly in rural areas and high density areas, carrying out research and assessments that are used in advocacy and lobbying for policy changes. The main aim is to advocate and ensure the socio-economic empowerment of children and youth through the thematic areas of education, health and hygiene, agriculture and environment, economic empowerment and research and advocacy. Gender and HIV and AIDS issues are mainstreamed in all our programming.

We have also worked, and continue to partner, with various local and international organisations, including the Government of Zimbabwe, local authorities, United Nations agencies, OXFAM, other international NGOs, donors, embassies and various youth networks through cluster activities and coordinated responses mainly in issues of health and advocacy. As a youth-centred non-governmental organisation formed by and run by youth, PENYA is part of a growing network of youth-led initiatives targeting various issues on human rights, governance and development. Coordinated responses have helped us reach a greater audience than we would have with own resources.

Students posing with refuse bins for their school *Source: PENYA Trust*

What Does our Work Include

The specific activities that we have undertaken so far in the various communities around Zimbabwe are as follows:

Dzidzo Inokosha (Education is precious)

In this project, orphaned and vulnerable children have been assisted with school fees payments and the supply of educational requirements. Beneficiaries have their fees paid for and also receive packs of stationery, uniforms and food so as to ensure that they continue with their schooling without worrying about their situation at home. Donations of textbooks and sports equipment have also been made to a number of schools. We still continue to mobilise more text and reading books that are forwarded to marginalised schools. Some of the partners we have worked with include Book Aid International.

Y.E.S.S. (Youth economic and skills support)

The project targets mainly out of school youth through life-skills training and access to equipment, machinery and the tools necessary to run projects individually. There is also a great emphasis on helping youth access loans and grants from government, banks and other sources.

Capacity building for community initiatives to mitigate climate change effects

With an understanding that vulnerable groups may not be able to take care of themselves, projects under this category mainly target guardians and care-givers

through income-generating activities and sustainable food production to make them independent from hand-outs. There are also projects targeted mainly at reversing environmental degradation through reforestation and land reclamation. The main thrust of these projects is to transfer knowledge and information to community members who become the custodians of the info-data bank for the generations to come. Communities are being trained in environmental protection, climate change and the adoption of energy saving technologies.

WASH (Water, sanitation and hygiene)

Working under the theme *"catching them young for a healthy nation",* activities under WASH are targeted mainly at school children. Activities include sanitation and hygiene promotion in schools, borehole and sanitation facilities rehabilitation and participatory hygiene education for care-givers and children who are HIV positive and living with AIDS. In 2010, non-food items were distributed in Mabvuku/ Tafara, a high density area in Harare, to over 22,000 households as part of a campaign towards prevention of cholera and typhoid.

Taurai/ Talk about HIV/AIDS

The concept behind *Taurai* (which means talk/discuss) HIV/AIDS is to encourage dialogue around HIV/AIDS issues in churches and schools. There has been a noticeable silence in churches, and the activities therefore revolve around encouraging openness about one's status as well as carrying out awareness and prevention campaigns. Psychosocial support is also offered to affected and infected youth and children.

How We Do it – Our Approach

However, practical empowerment is not possible where the development worker comes into a community with solutions for problems, both real and imaginary, that they had already developed somewhere in an office. The outcome is usually that the solutions are partial and impractical and, in the worst case, create more problems than they solve. This has always been the argument by many against aid in Africa and the developing world, that development organisations leave more damage than positive impacts. At PENYA, the thrust has always been to use participatory approaches right from problem identification through to programme evaluation. This is why we where very excited when we engaged with d*vv International* to work around the introduction and scaling up of the use of a participatory based technique called *Reflect* (Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Community Techniques) in Zimbabwe.

Whilst the approach is relatively new it has resulted in greater participation from members of the community, including those whose voices had been silenced by their own illiteracy, and also resulted in a greater awareness of rights. *Reflect* is, however, not limited to these two issues, and PENYA is working with community circles through facilitators it has trained to identify those issues that are peculiar to their own existence. Thus communities are increasingly being more involved in creating solutions that work for them.

Still, this does not necessarily guarantee any buy-in from the communities. Zimbabwe remains a highly polarised nation where political allegiance can take precedence over the benefits of any development work. The major problem is that politics have enough power to sway the masses against reason. Thus, sometimes you find youth and other community members who have been brain-washed and will not give you a chance to enter into an area, even when your coming in will benefit them more than any politician will ever.

As a development organisation, you have to go through intense bureaucratic registration procedures for you to be allowed to work in any area in Zimbabwe. This had been our major drawback – getting the authority to operate within certain areas (more so those that have great potential to sway votes in favour of certain politicians). Even then, when you have secured the necessary government documents, you have to satisfy relevant and irrelevant authorities that your programming is not going to affect their political fiefdoms. Thus any talk that borders around issues of democracy, good governance and human rights can sometimes find you at loggerheads with political authorities.

A Close Look at Our Program

Having given you an insight into our organisational work, it would be appropriate to get closer to our work by sharing our experiences in carrying out a project to fight climate change within the community. We set out to commit the community to fighting climate change and building its capacity to mitigate and adapt to its effects whilst at the same time addressing the challenge of food insecurity. Whilst we may not directly point it out, it's our hope that from this case study you will be able to identify what we wanted to achieve, what problems we needed to overcome, what framework conditions influenced our work, how we went about working, what changes we were able to achieve and how these changes affected the community.

We hope you will be inspired to scale up such community work with youth in your own fields of action.

Project Summary

This project was for the improvement of environmental protection initiatives being undertaken by PENYA Trust in collaboration with the youth and other stakeholders from three villages of Ward 4 of Chegutu rural district, with plans to expand to two other villages in the ward as well as three others in Goromonzi District (after securing additional funding). The project carried activities covering the following thematic areas:

Biodiversity – this was the major thematic area but the others of land degradation and climate changes were incorporated during programming as they can be mainstreamed in the capacity building of the community's initiatives in environmental protection.

Information dissemination and policy advocacy at local levels was mainstreamed into all activities as it is integral to ensuring that the community and its stakeholders are well appraised on environmental protection issues.

Over a projected twelve month project tenure period, the following activities were undertaken:

- Enhancement of local capacities to appropriately and effectively manage and respond to environmental challenges and food security threats through training, information, education and communication material and workshops.
- Setting up of gardens for sustainable utilization of natural resources and biodiversity management by communities (relocation of stream bank gardens).
- Adoption of alternative forms of energy through biogas or wood-saving stoves.
- Establishment of woodlots and orchard gardens and planting of vertiver grass to curb soil erosion.

Fighting erosion through the planting of vertiver grass *Source: PENYA Trust*

Community Background

The community we worked with is from Chegutu Rural District's Ward 4. The villages covered are Chinengundu, Chipashu and Churu. We also worked with Chipashu Primary School, where we set up an Environmental Club for the school pupils there.

The youth in the area had done little in protecting their environment, mainly due to lack of knowledge as well as having little or no impetus to make their own initiatives for a positive change in their community. Those doing something were doing it on a very small scale. This project aimed at training the youth in life skills that would propel them as agents for positive social change. The youth were motivated and activated to be environmental protectionists in their communities and thus ensure sustainable agricultural practices that safeguard their livelihoods. Other interventions such as income generating clubs were promoted to allow for community participation, best practice learning, thereby ensuring project ownership and sustainability. The project was characterized by active community participation, involvement of vulnerable households that are affected by HIV/AIDS, housing/supporting orphans, and there was promotion of local skills and indigenous knowledge systems as well as capacity building of youth to provide home grown solutions.

The Community's Capacity Profile

The community is made up of a population of various skills and abilities. Given the high rate of unemployment in the country there is a large number of youth who have finished their studies but have no form of employment that is found in these villages. The community therefore has an abundance of active members that can be used to influence community change. Given the right impetus, the youth in this area can be the drivers of the environmental change needed.

The Problem: What Needed to Be Addressed!

The villages in Ward 4 face a myriad of challenges. Chief amongst them are deforestation (the indiscriminate cutting down of trees), land degradation through stream-bank cultivation, and gullies due to loss of surface cover. This area is prone to soil erosion, soil infertility, deforestation and over-harvesting of wood for fuel and medicines. The once dense forest around the banks of the nearby Mupfure River is now sparsely populated thus increasing the risk of siltation. The lack of education and awareness programs and land use planning can be cited as contributing to the accelerated degradation.

As the number of households living in the area increase (due to more births) and the land available both for residential and farming purposes becomes less, more families have to share the little farming space available. This has disturbed natural ecosystems, thus reduces biodiversity, and changes the habitats of certain species. The ward and its environs have experienced a reduction in crop and livestock diversity which increased food insecurity

Households still rely heavily on wood fuel, and due to the lack of capacity and knowledge to adapt to biogas technology and wood-saving stoves, the use of alternative sources of energy is still limited in this ward. Agricultural development is therefore at risk because of unsustainable practices, accelerated soil erosion, soil degradation and a general decrease in land productivity. The result is decreasing self sufficiency for most food produce, so there is a desperate need to focus on the conservation, efficient use and effective management of the available land and water resources.

The Solution

The project proposed several initiatives that would reduce vulnerability. There was need to disseminate information on best environmental protection practices. More information was shared through training on renewable energy, coordinated efforts, facilitating the procurement and adaptation of technologies, and promoting the development of new energy technologies by providing resources. We encouraged the households to grow traditional crops and small grains as well as adopt conservation methods that helped to boost biodiversity. The conservation of ecosystems is likely to create carbon sinks that will reduce the level of carbon emissions and the effects of climate change. The community was thus encouraged to grow natural/traditional trees and other grass cultivars that will improve natural habitats. To enhance food security and help those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to improve their livelihoods and boost their immune systems, growing traditional herbs and crops in the communal gardens was encouraged.

Establishment of wood lots and planting of vetiver grass on the homesteads and other vulnerable and exposed areas will minimize surface run off and soil erosion. It will also prevent the formation of gullies and ultimately desertification. The proposed biogas and wood-saving stoves are technology that is important in the reduction in the cutting down of trees for energy purposes and has the advantage of increasing efficiency in the use of wood fuel and other natural sources by households. This will help to promote the regeneration of vegetation, in particular, trees, thus enhancing biodiversity and natural habitats.

Handover of reference books *Source: PENYA Trust*

Links to National Initiatives and Goals

Zimbabwe has undertaken several initiatives that are aimed at addressing the environmental challenges faced in the country. These include The National Environment Policy (NEP), National Drought Management Policy, The Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) policy and the Water Resource Management Strategy. This project aligns itself to such strategies and initiatives and is guided by the policies in terms of projected achievements and methodologies. The project will also help the country in achieving the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1 and 7.

Activities and Intended Results

The project aimed at building local capacities to appropriately and effectively manage and respond to environmental challenges and food security threats through training and workshops. This goal was achieved with the help of community mobilisation rallies, awareness building with village leaders and the training of selected Village Environment Protection Promoters. These actions resulted in a well informed and capacitated community that is able to solve environmental and food insecurity challenges in its environment.

Specifically, the project focused on the increase of the supply of household water through windmill driven pumps and water harvesting techniques, as well as the increase of water supply for gardening activities. Participants of the project learned to build cisterns and water ponds and to make use of earth banks, bench and contour stone terraces. Water pumps were set up at strategic points. As a consequence, households enjoyed increased water supply and improved food security and community livelihoods.

Another goal of the project was to introduce sustainable agriculture techniques and to control land degradation as an environmental measure against stream bank cultivation. Gardens were relocated to safer and more appropriate sites, woodlots, hedges and orchards were established. Participants learned about conservation

farming techniques such as zero tillage, rotational cropping, progressive retention of crop residue, composting and integrated pest management. The planting of trees and vertiver grass and the cultivation of nurseries for seedlings was encouraged in order to control soil erosion, whilst the demand for fuel wood was reduced by equipping households with energy efficient stoves.

Implementation Plan

The project had two crucial phases, the phase for sharing information and building of awareness and the practical action phase. The first phase started within the first month of funding and was very short, spanning over a month. This phase involved the training of Village Environment Protection Promoters (VEPPs), community meetings with leaders and other stakeholders as well as awareness campaigns with other members of the community. The second phase in which the beneficiaries put into practise what they were taught and were enabled to indicate an understanding of the knowledge they acquired ran for the remaining period of the project tenure. This project is now entering its home-stretch and is expected to come to an end within the next two months (by February 2011).

Project Characteristics

Ensuring active community participation: Active community participation was well achieved through community involvement in all stages of the project life cycle. The project members were responsible for electing their own leadership and drew up a constitution to govern their activities. The project members were also responsible for internal monitoring and evaluation of project activities.

Capacity building: First and foremost the capacity of the project members was built through knowledge sharing and training on environmental issues. Members' capacity to initiate and manage development projects was enhanced through training and workshops on other skills such as minutes writing, writing of reports, community financial administration and **communication** skills. The introduction of the Reflect method during the project tenure was also helpful in the capacity building.

Sustainable livelihoods: This project offers alternative means of livelihood to the youth. The gardens and orchards put under sustainable conservation agriculture will provide the participants with sufficient vegetables, fruits and other crops throughout the year. Water harvesting will provide ready cash for the households through the sale of agricultural produce as well as of seedlings grown in nurseries run by the youth, while those who have acquired the skills to construct energy efficient stoves and windmills have ready employment servicing the needy households as well as making similar structures for other villages.

Gender Issues: To enhance gender equality, each village forwarded 2 youth (one male and one female) to be trained as Village Environmental Protection Promoters. It is important to note that female participation in developmental projects in rural areas is minimal. To address this challenge the project was deliberately composed of 60% female beneficiaries. The young women/girls identified as direct beneficiaries from the targeted 100 households were part of the leadership, and they have participated intensively in the decision-making process in the project. Since women do almost all the cooking in the households, they were also selected for training on the construction of the stoves and their optimum use.

Awareness of Global Environment: Community members met every 3 months in order to share information on various issues and developments concerning the environment. PENYA assisted by carrying out research and the sourcing for information that was handed down to the Village Environment Protection Promoters (VEPPs) to use at such meetings. The same meetings were used to identify any underlying problems affecting the community as well as identify any deviation from the set project targets. Through workshops, meetings and exchange visits, the project allowed for the creation of environmental awareness. The beneficieries were also trained by expert agriculturists and environmentalists on various activities such as sustainable land management practices, agro forestry, or water harvesting. These trainings equipped the community with skills relevant to managing and overcoming their challenges.

Innovative Financial Mechanisms: The household income is expected to be derieved from the sale of the vegetables, herbs and fruits. The participants of the project were trained in financial management skills to ensure a viable management of any income-generating activities they will undertake.

Distribution of seed packs for conservation farming *Source: PENYA Trust*

Project Impact

On the Environment: The project contributed towards protection of woodlands and the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources which are currently under threat. It also promoted wind energy technology which is renewable, non pollutant to land and air resources and thus environmentally friendly. Other significant positive impacts on the environment included mitigating climate change, developing community adaptation strategies to climate changes, promoting increases in biomass production, saving biodiversity, and combating soil erosion and deforestation.

Policy Influence: The project improved local policies governing the use and management of natural resources through the sensitization of local leaders on the crucial role they can play in making policy changes within their community. They were encouraged to consult and come up with local community by laws that will enhance environmental protection and promote sustainable use of natural resources. The project managed to strengthen the national policy on community management of natural resources, which emphasizes community ownership and benefit through natural resources management.

Possibility of Replication: The project started off with only 100 households from the 3 villages. Lessons learnt will be used to replicate the initiatives, firstly in all the other villages in this ward and then in other wards within the other districts in which PENYA operates.

Sustainability: Communities enjoyed direct benefits from this project in the form of enhanced livelihoods and improved nutritional diet. The beneficiaries will continue to work towards economic sustainability by running the orchards, herb and vegetable gardens as viable enterprises. Because of its participatory methodology, there will be enhanced community ownership, and thus the project can be sustained through replicity (with those not initially identified as beneficiaries learning from others). Due to the community commitment at the village level, good environmental protection initiatives will be made sustainable through the involvement of everyone. The youths will also use the skills gained to sustain their livelihoods and thus generate their own income.

Distribution of non food items to the community
Source: PENYA Trust

The "Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility" was ratified at the First International Conference on Environmental Education, which was held in 1992 parallel to the first Earth Summit in Brazil. Twenty years later, we are still a long way from achieving the mutually agreed goals. In their article, the authors appeal to adult educators and environmental educators to combine forces in a worldwide network, and to work together to develop new approaches to learning and knowledge, and to proactively foster the creation of a wide range of alternative, self-determined, and sustainable forms of work and consumption.

Marcos Sorrentino/Simone Portugal/Moema Viezzer

REAJA! Environmental Education for Young People and Adults

Human values such as solidarity, dialogue, and respect for all forms of life – principles which we have inherited from the various philosophical, political, and spiritual traditions – represent challenges and options for us in the face of the baffling socio-environmental changes that we are witnessing in societies all over the world today.

At the same time, the events shaping modern history are making it clear how urgent it has become for humanity to eliminate all forms of discrimination and prejudice, from the most subtle to the most brutal. Gender and environmentalist movements play a key role in the process of developing new levels of awareness (Castells, 1999). The present article seeks to discuss various aspects of endeavours toward this end.

Human societies must be willing and committed to implement changes that will ensure the future of the species. For changes to occur in behaviour and attitudes, however, permanent and continuous education is necessary in every facet of our daily lives. Although the need for close communication and cooperation in the various areas of education may seem obvious, records of events and reports contain too little evidence of dialogue between the environmental education sector and popular education for young people and adults.

Our aim in the following is to demonstrate the urgency that exists to integrate environmental education into education for young people and adults, and to foster closer cooperation and dialogue between the two areas in order to expand our perspectives on the issues and challenges referred to above.

Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility [1]

The Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility is an outcome of the First International Conference on Environmental Education, an event which took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, parallel to the Second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which was held during that year's Global Forum. The Treaty was drafted over the course of a year in a cooperative effort among adult, youth, and childhood educators from eight regions of the world (Latin America, North America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, the Arab States, Africa, and the South Pacific). It was initially published in five languages: Portuguese, French, Spanish, English, and Arabic.

Besides serving as a guideline for educational activities, the Treaty stimulated the creation of civil society organizations and networks within the framework of environmental education.

The following principles, as outlined in the Treaty, continue to inspire the work of countless Adult Education initiatives throughout the world today:

1. Education is the right of all; we are all learners and educators.
2. Environmental education, whether formal, non-formal or informal, should be grounded in critical and innovate thinking in any time or place, promoting the transformation and reconstruction of society.
3. Environmental education is both individual and collective. It aims to develop local and global citizenship with respect to the self determination and the sovereignty of nations.
4. Environmental education is not neutral but is value based. It is an act for social transformation.

1 Parts of the following section are taken from the article *"Educación ambiental de jóvenes y adultos – EAJA –: la educación de jóvenes y adultos a la luz del Tratado de Educación Ambiental para Sociedades Sostenibles y Responsabilidad Global"* [Environmental education for youth and adults – EYA – education for youth and adults in the light of the Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility], written by the same authors and published in the Latin American journal on education and politics *La Piragua*, 2009.

5. Environmental education must involve a holistic approach and thus an interdisciplinary focus in the relations between human beings, nature and the universe.
6. Environmental education must stimulate solidarity, equality, and respect human rights involving democratic strategies and an open climate of cultural interchange.
7. Environmental education should treat critical global issues, their causes and interrelationships with a systemic approach and within their social and historical contexts. Fundamental issues in relation to development and the environment such as population, health, peace, human rights, democracy, hunger, degradation of flora and fauna, should be perceived in this manner.
8. Environmental education must facilitate equal partnerships in the processes of decision-making at all levels and stages.
9. Environmental education must recover, recognize, respect, reflect, and utilize indigenous history and local cultures, as well as promoting cultural, linguistic, and ecological diversity. This implies acknowledging the historical perspective of native peoples as a way to change ethnocentric approaches, as well as the encouragement of bilingual education.
10. Environmental education should empower all peoples and promote opportunities for grassroots democratic change and participation. This means that communities must regain control of their own destiny.
11. Environmental education values all different forms of knowledge. Knowledge is diverse, cumulative, and socially produced, and should not be patented or monopolized.
12. Environmental education must be designed to enable people to manage conflicts in just and humane ways.
13. Environmental education must stimulate dialogue and cooperation among individuals and institutions in order to create new lifestyles which are based on meeting everyone's basic need, regardless of ethnic group, gender, age, religious, class, physical, or mental differences.
14. Environmental education requires a democratization of the mass media and its commitment to the interests of all sectors of society. Communication is an inalienable right and the mass media must be transformed into one of the main channels of education, not only by disseminating information on an egalitarian basis, but also through the exchange of means, values and experiences.
15. Environmental education must integrate knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and actions. It should convert every opportunity into an educational experience for sustainable societies.

16. Education must help develop an ethical awareness of all forms of life with which humans share this planet, respect all life cycles, and impose limits on human exploitation of other forms of life.[2]

The Treaty was reviewed and updated in 2006, at the Fifth Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education, which was convened in the Brazilian city of Joinville (State of Santa Catarina). It was also the subject of a workshop held by the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya, and was presented in Ahmadabad, India at the international conference which marked the completion of 30 years of the first international Environmental Education conference in Tbilisi, Georgia. These international events confirmed the continuing validity of the Treaty, paving the way for the Second International Conference on Environmental Education.

Considering that the year 2012, which marks the 20th anniversary of the Treaty, also represents a culmination point in history, the participants of the first conference decided to schedule the second conference in that year not only in recognition of the need for ongoing follow-up and periodic evaluation of the Treaty, but also as a symbolic act and a political opportunity to use the occasion of the year to set the course that humanity should follow in coming generations. All the projections and scenarios that have been sketched for the future, from the Mayan prophecies to the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and, last but not least, the decision on the part of the UN and the Brazilian government to hold the conference, point to the importance of this moment.

From now until 2012, it will be up to the organizations of civil society together with university faculties, the State and other social actors, to take up the challenge and, in a process of debate and public action, to lead the efforts to bring environmental education into the forefront of public policy.

Adult and Youth Education from the Perspective of Environmental Education

The quest for human and social transformation and the incentive to build equitable and ecologically balanced societies, in accordance with the objectives set forth in the Treaty, require us to address the causes of human and social degradation from a global and systemic perspective, while at the same time taking local realities into consideration. To achieve the kind of world envisaged in the treaty demands

2 www.prosus.uio.no/english/sus_dev/alternativ-agenda/Environmental_Education.html

that we promote cultural diversity, that we recognize and respect diverse forms of knowledge, and that we create alternatives for life based on self-determination in matters relating to labour, resources, and knowledge, and sustainable modes of production and consumption.

Environmental education *"aims to develop local and global citizenship with respect for self-determination and the sovereignty of nations"*, and must *"act to eradicate sexist, racist and other prejudices, as well as contribute to the promotion of (...) territorial rights"*.[3]

Equally important is the role played by public policies in environmental education and adult and youth education in order to ensure the right to education without discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnic origin, class, sexual orientation, and religion. There is a need to bring stakeholders together to develop synergies in the implementation of activities, and to encourage exchange of information so as to stimulate reflection and improve the different modes of practice.

It is essential for us to develop critical awareness of this present and existential situation, and to reflect on modes of being and interacting in the world when we concern ourselves with educational action and policies, because

> *"to exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming".* (Freire, 2000, p. 88)

Besides being a generative theme, environment in a social context is an issue that can and must encourage processes of literacy learning and continuous education. It has the potential to reinforce acquired skills by incorporating them in an ongoing process of learning, thereby fostering the continuity of literacy within the world and for the *"world of life"*.

The demand for environmental education in adult and youth education is evident from a look at recent documents (Haugen, 2006; Merriam et al., 2006; Schemmann, 2007; Soriano, 2007; Tanvir, 2007). At the same time, these documents show an under-representation of environmental issues in the adult and youth education sector. These considerations point to the urgent need to more closely connect the two fields. The following observations in particular emerge from our analysis:

Various texts and authors explicitly, albeit generally, acknowledge the need to include environmental issues and environmental education in adult and youth training programmes.

3 Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility. www.tratadodeeducacaoambiental.net

There is a conspicuous lack of concepts, methods, techniques, and materials on environmental education in adult and youth education. Many texts and authors fail to mention them at all, and only very few describe them in any detail.

Only a minimal number of texts and authors point out examples of concrete activities and proposals for including environmental education in adult and youth education programmes.

REAJA: A Network of Environmental Education for Youth and Adults

The heading of this section sums up the proposal presented in the following paragraphs. It is a call for adult and youth educators to combine forces with environmental educators so that through interaction they can complement one another in achieving their objectives.

Besides being the Portuguese acronym for *"Environmental Education Network for Youth and Adults"* (***R**ede de **E**ducação **A**mbiental de **J**ovens e **A**dultos*), **REAJA,** as the imperative form of the Portuguese verb *reagir* (to react), is a call to action, an exhortation to act, to synergize action, to seize the challenge of building a better world, both individually and collectively. It is an invitation to take action in response to the tide of despair and authoritarian or eschatological solutions and to encourage and support young people and adults in every country and community on our planet to become environmentally literate and to take up the cause of protecting our environment. It is a petition to involve all citizens in permanent and continuous lifelong education, and to combine forces with all the relevant stakeholders to achieve that goal.

The point is to learn to *"read the world and the word"*, as Paulo Freire tells us; to improve the conditions of life and the systems that support life; to become qualified for jobs that are sustainable, and to promote the construction of sustainable societies; to come to know and transform the environment as a way to improve personal existence, but also as an act of solidarity with life, both human and non-human, and both near and far in time and space. In other words, we must learn to promote lifelong education as an instrument for the survival of life, an instrument that permits us to keep on improving life from day to day for each and every individual who lives on this *"small and still beautiful planet"*.

Without environmental education it will not be possible for us to respond to the anticipated global socio-environmental changes that are already taking place. Without adult and youth education, it will not be possible to achieve the Millennium Goals and the objectives of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

– goals and objectives which the nations of our world have also deemed to be of high priority in many other conventions and programmes.

The present time, accordingly, is a good opportunity for us to consider and discuss the relevance of and need for environmental education in training for young people and adults. As we approach the Second International Conference on the Treaty of Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility, it is an important opportunity for us to identify possible points of convergence.

To overcome different forms of imperialism, colonialism, armed invasion, and cultural oppression, to reach the goal of universal primary education, to reduce infant mortality, increase life expectancy, secure democracy and guarantee the right to vote, are all regarded as achievements for humanity. But such achievements have yet to be attained in many communities and countries of the world. And where they have, they come with a package of *"modernity"*, (the hyper-consumerist form of capitalism which Gilles Lypovetsky discusses in his book *Le bonheur paradoxal* / Paradoxical Happiness). This type of capitalism homogenizes cultures and eliminates diversity (substituting an *"I-it"* relationship for the *"I-Thou"* relationship, as Martin Buber phrases it). It endangers the survival of the entire human race. It has led to the extinction or degradation of various peoples and languages, as well as countless species and natural systems.

Young people and adults will be called upon more and more frequently to defend and protect their environment, to conserve and preserve the surroundings where they live, and to build their dreams of the future. Without them we will not be able to provide our children with education, nor will we be able to create the conditions they need to teach themselves.

Can the fragmentary data that has been collected on *"global warming"* wake us up to the connections that exist between what is happening and the lifestyle that has become characteristic of contemporary society? Or will the mass media portrayal of the phenomenon, the excess of information and consumer individualism, move us farther away from individual and collective action for change for the common good and public welfare?

How can it be that there are still governments of entire countries, large-scale corporations, and different civil society organizations around the globe which do not invest in Adult Education? And how can we continue to ignore the subject Environment in education for young people and adults?

These questions raise still others: How can we open up local and global spaces to reflect on our reality in terms of society and the environment in a way that will make adult and youth education *"education for life"*, the kind of education that can

truly improve the quality of life for humanity as a whole and for each of us as an individual. How can we transform adult and youth education into a prerequisite for every other type of education and for every development, cultural, and social programme and project? How can we keep adult and youth education from being restricted solely to learning the basic skills of literacy and arithmetic alongside a few other bits of general knowledge?

What Are our Hopes for Adult and Youth Education?

It is our hope that the Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility will be widely disseminated and implemented so that it reaches a high level of public awareness and stimulates critical debate; that it will promote participatory commitment on the part of the public as well as on the part of environmental educators and the social groups with whom they work. It is our hope, in particular, that adult and youth education will foster reflection and debate on the different socio-environmental realities both locally and globally, and that it will lead to individual and collective commitment to initiatives that are working to transform society for the common good in terms of conservation, environmental rehabilitation and improvement, and the quality of life for everyone. In this sense, it is our hope that adult and youth education will:

1. foster dialogue and critical debate among young people and adults on socio-environmental reality and ways for individual and collective participation to build sustainable societies;
2. utilize the Treaty on Environmental Education and the time from now until the Rio +20 Earth Summit in 2012 as an opportunity to form participatory learning circles on environment and the quality of life, and relate the treaty to other global charters for a sustainable future, in particular the Earth Charter; and
3. promote the building and/or strengthening of educator collectives so as to unite and combine the efforts of environmental and educational organizations, and elaborate and implement territorial projects that focus on political education oriented to synergizing concerted efforts of popular environmental educators and a wide variety of other social actors.

Public policies on environmental education must not be monocultural. It does not suffice for us to find good concepts and treat them as if they were the only ones that are sound. We must rather deal with, in, and for a diversity of stakeholders and their needs, demands, ideas, and alternatives for solutions in terms of conservation, environmental rehabilitation and improvement, and the quality of life for each and every human being, species, society, and ecosystem.

Examples of efforts which have been following this aim in Brazil's school system over the past decade include: the national curriculum plan (*Plano Curricular Nacional PCN*), curriculum action plans (*Planos Curriculares PCNs em Ação*), commissions to promote environmental education and quality of life in the school system (*Com-Vidas Comissões de Meio Ambiente e Qualidade de Vida nas Escolas*), sequential environmental education programmes (*Educação Ambiental Seqüencial*), the national children and youth conference on environment (*Conferência Nacional Infanto-Juvenil de Meio Ambiente*), transversal projects and studies, environmental education centres, environmental working groups, art-based environmental initiatives, ecology clubs, and the re-adoption of a decision that had previously been put aside to make environmental education a discipline in its own right.

In the nonformal education sector, there are other projects that merit mention: green rooms (environmental education *telecentros*); educator collectives (together with a diversity of social actors); environmental management training initiatives; measures to acquaint people with the procedures for obtaining environmental permits; environmental education in conservation units; participatory learning circles on environment and quality of life; measures to build awareness about environmental legislation and supervision. These examples represent only a few of the many positive efforts that are being undertaken.

Despite all these initiatives, we still cannot make the simple claim that we are all *"environmentally educated"*.

Education is a process. As such, it must be permanent and continuous. It must be a lifetime process that is realised in an articulated manner by all the institutions and people who are involved in every facet of our existence. It is a process that must always seek to include every participant in every space of life.

Neither the State nor isolated and rivalling institutions that compete with one another for the few souls that are interested and involved in environmental education can be expected to work a miracle that will turn us into environmentally educated people.

It is the role of public policy on environmental education to bring together all the different actors who can contribute to the process, and to stimulate them, within the limits of their individual realities and their objective and subjective potential, to synergize their efforts and exchange information so as to improve their practice and concepts. The object must be to foster integrated and integrating action and to encourage the greatest diversity of constructive initiatives that will enable every sphere to do its part to advance the cause of environmental education.

Our actions must proceed from local reality. They must be based on synchronic and diachronic solidarity, and must be constant and continuous. In other words,

we must work together in solidarity to conserve and improve the quality of life for each and every one of us who are presently sharing this planet, and for all those who will be sharing it in the future. This is what makes it important to search for sustainable modes of production and consumption.

Since its inception, the World Social Forum has insisted that *"Another World is Possible"*. Many uncertainties have arisen over the feasibility of this affirmation, especially in the face of the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, the socio-environmental changes associated with global warming, the persistence of wars and military spending on every continent in the world, the growing numbers of people living at or below the poverty line, and so many other disheartening trends.

But just as in Portuguese the word *vida* (life) is imbedded in the word *dúvida* (doubt), and considering the fact that where there is life there is always doubt as well as hope, it is, indeed, possible for us to believe that another world is possible, and that other human societies are possible. But such societies must be built by people in the course of their daily lives, both now and in the future.

It is crucial that every school be transformed into a centre that provides permanent lifelong education parallel and complementary to schooling for young people and adults. Above all, however, these centres must facilitate access to education in the spirit of the cultural circles proposed by Paulo Freire.

By anchoring the kind of cultural circles or participatory learning groups that focus on environment and the quality of life within our schools and other public and community facilities, we can create opportunities for people to critically examine their environment and learn how to leverage their individual and collective power to act.

If we work to strengthen society's grassroots organizations, and encourage them to form collective learning groups that collaborate in all the different regions of every country; if our institutions cooperate with the inhabitants of these regions to realize participatory models of political education projects, we will succeed in shaping and implementing public policies committed to environmental sustainability.

The organization of learning communities and learning circles to promote the training of popular environmental educators, and the creation of a global network of all stakeholders to facilitate and strengthen contacts and initiatives on the part of environmental education for young people and adults, are good places to start. REAJA is a step in that direction.

References

Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. Translated by Ronald G. Smith. New York: Scribner's, 1958; New York: Collier Books, 1987.

Castells, Manuel. *A Era da Informação: economia, sociedade e cultura* [The age of information: economy, society and culture], 3 Volumes, São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1999.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Haugen, Caitlin Secrest. Environmental Adult Educator Training: Suggestions for Effective Practice. In *Convergence*. Montevideo: ICAE. Volume XXXIX, no. 4, 2006. pp. 91-106.

Lipovetsky, Gilles. *A Felicidade Paradoxal* [Paridoxical Happiness]. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2007.

Merriam, Sharan B; Courtenay, Bradley C.; Cervero, Ronald M. Temas Mundiales y Educación de Adultos: Perspectivas para América Latina, Sur de África, y Estados Unidos [Global issues and adult education: perspectives from Latin America, Southern Africa and the United States]. In *Convergence*. Montevideo: ICAE. Volume XXXIX, no. 4, 2006. pp.142-144.

Schemmann, Michael. CONFINTEA V desde la perspectiva de la organización política mundial [CONFINTEA V from the world polity perspective]. In *Convergence*. Montevideo: ICAE. Volume XL, no. 3-4, 2007. pp.167-179.

Soriano, Cecilia. Desafíos de la alfabetización de personas adultas: las 7 M [Adult literacy challenge. The 7 Ms]. In *Convergence*. Montevideo: ICAE. Volume XL, no. 3-4, 2007. pp.193-201.

Sorrentino, Marcos; Portugal, Simone; Viezzer, Moema. *Educação Ambiental de Jovens e Adultos – EAJA – A Educação de Jovens e Adultos à Luz do Tratado de Educação Ambiental para Sociedades Sustentáveis e Responsabilidade Global*. [Environmental education for youth and adults – EYA – education for youth and adults in the light of the Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility] Revista LatinoAmericana de Educación y Política La Piragua. CEAAL no. 29, II, 2009.

Tanvir, Mohammad Muntasim. Más allá de la retórica: una receta para la acción de la sociedad civil sobre la alfabetización. [Beyond Rhetoric: A Recipe for Civil Society Action on Literacy] In *Convergence*. Montevideo: ICAE. Volume XL, no. 3-4, 2007. pp.137-150.

Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility. www.tratadodeeducacaoambiental.net

Viezzer, Moema; Ovalles, Omar; Trajber, Rachel. *Manual Latino-Americano de Educação Ambiental* [Latin American Handbook on Environmental Education], São Paulo: Editora Gaia, 1995.

Alan Tuckett

Join us!

The VIII th ICAE World Assembly

For ten years now we have asserted, with other civil society organisations that *"another world is possible"* – one that is grounded in mutuality, human rights, and the opportunity for women and men to learn throughout their lives.

From CONFINTEA V in Hamburg onwards, ICAE's members monitored the extent to which its recommendations had been implemented by the nations that signed up to them. We have been active in the work leading to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All targets. Again, we monitored implementation on the ground. Our advocacy academy has built capacity among emerging leaders on every continent.

At Belém, in CONFINTEA VI we co-ordinated a critical civil society platform, challenging national states to recognise the importance learning plays in the lives of young people and adults alike, and its key role in supporting the ambitions enshrined in the EFA and MDG goals.

Now at the 8th World Assembly of the ICAE we need to move beyond the assertion that *"another world is possible"*, to ask how we can create a world worth living in for young people and adults throughout the world.

We have chosen 4 themes through which to explore the Council's agenda for the next 3 years.

First we have, of course, to explore the opportunities and challenges presented by the agenda of CONFINTEA VI, the revised MDGs, and by the last years of the period covered by the EFA targets. A key thematic – raised at CONFINTEA VI and adopted in the agenda for action-concerns migration and the learning needs and rights of individuals and communities displaced by political oppression or economic necessity.

Second, we will explore the possibilities presented for learning at and through work – paid and unpaid, co-operative and employed.

Third, we will address the learning dimensions of environmental change, global warming, and the differential impact on different societies.

Fourth, we are taking advantage of meeting in Malmo, Sweden to look at lessons and experiences arising from the Nordic tradition of popular enlightenment.

Taking the 4 themes we will then weave a programme of action to recommend to the ICAE General Assembly.

There has never been a more important time for popular and adult educators to work together to share experience and to frame thinking on what a world worth living in – for everyone – would look like, and what role learning can play. Join us!

Climate change is a universal but abstract threat for women shellfish harvesters in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. By resorting to the age-old tradition of storytelling involving metaphors that reflect reality, and by organizing field trips to facilitate the exchange of experience with other groups which have found solutions to similar problems, the project described in this article has helped to increase awareness about the ecological connections behind the degradation of ocean ecosystems. Participants are coming to recognize the necessity, but also the feasibility, of adopting eco-friendly practices of mussel and crab harvesting in order to foster the rehabilitation of biological habitats along the coastline.

Siân Davies/Heila Lotz-Sisitka/Rob O'Donoghue

Learning with Story and Metaphor

Introduction

Much has been said about climate change and its projected impacts on rural communities in Africa. Little has been said, however, on how we should think about facilitating learning at the local level in ways that support people's capabilities to adapt to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. Climate change remains a somewhat abstract, yet ever present risk which is difficult to see or do anything about, particularly when you are at the receiving end of climate change impacts, as most southern African communities are.

Our learning story is based on working with women shellfish harvesters in Hamburg and Ngqinisa, two coastal communities in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. While this work does not focus directly on climate change, it addresses the

Women harvest shellfish in the coastal communities of Hamburg and Ngqinisa
Source: Siân Davies

wider issue of how communities faced with risk learn about these risks and about possible alternative practices. The community of women we worked with are faced with similar risks to others in southern Africa who are living in extreme poverty and are faced with challenges presented by the loss of the marine resources on which they depend. The average household income of the women we worked with was in the region of $80-$100 per month, and most women were caring for between 6-9 children some of whom were orphans resulting from the impact of HIV/AIDS on their community. Our aim was to understand how women learn to mediate risk in such a context.

Picture Stories and Metaphor as Learning Methods

We needed to create and develop learning spaces and educational materials that could bridge the divide between two worlds of knowledge and context – the ecological explanations of scientists and conservationists and the everyday practices of collecting marine resources for survival. To do this, we decided to focus on developing co-learning methods and started by using a picture-based story approach.

We began by asking the women to tell stories of their harvesting experiences. Their initial stories emphasised the abundance of resources available and the belief that they were in fact increasing. Thus, they argued, the limitations stipulated by the harvesting regulations were an unnecessary hardship, especially in the context of poverty. Through photographs taken by all of us (the women and the researchers) of the rocky shore environment and harvesting practices, we built up a picture that more accurately reflected the reality of declining coastal resources. Looking at these pictures led the women harvesters to alter their stories. They started to talk more about the loss of the resources and what it would mean for their incomes and their livelihoods. This indicates that the use of photographs led to a heightened self-awareness among the women and enabled them to begin talking about the realities of resource decline. Despite the recognition of resource decline and the risk associated with this, the women remained united in the belief that marine resources could and would never be completely depleted.

Through listening to the women's stories, we came to realise that few opportunities for learning were open to the women while they were *"trapped"* within the bounds of the contexts in which they worked, limiting their capacity for critical engagement and decision-making. How could they develop wider knowledge of risk and alternative practices? Implementing educational programmes that keep communities trapped in their own realities, with-

Looking at photographs encouraged the participants to think about how coastal resources were declining
Source: Siân Davies

Harvesters and their children enjoy fresh mussels for lunch *Source: Siân Davies*

out gaining further or new information and insights into alternative practices, aspects, context, environments or knowledge is to leave these communities continually at a disadvantage.

Developing New Languages for New Stories and Practices

To allow the women in the two communities to learn from others and other contexts, we planned a field trip to another coastal community some 500 km down the coast in Coffee Bay, where they could observe and talk to people from other communities who were implementing methods of coastal resource rehabilitation. We were, however, acutely conscious that if the women were to gain from this experience, they needed to understand the ecology of the marine species in question, and be

provided with the necessary ecological concepts and language to do so. So we needed to find a method of introducing this language in ways that would connect with and arise from concepts and experiences that would be familiar in the socio-cultural context of the harvesters' lives.

We turned to the use of metaphor, since this is widely used in isiXhosa cosmology and is a key feature of the isiXhosa language and communication system. We found that metaphors provided a means to bridge the gap between situated knowledge and experience and ecological or scientific knowledge and experience.

Metaphor 1: Central to the isiXhosa culture and belief system is the ownership of cattle and thus the necessity of productive grazelands. A grazing metaphor was developed to explain that in the grazelands there are many types of grass. The sweet grass keeps the cows fat, healthy and productive. But if all the sweet grass is burnt or eaten, only the hard, sour grass will grow and the cows will start to grow small and thin, stop producing milk and not have many young. We explained to the women that it is like this in the sea, where there are many types of plants and animals living together on the rocks. The iqongwe (alikreukel) graze on the sweet, nutrient-rich seaweed (green and red) that grow next to the imbaza (mussel) and oyster communities. When too many imbaza and oyster are taken off the rocks, the sweet sea grass no longer grows and the empty rocks become covered by hard sour sea plants (pink and grey crusts). The iqongwe have less sweet seaweed to eat, and so become thin, do not grow well and cannot reproduce many babies.

Metaphor 2: The second metaphor focussed on the homestead, and the story we told went something like this: people and animals can only reproduce if they are mature adults. These adults can have many young that will grow to be big and strong, but only if they can welcome their young back to and protect them in a safe, productive homestead. When the young return home, there must be adults there to welcome and protect them. If the homesteads are empty the young ones will move off and not return. We explained that it is like this in the sea. The imbaza (mussel), oyster and iqongwe (alikreukel) can only reproduce once they have grown up to become adults. This takes about six months for imbaza and oyster, and about three years for the iqongwe. They let their sperm and eggs flow into the water, where they meet to form tiny young shellfish that can swim. These tiny shellfish need to swim back to the shelter of the communities on the rocks. They can only come back to the rocks if there are enough adult shellfish left on the rocks to welcome and protect them. If people have taken too many imbaza, oyster or iqongwe off the rocks, then the young cannot find their way back. Also, if too many of the big ones are taken, then there will not be enough adult shellfish to send their sperm and eggs into the water to make more young shellfish. And so the communities will slowly get smaller and smaller.

Metaphor 3: We found this story-based education strategy to be highly effective, and the women responded to the stories with a great deal of discussion. In fact it led to a third metaphor, which was created by the women themselves. Throughout one of our sessions, we were constantly interrupted by a hen trying her utmost to get inside the house to lay her eggs. One of the participants pointed at the chicken and explained that the homestead story was like the mother hen, in that her chicks tend to wander, and would be lost unless she was there to call them back to her. It was through this metaphor, created by the research participants themselves, that we were able to confirm their understanding of the basic ecological concepts.

Conclusion – Openings for New Sustainable Practices

This work with metaphor provided the participants with adequate ecological knowledge to engage productively with the community of harvesters in Coffee Bay who were implementing a mussel rehabilitation project. They understood what the community were doing, and why they were doing what they were doing. They were able to conceptualise this as a possible alternative practice in their own community, and when they returned to Hamburg and Nquinsa they organised a number of community meetings to explore the possibility of establishing a mussel rehabilitation project which had the potential to enhance the size of their harvests while maintaining ongoing access to the natural resources that were so important for supplementing their livelihoods and feeding their families.

In concluding this story, we recommend to others engaging with communities in contexts of risk and vulnerability to take time to learn with communities the languages and methods necessary to bring about changes in practices. Developing more insight into pedagogies for socioecological resilience building is likely to be a key challenge for the future and a critical issue for empowering women to develop their capabilities for everyday risk management and negotiation in marginalised communities.

Gender equality and sustainability in the use of natural resources are two sides of the same coin. Claims of sex-based superiority reflect the same mentality as the hostile approach that humanity has taken toward nature which has led mankind to subjugate and exploit nature to satisfy human needs instead of comprehending that as part of the greater whole, humanity must seek to live in harmony with nature. Proposing a shift in paradigm, the authors discuss the need for new methodologies and approaches in education to achieve the goal of harmonious co-existence.

Moema L. Viezzer

Gender Equality in Socio-environmental Education

Introduction

What does the end of violence against women have to do with achieving sustainability on our planet? Does women's participation in the decision-making process at all levels have an impact on the protection of natural and patrimonial resources? How is gender equality related to sustainable governance? Although these and many other issues have been the focus of debate for many years, they are still not sufficiently integrated within the daily agendas of people and organizations that work to address socio-environmental concerns.

A few occasions that are commemorated world-wide, e.g. International Women's Day (8 March) and World Environment Day (5 June), call to mind two other, much larger social movements that arose during the second half of the 20th century: the environmentalist movement and the feminist movement. Both relate directly to sustainability, a subject which in recent years has come to occupy a prominent place on the agenda of the diverse forums and international conferences of the United Nations and other international organizations.

The following text examines a number of issues surrounding cultural change, proposing the implementation of a liberating approach to socio-environmental education based on equality in gender relations and a balance between *"masculine"* and *"feminine"*.

Two Important Inter-sectoral Themes

What is the purpose of inclusive, permanent, and continuous education if not to promote pedagogical processes that help people feel a part of the surroundings in which they live – processes that encourage people to understand that taking care of the environment also means taking care of themselves as well as others in ways that guarantee the quality of life for themselves and for future generations?

Environment and gender relations form an inextricable nexus that ultimately involves relationships between human beings of all ages, races, colours, ethnic groups, beliefs, nations, and countries, all of which are tied to an understanding of the planet Earth as Pachamama, the Mother Earth of the Quechua and Aymara peoples; Tekohá, the mother house of the Tupí-Guaraní; Gaia, the living being who is home to the entire community of life, including humans. As such, these are issues that must be addressed in every initiative, programme, and project striving to achieve sustainability in human relations, and in the relationship between humans and nature.

As inter-sectoral themes transcending academic subjects, curricula, programmes, and projects, they belong on the agenda of every process of human development and citizenship education, not only in the classroom, but also in every arena in the school of life.

It is no accident that these two generative themes have come to be included in reviews of basic curricula in formal education systems. Nor is it a coincidence that they are a growing focus for universities, NGOs, and social movements in their courses, programmes, and centres, as well as for public and private enterprise, and for institutions which address issues specifically related to the environment or gender equality. These trends can be regarded as signs of gradual acceptance that the environment and gender relations have become a fixed part of agendas for socio-environmental transformation.

Gender-based Social Relations – A Definition

Gender-based social relations emerged as a focus of sociological analysis in the 1970s, when a number of feminist scholars in the Subordination of Women Group,

a project supported by the British University of Sussex in Brighton, re-examined the theories of Marx and Engels which assert that the production of goods and services forms the sustainable base for society. This group turned a spotlight on the importance of reviewing the existing imbalance in the interrelated processes that synthesize two major aspects of human life: production and reproduction.

In the course of analysis it became evident that the natural and logical order behind human life has been reversed. Goods and services are no longer produced for the sake of reproduction – to nourish and recreate life. Human resources are no longer invested in the service of life. It is rather the case that the reproduction and sustaining of life has become adversely affected by and subordinate to the production of goods.

In this context, with rare exceptions over the last few millennia, the social roles prescribed for men and women have one element in common: men have remained in charge of producing goods and services, with the result that the exercise of power over the economy, government, policy-making and religion have been defined as masculine domains, while women have been relegated to the role of biologically reproducing human life and society while performing all the other domestic functions involved, mainly household chores such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, the elderly, and the sick, and attending to the needs of their husbands. Not being recognized as "work", these duties have not been ascribed any value.

This perception of the relationship between women and men has had a direct impact on the structures of society. Women have been regarded as inferior to men, including in a legal sense. Under the laws of ancient Rome, women were considered to be the property of men. According to the Napoleonic Code, they were no longer regarded as property, but were considered intrinsically dependent on their fathers and later on their husbands. In the absence of a father or husband, a woman was subordinate to the men of the house who were responsible for maintaining the family reputation: brothers, uncles, or grandfathers. It was not until 1988, with the ratification of the present Constitution, that the principle of equality guaranteeing equal social and human rights for both women and men was explicitly recognized in Brazil.

In recent centuries, the social roles designated to men and women have created new differences, reformulating and deepening social disparity between the sexes. The advent and gradual rise of science in opposition to the wisdom of humanity – knowledge to a large extent accumulated over the course of history by women – had the consequence, among others things, of excluding women from scientific endeavours for many years, preventing them from being officially recognized as scientists, inventors, or artists. The arrival of industrial technology divided the

household unit by creating the concepts *"worker"* and *"housewife"*, the latter being socially recognized in her identity as *"the worker's wife"*. This reinforced the idea that only work performed by men was of value, and that women-specific domestic labour was not.

With the mass inclusion of women in the labour market, their dual role became more apparent. They not only contributed to society as reproducers of the human species, but also as workers involved in the production of goods and services. As such, they had a vested interest in economic, social, and political issues.

This recognition brought about the need to rethink the traditional roles which society assigned to women and men. Masculine roles concentrated almost exclusively on the sphere of production, without any obligation to perform the activities associated with the reproduction of life that women had assumed for thousands of years, and without the consideration and respect that we owe to the cycles of life.

Significant social changes have been taking place against this background. The situation has even influenced the development of new laws to formally define new behaviour patterns. The presence of women in today's world who exist alongside men as equal human beings with full citizenship rights is progress that cannot be reversed. As observed by Joan Scott (1995), revealing socio-economic, cultural, political, and environmental reality in this manner changes the old paradigm and has a bearing on the construction of knowledge. It influences the use of technology and the practices of social organizations.

Equality in Gender Relations: Part of a New Paradigm

When we analyze social and environmental reality from the perspective of new gender relations, we are definitely not looking at something that pertains to women alone, because *"the problem is not in the woman"* (Viezzer, 1990). The important consideration, when addressing the enormous problems faced by our small planet today, is to identify more points of confluence that can facilitate the construction and perfection of *"a different form of being"* (Viezzer & Moreira, 1993). This implies finding new ways of organization and coexistence based on equality, harmony, and reciprocity between and among human beings. New relationships between humans and other natural species follow from this as a logical consequence.

But this will not happen on its own, for patriarchal ideology has had a profound influence on our ideas about human nature and our relationship with the universe. Patriarchal worldviews have crystallized into a paradigm that until very recently has never been openly challenged. Its doctrines have enjoyed an acceptance

tantamount to *"the law of nature"*. Fritjof Capra (1993) summarized a number of premises from this old paradigm as follows:

- The universe is a mechanical system composed of elementary material building blocks.
- The human body is a machine, and medical science is dedicated to the study and treatment of each of its separate components.
- Life in a society is a competitive struggle for survival: the law of the strongest prevails.
- Material progress is unlimited and can be achieved through economic and technological growth. Cost is no object.

In his book *The Turning Point* (1983, p. 56), Capra cites Francis Bacon as an advocate of this line of thinking and observes that *"since Bacon, the goal of science has been knowledge that can be used to dominate and control nature, and today both science and technology are profoundly antiecological"*.

Capra demonstrates how this present attitude relates to woman's subordination to man. In Bacon's view, as he explains, nature had to be

> *"'hounded in her wanderings', 'bound into service', and made a 'slave' She was to be 'put in constraint' and the aim of the scientist was to 'torture nature's secrets from her.' Much of this violent imagery seems to have been inspired by the witch trials that were held frequently in Bacon's time. As attorney general for King James I, Bacon was intimately familiar with such prosecutions, and because nature was commonly seen as female, it is not surprising that he should carry over the metaphors used in the courtroom into his scientific writings. Indeed, his view of nature as a female whose secrets have to be tortured from her with the help of mechanical devices is strongly suggestive of the widespread torture of women in the witch trials of the early seventeenth century."* (ibid.)

We are far removed from the ancient concept of the Earth as a nurturing mother! As Capra puts it, this concept

> *"was radically transformed in Bacon's writings, and it disappeared completely as the Scientific Revolution proceeded to replace the organic view of nature with the metaphor of the world as a machine."* (ibid.)

Capra observes that the qualities derived from Baconian premises include self-assertion, competition, expansion, and domination. These are generally considered to be masculine attributes. In a patriarchal society, as Capra points out, not only do men enjoy most of society's privileges, they also dominate the economy

and politics. This is one reason that the shift towards a more balanced system is so difficult for many people, men in particular. This is also the explanation for the natural affinity between ecology and feminism.

The domination/subordination theme in the sphere of production/reproduction, and the connections between this theme and humanity's treatment of all other beings that are an integral part of nature, have been explored in depth by ecofeminism, a philosophical current of thought that has evolved since the 1970s. Carolyn Marchant, Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies are among the theorists who have refined and expanded on analyses of the old paradigm and patriarchal culture characterized by obsessive male dominance over the female (nature and women) (Di Ciommo, 1999).

The new paradigm recognizes women and men as equals in terms of their social and human rights. It demands respect for biological and psychosomatic differences and the right to cultivate those differences. According to the new paradigm, the biological attributes of men and women are no justification for social inequality, male dominance, and female subordination which prevents women from developing fully as human beings. This is reflected in personal choices, but it also has a direct bearing on the structure of social institutions: family, school, church, as well as political and market institutions.

This view constitutes a complete revision of beliefs and values taught and assimilated as *"natural"* when, in fact, they are *"historical"* constructions, and, as such, open to change. These new values and principles already constitute part of the progress that has been made toward a new level of human consciousness. As one of the instruments that integrate the principles of social and economic justice, the Earth Charter, calls for us to *"affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care and economic opportunity."* Under the section entitled Plan of Action, the Treaty on Environmental Education for Societies and Global Responsibility also includes a commitment on the part of educators to *"promote gender corresponsability in relation to production, reproduction and the maintenance of life"*.

These changes have brought about a need for new studies, new social practices, and new public policies. Significant progress has been made in this respect toward increasing the participation of women in important global decision-making processes, a trend which can be observed, for example, in documents such as Agenda 21 (Chapter 34), Women's Action Agenda for a Peaceful and Healthy Planet (Rio 1992, analyzed in Johannesburg in 2002), the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (Peking, 1995), and the United Nations Millennium Goals (UN,

2000). In Brazil, the National Policy Plan for Women (2004 and 2007) specifies the need for equal participation of women and men in various socio-environmental connections.

Gender Balance and Socio-environmental Sustainability

In challenging the hegemonic paradigm *"development at any cost"*, the Second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (ECO 92 or Rio 92), was, without doubt, a momentous occasion in that it opened up dialogue on socio-environmental sustainability.

But what does it mean in the sense of the Treaty on Environmental Education to make our societies sustainable in the context of global responsibility? The following definition aptly describes what this entails: A sustainable community is one that:

- does not waste financial resources;
- does not exhaust natural resources or degrade environmental resources;
- values and protects nature;
- leverages local resources to satisfy community needs;
- values domestic work and recognizes gender needs and the different roles of men and women in the implementation of public policies;
- increases livelihood and income-generating opportunities for everyone;
- seeks to diversify local economies;
- protects the health of its inhabitants, placing emphasis on preventive medicine;
- promotes universal access to housing and environmental sanitation services (water supply, sewerage, drainage and vector control, refuse collection and disposal);
- guarantees universal access to public transportation;
- ensures food security and supply for the population;
- guarantees and improves education, training and recreation opportunities;
- preserves historical patrimony and local culture; and
- guarantees society's participation in decision-making processes. (Redeh, 2000)

It is difficult to imagine building a community where people live and coexist according to these criteria against a background of domination and subordination between men and women, domestic and external violence, and any other attitude that reflects the lack of an *"ethics of care"*, starting with human beings.

To ensure all the relevant dimensions of sustainability – ecological, environmental, demographic, cultural, social, institutional, and political – it is absolutely necessary

to secure balance and harmony in relations between women and men while at the same time cultivating difference in order to more fully ensure equal human rights.

An implicit assumption in this new paradigm is that balance is necessary between masculine and feminine in all living beings, and that this has direct implications for equitable relations between women and men. Fritjof Capra (1993) summarizes the basic principles that characterize this new paradigm as follows:

- *Interdependence*: the *"web of the life"* is a network of relations in which the success of the whole depends on the success of each individual, and vice versa;
- *Energy flow*: relations between men and women in search of sustainability are directed in the sense of permanent co-evolution, both of the human species as well as of humanity with other species, in the same way in which solar energy controls the ecological cycles;
- *Association*: women and men, as well as all species, realise a subtle interaction through cooperation and competition which aim at the search for balance;
- *Diversity*: appreciation and respect of the differences between women and men enrich the level of the relations that permeate the web of life.
- *Co-evolution*: men and women, as well as all other species, evolve by means of constant interaction between creation and mutual adaptation.

Gender Equality in Socio-environmental Education

Accordingly, the worldview that guides our thoughts, behaviours, languages, and our individual as well as our collective practices, is reflected in all our programmes and educational materials (Trajber & Manzochi, 1996). Texts, images, cartoons, and other information included in these materials reflect the way we see – or do not see – the universe, and human beings as part of that universe.

The new paradigm of relationships between human beings and with other living things evokes the need to integrate gender education into socio-environmental education. By introducing the gender perspective when examining similarities and differences between women, and the implications thereof on the relationship between humans and other natural species, it becomes possible to distinguish the natural from the historical.

To respect and cultivate human rights while respecting and cultivating human diversity is the condition *sine qua non* for making the qualitative leap that will permit us to develop a balance between the feminine and masculine dimensions inherent in all living things.

In this sense, the basic issues dealt with in environmental education are always the same: What vision of the world do we share? What are the beliefs, principles,

and values that guide our actions? These questions lead us to other topics that need to be examined, e.g. perceptions, languages, different customs and practices, or participation quotas (especially in decision-making processes). Learning to conduct gender analyses and propose affirmative environmental education initiatives means learning to reframe man/woman relations that were created by society thousands of years ago. These are concepts that still impact the two important spheres of life: production and reproduction. Learning of this nature requires us to use unique approaches and methods, and to adopt new practices in daily life.

Theory in Practice: Recommended Activities

It is still common to find educators and environmental educators who are willing *"to work with women"* in order to guarantee their participation in initiatives geared to *"sustainable development"*, but who, nevertheless, tend to follow the same patterns established in policies over the past decades. Therefore, it is important to understand how the traditional role of women can be reinforced to serve the intentions of others (family, governments, companies, churches, etc.) without producing any benefits for the women themselves, and in particular without fostering progress toward the achievement of full female citizenship.

Owing to the limitations of space for an article of this nature, we shall concentrate our recommendations on two aspects that deserve special consideration in socio-environmental projects: learning as it relates to elaborating, monitoring, and evaluating projects in line with checklists; and designing proposals in the field of *"educommunication"*,[1] based on the analysis of teaching materials and teaching aids on environmental education.

Socio-environmental Projects

Dutch government international cooperation agencies have elaborated a checklist as a tool for socio-environmental projects, including those with an educational component. Following is a summary of the main points on this list:

Prepare a breakdown of data according to gender, age, race/ethnic group, socio-economic level, urban or rural sector to identify project participants.

Verify how roles and functions related to the theme of the project are divided up between women and men, and how this division of roles does or does not help to

1 *"Educommunication"*, the link between education and communication, refers to the process of awareness-building to empower people to defend their right to information and communication, and a means of fostering development (translator's note).

maintain structural relationships of gender domination and subordination rather than relationships based on equality, fairness, and reciprocity.

Identify whether traditional gender roles are changing and what main differences can be observed in the various categories for women (age, marital status, ethnic group, education level, occupation); what is the general situation in all facets of the work assigned to women in the region/place (traditional sector, services, companies), including the occupations which are predominantly female or male and those where there is an increase in numbers of women; what are the main limiting factors for women (in terms of mobility, time, rights of access to technical qualifications and credit); existing or recently lost feminine skills with income-generating potential; who decides on the allocation of resources, costs and benefits within families; what forms of women's organization (established or nascent) exist at the local level that can be strengthened to promote a greater capacity of organization; what are the attitudes and expectations of women and men toward themes linked to their roles in society and to issues connected with the proposed project.

Verify how women's participation in the decision-making process can secure the existence of the project; what benefits do women and men derive from it for their lives at home and in their communities; how do men share in the tasks associated with reproduction in ways that allow women to participate in the project without burdening themselves with additional tasks; how are women included in the process of establishing project strategies and priorities; are there follow-up and assessment procedures designed to identify the real impact of the project on women; how is the project related to national policies geared to strengthening the position of women in sustainability-driven initiatives; what is the role of women in elaborating and implementing the project, and how does this role ensure adequate consideration of women's interests and needs; how does the project foster the quest for equality in everyday life; how can the project gain community and government support to ensure continuity of its initiatives. (Viezzer, *Rede Mulher de Educação* [Women's Network for Education], 1993)

"Educommunication" Programmes

Educational materials and teaching aids – including books, texts, magazines, pamphlets, comics, plays, animated cartoons, and manual or electronic games – are important sources of information, and help to change attitudes or to reinforce existing standards.

It is common to find traditional approaches on human beings and how they relate to nature's other species in educational materials on environmental issues.

Rather than facilitating a shift in paradigm, educational materials around socio-environmental issues tend to reinforce stereotypes of male/female relationships.

An examination of educational materials and teaching aids offers the following specific recommendations in line with the theme of the present article (Trajber & Manzochi, 1996).

Gender analysis in *"educomunication"* goes beyond those aspects related exclusively to sexist language or male/female relationships. It seeks to reflect on the factors that shape how socio-environmental issues are dealt with in the mass media, i.e. whether those factors are based on patriarchal premises linked to the established paradigm, or whether they aim to promote equal relationships between human beings and with nature.

To effect any significant change with respect to social relations and the environment, we must begin by using appropriate words and by sending nonverbal messages that reaffirm equality between the sexes and that value sociocultural, sexual, and racial diversity. If we hope to forge new relations between and among people and with the rest of nature, we must necessarily include these parameters in materials that are used to teach environmental education.

The following list of recommendations is intended as a guide to foster analysis and affirmative gender action in the media (Viezzer & Moreira in Trajber & Manzochi, 1992).

1. Avoid sexist language (writing, audio-visual, electronic)

Sexist language reflects the patriarchal structure of society. One of the most prominent examples is the use of the word *man* as a collective word for all human beings, while the word woman only refers to the females of the species. A number of international and national initiatives have contributed significantly toward building awareness about sexist language. UNESCO issued a set of guidelines entitled *Redação sem Discriminação* (Writing without discrimination) (1996). On 8 March 1996, the National Council for Women's Rights and the Brazilian Ministry of Education signed a Declaration of Intent in which the Ministry undertook to identify and combat sexism in language used in educational materials, and to make this procedure the norm for all publications geared to primary school pupils. In 2004, as a result of the First National Conference on Public Policies for Women, special emphasis was placed on the subject of *"inclusive and nonsexist education"* in the Action Plan adopted by the Brazilian presidency's National Secretariat of Policies for Women. These documents serve as a basis for examining the language we use. Our task now is to learn new forms of good practice. This includes, among other things:

- eliminating all expressions containing or conveying a disqualifying or discriminatory message to the effect that women are inferior, absent from public life, and defined and identified in relation to man. There is no justification for maintaining expressions such as *"history of man"*, *"modern man"*, and *"man who has reached the moon"*, which are so common in educational books, and especially in books on natural history. Discriminating words and expressions of this nature must be replaced by more interesting and respectful terms such as *"humanity"*, *"human species"*, *"men and women"*.
- Promoting the inclusion in texts and illustrations of images that represent equality, cooperation, and partnership between men and women – adults, young people or children – of different racial and ethnic groups, age groups, religious affiliations, and social positions; and eliminating those containing disqualifying or discriminatory stereotypes.
- Depicting situations in which power and leadership are shared by persons of both sexes, and in which both men and women are portrayed in turn as heroic figures, acting in defence of nature and demonstrating a positive relationship with nature.

2. Address complex themes without making them overly-didactic or complicated

Issues connected with environmental education are generally complex, but this does not mean that texts about them have to be complicated. To translate ecological vocabulary, expressions, and terminology – obviously without resorting to reductionism – is an obligation of communicators and a demonstration of respect for the readers and learners.

It is an art to make difficult subject matter understandable by using short sentences, simple words, and constructions that are as tangible as possible for the people to whom the material is directed. The use of analogies facilitates understanding, stimulates visualizations, and aids the memory process. The idea, above all, is to engage the attention of the learners, to make an impact, and to bring them new information that will improve their vocabulary and enrich their world. And to generate a climate that leads to mobilization instead of to apathy and inaction. Working with information that generates a negative feeling of powerlessness in the face of environmental problems is part of the old paradigm.

3. Be constructive instead of just denouncing

Countless solutions exist. The key is to make them visible. Denunciation is an important vehicle of transformation, but unless it is accompanied by proposals for new ways of dealing with reality, it amounts to empty rhetoric. The emphasis therefore

must be on achieving a balance between denunciation and constructive proposals, solutions, and ways to overcome the problems we are facing.

One of the main problems in many educational materials and teaching aids is the fact that they generalize the destructive action of *"man"*, without specifying that said *"man"* is white, Western, part of a predatory civilization, and an unquestionabe driving force in the phenomenon of globalisation.

It is always important to understand destruction in the context of its agents. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of patriarchal thought is confrontation, combat, the lack of cooperation, and competition. This either translates into aggression or results in the opposite reaction, namely indifference and apathy. In end effect, corrupt language serves to drain the vast universe of insight open to those who embark on the search for more harmonious relations with their environment.

For instance: Before saying that rivers are dying, why not show how life flourishes in rivers that are still alive, and in rivers that are being rehabilitated? This does not mean that we ought to ignore the reasons behind the death of rivers. On the contrary, the truth of this fact will have greater impact if learners can comprehend the processes and connections behind life in rivers and how it benefits countless species, including the humans. In addition, there is a great deal of experience with river management that is not generally known. Why shouldn't we call attention to such cases, describe them, and bring them into public focus and in doing so transform the *"media"* into *"channels"* of *"educommunication"*? (Viezzer and Rocha, 1992).

At the same time, there are entire societies and cultures that live in harmony with nature. There is much to learn by way of *"demonstration"*, especially when we are acquainted with societies and cultures that identify with nature in a positive sense. Essentially, environmental education is an affirmation of life.

4. Reconstruct the links in the chain of life

As Carlos Rodrigues Brandão points out (1995), it is not about utilitarian values in the sense that doing a better job of preserving the environment will allow us to reap more of its benefits, both now and in the future; nor is it about human pleasure and satisfaction – about not destroying what is beautiful because it is natural. It is because we are part of the chain of life, the flow of life, because we are links in the chain of life that has always existed. That is the point for us.

Being in *"the lap of Mother Nature"* makes us part of something greater. It places us in communication with nature on a different plane, and makes our relationship with other living species one that is not based on hierarchy. It is a leap from the status of *"masters of the world"* to *"brothers and sisters of the universe"*. This, by the way, is what makes all the difference.

5. Encourage the desire to share rather than judge

For a long time now environmental education has been synonymous with rules and norms of the type *"Keep off the grass"*, *"No smoking"*, *"No littering"*, *"Don't destroy the plants"*, *"Hunting prohibited"*, *"Keep our forests green"*. Warnings and admonitions of this nature are infinite in number. The extremely normative approach makes it difficult to generate the kind of empathy which is so necessary for environmental learning.

Environmental education must prevail not by imposing obligations to protect life, or by taking a legalist approach to the environment based on concepts of blame and duty. Instead it should underscore the pleasures of being alive. It should kindle a deep sense of fulfilment in living and in sharing life in a system that integrates all living things in the spirit of wisdom and solidarity.

Summary

Education, as most of us adults experienced it, was not based on the values and principles of sustainability and the notion of equality between masculine and feminine. And even today it is common to find educators, including socio-environmental educators, who still adhere to the domination/subordination ideology in the relationship between men and women and between humans and nature. It is consequently crucial that we introduce gender analysis and affirmative gender action into education, and that we make socio-environmental communication part of the agenda of learning communities. Issues pertaining to gender and the environment must figure in every topic that concerns us, whether it be the culture of water, sanitation, agriculture, sustainable consumption, biodiversity, selective harvesting, or any other subject.

As affirmed in the Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility, *"we are all learners"* regardless of our age, academic background or the circumstances in which our lives develop. This also refers to gender and equality in gender relations. In approaching this *"new-old"* subject, we must remember that environmental changes are becoming increasingly necessary and urgent. More than anything, they depend on the synergy of interests between human beings. As Paulo Freire stressed during the Day of Environmental Education at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992: *"Without man and woman… the green has no colour"*. (Viezzer, Ovalles, Trajber, 1995).

References

Agenda 21 de Ação das Mulheres por um Planeta Saudável e pela Paz [Women's Action Agenda for a Peaceful and Healthy Planet]. Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Network for Human Development (REDEH), 1992.

Agenda 21 de Ação das Mulheres pela Paz e por um Planeta Saudável, Estratégias das Mulheres para a Rio + 10. Relatório da Reunião de Consulta [Women's Action Agenda for a Peaceful and Healthy Planet, Rio + 10 Conference Report, Network for Human Development (REDEH)], 2003.

Capra, Fritjof. *Alfabetização Ecológica* [Ecological literacy]. The Elmwood Institute. Brazilian version, Rede Mulher de Educação [Women's Education Network], 1993.

Capra, Fritjof. *The turning point: science, society, and the rising culture*. Bantam Books, New York, 1983.

Carta da Terra: *Princípios e Valores para um futuro Sustentável* [Earth Charter: Values and Principles for a Sustainable Future]. In Portuguese with Commentary by Moema L. Viezzer, Itaipú Binacional, 2004.

Centro de Investigación para la Acción Feminina CIPAF [Centre for Feminist Action and Research]. *Guia para el Uso no Sexista del Lenguaje* [Guide for the use of non-sexist language]. Ediciones Populares Feministas, CIPAF, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 1992.

Corral, Thais. *Educação para um Planeta Saudável: Manual para Educadores (as) de jovens e adultos (as)* [Education for a sustainable planet: Manual for Youth and Adult Education educators]. REDEH/MEC/FNDE, 1999.

Corral, Thais, ed. *Poder Local, eu também quero – Agenda 21* [I, too, want local government – Agenda 21]. Ediciones REDEH, 1999.

Di Ciommo, Regina Célia. *Feminismo e Educação Ambiental* [Feminism and environmental education]. Editorial Cono Sur, Uberaba, 1999.

Trajber, Rachel, and Lucia Helena Manzochi. *Avaliando a Educação Ambiental no Brasil* [Evaluating environmental education in Brazil]. Materiais Impressos, Editora Gaia, 1996.

ONU. *Plataforma de Ação Beijing 1995: um instrumento de ação para as mulheres* [UN Beijing Platform for Action 1995: An instrument of action for women]. Isis Internacional / REPEM, Uruguay, 1996.

Shiva, Vandana. *Monoculturas da Mente: perspectivas da biodiversidade e da biotecnologia* [Monocultures of the mind: perspectives on biodiversity and biotechnology]. Brazilian edition, Editora Global, São Paulo, 2003.

Viezzer, Moema. *O problema não está na mulher.* [The problem is not in the woman]. Editora Cortez, 1990.

Viezzer, Moema, Omar Ovalles, and Rachel Trajber. *Manual Latino-americano de Educação Ambiental* [Latin American Manual of Environmental Education]. Editora Global, São Paulo, 1995.

Viezzer, Moema and Tereza Moreira. *ABC da Equidade de Gênero na Responsabilidade Socioambiental* [ABC of gender equality in environmental responsibility], Itaipú Binacional, Foz de Iguazú, 2006.

Viezzer, Moema, et al. *Comunidades de Aprendizagem para a sostenibilidade* [Learning communities for sustainability]. Itaipú Binacional, Foz de Iguazú, 2007.

Viezzer, Moema, ed. *Trilogia de Educação para a Sostenibilidade* [Trilogy of education for sustainability], COPEL, Paraná, 2010.

UNESCO, *Redação sem Discriminação* [Writing without discrimination], Editora Texto novo, São Paulo, 1996.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCAT
MENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADU
DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOP

Women's Empowerment

Several of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) deal with the situation of women. The target of Goal 3 is the elimination of gender disparity. Goal 4 seeks to reduce child mortality, and Goal 5 aims to improve the health of mothers. But the empowerment of women and the strengthening of their position in society is the aim of the other MDGs as well. Women play a crucial role in the fight against extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1). Girls and women lag far behind boys and men in progress toward achieving universal basic education (MDG 2). No progress at all can be made in the fight against HIV/Aids, malaria, and other endemic diseases (MDG 6), unless women are included. And without the participation of women, it will be impossible to ensure environmental sustainability (MDG 7).

Women normally have to work harder than men, especially in the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They maintain traditional vegetable gardens, raise domestic animals, and do the farming. They are responsible for child rearing, feeding their families, doing the domestic chores, collecting the fire wood, and fetching the water. They supervise the education of their children and nurse them back to health when they get sick. They guarantee domestic stability, taking on any work they can get to secure the family income, more often than not in the informal sector and without the benefit of social security. They do sewing, cooking, hairdressing, or house cleaning, produce and market processed agricultural products and handicrafts. More and more they are finding work in clerical or secretarial occupations or in the service sector.

But despite the important role they play for family and society, in all essential areas of life women are generally at a significant disadvantage as compared with men, whether in terms of education, income, partner choice, inheritance laws, property rights, decision-making processes, community organization, or access to leadership positions in education, business, or politics. The goal of gender equality is far from being achieved both in the public mind as well as in reality. Work with and for women in the interest of *"women's empowerment"* will continue to be one of the main tasks of adult education for a long time to come. The task is a difficult one, considering that it involves the calling into question and changing of sociocultural behaviour patterns and rules. The advantage is that all over the world, women play a highly active role in the continuing education sector.

It will take more than just education and training measures, however, to empower women to overcome their education deficits and to develop the self-confidence and initiative they need to take action and assume new roles in society. Before women

can gain equal status with men, it will be necessary to secure equal rights on the political and legal plane. This makes women-specific education a political task as well as an educational one. Besides working directly with women, adult educators are called upon to intervene with decision makers on the national and global level. One such advocacy initiative has been launched by a broad group of women's organizations and networks which have joined together to form the *"Women and Gender Constituency"*. Explaining their purpose as follows: *"We seek to ensure the representation of women's voices, experiences, needs and capacities, as women are still underrepresented in planning and decision-making at all levels, including Parties and observer organisations to the UNFCCC"*, this network participates at all international conferences in order to influence and monitor the adoption of resolutions.

To quote **Ana Agostino** of the International Council for Adult Education **ICAE**: *"Women's rights are human rights. No agreement, decision or mechanism on climate change will be effective or successful without the full respect of women's rights and the recognition of our valuable knowledge"*. Alongside her many international activities in the interest of women's empowerment and gender equality, she is a member of AED's editorial board. Her contribution on gender equality, climate change, and education for sustainability originated in connection with the UN Climate Conference, Conference of the Parties (COP) 15, which took place in December 2009, in Copenhagen. The project *"Beyond Access"*, launched in 2003 by Oxfam, the Institute of Education of the University of London and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), has kindly granted us permission to reproduce the article, which originally appeared in the February 2010 issue (no. 24) of the newsletter *"Equals"*.

A Chilean-born Swedish national, **Marcela Ballara** is an international advisor on questions of gender and adult education, and a representative of the Gender and Education Office **(GEO)** of the International Council for Adult Education **ICAE**. With her long years of experience attending and monitoring the major international conferences to ensure that agendas in every relevant policy sector include women's concerns and gender equality as a cross-cutting objective, she sees gender equality not only as a question of conviction and good will, but also as a matter of finance.

In a remote prefecture in Guinea *"Jeunes Animateurs Communautaires et Incubateurs d' Entreprises"* **(AJACIE)** is working on a completely different level to help people overcome illiteracy, lack of know-how, poverty, and environmental degradation. Recognizing the key role that women play in tackling all of these problems, the organization seeks to help them learn how to maximize their strengths and take the initiative to change their situation. **Alhassane Souare** is the coordinator

of the organization's programmes. In his contribution, he lets the women speak for themselves.

In **Pakistan,** as in many other countries, the status differences that put women at a disadvantage begin already with the school system. Girls are less likely to attend school than boys and tend to leave school at an earlier age. Only supplementary non-formal education campaigns can ensure that any progress will be made toward achieving the goals of Education for All. This section includes a contribution by **Fazalur Rahman**, **Nabi Bux Jumani**, and **Khadija Bibi**, educators at Islamabad's Allama Iqbal Open University and International Islamic University, who report on the outcome of a study conducted in Punjab to evaluate the extent to which such initiatives have produced the desired impact.

Human-induced climate change has the greatest impact on the poor, and especially on women, who face the most serious disadvantages in matters of employment, land tenure, education, health care, and career opportunities as well as in decision-making processes. As a consequence, women organizations are particularly interested in securing adherence to the resolutions of the international climate conferences. Lifelong learning is the key to building better understanding and new modes of behaviour that are crucial for changing prevailing models of growth and consumption.

Ana Agostino

Gender Equality, Climate Change and Education for Sustainability

Climate Change is currently at the centre of our day to day life, as its impacts and consequences are being experienced in all regions of the world. But as we know, climate change is not a natural phenomenon; climate has natural variability over time, but when we talk about climate change it refers to the alterations in the atmosphere that are over and above natural climate variation and that are a result of human activity. This means that the situation can be changed if human beings transform their ways of living to be more sustainable and friendly to the environment. Climate change, though, affects different social groups in different ways. This means that responsibility for making the necessary transformations in ways of living is also differentiated.

It is widely recognised that climate change is having a greater effect on vulnerable populations, groups and communities, this vulnerability being the result of different factors such as age, gender, geography, ethnicity, and income group. Poor communities often live in high risk areas and have limited access to resources and services that would enable them to mitigate and adapt to the problems caused

Flash floods in Char Atra, Bangladesh, mean that children like Keya can't go to school
Source: Dan Chung/Oxfam

by climate change. Women are particularly affected because they are the largest percentage of the poor population (it is estimated that women account for 70% of poor people) and they also face gender inequalities, which climate change tends to exacerbate, as highlighted by the 2007 UNDP Human Development Report. Some of these inequalities are: lack of access to resources such as land, credit and training; limited participation in decision-making processes; more dependence on natural resources and greater caring responsibilities.

These existing gender inequalities exacerbate many of the consequences of climate change. For instance, reduced access to water puts further pressure on

women, as in many countries of the South, women are the main collectors of water, spending several hours every day on this task. Women are also the main producers of food in many regions: according to UNIFEM, in some regions of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, women provide 70% of agricultural labour and produce over 90% of food. This means that changes in ecosystems and loss of diversity that are leading to reduced agricultural output and increased food insecurity are bringing greater problems to women as food producers, as well as impacting on human settlements as some areas become uninhabitable. Finally, the adverse impacts of the effects of climate change and environmental degradation on human health, such as waterborne diseases as a result of polluted water supplies, more extreme weather resulting in natural disasters, and changes in air quality and food quality, also have a particular impact on women in their role as principal caregivers. Many are having to take on an increased burden of care as they look after other family members and people in their communities, as well as having to deal with the impacts of these changes on their own health and wellbeing. This is further exacerbated by the fact that in some regions, women have less access to medical services, either as a result of living in remote rural areas where medical facilities are few and far between, or because they are not in formal employment and are not covered by medical insurance schemes as a result.

As part of the preparatory process towards COP 15, the Feminist Task Force of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) held a series of tribunals on gender and climate change during October and November of 2008. The idea of these tribunals was to provide a space where women could share their testimonies of how climate change impacts on their daily lives, and present proposals on how to mitigate the impacts and move onto a sustainable path that will benefit society at large. They also aimed at putting political pressure at national, regional and international levels so that proposals arising from these events were taken into consideration in designing policy. The tribunals took place in Brazil, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Botswana, Nigeria and Uganda. Conclusions were presented at the Klimaforum, the parallel forum organised by civil society groups – which included a number of sessions that brought together concerns with climate justice and gender justice – at the same time as the main UN conference in Copenhagen.

The 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was held in Copenhagen from 7 to 18 December 2009, aimed to reach agreements among governments on

long term cooperative action towards sustainability. The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases which interfere with climatic systems. Greenhouse gases occur naturally and as a result of human activity. They trap the heat in the atmosphere; when emissions of greenhouse gases are too high, this results in raised temperatures in the earth's climate. According to the text prepared for COP 15,

> *"The shared vision for long-term cooperative action aims to achieve sustainable and climate-resilient development and to enhance action on adaptation, mitigation, technology, finance and capacity building, integrating the means of implementation needed to support action on adaptation and mitigation, in order to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention".*

In this context, adaptation and mitigation relate to measures that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote environmentally-friendly development.

The achievement (or not) of these very technical objectives will have a direct impact on the lives of millions of people around the world, and, as mentioned above, particularly on those who are more vulnerable. That is why civil society organisations and movements representing various constituencies are mobilizing to put pressure on governments to commit themselves to a deal that will change the current trend of unsustainable development. Women's organisations in particular have mobilized to ensure that: gender equality is integrated in the Copenhagen outcome and follow up activities; the differentiated impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, groups and communities are recognized and priority is given to those most vulnerable; all those affected by climate change are encouraged to participate in the decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation of the Copenhagen outcome, and this participation is based on gender equity; women's capacity to act and contribute in all measures is enhanced; and progress towards meeting commitments is regularly reviewed using sex-disaggregated data (so it will be easier to know how men and women are being differently affected).

Another important aspect that needed to be monitored by civil society in the negotiations and follow up activities is the capacity building dimension. The negotiation text included four areas where countries need to reach agreement: a shared vision for long term cooperative action; enhanced action on adaptation; enhanced action on mitigation; and enhanced action on financing, technology and capacity building. This capacity building included in the document refers mainly to technocratic capacity building approaches for mitigation and adaptation processes and there is no reference to democratic Lifelong Learning for sustainable societies and global responsibility. It is important to carry out advocacy work so that capacity building is understood in this broader sense. For instance, when speaking of train-

In Tanzania Ndetia Koipa and her neighbours are already noticing the effect that changes in weather patterns are having on their crops *Source: Geoff Sayer/Oxfam*

ing, reference needs to be made to the promotion of sustainable ways of living, both in the North and in the South, acknowledging the need for a shift from the production and consumption models that have led to present-day climate change, to sustainable models. Since this dimension was not included in the official negotiation text, it is essential that civil society organizations continue to raise awareness of this, and that governments responsible for the implementation of training incorporate promotion of the need for fundamental lifestyle changes into those programmes.

The challenges currently posed by climate change highlight the need to consider the necessary articulation of efficiency and sufficiency in adaptation and mitigation actions. Efficiency actions refer for example to the use and recycling of energy sources or the development of clean technology, while sufficiency actions have to do with decisions about how much to produce, how much to consume, and setting limits on both production and consumption.

Education has a specific role to play in these shifts. Already at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 a specific Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility was approved at the Global Forum. The Treaty called for a collective understanding of the systemic

nature of the crisis that threatens the world's future, indicating that "The root causes of such problems as increasing poverty, environmental deterioration and communal violence can be found in the dominant socio-economic system. This system is based in over-production and over-consumption for some and underconsumption and inadequate conditions to produce for the great majority". In the many years that have passed since Rio, little recognition has been given to the fact that development based purely on economic growth can contribute to worsening environmental conditions.

Central to this is the role that Lifelong Learning can play in altering popular attitudes. This is mainly in connection with the provision of information on the causes and impacts of climate change, but also includes other aspects such as: the promotion of sustainable ways of living; challenging traditional views on development and the exclusively technical approach to reversing climate change; awareness raising on the need to have a gender perspective; and disseminating local, indigenous and traditional knowledge about the environment and its management. In light of this, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) presented a workshop at the Klimaforum in Copenhagen on *"Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility"*, highlighting the role Lifelong Learning plays in the promotion of sustainable ways of living, informed by diverse environments, peoples, their knowledges and practices, and incorporating a gender perspective.

Substantial sums of money are invested to help people in developing countries become less vulnerable. In 2008 in Doha, the international community committed itself to this aim. The necessary changes will not be possible, however, unless efforts to promote women's empowerment are coupled with measures for environmental protection. Larger donor organizations such as the World Bank and the Development Banks have pledged that they will adhere to the principles of equal rights and gender mainstreaming, but there is an urgent need for civil society to monitor compliance with these commitments.

Marcela Ballara

Financing Gender Equality across the Silos: How Do We Move Forward

Gender Justice in Climate Financing?

According to The UNDP 2007 Human Development Report, the international community is investing very little in terms of financial support for adaptation and the funds available from climate financing mechanisms and official bilateral help amount only to 200 million US dollars. The critical balance drawn by UNDP and others on the implementation of national adaptation plans is inextricably linked with the latter's underfunding. This underfunding is also relevant from the gender perspective, for one effect of the evident lack of willingness on the part of the donor community to reduce the vulnerability of the poor population is that it serves ultimately to intensify the especially high vulnerability of women and raises the risk that climate change could deprive them of their livelihoods.

Compared with the funds invested in climate and forest protection, i.e. made available for mitigation, adaptation mechanisms are significantly underfinanced even if donor countries from the north have come with numerous new financing

initiatives.[1] For example, with the exceptions of the GEF funds already set up, and the World Bank's Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), most of these bi-and multilateral climate funds are oriented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by developing clean technologies, promoting renewable energies and energy efficiency, and investing in forest protection; but they are not oriented to reduce the vulnerability and risks of marginalized population groups when it comes to the impacts of climate change.[2]

The resolution adopted by the International Conference on Financing for Development **(Doha Declaration on Financing for Development 2008)** sets out a commitment to finance adaptation measures designed to reduce the vulnerability of people in developing countries. Following difficult negotiations, the donors reaffirmed their commitment to a gender-equitable development financing. *"[F]ostering gender equality"* and *"preserving the environment"* specified as tasks in connection with official development assistance to reduce poverty, though without establishing any direct linkages between the two points (see paragraph 41).

Only the **Report on the 52nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women** (CSW 2008)[3] establishes a linkage between the two global challenges – of gender inequality and adaptation to climate change. The report recommends that a gender perspective be integrated at all levels of planning for and decision-making on climate issues and that resources be made available to ensure the full participation of women.

However, things went different during the Copenhagen Conference in 2009. And as the UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer puts it, the Copenhagen summit ended in a mere *"Copenhagen Accord"*, negotiated by a small group of the key

1 The funds provided are voluntary or compensation paid by the countries mainly responsible for climate change (Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan). In the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, the industrialized countries reaffirm their obligation to make new and additional funds available to finance adaptation. It is, however, unclear whether *"additional"* refers to funds additional to existing adaptation funds or to existing ODA funds. The donor community is also divided on the demand to mobilize adaptation financing in addition to the 0.7 goal, that is, without counting these funds towards ODA.

2 The NAPAs, for instance, are a product of the Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF), which, like the Climate Change Fund, is administered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).The LDCF has less than 10 million US dollars, and 200,000 US dollars of this is made available to every country preparing an NAPA. Only eleven of a total of 38 NAPAs have been completed thus far. This figure, which is far too low, is not only a reflection of the general underestimation of global adaptation costs, indeed, it is also a reflection of the low political significance attached to efforts designed to reduce vulnerability and the social costs. Thus far, their implementation has not been supported significantly through bi-and multilateral DC, nor do the Climate Framework Convention's funds have sufficient resources of their own.

3 *"[j] Integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national environmental policies, strengthen mechanisms and provide adequate resources to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies related to the impact of climate change on the lives of women and girls"* (UN Commission on the Status of Women. Report on the 52nd Session, 25 Feb.–7 and 13 March 2008; E/CN.6/2008/11, 8).

countries, and *"noting"* the necessity to contain global warming to the 2 degree C limit. The Accord called for commitments by industrialized countries and engagement of developing countries, but with scarce specification on how this will occur.

While during COP 15, gender-sensitive text remained in the negotiating documents until the end, these texts meant nothing without an overall outcome that includes every bodie's life and livelihoods protection. Nevertheless, the arguments of gender experts focused on equal access to technologies in climate protection strategies. Whole sections of the final COP 15 text lack reference to women, including the important financing and technology transfer sections.

Nearly all donors, as well as the UN, the World Bank and the regional development banks have – unlike the UNFCCC – committed themselves, in their policy guidelines, to advance equal opportunity and gender mainstreaming. Nevertheless, banks cannot be called to account if they fail to meet the social and political obligations they have voluntarily assumed. But the problem is that governments and the market gives too little consideration to gender justice in climate adaptation policy and they lack recognition of women rights as well.

Institutional reforms and gender-sensitive mechanisms are the only way open to monitor and effectively address contradiction between existing obligations and the political practice of resource allocation.

How to Move Forward?

- From a gender perspective, the debate on climate financing must focus on the need for mandatory monitoring instruments for adaptation and climate protection.
- In relation to the instruments, there is an urgent need to overcome conceptual bottlenecks. This means to ensure that gender aspects are mainstreamed in climate policy. Therefore solid financing must be included to avoid these efforts leading only to a discourse without any practical implications.
- Gender aspects should also be included in the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), set up to promote mainstreaming of climate change adaptation into the national development planning and budgets of developing countries (as in the case of Malawi[4]).

4 Malawi, a notable exception, has identified gender as its own sector, not merely as a cross–cutting issue: Several interventions are proposed that target women in highly vulnerable situations: (i) empowerment of women through access to microfinance to diversify earning potential, (ii) ensuring easier access to water and energy sources by drilling boreholes and planting trees in woodlots, and (iii) use of electricity provided through the rural electrification program (Malawi NAPA, March 2006, x– xi, in: WEDO ibid.).

- Increase access for women to existing mitigation and adaptation funds. Financing instruments that have impacts at the national level should include, ex ante gender- specific consideration as well as social disparities within societies.
- Adaptation strategies need to take into account women and men's relative and different capacities, power and social resilience, vulnerabilities and resources, because gender norms, roles and relations can either enable or constrain adaptive capacities.[5] Therefore studies on quality and quantity of adaptation financing with a gender lens are needed as studies currently available fail to address gender issues.
- Adoption of gender-specific indicators to monitor the gender impacts in programmes, and projects; performance of gender impact assessments and gender audits.
- Develop and implement gender-specific indicators as well as gender analysis in each phase of adaptation programmes and projects.
- Implement mandatory adoption of gender-responsive budgeting in national and international financing mechanisms. Monitor the gender-specific allocation of resources and its effects/benefits.
- Women should be recognized as powerful contributors of change and should be fully integrated into climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies at all levels. Equal involvement of women and men in negotiations on and implementation of financing mechanisms is urgently needed.
- At the global and national levels, calls to increase the number of women chairs in the UNFCCC, with a meaningful participation of women and men from all sectors in national and global climate policies. This also includes strengthening the commitment to prioritize the most vulnerable, and gender-sensitive approaches in the draft Mexico agreement.

An articulated political will and a substantial increase in international financial resources is needed to implement gender justice in adaptation policy. If this is not achieved, poverty-oriented adaptation policy will not really be implemented, will have no impact and most probably the third MDG will not be reached. The achievement of all of the MDGs depends, in very crucial ways, on reaching MDG 3.

5 After Hurricane Mitch in 1998, La Masica, Honduras reported no deaths. A disaster agency had provided gender-sensitive community education on early warning systems and hazard management six months earlier. Women were able to assume responsibility for continuously monitoring the early warning system, and the municipality was able to evacuate the area promptly when Hurricane Mitch struck.

The degree of illiteracy in the prefecture of Pita in Guinea, is considerable, particularly among women. Substandard levels of hygiene and lack of information about rampant diseases in the region combine to entrench the conditions of poverty. The environment is threatened by logging activities and slash-and-burn forms of cultivation. Responding to the challenges posed by these multi-layered problems, and in an effort to encourage women farmers to seize the initiative and organize themselves, the NGO "Jeunes Animateurs Communautaires et Incubateurs d' Entreprises (AJACIE) has opted to work with the participatory methods of the "Reflect" approach.

Alhassane Souare

Women and Rural Development – Impacts of REFLECT

A current project conducted for the Rural Community Development (RCD) of Timbi-Tounni and Timbi-Madina, in the Prefecture of Pita, Labé administrative region, Republic of Guinea/Conakry, has been the object of interesting testimony.

According to the diagnostic study made in the two RCDs in 2008, some socio-economic characteristics have arisen which justified the reasons for implementing this project, namely: the high rate of illiteracy in the area, which is 72.98% overall in the Prefecture of Pita and 79.27% for women; low cash income of 116 USD per person per year in the area, i.e. less than $0.32 per day (ref doc PRSP 2008); the low organizational development of associations and farmers' groups; inadequate involvement of women in decision-making for local development; the persistence of endemic diseases (malaria, diarrhea, etc..); the fragile development of carriers of income-generating activities; and the inadequacy in the management of funds from nationals based in Senegal, France and elsewhere.

However, it should be noted that the area of project intervention has major assets, like the area of excellence for the production of potatoes, the openness of the communities to social mobilization and community participation, the existence of farmers' associations and agricultural workers' groups, the openness of the community to innovation and creativity, plus the strong involvement of citizens' associations in their local development, among others.

Issues and Challenges

The report of the baseline study conducted in the area has allowed the identification of five major challenges that need to be confronted, notably, reducing the illiteracy

rate in general and for women in particular, the organizational and institutional development of community organizations at the grassroots, the increase of individual, family and community income, the promotion of a literate environment to establish a cultural influence in the project area and also the promotion of basic hygiene and health education around HIV/AIDS and diarrheal diseases.

To meet these major challenges, the Association of Young Community Leaders and Business Entrepreneurs (AJACIE), with the technical and financial support of *dvv international*, established and carried out the integrated project to support the self-reliability of the agrarian class in the rural development communities of Timbi-Tounni and Timbi-Madina. During its realization, the project has taken into account the needs and expectations of members of the community organizations at the grassroots in terms of social change and participatory development.

History of its Establishment

AJACIE Guinea was born from the impulse of PRIDE Training, Guinea, in its efforts to help young unemployed graduates to acquire marketable skills to better manage the process of self-employment on the one hand and, on the other hand, to address the deficit in the fight against poverty at the level of youth and women, which is an obvious reality of Guinea. Founded in September 2002, it was sponsored by PRIDE Training for its first experiences in the field of Adult Education through the Expanded Natural Resources Management Project, the Village Communities Support Program under the exploratory group of the DPC and elaboration of local development plans in 2003, as well as with the Support Project for Women's Economic Activities and the Support Project for Women's Activities in the Urban Communities of Ratoma and Matoto. It was finally approved in 2005.

Its strategy consists of using participatory approaches that take into account all aspects related to expectations of potential beneficiaries, especially of women's groups, youth associations, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in order to strengthen their capacities and develop their skills for greater ownership of development strategy at the grassroots.

Its vision is to make non-formal education a real tool in the fight against poverty in vulnerable sectors.

Its mission is to promote development through education, training and information to disadvantaged groups.

By inserting itself in the logic of the documented national strategy for poverty reduction, its objectives are the fight against poverty among women and young graduates by strengthening their institutional and organizational capacity, promoting and strengthening community organizations at the grassroots, as well as ac-

companying the process of good local governance in plans for local development based on participatory approaches.

The NGO's area of intervention extends through the national territory where needs are felt in Lower Guinea and Middle Guinea, in the Boke and Pita prefectures respectively.

Its focus areas are non-formal education, such as functional literacy, the creation and development of the Literate Cultural Environment (LCE), civic education, democracy, good local governance and citizenship.

As regards health and hygiene, the goals are awareness on the subjects STD/HIV/AIDS, nutrition, malaria, diarrheal diseases, family planning, and the fight against genital mutilation.

The goal of the AGR is the technical support for the promotion and development of income-generating activities.

Finally, in the environment it will have to organize a campaign against deforestation, bush fires, poor farming practices and reforestation.

This project, funded by *dvv international* West Africa and executed by AJACIE, effectively contributes to improving the lives of the members of seven farmers' organizations.

Approach Used

Reflect has been used in its program of activities for literacy and capacity building. Reflect is a participatory approach of community development that takes into account integrated functional literacy and whose participants are the central actors in the development of their knowledge and their instrumental skills.

Reflect combines the theory of Paulo Freire and the practice of PAR (the method of Participatory Action Research) in the phase of development or use within the grassroots communities to address and support information campaigns, communication, education and training relative to individual and collective life to initiate an opening to participatory development.

The literacy language of the members of the seven groups supervised by the NGO is Pulaar, the language used by local communities in the area of project intervention. Literacy is not learning a language but rather the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic written in the language spoken by the participants. This mastery of the literacy language has facilitated and promoted the development of the instrumental knowledge and skills of participants during the implementation of literacy sessions and thematic courses focused on the needs of the community.

The activities conducted under the auspices of this project are supported technically and financially by *dvv international,* the main technical and financial partner, by administrative authorities and local governments, the decentralized technical services of the state, leaders of grassroots community organizations and the AJACIE NGO which is responsible for executing the project.

A series of studies was conducted on the need for the project and its submission, on its presentation, the selection of villages, the appropriate personnel to perform work for both intellectual and physical organization of Reflect circles. The profitability of activities has been the subject of a report. Staff training and the corresponding instruction on craft and medical fields and their administration have been planned. And finally, of course, the project was evaluated.

It should be known that before the implementation of project activities to support self-reliance of these grassroots organizations, especially of women farmers in this area, women were involved in large part in the household, in the raising of backyard poultry, as well as small gardening activities to meet daily needs. Women were subject to the decisions of men because of the prevalent culture, tradition, habits, customs, morals and principles of Islam. Not to mention the lack of women in decision-making within their families and communities on the one hand and on the other, the management of the small family income.

How the Reflect Circles Were Created

The NGO staff responsible for supervision in collaboration with local elected officials, leaders of community organizations and the teams from the devolved technical government services implemented a participatory approach to promote and facilitate the creation of Reflect circles or Adult Education centers, including, among others: The study of the needs and problems of literacy and training; making contact with local authorities to organize and distribute powers and responsibilities; the making aware of, the information of, and in respect of the training of assets according to the principles of Reflect circles; meetings on the ground for the formal establishment of management committees. Naturally, implementing the plans demanded the monitoring of the functioning of Reflect circles and their interaction, not to mention the evaluation of results obtained by the participants.

Effect and Impact of the Project on Grassroots Women's Organizations

After three years of project implementation, the results and impact observed in the field and the beneficiaries themselves are significant.

a) On the individual level

The number of neo-literates has increased in the intervention area of the project by the acquisition of instrumental knowledge (reading, writing and arithmetic) in the literacy language.

Attitudes have changed positively vis-a-vis the recurring themes related to environmental protection through the limitation of burn cultivation and traditional honey harvesting and reforestation of public spaces, health and basic sanitation through the use of impregnated mosquito nets as a preventive against malaria, the use of condoms and other modern means of prevention and protection against HIV/AIDS, the monitoring of children's education, the occupation of positions of responsibility within grassroots communities and participation in decision-making, development and maintenance of simplified accounts management of individual income-generating activities, etc..

"I'm Mrs. Koumba Barry, a neo-literate from the Pellel Modiyabhé group. Thanks to the achievements of the project, I was able to participate in all the activities of community interest in my area as a resource person to support the development of legal documents for the Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in the national languages and keep the minutes of village meetings. Also I run awareness sessions on environmental protection and protection against HIV/AIDS. The acquisition and use of skills on saponification allowed me to produce and sell local soap called Kabakoudou. I am also able to increase my income in my small business through the use of management tools and, finally, I manage to keep track of the regular attendance of my children at school."

"I'm Mrs. Kadiatou Diallo, neo-literate from the Ninguelandé circle, proud of my status as a neo-literate woman, which gives me privileges and consideration that I didn't have when I was illiterate. This is due to my participation in the decision forums at the Rural Community Development level and my new responsibilities as President of my grassroots community organization, as well as the basic skills I learned that allow me to manage my small business and make it profitable and to be able to track the education of my children, not to mention the renunciation of circumcision of my girls."

"I'm Mrs. Adama Oury SOW, facilitator of the Ley Tolin circle. Thanks to literacy, I am now a facilitator of a Reflect circle in my village. It confers great respect on me and consideration in my locality because I facilitate literacy sessions and Adult Education for the benefit of my parents. This activity gives me a cash income which contributes to support my family expenses in order to positively improve living conditions for my family. I am also invited to all the public awareness campaigns and various community meetings in my RCD."

b) At the community level

The literacy and Adult Education activities implemented in this community project helped raise awareness in the beneficiary population on the roles and importance of literacy in socioeconomic development. This materializes through the active participation of the neo-literates in the awareness outreach campaigns, the emergence of new literacy advocates, the provision of services by the neo-literates in the translation and preparation of legal documents of grassroots groups, the existence of a network of literacy advocates, the reenforcement of the dynamics of participation in development initiated in the affected communities.

A local politician (President of the RCD) says:

"I am Mr. Souleymane BAH, President of the RCD Ninguelandé. This project has brought great happiness to our community because we never had a literacy center before. Today the neo-literate people are much more motivated to participate in development activities in my RCD through:

- *Participation in awareness campaigns, especially the presidential election, 2010*
- *The support for the emergence of and management of new agricultural workers' organizations*
- *Participation in improving the quality of monitoring of education for students by some members of the Parent Teachers Association and Friends of the School."*

Decentralized State Technical Service means:

"I'm Mamadou Saliou Diallo, chief service officer of Rural Development for Timbi-Tounni. Thanks to this AJACIE project we were able to popularize new knowledge on crop management of the potato and some gardening produce through our personal involvement in the various capacity building sessions organized by the NGO for farmers' organizations on the one hand, and sharing experiences with households in the literate environment on the other."

A view on the outlook:

"I'm Mrs. BAH Mariama Djello, group president of the village of Wansan. We neo-literates, members of grassroots community organizations with the support of a locally elected council and citizens, the support of decentralized state technical services and the AJACIE NGO through its office staff located near Timbi-Tounni, the intervention area of the project, have put in place strategies for the continuation and sustainability of the project's achievements."

To summarize: Future strategies include the need for close relationships between the active members of the project and state and economic structures of the country, financial means in favor of the formation of communities based on the model of Timbi-Tounni and support in all their activities, as described above.

The formal educational system in Pakistan is not capable of meeting the country's growing education needs. Schools are poorly equipped and too few in number. Teachers with insufficient training must work with classes that are too large using materials that are not well adapted to student needs. Especially girls are at a disadvantage under existing socio-cultural conditions. Within the framework of a National Action Plan, nonformal basic education programmes have been created to fill the gap. This contribution examines the success potential of a number of such programmes geared especially to girls and women in the province of Punjab.

Fazalur Rahman/Nabi Bux Jumani/Khadija Bibi

Non-formal Education in Pakistan: A Panacea for Women Development

The present study was aimed to assess the performance of the non-formal basic education (NFBE) schools project initiated in the province of Punjab with the assistance of Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA). The study was conducted in 120 NFBE schools in four districts of Punjab. It was a survey study in which data were collected from female teachers, officers of NFBE, students and their parents. 100 NFBE school teachers, 20 officers of NFBE schools and 500 students and their parents participated in the study. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. It was found that the project is achieving its targets as planned. It was also found that drop-out rates were higher and the teachers were not satisfied with their job structure. It was further concluded that a proper media campaign may be initiated to mobilize the community. The study recommended that learning materials may be developed in the regional languages.

Emergence of Non-Formal Education in Pakistan

Pakistan is a developing country with limited resources and high population growth rate of 2.6% per annum. The increase in the enrollment rate is not in line with the increase in the rate of population growth in the country, and each year millions of children school-age are deprived from getting admission to formal schools due the shortage of schools.

Rural women in Nothern Pakistan researching in the Internet
Source: Fazalur Rahman

During the first decade of the 21st century – since the policy focused on rural areas – the number of primary schools increased sharply for both boys and girls, although the proportion of girls' schools remained constant. The Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey, conducted by the Government of Pakistan in 2006-07, revealed that every year dropout rates for girls are increasing.

A look around neighboring countries in South Asia shows that at the start of the new millennium, Maldives and Sri Lanka had both achieved literacy rates of well over 90%, considerably higher than the regional average of 54%. Similarly many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have quite successfully adopted non-formal education and are offering different programs. Developed countries like Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, France, UK and USA and developing countries like India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan have seized upon its advantages to meet pressing educational needs and social needs (Haq, 2002). Non-formal systems of education are being used effectively in different parts of the world in order to solve the long standing problems of mass illiteracy and creating social awareness. It was realized that through the formal system alone, illiteracy and other problems of education cannot be solved. Therefore, many countries of the world, both developed and developing, realizing the advantages of the non-formal system, have adopted it and made it an integral part of their national system of education. However, in Pakistan there is dire need to launch a national movement for literacy. The country is far behind the target of 100% literacy as set by the Dakar Declaration (2000).

The need for NFE in Pakistan has arisen because not only is the formal system unable to cope with the rising demand of education in the country with its rigid nature but also because the costs of formal education are higher. In several of his writings, Ghafoor (1997) identified two factors for low progress of primary education, and these include inside school factors and outside school factors. The inside school factors include the poor physical facilities, dearth of teaching and learning materials, shortage of trained and qualified teachers, inadequate training of teachers, inadequate learning climate, high pupil/teacher ratio, overemphasis on subject matter rather than personality development, rigid educational policies and practices and urban based curriculum. The outside school factors, as identified, include low socio-economic background of the child, malnutrition among children and socio-cultural problems related to female education.

A report by UNESCO in 1999 on Basic Education in Pakistan points out that already in the past several years non-formal education programs had been initiated. The Non-Formal Basic Education program (NFBE) was initially launched in Pakistan in the 1950s under the title of *"Adult Basic Education Program"*. Several non-formal education programs have been started but no effort has yet been made to launch a non-formal education program on a national level, although this may be changing.

Major initiatives towards *"Education for All"* were the Social Action Program (SAP), the Education Sector Reforms (ESR) and the National Plan of Action (NPA) which have specially targeted girls' education and have allocated significant funds for this purpose. This factor encouraged gender equality in education. The NPA (2000) is a roadmap to meet the education for all (EFA) targets. This plan represents the will and determination of the nation to fight against illiteracy and universalize primary education. It aimed to achieve 100% participation in basic education (grade 1-5) by the year 2015 both for male and female students.

Non-Formal Basic Education Schools

Non-Formal Basic Education Schools (NFBES) were first established in 1996 under the Prime Minister Literacy Commission Islamabad. The concept of these schools is based on the philosophy to involve parents, community and the non-governmental organizations in the promotion of education through non-formal means. Some of the objectives of the NFBE schools include the universalization of primary education, increased involvement of the community and NGOs, provision of employment opportunities to the educated persons and empowerment of rural women. The NFBES are based on the *"Home school"* model. The selected community provides a teacher with a fixed salary of Rs.1000 per month. The five years primary curriculum is taught in three and a quarter years. The government provides funds to the community through intermediary non governmental organizations (NGOs). Accordingly, the NFBES were established all over the country, covering urban slums, small towns and remote villages. The target of the NFBES are the dropouts of the formal schools of age group 10 to 14 for whom the completion period to cover primary level education is to be 2-3 years while students attaining the level of the school grades 5-9 have to complete this course in 3-4 years instead of 5-6 years, the time specified for formal schools. According to the Planning Commission of the Non- Formal Basic Education Schools (1998), these schools have to complement the formal school by offering education in those areas where regular primary schools do not exist and where children are out of schools for various reasons. This school model required fewer resources. The community provides the school building and manages the school. The teachers of NFBES do not have to worry about transfers

and, therefore, work with a missionary zeal. According to PMLC (1996), the program of Non-formal Basic Education Schools is implemented through NGOs and community-based organizations that identify sites for schools, supervise them, give inputs and teaching aids, and pay remuneration to the teachers. These NGOs also manage to provide training to the teachers, form parent-teacher committees at local levels and hold meetings with the teachers and communities. In turn they are paid Rs.200 per school per month in addition to getting awards for the best performance.

Assessment of the Performance of NFBE Schools in Punjab

Presently, a number of schemes and projects have been initiated in the country. In this connection a five year program has been chalked out for imparting education and skill development for rehabilitation and providing economic opportunities to illiterates in jails and working in factories. A scheme of literacy under the title *"Model Districts for Literacy Campaigns to Achieve 100% Literacy"* has been launched with the assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in four districts of Punjab. The scheme was approved in 2004. Its major components included the establishment of adult literacy centers and non-formal basic education (NFBE) centers and awareness campaigns. The targets of this scheme are to achieve 100% literacy in four districts (Khushab, Khanewal, Mandi Bahauddin and Dera Ghazi Khan) of Punjab.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study:

- To investigate the role of non-formal basic education in promoting women's education
- To assess the effectiveness of NFBE schools by exploring their strengths and weaknesses
- To examine the strengths and weaknesses of NFBE schools

Design of the Study

It was a survey study. It was conducted in the literacy schools of the project entitled *"Model Districts for Literacy Campaigns to Achieve 100% Literacy"* in four districts of Punjab. Questionnaires and interviews were used as tools for data collection.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study comprised of:

- 100 female teachers of non-formal basic education schools
- 500 students studying in NFBE centers along with their parents
- 20 officers of NFBE schools

Instrument of the Study

Two questionnaires were developed for data collection. One questionnaire comprising of 21 items was designed for female teachers of NFBE schools. The second questionnaire was developed for officers of NFBE schools and it included 12 items. A structured interview was conducted with students and their parents.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

After collection of questionnaires, data were analyzed, and the summary is presented below:

1. Summary of Teachers Questionnaire

- Teachers of the formal system are not equally beneficial for NFBE as it has a different philosophy.
- Parents are reluctant to educate their daughters.
- Teachers were not satisfied with the pay structure and the physical environment of NFBE schools.
- Dropout rate was higher in NFBE schools.
- Teachers sent progress report regularly but the parents did not agree with them.
- Teachers did not have prior training in non-formal education.

Summary of the Suggestions by Teachers of NFBE Schools

- Proper training for teachers
- School should be easily accessible for teacher/students
- Proper community mobilization techniques be used
- Appropriate pay structure for teachers
- Teaching materials in regional language

2. Analysis of Questionnaire of NFBE Officers

S No	Statement	Percentages		
		Yes	No	To some extent
1.	Need assessment of students needs is done	40	13	47
2.	Teachers provided any training before.	12	59	29
3.	Supervisory staff is sufficient	37	26	37
4.	Performance of teachers is satisfactory	53	15	32
5.	Supervisory staff have any prior training	45	30	25
6.	Community participation is good	34	48	18
7.	Is there any continuous evaluation system of NFE program?	66	–	34
8.	Proper strategy adopted for community mobilization	45	30	25

Without active community participation, success of a non-formal education is impossible. Further need assessment may be done before launching of NFBE schools.

3. Summary of Parents' Interview

S No	Statement	Percentages		
		Yes	No	To some extent
1.	Their girls have learnt new skill/ knowledge in these schools.	48	13	39
2.	Girls can express their ideas in a better way because of the education in NFBE schools.	67	10	23
3.	NFBE schools play an important role for women development in a society.	80	2	18
4.	Education can promote positive behavior in their girls.	90	–	10
5.	NFBE creates awareness regarding health and hygiene.	70	–	30
6.	Non formal basic education can play a better role in social and economic development as compared to uneducated women.	90	–	10
7.	NFBE education develops positive thinking/tolerance in girls.	85	–	15
8.	Progress reports of students.	15	65	20
9.	NFBE schools have developed confidence in their girls.	89	–	11
10.	Do you recommend NFBE to other girls?	75	–	25

The table shows that the parents were very happy about performance of NFBE schools. They were of the view that their kids developed many skills and now they communicate properly. However, they said that teachers did not inform about progress of their girls.

4. Summary of Students' Interview

S No	Statement	Percentages		
		Yes	No	To some extent
1.	School is easily accessible	55	25	20
2.	Are satisfied with the facilities at school	43	30	27
3.	School environment is good	57	12	31
4.	Family members cooperate in attending school	70	15	15
5.	Timing of school is proper	60	10	30
6.	Teacher attitude is friendly	70	5	25
7.	Teacher came to school regularly	67	18	15
8.	Teaching material is easy to learn	56	19	25
9.	Teaching material is linked with your need	45	32	23
10.	Teacher involves you in lesson/activities	58	17	25

The students endorsed the majority of the statements about the performance of their teachers, however, there is still need to improve physical facilities in the school.

Rural women listening a trainer
Source: Fazalur Rahman

Conclusions and Results

It is a fact that a country's social and economic development depend on education. Those nations who neglect education lag behind in the march of civilization and suffer the bad consequences. The history of the subcontinent shows that after the downfall of Mughal rule, Hindus turned to education quickly while the Muslims did not give attention to the acquisition of modern education. In the present-day world, every country increases its expenditure on education and so is getting the advantages of it. Despite the importance of education in the 21st century, the third world countries have not achieved their educational objectives. Pakistan is one of those unfortunate countries which have a low literacy rate. To overcome this problem; a national educational conference was convened just after the creation of Pakistan to bring reforms in the educational system. But the lack of political stability in the initial stage hindered the steps for reforms. Although overall adult literacy rates are low in the country, with over half the population illiterate, there has been impressive progress over the past two decades, especially in rural areas where literacy rates have doubled for females (Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey 2007-08).

The present study was aimed to assess the performance of NFBE schools project initiated in the province of Punjab with the assistance of Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA). The study was conducted in 100 NFBE schools in four districts of Punjab. The study revealed some important findings that led to the following recommendations:

- To create awareness among the masses, proper media campaign for community mobilization should be fully utilized.
- Proper training should be arranged for teachers of NFBE schools.
- Appropriate service structure should be introduced to attract talented teachers.
- Learning materials should be drafted in regional languages.
- Need assessment should be done before establishing NFBE schools.

Bibliography

Academy of Educational Planning & Management. (2007). Pakistan education statistics 2006-07.

Ghafoor, A. (1997). Non-formal education in Pakistan. Islamabad: EPAM.

Government of Pakistan. (2000). National plan of action. Islamabad: Planning Commission.

Haq, M. (2002). Human development in South Asia. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

UNESCO (1999). *Basic education in Pakistan*. Islamabad: Author.

UNESCO (2003). Educational for all: Where do we stand? Islamabad: Author.

World Bank. (1980). Education sector paper. Geneva: Author.

POPULAR EDUCATION AND REFLECT

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCAT
MENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADU
DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOP

Popular Education and Reflect

One of the tasks of our journal is to inform our readers about developments in the science and methods of adult education. It is our hope that articles dealing with this theme will help to advance the debate on suitable methods and concepts in the search for coherent approaches in the field – approaches that need to be tested and retested in practice.

Adult education works at the grassroots level and caters to the needs of the underprivileged. It does not seek to set goals for learners, but rather to support them in articulating their own goals in a process of dialogue. This approach is inextricably linked with the name Paulo Freire, the best known and most influential representative of *"Popular Education"*.

Many years after his death, his teachings still provide the basis for the most widely followed and respected approach to adult education in Latin America, and they are increasingly being put into practice in other regions of the world as well. Building on Freirian methods, the British organization ActionAid developed the *"Reflect"* approach, which stands for *"Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques"*. The approach is currently being used by over 500 organizations in more than 70 countries of the world. Adapting the method to other cultural contexts, however, is not an automatic process. It can serve to generate any number of new models in attempts to integrate participatory components into conventional methods and traditions – often with only a superficial level of interaction.

Nydia González has been a staunch advocate of Popular Education for decades. She is the director of the Cuban *Asociación de Pedagogos de Cuba* as well as of the *Colectivo de Investigación Educativa "Graciela Bustillos" (CIE),* an NGO of which she is also the founder. Alongside her other numerous positions, she serves as honorary president of CEAAL.

Nélida Céspedes Rossel is also a veteran in the cause of Popular Education in Latin America. She is the incumbent president of CEAAL for the term 2009 – 2012. Her name will always remain closely associated with the prestigious Peruvian non-government organization TAREA.

Moussa Gadio is an adult educator from Mali who is actively engaged in the planning and implementation of small projects. From 2009 through 2011, he was a Fulbright scholar at Northern Illinois University.

Lamphoune Luangxay is the head of the literacy division of the Laotian Ministry of Education's Department for Non-formal Education. **Mathias Pfeifer,** currently a junior consultant in Laos, is an adult educator and sociologist who has conducted research on the Reflect method.

Pedagogy as the well-deliberated, historical, social, and political science of education has evolved over the course of centuries. After briefly outlining the development of this discipline since the Renaissance, the article focuses on Popular Education, a model of pedagogy for the oppressed proposed by Paulo Freire to help disadvantaged subjects liberate themselves from their oppressors by analyzing the conditions of their oppression, and by developing their own initiative to take transformatory action. Although Freire's fundamental ideas retain their validity, changing conditions make it necessary for educators to adapt the methods according to well-founded theoretical considerations.

Nydia González

Popular Education and Pedagogy

A Brief Introduction

Pursuing this subject implies recognizing that the phenomenon of education is as old as the human race. From the dawn of humanity there has been a need to learn and teach, in other words a need for education. Over the ages great teachers and important teachings have appeared around the world, but it took thousands of years before people began reflecting on the practice of education for the sake of guiding and clarifying the process and filling in the gaps. The discipline of pedagogy – the general theory of the art of education – was developed in the course of this process.[1]

As a social phenomenon, these processes of action and reflection in education are conditioned by other historical, sociological, and political components. Every era has left its mark on pedagogy. Dogmatic theology had a decisive impact on scholasticism. Modernity gave rise to rationality and the so-called New School Movement. And the process of domesticating capitalism leveraged the development of educational technology and programmed learning. School is clearly not a static entity. The art of teaching has changed as a consequence of scientific findings and the interests that have defined school as an ideological apparatus of the State.

1 The Dominican educator, Eugenio Maria de Hostos, defines pedagogy as a science and an art. As a science, it is the application of the natural laws of human understanding and reasoning; in other words, it is the study of the order in which knowledge is communicated, based on the laws of reason. As an art, it is the body of resources and procedures used by educators to transmit knowledge. http://monografías.com/trabajos10/

At the same time, every era produces ideas that question or dispute existing theories. For every school there is a counter school. However, it is important to remember that educational trends do not materialize as a finished product. They are shaped and modified in the course of educational practice. Neither do they reject or exclude every idea developed in earlier approaches. On the contrary, elements perceived as positive are maintained, and other elements are adapted to fit alternative concepts. New ideas are introduced and connections between new concepts and earlier approaches are identified. As a result, no pedagogical trend exists in a pure or classic form.

Scholars therefore acknowledge the existence of diverse influences and common traits in different approaches, as demonstrated in the following comments of Paulo Freire:[2]

> *"Let us consider for a moment the question of influences, which at times are misinterpreted in a very mechanistic manner. The belief is that the influence which one individual exerts over another implies that the person who is influenced copies the influencer. This is not the case. Influence only exists if the one who is influenced is capable per se of being influenced, and if the one who is influenced reshapes the one who influenced. Otherwise it is not influence but mediocrity. Therefore, I believe that to accept influences and to live them, to adopt them, is one of the tasks of a good intellectual."*

A brief survey of the trends that have emerged over the history of pedagogy serves to demonstrate the complex nature of the history of pedagogy and the implicit need that exists to establish where these trends are related and what they have contributed. This process is particularly important today considering the explosive developments taking place in the new sciences. The field of pedagogy is experiencing the effects of new concepts, reasoning, and technologies. It faces a wide range of alternatives as a result of the growing number of critical perspectives.

The Renaissance, an era of rapid scientific development, enabled pedagogy to create the body of theory necessary for the area to be regarded as a separate academic discipline. It evolved into a pedagogical tradition that still bears influence today (in terms of education principles, structure of the teaching process,

2 In this connection Freire himself commented: *"I never claimed to be a constructivist in my work or my most recent studies. Nevertheless, it is impossible for me to study constructivism without seeing myself, because for the past 30 years I have been doing and saying things that laid the foundation for constructivism. Accordingly together with Piaget and others like him, I am a sort of precursor for constructivism."… "Emilia Ferreiro takes the question of language acquisition that I proposed in my early works further than I did, precisely in terms of a more scientific understanding of the process. Nevertheless, Emilia does not go further than I do in terms of the political and ideological perspective of education."* http://www.scribd.com/doc/3934603/Citas-de-Paolo-Freire

discipline; the role of the teacher as an active expositor, and the student as a receptive repeater; and the formal nature of teaching, focusing mainly on grammar and literature). The concepts set forth by John Amos Comenius in his work *Didactica Magna* still hold true. The model of education which developed during the Renaissance has been replicated for more than five centuries. A vision of school has been created that has become a state institution, a status which has permitted the underlying ideology to be reproduced and prevailing interests to be realized. It is no wonder, therefore, how difficult it is for teachers to erase or unlearn elements that are recognized as constitutive components of school and teaching. Although the concepts can be refuted and challenged as practices that hinder the freedom and creativity of the education process, they are still frequently reproduced in our practice, and, as such, are evidence of our own inconsistency.

The late nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of the New School Movement. In their critique of traditional pedagogy, proponents of the New School argued that the education system should be more flexible, that students should be able to pursue their own interests and thus play a more active role in the education process, and that the contents of education should be organized in a more global manner. Education, as they envisioned it, needed to be contextualized. The approach taken by John Dewey is genetic and functional. His theory of pedagogy is considered to be a valuable contribution to society. It is from important representatives of this school of thought – eminent educators such as Maria Montessori, Ovide Decroly, and Roger Cousinet – that we have inherited a new paradigm for the relationship between theory and practice based on the principle of learning by doing.

In the early twentieth century, during the height of the Social Revolution, a young Russian educator by the name of Lev Vygotsky developed a cultural-historical approach to education. This approach takes a critical look at the transmission of knowledge, biological determinism, and the rigidity of programmes. As a methodology for research in psychology, Vygotsky introduced the concept of the *"zone of proximal development"* as the starting point for educational work: the distance between the actual development level (an individual's capacity to solve problems independently) and the level of potential development (the individual's capacity to solve a problem with the help of others).

Around the middle of the twentieth century, with the development of the technological sciences, there was a trend toward consolidating the educational technology movement with the support of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and programmed learning in a trial and error approach with behavioral objectives and content logically organized into sequences of units. The teacher's role was reduced to developing programmes. Students were to set their own pace and work according to individualized learning plans based on their personal learning rhythm.

In the second half of the twentieth century, as theories accumulated and revolutionary movements in America flourished, traditional and technological trends understandably encountered a wave of critique, and new paths opened up for educational concepts based on strong arguments derived from the sometimes overlapping areas of psychology, epistemology, philosophy, and sociology.

A number of the more prominent examples of these new directions include: self-directed pedagogy, non-directive pedagogy, cognitive pedagogy,[3] constructivism,[4] significant learning theory,[5] problem-based learning, the pedagogy of action research, critical pedagogy and the pedagogy of liberation.[6]

Against this background, during the rebellious 1960s, the creative revolutionary educator Paulo Freire developed a pedagogy that sees the oppressed as its starting point. This pedagogy, which represents an educational alternative for liberation and which opposes both arrogant authoritarianism as well as irresponsible spontaneity, is located within the movement of Critical Pedagogy and is called Popular Education.

Popular Education: Its Nature and Purpose

Popular Education continues to grow and evolve through practice, although not without difficulty. More and more it is proving to be:

3 Representatives of the Cognitive School include the Swiss psychologist, Jan Piaget (1896 – 1980), and the US American psychologist, Jerome Bruner, who contributed to the development of genetic epistemology, and created a model of intellectual development in childhood. They viewed knowledge as a construction that individuals build through interaction with their environment and by fitting information into pre-existing cognitive schemas.

4 Social constructivism argues that the environment for optimal learning is one where there is dynamic interaction between instructors and students, and activities that provide opportunities for students to create their own truth, based on the interaction with others. Knowledge is not received, but actively constructed. Vygotsky is considered a precursor of this theory. Representatives include Piaget, Ausubel, and Chomsky.

5 Significative learning is a theory proposed by the US American, David Ausubel (1918-2008). His concept is a mixture of behaviourism and cognitivism. It brings into play the idea that learning is mainly influenced by activating pre-existing knowledge and connecting what the learner already knows with new knowledge. It further considers the role of expectations as a factor in orienting the learner and maintaining his or her attention.

6 Pedagogy for liberation is a teaching concept that intends to help students question and challenge domination and the beliefs and practices that create it. In other words, it is a theory and practice (praxis) in which students develop critical awareness. The main representatives of pedagogy for liberation are Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren. McLaren maintains that although not physically located in any school or university department, critical pedagogy constitutes a homogenous set of ideas catalyzed by the interest of critical theorists to empower the weak and to transform social inequality and injustice. One of the fundamental components of critical pedagogy is the conviction that education for personal and social empowerment is a greater ethical priority than epistemological questions or the mastering of technical or social skills that are seen as priorities by the market.

- a pedagogy of the oppressed that aims to create awareness not only of the world we live in, but also of the one we want it to be;
- a methodological counter-proposal to the banking concept of education and an approach which promotes student involvement in the construction of knowledge through practice;
- an alternative communicative approach to inclusion and dialogue; and a viable proposal to nurture the hope and the ethical commitment that imbues liberating action with life.

In the following paragraphs, I shall summarize the traits that characterize three of the many dimensions of Popular Education.

The Political Dimension

The essence of Popular Education is political, considering that it is conceived as a pedagogy created with the oppressed as a means for them to develop critical consciousness, because *"Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society?"*[7]

It surpasses contemplative criticism and poses the need for the oppressed to design the revolutionary transformation of their reality, because *"Who better than they can understand the necessity of liberation?"*

But not only is Popular Education political in its liberating goals and protagonism on the part of the oppressed, but also in the object of study, and in its dialectic and creative methodology:

> *"This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for liberation. And in the struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade."*

In his approach Freire calls attention to the phenomenon he describes as *"adhesion to the oppressor"*.[8] He defines the *"new man"* as arising out of the contradiction between oppressors and oppressed, stating: *"the contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man: neither oppressor nor oppressed, but man in the process of liberation."* This extraordinarily dialectic idea of ethical humanism considers struggle to be indispensable to win critical consciousness of oppression.

---

7 All quotations in the section *The political dimension* are taken from Chapter I of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire.

8 As Freire writes, *"during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or 'sub-oppressors'."*

Our generation was not the first to recognize the value of adult education for the individual as well as the broader community, and to take up its cause. In a fictitious interview with the historic figure Simón Rodríguez, tutor and mentor of the Latin American liberator, Simón Bolívar, Raúl Léis points out that many of the ideas which are current today have a long tradition in history. Raúl Léis is a Panamanian author and adult educator. He is currently Secretary General of the Latin American Council for Adult Education CEAAL.

Simón Rodríguez

Without Popular Education There Will Be no True Society

Interview

Simón Rodríguez (1769-1853), who was born in Caracas, Venezuela, was the teacher and mentor of Simón Bolívar, the great South American liberator. As an educator and philosopher with extensive knowledge of Latin American society, he wrote many articles and books on history, education, and sociology. *"La Carta"* is the virtual newsletter of CEAAL, the Latin American Council of Adult Education.

The questions in this imaginary interview are fiction, but the answers are excerpts from the writings of Simón Rodríguez.

La Carta: Don Simón, is popular education important?
SR: Without popular education there will be no true society.

La Carta: What is the aim of popular education?
SR: To instruct people and accustom them to working; to create useful people, people who are capable of contributing to building the nations in which they live…. In general, governments must provide the ways and means…and must give careful consideration on how to proceed.

La Carta: Should there be equal education for everyone?
SR: Everyone in general needs education. Without kindling the first lights of education, man is blind to the rest of knowledge. The aims of education are laudable and interesting: to instil the spirit in children to receive the best of impressions, and to make them capable in all their endeavours.

La Carta: How does popular education relate to the construction of a better society?
SR: No one can do something well unless he knows how to do it. It follows that a republic cannot be built together with people who are ignorant, whatever the plans may be... Consider this well: If you want to build a republic, educate your children.

La Carta: What is the relationship between public education and poverty?
SR: A person is not ignorant because he is poor. The opposite is true!…. He who knows nothing can be deceived by anyone. He who has nothing, anyone can buy.

La Carta: What, to your mind, is the purpose of education?
SR: To instruct is not to educate. Instruction is not education, although education is fostered through the process instruction.

La Carta: An interesting observation! And what is the role of the educator?
SR: An educator should be a wise, enlightened, communicative philosopher. His function is to prepare individuals for their role in society.... Teach children to be inquisitive so that, asking the reasons for what they are told to do, they learn to obey reason, not authority like limited people, nor custom like stupid people. There is no interest on the part of individuals who do not grasp the *"why"* behind an action. What they do not feel, they cannot understand, and what they do not understand, does not interest them. Three parts of the art of learning are bringing something to the attention of learners, capturing their attention, and holding it. Not every teacher excels in all three.

La Carta: Is it a question of motivating students to learn how to learn?
SR: The title *"teacher"* is one that should only be given to those who know how to teach, in other words to those who know how to teach others to learn – not to those who order others to learn or tell them what to learn. The teacher who knows how to initiate the process of learning continues to teach virtually everything that is learned later on because what he taught is how to learn. Teaching leads to understanding. It is about using understanding and not about making others recite from memory.

La Carta: What values should be promoted?
SR: Accustom children to being truthful, loyal, helpful, temperate, charitable, appreciative, consistent, generous, amiable, diligent, careful, and neat, to respect reputation, and to honour their promises. Leave them in charge of their skills; when they are young, they will know how to look for teachers. Teachers should help children to learn the value of work so that they can appreciate the value of things. Teach, and you will have people who know; educate, and you will have people who do.

La Carta: How do you define the art of education?
SR: We need social instruction to create a prudent nation; physical education to make it strong; technical education to make it expert; and scientific education to make it thinking.

La Carta: On 15 August1805 in Rome, Simón Bolívar climbed Monte Sacro with you. Can you tell us part of the oath made by your disciple that day – an oath that was to change the destiny of this continent?
SR: *"I swear by the God of my fathers, I swear on their graves, I swear by my honour and my Country that I will not rest body or soul until I have broken the chains binding us to the will of Spanish might!"*

La Carta: What problem do you consider the affliction of your century?
SR: The insatiable appetite for wealth is the affliction of the century.

La Carta: The desire for wealth continues to plague our countries, Don Simón. As our revered teacher, what final message would you want to convey to the readers of CEAAL's newsletter, *"La Carta"*?
SR: Where should we look for models? Spanish America is unique. Its institutions and governments must therefore also be unique. And we require unique approaches to construct them. Either we invent or we fail.

The foregoing interview was elaborated by Raul Leis R. ceaal_secge@cwpanama.net

When he reflects on praxis in the search for critical awareness, he outlines his critique of activism and verbalism and enlarges on his Marxist orientation in defining praxis as *"reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it."*

He expands his critique to include political and ethical issues such as violence, the culture of domination, dehumanization and fear, the role of structures and bureaucracy, and liberating propaganda, and he defines the final aim of the struggle when he writes: *"They must realize that they are fighting not merely for freedom from hunger, but for freedom to create and to construct, to wonder and to venture."*

The Pedagogical Dimension

Popular Education rejects the traditional model of education which Freire calls the banking approach because it views knowledge as a gift bestowed by the teacher upon the student. With this apparent act of detachment, the banking approach masks its intention of controlling the thoughts and actions of men. This makes it a practice of domination with the result that individuals passively adapt to the world.

Freire denounces traditional education as an instrument of oppression. He explains the relationship of power that is hidden in the determining, disciplined, and distant relationship between teacher and student. The function of the teacher is a narrative and discursive one, while the student is receptive and silent. Freire explains the relationship as a contradiction of unfinished beings. Once they become aware of their incompleteness, they will fight *"to become more"* in a struggle that will end in either domestication or in liberation.

As a counter proposal to domesticating education, Popular Education introduces the problem-posing concept of education as an instrument for liberation that involves a new relationship between teacher and student. The new relationship is one in which both teacher and student learn and teach simultaneously, mediated by a world in which reality is neither fixed nor comprised of separate pieces. Reality as comprehended in Popular Education requires learners to identify 'generative themes'.

The interests of the learner are the point of departure for determining such themes. Reflecting on these themes generates a process of searching and unmasking which does not evade the complexity of the practice itself and which places science at the service of the practice. In his proposal, Freire sees the need to discover hidden issues in *"limit situations"* and brings the concept of *"untested feasibility"*. He explains:

> *"[L]imit situations imply the existence of the persons who are directly or indirectly served by these situations, and of those who are negated and curbed by them. Once the latter come to perceive these situations as the frontier between*

being and being more human, rather than the frontier between being and nothingness, they begin to direct their increasingly critical actions towards achieving the untested feasibility implicit in that perception."[9]

Popular Education envisions a close connection between theory and student practice with the latter serving as the starting point. Knowledge is built in a participatory manner from context, criteria, and feelings of learners. Learning takes place in a pleasant atmosphere, and in a back and forth between the processes of action and reflection. Participatory techniques serve as tools to support this process.

The Communicative Dimension

In contrast to education based on narrative that is manipulative or imposed on the student, Popular Education adopts a problem-posing dialogue as the concept for communication.

Dialogue, to quote Freire, is *"born from a critical matrix and generates criticality. When the two 'poles' of the dialogue are thus linked by love, hope and mutual trust, they can join in critical search for something. Only dialogue truly communicates."*[10]

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire explains antidialogics and dialogics as matrices of opposing theories of cultural action: the former as an instrument of oppression and the latter as an instrument of liberation.

This theory, which predates the communicative action theory of Habermas, contrasts antidialogic action with dialogic action, and, with perfectly logical arguments, characterises the action of oppressors as: *"conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, and cultural invasion"*. The theory of dialogical action is presented as an alternative that is impossible for dominators to adhere to and indispensible for those whose revolutionary intention is liberation.

Its main characteristics include: cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis.

The intention of the communication dimension of this essentially political concept is summarized by Freire as follows:

"Forms of cultural action . . . have the same objective: to clarify to the oppressed the objective situation which binds them to the oppressors, visible or not. Only forms of action which avoid mere speech-making and ineffective 'blah' on the

9 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter II.
10 Mario Kaplún, *Comunicador Popular*, p. 63.

one hand, and mechanistic activism on the other, can also oppose the divisive action of the dominant elites and move towards the unity of the oppressed."[11]

What Praxis Tells Us

Popular Education is being continually defined through practice. It is created and recreated from day to day by the popular educators of Latin America in their struggle toward coherence.

The space it has won in Latin America exists essentially outside of school walls and lies for the most part in the sphere of adults. Experience in problem-posing education is very scarce, and even less at any level in school curricula where it is virtually non-existent in combination with a commitment to the idea of liberation. It would be naive for us to hope that the dominant classes, for whom school is perceived as an institution that serves to perpetuate their system and secure their power, would adopt a critical, consciousness-raising methodology that unmasks their limits. For them to do so would be the same as digging their own graves. For many years this pedagogical movement has been reduced to processes of community education, courses in leadership development, and education processes in which the oppressed create spaces combining action and reflection.

We cannot deny the possibility that the oppressed will triumph even beyond the boundaries of Popular Education because the more acute the situation becomes, the more they will grow conscious of it, and the greater their motivation will be to organize revolutionary activities. This potential can empower the oppressed to take control and achieve revolutionary triumph. But even after they assume power, they cannot be expected to automatically dismantle machinery established across centuries, as in the case of the traditional school system. When the oppressed assume power, there will be many gaps for them to fill. They must universalize education and bring it within reach of all: from the acquisition of literacy skills through the diversification of university spaces; from the very young to the very old. Contents must be changed, the *"hidden"* must be *"unmasked"*, the learner must develop a critical perspective. But to support this process it will be essential to harness the forces of scientific thought.

On the other hand, it will be essential to make teaching methods democratic, to create participatory spaces to train the mind and conduct of the student to exercise power but liberated from the shadow of the oppressor.

11 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter IV.

Material conditions must be ensured, but above all it will be necessary to revolutionize concepts and transform educators. There is a need to know how to teach and learn differently, a need to strive for coherence and consistency, and not to betray the inheritance or image of power. Contrary to established practice, it will be necessary to learn to read the context before the text, and not to let impatience for results become a motivation to transmit knowledge which ought to be constructed. Special efforts will be needed to replace the backward culture of explaining and orienting with a new culture of listening and dialogue. We must cultivate the tolerance that permits us to understand what is different without abandoning the struggle for our dream, to appreciate its alternative nature without losing sight of the fact that unity, in its broadest sense, is the premise for our survival as a social proposal that provides an alternative to capitalism.

In an interview in the 1980s, Paulo Freire observed:

> *"[W]hat can happen it is that even though Cuba conducts a revolution, education retains its traditional character. And this is perfectly understandable. Nicaragua is showing us how difficult it is to recreate education. It is not possible to comprehend revolution mechanically. It must be viewed historically. Transforming history is not just a matter of headwork, no matter how bright the people doing that work are. History is made and transformed dialectically, in a process of contradiction. Accordingly, it takes a long time for revolution to tear down 'the old', and build up 'the new'. If this relation were mechanical, the day after the triumph of revolution we would already have the 'new man', the 'new woman', and the 'new education'. But it does not happen this way. It is not mechanical, but historical. That is why it takes time.*
>
> *At the same time, it is clear to me, that the preservation of traditional methods of education in a revolutionary context signifies the distance between dream and practice. One of the most difficult struggles for revolutionaries within the revolution – never outside of it – is the struggle for the renovation of the methods and procedures at the same time as the content of education is renewed."*

The difficulty in *departing from "the old"* to create *"the new"* is complicated by the fact that *"the new"* has to be created alongside or in juxtaposition to *"the old"*. This is because we live in a capitalist world of exploitation, and when the status quo is faced with the prospect of change, aggressiveness tends to increase. From every front, either consciously or unconsciously there will always be some oppressors, or members of the oppressed classes who have adapted to their situation, who strive to defend their educational paradigm and attack any alternative paradigm that stands in opposition to theirs.

Popular Education has been the target of every manner of critique. It has been labelled a reductionist vision of education that was developed merely to teach literacy skills or to educate adults. It has faced the astonishing claim that as a theory it has not been fully developed because it lacks theoretical rigor. Some critics have even mistaken the concept for a participatory technique limited only to making instruction more enjoyable. Others argue that Popular Education is more of a political agenda than a pedagogical concept, which makes it better suited to party politics than to school instruction. Still others have argued that the concept is a product of subjective idealism on the part of its founder, and as such tends to perpetuate a naïve error of youth, an idea which Freire himself has refuted. There are even some who entertain the strange idea that although Popular Education was good as a theory for the 1960s, it has meanwhile become outmoded because the world we live in has become a better one.

It is not the intention here to examine the reasoning behind such opinions, or simply to dismiss them as the product of ignorance about the work of Paulo Freire or as an expression of natural resistance to change. Neither is it my aim to try and convince the oppressors that we need to equip the younger generation with powers of critical, ethical, and flexible thinking, to build their creative capacity, and to provide them with revolutionary goals. I only desire here to appeal to the conscience of teachers who can contribute through their teaching practice to forge the kind of spirit that can open up space for revolution and the future – space in their classrooms, or perhaps in their schools, and in this way, inch by inch, fight at the side of the oppressed with the weapons of Popular Education for the kind of world we are entitled to live in.

As José Martí once said:

> *"Today, with the colossal affluence of intelligent and eager men in all walks of life, whoever wants to live cannot sit down to rest and let the pilgrim's staff of his voyage remain idle for a single hour: for when he wants to get up and set out again, the staff will have become a rock. Never, ever was the world greater or more picturesque. It is merely difficult to understand and put at one's own level. As a consequence, many would rather speak ill of it and vanish into resentment. It is better to work and try to understand the marvel, and aid in perfecting it."*[12]

I see him envisioning the nascent democracy that we are experiencing in our America today, the progress toward empowerment that the oppressed are achieving, the urgent need for us to become better prepared for embarking on the voyage in defence of our dreams and aspirations.

12 José Martí, *La América*, New York, 1884.

Translating Challenges into Commitments

Modern critical theory tells us that as teachers we are cultural workers, and in that capacity we have the potential to become part of the system and its vast machinery either as simple cogs or as intellectual **transformers**. Those who select the first alternative will be destined to disillusion and monotony; those who choose the second will lend professional and personal dignity to our work.

The guiding thread of Ariadne that can lead teachers through this maze starts with their own transformation through the process of their teaching practice. The need to fight for ethical coherence between their lives and their dream is the only compass they can count on to guide them.

Leadership-building experiences in the projects or movements emerging in our countries are an excellent place for learning and sharing what we learn. The need to share knowledge and commitments can be an excellent school for popular educators, without forgetting that *"It is true that education is not the ultimate lever for social transformation, but without it transformation cannot occur."*[13]

The misconception that Popular Education is exclusively reserved for Adult Education has become less prevalent among the greater majority of teachers at all levels. More and more teachers are interested in learning about the methods and experimenting with them. It is essential for Popular Education to win every inch of scholastic space possible. Teachers all over the world must view the practice of teaching through the eyes of the poor and with commitment to the poor. And this includes our children and young people, who the foundation of the future.

We must exert our influence to promote the study of Critical Pedagogy in teacher training programmes and in postgraduate studies in education. We must discover new and viable education alternatives for our peoples. We must find practicable solutions that have not yet been found.

At the same time, we must work to enrich the sector's theoretical underpinnings. The educator, Carlos Núñez, has said that teachers must permanently create, invent, and reinvent ways and means to facilitate the process of exploration, critical questioning, and discovery that leads learners to comprehension. It is absolutely essential, starting with this process of re-creation, for us to make progress in systematizing the concepts that will help us to better socialize our students.

Besides working to improve the theoretical underpinnings in our field, we popular educators must make every effort to reflect on the criticism that has been brought against Popular Education so as to refute the attempts to detract from its status. It

13 Paulo Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to those who dare to teach*, Boulder, CO., 1998.

is not necessary to evade confrontation. As José Martí said in *Our America: "The greatest war we wage is waged by thinking. Let's win it by thinking."*

There are many ways in which we can make these commitments of ours. Every nation knows what has to be done, and we trust in their wisdom. But America's great educator, Paulo Freire, has left us with a challenge we cannot ignore:

> *"What matters is not whether we make mistakes and inconsistencies, but our disposition to overcome them. By living we can contribute to creating a happy, joyful school. We forge a school-adventure, a school that marches on, that is not afraid of the risks, and that rejects immobility. It is a school that thinks, that participates, that creates, that speaks, that loves, that guesses, that passionately embraces and says yes to life. It is not a school that keeps silent and silences me."*[14]

References

Acosta Navarro, María Elena, *Tendencias pedagógicas contemporáneas. La pedagogía tradicional y el enfoque histórico-cultural. Análisis comparativo* [Contemporary trends in pedagogy. Traditional pedagogy and the historical-cultural focus. A comparative analysis] http://www.bvs.sld.cu/revistas/est/vol42_1_05/est09105.htm

CEPES. *Tendencias pedagógicas en la realidad educativa actual*. [Pedagogical tendencies in the current educational reality] Havana: University of Havana. 2002.

Citas de presencia y vigencia de Paolo Freire. [Quotations establishing the presence and validity of Paolo Freire] http://www.scribd.com/doc/3934603/Citas-de-Paolo-Freire

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Freire, Paulo. *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*. Expanded ed. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2005.

Kaplún, Mario. *El Comunicador Popular* [The Popular Communicator]. Quito: CIESPAL, 1985.

Martí, José. *Ideario Pedagógico*. Havana: Impr. Nacional de Cuba, 1961.

Núnez Hurtado, Carlos. *Retos De La Renovación Educativa*. Conference. Mexico, 2002.

Rodríguez Alarcón, Jose Guillermo. *Tendencias pedagógicas* [Pedagogical Trends]. Conference. 2008, http://www.scribd.com/doc/16257742/Tendencias-pedagogicas

Tendencias pedagógicas contemporaneas [Contemporary trends in pedagogy] http://www.monografias.com/trabajos6/tenpe/tenpe.shtml

Torres, Rosa María. *Entrevista con Paulo Freire* [Interview with Paulo Freire]. Havana, Association of Cuban Pedagogues (APC).

14 Ibid.

The social situation in Latin America is marked by profound differences between rich and poor. One of these differences is access to education. But it is only through education and knowledge that people can develop the capacity to act and instigate change in their social conditions. There are many obstacles hindering achievement of the goals stipulated in the UN Literacy for All campaign. The Latin American Association for Adult Education CEAAL stands in the tradition of Paulo Freire and works in every country of Latin America on both practical and political levels to overcome inequality and exclusion.

Nélida Céspedes Rossel

A Perspective on Lifelong Learning

The success or failure of Adult and Youth Education (AYE) involves issues that go far beyond the education system – issues related to macro-economic influences, market forces and development models. This opens up space for a debate, challenging us to take a closer look at lifelong education. We must urgently consider AYE in terms of the type of development model that should be pursued in Latin America and the Caribbean so as to ensure that AYE can effectively become a basic component of human development. For this to happen, we must incorporate the kind of meaning and content in AYE that can transform the unjust order and produce independent and critically-thinking people in accordance with the principles underlying Adult Education.

It is in this sense that we undertake to briefly analyze the situation in Latin America in order to identify the problems and critical issues encountered in the development of AYE. In the midst of worldwide political, economic, cultural, and environmental crisis, we face the formidable task of renewing international efforts in the area of Lifelong Learning, and of bridging the gap between vision and discourse.

A Brief Look at the Social Situation in Latin America

The findings of the World Wealth Report,[1] which disclose the concentration of wealth in Latin America, are cause for indignation. Over the course of three years, as the report reveals, the wealthiest people in Latin America have amassed the staggering amount of 6.3 trillion US dollars in financial assets, increasing their fortunes by 20.4 percent. And this figure excludes material assets such as homes and art collections. By comparison, during the same period, wealthy individuals in the oil-producing countries of the Middle East have increased the balances of their bank accounts by 17.5 percent. In Africa, increases amounted to 15 percent; in Asia 12.5 percent; in Europe 5.3 percent; and in the United States and Canada 4.4 percent. According to the report for the year 2007, wealthy Latin Americans are the least generous of their class anywhere in the world. Facts like these give rise to important questions: At whose expense do such fortunes grow? What do political rulers do – or fail to do – that permits such excesses? How does the result affect the living and learning conditions for children, young people, and adults?

A starkly contrasting picture is offered in a study conducted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) under the title Social Panorama of Latin America.[2] More than 182 million people, according to this study, are currently living in poverty. This represents 33.2 per cent of the population. And during the present year, the rate of extreme poverty and destitution, which stood at 12.6 per cent (68 million people) in the year 2007, is estimated to rise to 12.9 per cent (71 million people). Inequality in education is a factor in this situation. The poor are excluded from the universal right to education:

> *"This poverty is linked to the impact of inflation that took hold at the beginning of 2007. According to economic forecasts, global economic deceleration will leave the region with a weaker demand for commodity exports, lower investments in the productive sector, and reduced migrant remittances. Emerging economies will experience international financial market constraints. Employment is expected to stagnate, and household income is expected to decline, especially among self-employed and informal sector workers whose jobs are more susceptible to economic shifts. The outcome is likely to be a slight rise in poverty and indigence, which will prolong the negative trend initiated in 2008."*

The Social Panorama report, which also analyzes the subject of juvenile and domestic violence in Latin America, states in this connection:

1 Capgemini Merrill Lynch, World Wealth Report 2008, http://www.ml.com/media/100472.pdf
2 http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/3/34733/PSI2008-SintesisLanzamiento.pdf

"Such violence feeds on various forms of social and symbolic exclusion among youth, including a lack of equal opportunities, a lack of access to employment, alienation, discrepancies between symbolic consumption and material consumption, territorial segregation, the absence of public facilities for social and political participation." (Social Panorama of Latin America. 2008)

Not only does this worrying trend jeopardize the objectives related to literacy and the education of youth and adults as set forth in the agreements concluded in Hamburg. It is also undermining economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, and the commitments adopted by the Decade of the United Nations. It compromises the aims of the Education for All Declaration, Article 3 of which demands universal access to education and the promotion of equality. And it runs counter to the Millennium Development Goals which seek *"to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people"*.

Some progress has been made. Examples include the shaping of a vision of Lifelong Learning, the search for links between literacy learning and education for young people and adults, the development of a variety of programmes and methods, the elaboration of education materials, and the provision of national and international funding. However, the stated goals have not been achieved. That will require the renewal of commitment toward the transformation of existing economic structures, the articulation of educational, social, and cultural policies, the empowerment of excluded sectors, and a focus on the gender perspective. Only if we address these issues will we be able to confront the extreme disparities that exist between rich and poor, and to build humane societies whose members are capable of reading, understanding, and transforming the world.

The renewed commitment that we speak of involves addressing the problem of poverty. The eradication of poverty is part of a horizon of economic justice on a continent beset by inequality. Such a horizon can only be reached through an immediate redistribution of wealth, a process that requires active, conscious, and democratic political participation. This implies empowering people to strengthen their capacity to act. Putting education at the service of the most disadvantaged is the prerequisite. Policies must be created that confront the problem of inequality in education for young people and adults and serve to shape a system of basic education that prevents desertion. Literacy training must provide young people and adults with access to knowledge that will foster the democratization of our societies and an intercultural citizenship.

The United Nations Literacy Decade A Development Strategy for 2008 – 2012

The mid-term report for the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD)[3] which was submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in October 2008, served as the basis for a publication entitled The Global Literacy Challenge.[4] As the report points out, Literacy for All, which is the vision of literacy put forward in this report, is a difficult objective to realize, not merely because of the difficulty inherent in the acquisition of language skills, but also because the challenge is complicated by powerful socio-economic and political constraints that constitute limiting factors in the development of literacy efforts.

As outlined in the report, the following factors that limit progress towards Literacy for All constitute challenges that must be taken up by the countries of the world if they earnestly intend to make the necessary changes to achieve the stated goals by 2012.

Limiting factors

Low priority: Literacy has low priority in many countries and in many international agencies relative to other pressing socio-economic issues. In addition, youth and adult literacy is most often regarded as a matter of secondary importance compared to the provision of schooling at all levels for children and young people.

Inadequate policies and planning: Where there are no clear policies or strategies for literacy, efforts lack coherence and may not contribute to broader national development goals. Unclear objectives and the absence of consistent planning lead to ad hoc programmes and possibly to the neglect of certain population groups, and haphazard outcomes.

Inadequate coordination and lack of partnerships: Literacy is implemented not only by the ministry of education, but by several ministries as well as civil society. In most countries, there is neither comprehensive information on the activities the various stakeholders are undertaking, nor coordination among them. This leads to overlap, waste of resources, and the impossibility of monitoring and evaluating what progress has been made towards policy objectives.

Inappropriate organizational frameworks: Promoting literacy for youth and adults must cope with its inherent diversity. The lack of an organizational framework which copes well with inherent diversity has led either to relatively short-lived

3 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F63%2F172&Submit=Search&Lang=E
4 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001631/163170e.pdf

standardized approaches with dubious results, or to an abandonment of literacy to scattered initiatives. Highly standardized systems modelled on those that deliver schooling to children are not appropriate.

Insufficient information on what works: Literacy programmes tend to function in isolation and experiences may not be documented. Without information about successful efforts, the individuals responsible for planning literacy programmes are bound to repeat the same errors without being able to benefit from experience accumulated by similar programmes in other locations.

Low quality: The low quality of literacy provision and the results it produces is due in some cases to weak policies, the lack of concrete evidence about actual efforts and actual needs as well as the low level of professional capacity. Quality demands a professional approach.

Lack of data on literacy levels and needs: When literacy programmes are initiated without evaluating the level of competence attained by a specific group, it may lead not only to frustration for both learners and facilitators but also to inappropriate methods and materials and unclear objectives about where the process should begin and what is to be achieved.

Lack of monitoring and evaluation: No one can know whether literacy efforts are achieving sustainable and effective results unless there is a process of monitoring and evaluation. Where these processes are absent, valuable lessons leading to improved policies and programmes cannot be learnt.

Inadequate financial resources: Within national education budgets, the amount devoted to youth and adult literacy is frequently less than one percent, and resources are budgeted only for certain aspects of literacy programming, such as facilitator expenses or materials, and not for the support and development costs which are necessary for quality results. A benchmark of three percent has been proposed, but precise financing needs must be assessed for each national case. The aim must be to increase the envelope for education as a whole, with more adequate resources for youth and adult literacy within that. The same principle applies to the neglect of the field in donor strategies and the allocation of external aid.

In addition to this list, the report also emphasizes that the strategies pursued during the remaining years of the Literacy Decade must be geared to vulnerable and marginalized groups. Literacy efforts to date have not sufficiently addressed the needs of the members of these groups. Standardized literacy programmes are not appropriate in the context of their lives or circumstances. It is not a question of special treatment, but rather of investing in literacy programmes so as to make them effective and sustainable. Experience has shown that unless attention is paid

to the specific context in which measures are undertaken, any efforts will fail and exclusion will be the result. Investing in vulnerable and marginalized groups will also have a greater impact on literacy levels and sustainable development. The groups that must be given priority include women and girls, young people, marginalized communities, cultural and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, nomads, migrants, rural populations, persons with disabilities, and individuals who have been deprived of their liberty.

What are the countries of the world doing to remediate the deficits? It would indeed be lamentable if, as has been the case in past agreements, these critical points were to remain unaddressed, if ways are not mapped out to overcome inequalities in access to AYE, if the proposed goals are not implemented during the coming years.

CEAAL's Contributions

Following in the Steps of Paulo Freire

As José Rivero observes,[5] Paulo Freire has contributed to the creation of a renewed and broader vision of literacy by highlighting the political dimension and viewing literacy learning as an integral component in a process by which illiterate individuals become conscious of their personal situation and learn to create or use the means to improve it. For Freire, learning how to read and write and do mathematical calculations is part of the process that enables people to gain access to political, economic, and cultural rights, and to influence or modify the manner in which power in society is distributed.[6] Freire's influence extends far beyond the borders of Latin America.[7]

The transformational learning theory and praxis introduced by Paulo Freire in the 1950s are still relevant today. Freire not only contributed to the construction of a new education system in Latin American countries such as such as Chile, Cuba, and Nicaragua, but also in Africa and in other countries of the world. During the

5 José Rivero. *Educación y actores sociales frente a la pobreza en América Latina*. [Education and social actors in view of the poverty in Latin America] CEAAL, CLADE. Lima 2008.

6 To quote Paulo Freire: *"It is a vision of literacy learning that goes far beyond memorizing 'ba, be, bi, bo, bu' because it implies a critical understanding of social, political, and economic reality in which the literacy learner lives. Literacy is much, much more than reading and writing. It is the ability to read the world, it is the ability to continue to learn, and it is the key to the door of knowledge."*

7 In a special commemorative ceremony held during CONFINTEA V in Hamburg in July 1997, tribute was paid to Paulo Freire in honour of his life and works. Representatives from every continent in the world participated in a demonstration of appreciation for the impact his writings and his work have had in their respective countries.

1990s, after returning to Brazil following 16 years of exile, he served as Secretary of Education in Sao Paulo. Taking an activist approach to pedagogy, he developed a concept of literacy as an integral component of Adult Education, and he worked hard to convert that concept into public policy.

Paulo Freire understood literacy as an emancipatory social and educational process. According to his concept, literacy learning involves more than just learning the skills of reading and writing according to the *"ba-be-bi-bo-bu"* method. It is a process of citizenship construction. Rather than a method by which learners repeat words, it is a method to empower people to use their words to change their environment. Another fundamental aspect of Freire's approach is that it links the fight for literacy with a concept of social mobilization. The literacy campaigns in Cuba and Nicaragua were inspired by this concept that integrates the struggle for the right to education with a process of educational, social and political mobilization.

It is important to emphasize the perspective that Paulo Freire and other educators active in the popular education movement created for literacy and AYE. They have developed political and educational practices that challenge the theory of human capital, an approach which considers the creation of skilled manpower a priority in the interest of globalised capitalist development. Their perspective is based on the values of justice and equality. As Maria Clara Di Pierro has stated, literacy learning develops the kind of human, technical, and political skills that are required to fight for societies which ensure life with dignity in a sustainable environment, and promote democratic coexistence with respect for diversity and human rights.[8]

An Agenda for AYE and Literacy

Since CONFINTEA V in 1997, the Latin American Council for Adult Education CEAAL has been exerting efforts in every Latin American country to counteract processes of exclusion that shape the lives of so many young people and adults. Interventions are many and varied. The work concentrates on themes including women and women-specific issues with the aim of integrating a gender perspective into Adult Education; citizenship empowerment and leadership; indigenous populations from an intercultural perspective; and urban and rural migrants, all in the interest of developing Adult Education concepts and promoting social inclusion. Some institutions serve working-class youths and seek to bring an intergenerational perspective into AYE; others strive to ensure quality basic education by forging gender equity policies to ensure the right to education for all. In general, the institutions

8 María Clara Di Pierro. *"Youth and Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: The recent trajectory"*. An analysis of the situation regarding the education of young people and adults in Latin America. CREFAL, CEAAL. 2006. http://www.scielo.br/pdf/cp/v38n134/en_a0638134.pdf

link work in Adult Education to processes of leadership, citizenship education, and policies to foster transformation and change at local, regional, and national levels.

The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) advocates for policies that promote the right to education, especially for the education of young people and adults. We also participate, along with CLADE, in the World Social Forum and its Americas chapter to help build a social, political, cultural and educational movement under the banner *"Another World is Possible"*. As members of CEAAL, CLADE, and ICAE, we work in diverse spaces and forums, to highlight the urgency for governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to place greater emphasis on the design and implementation of policies and action plans aimed at literacy and AYE, because the way it is being implemented in the region constitutes a perverse expression of social injustice.

Studies for an Education Policy Agenda

In 2005, CEAAL also formed a partnership with CREFAL (the Regional Centre for Adult Education and Functional Literacy for Latin America) to conduct studies in twenty Latin American countries on the situation of literacy and education for young people and adults. The countries included Mexico, Eduador, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Peru, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Colombia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Argentina, Honduras, Haiti, Panama, Venezuela, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic.

The studies report on the broader context of the various countries, describing the organization of each national education system against the background of recent developments in AYE. The aspects analyzed in the studies include public Adult Education policies and the practices generated by them, the role of non-government organizations, and collaboration between government agencies and civil society. Investigations concentrated on the construction of the right to education, AYE in the world of work and income, the training of trainers, and socio-cultural diversity. Poverty and sustainable and equitable development are themes cutting across all these areas. The documents give an overview of coverage in quantitative terms. They describe relevant experiences, identify the lessons learned, and make assessments and recommendations. The results constitute a contribution toward establishing an Adult Education agenda.

Considering how important it is to introduce these findings into the public debate, they are summarized below. In some cases they serve to reinforce the results of earlier analyses. To keep the inequality gap from widening even further, it is crucial that priority be given to the issues they address:

A compensatory approach vs. a human rights-based approach: Existing policies on secondary education are of a compensatory nature. They provide for education based on the formal schooling model which also serves as the model for AYE. Curricula and instructional materials are available, but education for young people and adults is not regarded as a right. AYE is not remedial education, but a form of education that must be specifically designed to be relevant for young people and adults.

Lack of political visibility: The area of AYE occupies a marginal position within education policy and plays only a secondary role in existing education systems. Policies must be put into operation that ensure that civil society and the emerging social movements are in a position to demand that the right to accessible, permanent and successful education for youth and adults be guaranteed.

Weak budgets: Budget allocations for AYE are inadequate. Budgetary decisions are not consistent with the priorities set out in political discourse.

Quality education is unequally distributed and does not extend to the AYE sector: Urban areas are more privileged than rural areas, and offers for indigenous populations and people of African descent are of inferior quality.

Ineffective teaching concepts and methods and inadequate preparation for instructors and facilitators: There are no academic teacher training programmes in the region specifically designed for AYE. The situation is complicated by the precarious employment conditions and insecure contracts that jeopardize the livelihood of facilitators and volunteers.

Unequal levels of development in AYE: Some countries have achieved progress in the design of proposals for AYE and for integrating the sector within their education systems, while others are experiencing stagnation. There are countries which have developed consolidated programmes for AYE, and there are those which focus on specialized areas such as intercultural education, prison education, and education for migrants.

Lack of institutionalization in AYE: In many countries, AYE falls under the jurisdiction of the public school system, in which case the sector is marked by insufficient organizational and programmatic development and receives lower priority within the overall context of education policy.

Youth and migration: An issue that requires special attention by AYE is the problem of migration and the social exclusion faced by young migrants. When violence and war force young people to leave their homes, they tend to suffer even greater discrimination.

Paradoxes of popular education: The proposals for AYE and popular education initiated by civil society were adopted by a number of governments. NGOs in turn redefined and adopted government literacy strategies. In the course of this process, they became less politically active. This role has meanwhile been transferred to AYE networks.

Literacy development, the pivotal element in initiatives conducted by national and international agencies: The studies have arrived at the conclusion that despite the various initiatives spawned in the region by the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), the currently inactive Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), the United Nations Literacy Decade, or the Millennium Development Goals, there is no substantial decline in the levels of illiteracy.

Promising signs: More and more institutions are following an integrated approach to tackle the problem of illiteracy and foster the provision of AYE. The paradigm has shifted toward Lifelong Learning and permanent education. Lifelong Learning, combined with the tradition of popular education, is a horizon of transformation in which people are the subject-agents, working together with the social movements to shape social and educational practices.

These conclusions, which are drawn from the aforementioned studies, are components of a political and educational agenda – an agenda that we propose as part of the strategy to overcome social, cultural, and educational inequality. This agenda must become an integral part of efforts to construct a just, decent, and humane society.

Challenges for CEAAL

CEAAL has undertaken to address the challenges facing literacy development and AYE, a process which involves weaving its activities with other necessary components, including: the systematization of experiences; the implementation of studies to more closely explore the findings issuing from the studies undertaken in 2006; the development of political advocacy initiatives that demand state policies on literacy and AYE which give greater priority to these areas and do not treat them as mere secondary or remedial measures, and which address the issues of inclusion and equity so as to cater for the rights of people who are excluded from society in general and the education system in particular.

As part of the popular education movement, CEAAL appeals to states, governments, and multilateral institutions to adhere to ethical standards in their work and not to pursue neoliberal policies that are responsible for creating inhuman conditions by exacerbating social exclusion and violating the right to education.

This urgently requires increased and more effective financing of adult and youth education.

In line with our tradition, which assumes that the construction of knowledge is an act of liberation, we consider it to be vital for literacy development and AYE programmes to go beyond the skills of reading and writing. In our understanding, pedagogy is a liberating act and a socio-educational process in which *"nobody educates anyone"*. The point of departure for a critical and democratic pedagogy based on dialogue is the experience and reality of the social actors involved who redirect their experiences into daily life in order to transform it.

Policies and programmes must be nurtured by cultural diversity and must recognize that every culture has its own particular world view. Strategies must be designed to promote bonds of brotherhood and intercultural dialogue, and to surmount disparities so that all persons can live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. We must seek to foster a non-consumerist way of life in which all of us can live together in a spirit of solidarity as productive, creative, critical members of society who are capable of realizing the collective vision of a universal humanity and of working together for the well-being, peace, and happiness of all.

There are many social, academic, political, and cultural initiatives dedicated to the cause of liberation. We must establish contacts with them and initiate a process of dialogue. It is important for us to form associations and launch concerted actions with various types of institutions, whether public or private.

As an association of civil society institutions, CEAAL seeks to address the proposals of its members. Our work will help strengthen the great popular education movement, connecting us with other democratic social movements in different Latin American and Caribbean contexts. Paulo Freire has told us that this will inspire our thinking and educational practice alongside those who are fighting to liberate themselves from every order which is dedicated to the kind of exploitation that deepens poverty and increases economic and social exclusion.

From this perspective, we seek to contribute to the protection of the universal right to education and the pursuit of never-ending learning.

Working together *Source: Moussa Gadio*

This paper focuses on the philosophy of social transformation of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire as depicted in an educational project in the Manankoro community in the South of Mali (West Africa) using the Reflect approach. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that social transformation as conceptualized by Freire took place in that community. It briefly presents the Reflect approach and the way it is linked to Freire's thoughts. It then describes and discusses the project, its activities and outcomes in relation to Freire's philosophy.

Moussa Gadio

Reflect and Social Transformation in the South of Mali

Reflect Approach: Origin and Link with Freire's Philosophy of Social Transformation

The term Reflect was originally an acronym. It meant *"Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques – REFLECT"* (Chambers, 1997, p. 121). The term then evolved to stand just as a concept, *"Reflect."* It was first developed by the British organization ActionAid in 1993 through pilot projects that were implemented in Uganda (Africa), Bangladesh (Asia), and El Salvador (Central America). Ever since, the Reflect approach to community development and social change has become one of the most widespread approaches used across the world. If the Reflect approach is widely used, part of the reason lies in its underlying principles.

The Reflect approach has two main pillars: the educational principles of Freire's social transformation philosophy and the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method. Archer and Cottingham (1996) noted that

> *"the Reflect approach seeks to build on the theoretical framework developed by the Brazilian Paulo Freire, but provides a practical methodology by drawing on Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques".* (Abstract)

Building on Freire, Reflect focused on several elements of his philosophy, mainly the issues of dialogue, conscientization, and literacy through codification and decodification. Dialogue was the baseline of the co-learning he encouraged between teachers and learners. The issue of consciousness raising that would lead oppressed people to be aware of their situation and take action was also taken into consideration and was favored by dialogue. Codification and decodification were in relation with dialogue between learners and aspects of their learning environment which leads to literacy, whereby learners decode and read their world. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) pointed out that Freire used conscientization to promote literacy, an aspect that is also important in the Reflect approach.

Freire's ideas inspired the Reflect approach at several levels. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which appears as the second pillar of the Reflect approach, also happened to have been inspired by Freire. Archer and Cottingham (1996) noted that

> *"Chambers is the key figure behind Participatory Rural Appraisal, having written and trained extensively. He has often spoken of the origins of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and refers to Paulo Freire's work on dialogue and conscientization as one of the central influences".* (p. 8)

PRA was also about community-driven change and transformation. After years of top-down approaches, whereby learners were very poorly involved in the learning process in the knowledge banking concept of Freire, PRA was meant to bring another dimension of learning which was more learner-driven.

Describing PRA, Chambers (1994) noted that

> *"the more developed and tested methods of PRA include participatory mapping and modeling, transect walks, matrix scoring, well-being grouping and ranking, seasonal calendars, institutional diagramming, trend and chance analysis, and analytical diagramming all undertaken by local people".* (p. 1253)

Therefore, PRA could simultaneously be used for several purposes. It allows the involvement of community members in the process of learning and development. It uses and values local assets and knowledge. Through PRA, community members learn through themselves, and they learn by doing. Archer and Cottingham (1996) argued that *"PRA techniques have been applied to broad appraisals, to detailed diagnoses of health needs or local agriculture, but they have not been applied in the past in literacy programs"* (p. 8). This junction between PRA and literacy has been achieved through the Reflect approach.

A Reflect activity has two main components. The first part is the construction of graphics and discussion. According to Archer and Cottingham (1996),

> *"each unit starts with the construction of a map, matrix, calendar or diagram. These are constructed on the ground using whatever materials are available locally – sticks, stones, seeds or beans".* (p. 12)

This is done in a participatory manner. The tool is discussed and reported from ground to paper, and participants start to put words on the chart. That phase is the beginning of the second part which deals with the introduction to literacy. The group using Reflect is called a Reflect circle, which is inspired by the term *"culture circles" as* used by Freire (2007). The Reflect approach is widespread in the world, as around 500 organizations now use it in at least 70 countries. It is promoted through regional networks on each continent. The African network which is based in Uganda is known as Pamoja. An international network known as "*Circle International of Reflect Action and Communication"* (CIRAC) coordinates the work of regional networks. Reflect was introduced in Mali in 2000. Ever since, many development organizations and communities demonstrated interest in the approach. One of those development organizations, Jeunesse et Développement, facilitated the approach in the southern area of Mali. That project will be chosen as the sample project that will be reviewed through this paper.

Overview of the Project Area

Mali is a landlocked country in West Africa. It is a territory of 1,241,238 square kilometers with a population of 12,051,000 inhabitants. Most of the country is covered by the Sahara and Sahel zones. Populations live mainly in the southern part where the project has been implemented. The project area is known as the Manankoro community which is along the border of the neighboring country of Côte d'Ivoire. This southern area, with better climate, is an area of human concentration unlike the Sahara and Sahel zones. The environment flourishes in the area despite the pressure of human activities. The Manankoro community is a rural, small, and isolated area. Further characteristics are long distances from big cities, unpredictable roads, and low access to media.

Mali changed its regime from single party rule to a democratic system after a popular uprising in 1991. This new political orientation has been reinforced through the implementation of a decentralization policy. Decentralization is a system through which new territorial entities have been created. Those entities self-administrate freely through elected councils. The most significant change was

the number of local entities known as *"commune"*, which evolved from 19 before decentralization to 703 afterwards. An important attribute of decentralization is that it allows citizens to elect their leaders. The level of accountability changes as elected leaders have to report to citizens. The potential of citizenship is also affected in term of leadership since citizens can also be candidates in elections.

The Manankoro community is composed of three rural communes. Each one is composed of a number of villages and has a town as headquarters. The three communes together have a total population of 28,250 inhabitants living in 42 villages. The decentralization process permitted each of them to have an elected council headed by a mayor. Those elected councils are in charge of planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the process of local development. Decentralization granted a number of competences to new communes. Therefore, elected councils in the three communes could develop and implement policies and plans in relation to education, health, water, natural resources management, and development of infrastructures for rural development. The issue of decentralization also highlights that of citizenship and participation in the community. There is an effort to develop the political potential of marginalized groups that were not politically involved, such as young people and women.

The socio-economic life of Manankoro is influenced by its people and their interrelation on the one hand, and people and their activities on the other hand. Manankoro is ethnically diverse and rich. Each village has its own dominant group and its minorities. Although ethnicity determines people's daily activities, it is rather a factor of cohesion than division. Obviously, there is tension between farmers and cattle breeders over the use of natural resource. However, due to long term values of solidarity and peaceful neighborhood, community members all live together in a peaceful manner. As a rural community, Manankoro social life is influenced by its economic situation.

Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) help us understand the economic conditions of rural communities such as Manankoro. According to them, rural communities

> *"live off the land, often on a seasonal basis. Livestock raising and farming are the most common means of economic survival".* (p. 40)

Farming activities in Manankoro are based on food crops like millet, corn, peanuts and also cash crops like cotton and cashew. Besides farming and livestock, fishing and small business are among the economic activities of the area. The dedication of the population to their activities and the enormous potential in terms of land and natural resources constitute valuable assets on which the community can rely in its effort to improve its economic conditions. Isolation, in term of distance from big cities and unpredictable roads, constitutes a serious handicap in term of economi-

cal progress. This isolation is however one of the aspects that helped to maintain an interesting cultural life in the area.

In rural communities like Manankoro, cultural life goes beyond ethnicities and celebrations. The Manankoro community used to be a reference for its culture in the whole southern region. The social, political, and economical aspects of this community life all have cultural dimensions. For example, besides the elected council, there are traditional leaders who act as moral leaders. This traditional leadership is ruled through a village council led by a chief of village. Traditional leaders and elected leaders work together to administer the community. Isolated rural communities like Manankoro have not been much influenced by media and technologies; therefore, authentic cultural features and behaviors, e.g. traditional celebrations, still prevail. However, the issue of culture may be challenging in terms of educational rights and social justice in relation to aspects like child education and gender. In such communities, gender, for example, is not considered as an issue and women are marginalized from the socio-political and economic life.

Jeunesse et Développement: The Organization that Facilitated the Process

Jeunesse et Développement is a youth founded national NGO that became operational in 1999 in Mali. It is involved mainly in education, training, and information. It started its activities in rural areas, with the objective of facilitating community self-development. Before the beginning of Adult Education programs, Gboku and

General Assembly *Source: Moussa Gadio*

Lekoko (2007) highlighted the importance of conducting a needs assessment process. Among the reasons for conducting needs assessment, they noted that

> *"needs assessment of potential adult learners gives programming staff the opportunity to assess learner needs and priorities impartially, free from the personal references and biases of the target group".* (p. 63)

Based on the principles of active listening to future partners and not imposing on them ready-made solutions on their development concerns, Jeunesse et Développement facilitated a month-long needs assessment study in the Manankoro area in 1999. The study revealed four areas of concern that were health, environment, the situation of women and literacy, and its results were used as the foundation for launching a community project in 2000 (UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, 2007). Given the interrelation between the concerns and the issue of literacy, *Jeunesse et Développement* suggested the use of the Reflect approach to which it has been introduced through a training of trainers by the British organization ActionAid.

The Manankoro Community Reflect Project and Social Transformation

The Reflect project started in 23 villages and later extended to 40 villages in the three communes of the Manankoro community, which represents a coverage of 95% of the geographical area of the community. Each village had its own Reflect circle. A Reflect circle in a village was usually composed of 30 to 50 people with equal numbers of men and women. In larger villages, there were several circles. Reflect circle participants were youths and adults, but not the entire population of the village participated in it. The Reflect circle was run by a management committee that included some leaders and elders of the village although they might not be active participants in its activities. The Reflect approach teaches participation and engagement. Thus participants used a circle which could meet either in a classroom, under a tree or at the public place of the village. To minimize Freire's notion of culture of silence during the Reflect activity, facilitators were chosen among community members, mostly two, a man and a woman. The Reflect circle met according to a schedule its members decided on. Jeunesse et Développement provided supervision and feedbacks through its field agents and coordinators on the progress of the Reflect circle.

The Manankoro community project used the Reflect approach to deal with the developmental issues identified by the community in collaboration with Jeunesse et Développement and other partners. Those developmental issues were mostly social ones. They focused on civic education, health, natural resources management,

and gender with literacy as a transversal activity. For all these issues, the Reflect approach strived to give voice to community members. Dialogue, reflection, and action were among the guiding principles of the functioning of Reflect circles in each of the villages. Freire (1986) pointed out that

> *"critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried out with the oppressed at whatever stage of their struggle for liberation".* (p. 52)

The Reflect approach was significant given several oppressive features in the community. Oppressors included both outsiders involved in the administration and development of the community and insiders. Oppression was manifested through the relation between leaders and citizens, landowners and landless, rich and poor, men and women, parents and children, and teachers and learners. Therefore, activities around concerns identified using the Reflect approach could foster critical thinking and action so that the social transformation wished for by the community members could take place.

Civic Education and Social Transformation

The issue of civic education highlights the perception of community members as citizens on the one hand and their relation with their leaders on the other. The reform of decentralization brought a significant change in the status of citizens. Citizens evolved from subject citizens in former times to active citizens during the era of decentralization. In other words, citizens not only have responsibilities but also rights. To highlight transparency and citizens' involvement in the process of local development, sessions of the elected councils are public. Each citizen can come and observe. Citizens may demand to see the communal budget. They can call upon leaders to fulfill their responsibilities. In the Manankoro community, all Reflect circles were enthusiastic to discuss and reflect on decentralization and civic education. The UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2007) noted that

> *"at the community level, there were civic action centers in every village. These consisted of a library, a learning space for the acquisition of reading, writing and arithmetic skills, a legal activity space, and a video center with audio and audiovisual cassettes".* (p. 21)

These centers were opportunities for citizens to engage in dialogue, reflection, and action on citizenship and local development.

A significant step in the process of social transformation in terms of civic education was the creation of civic education committees in each village. These committees

promoted the rights and responsibilities of citizens. It is important to note that these committees benefited from the support and collaboration of many of those government bodies that used to undertake oppressive activities against citizens, given the fact that citizens had few rights, which then were even ignored. Therefore, both civic education committees and civic action centers, derived from the actions of Reflect circles, constituted weapons of liberation and self-promotion for citizens. They were tools by and for community members, which in reference to Freire's notion of problem posing education allowed community members to discuss and reflect on their own issues and take action. Since administration and governance were most often linked with power and feared by citizens, such tools represented efficient weapons for community members' self empowerment and social transformation. Various civic actions were undertaken in villages and the interaction between elected leaders, government bodies, and citizens gained in transparency and efficiency.

Health and Social Transformation

The Reflect circles discussed themes that the community members found important to them. Health was among those issues in the Manankoro community. To favor more dialogue and discussion on the issue of health, Reflect circles used the peer education strategy. Considering the sensitivity of the question of health, especially Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and HIV, which were taboos, peer education promoted dialogue among groups who were comfortable in talking to each other. Women could talk to each other; young people and men could also talk among themselves to develop trust. Then, participants came together and discussed the sensitive issues in Reflect circles. In terms of an increased transformation concerning health, the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2007) reported that

> *"due to an increase in the proportion of people able to recognize and treat child illness (malnutrition, diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, and malaria) and STD/HIV, access to health services and facilities has improved".* (p. 21)

The creation of community health care associations and their collaboration with civic education committees made it possible to promote inter organizational dialogue on health and to favor social mobilization. For example, after discussion about malaria in Reflect circles, many villages have undertaken public action to clean villages and promote mosquito nets. The UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2007) noted the creation of village hygiene and sanitation committees for that purpose. The creation of health related organizations also promoted dialogue with elected councils and government bodies, providing community members with a voice. While developing indigenous knowledge about health and health care,

Reflect circles promoted the creation of various bodies in villages to discuss, reflect, and act in terms of health prevention and care. There was a transformation from the past attitude, which did not promote the rights of community members in terms of health and considered some health issues as taboos.

Natural Resources Management and Social Transformation

Reflect circles contributed to raise consciousness on the issue of natural resources management in most of the villages of the area. Questions of land and natural resources management which were strategic in the area were often sources of many conflicts. This part of the country is characterized by an important level of biodiversity. The issue of land was complicated, and it brought together several stakeholders. Local communities, elected councils and government technical services for the environment were all involved. Because of the often conflicting interests it could generate, the environment in a community such as Manankoro could be the source of many oppressive practices. The oppressors in this case were government technical services and some village leaders who undertook destructive practices on the environment solely for their own interest.

According to Diarra (2007), Reflect circle members of one village discussed the issue of natural resources management and found that uncontrolled woodcutting constituted a threat for their community and their environment. They discovered that elders of the village in collaboration with the government technical service favored the decision of woodcutting for business purposes. Having discussed and reflected on the issue, the Reflect circle decided to take action. Freire (1986) noted that

> *"the oppressors develop the conviction that it is possible for them to transform everything into objects of their purchasing power; hence their strictly materialistic concept of existence".* (p. 44)

The Reflect circle was convinced that this decision of elders and the environmental office was motivated by personal interests. Therefore, they decided to change that attitude. The refusal of elders to dialogue made young people more determined. The young people were ready to take severe measures if necessary to stop woodcutting. Diarra (2007) reported, however, that the two stakeholders ended up deciding to solve this matter through dialogue and negotiation. The young people apologized to elders and elders recognized that young people should be involved in the decisions concerning community natural resources management. Such transformation in attitudes and behaviors was quite frequent in terms of achievements by the Reflect circles.

Gender and Social Transformation

According to Naidoo (2002), decentralization in Africa can favor the participation of marginalized groups such as women in education and community development. Maruatona (1996) added that for those groups,

> *"the Freirean method would make the adult learners subjects, not passive objects, of their learning. The process would help them to become active participants in the development process that is intended for the improvement of their lives".* (p. 9)

Therefore, decentralization and Freire's ideas provided opportunities for Reflect circles to contribute to raise awareness on the issue of gender in the Manankoro community. Reflect circles conducted discussion and reflection on gender issues and the political, cultural, and economic implications. The informal nature of Reflect circles and some shared cultural features permitted discussion about and reflection on sensitive issues such as women's participation in the decision-making, female genital mutilation, and girls schooling. The fact that men and women discussed and reflected together, people were able to deal with gender issues as a concern for the whole community, not in terms of opposition between men and women. For social transformation to take place, effective and responsible actions should be taken.

Despite the challenging nature of cultural features in terms of gender in the African context, the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2007) reported many changes in the conditions for women as the result of Reflect circles in the Manankoro community. One example was the creation of women's groups. Each women's group was organized around a number of income-generating activities which included saving and credit, gardening, mills, and small business to increase women's economic power. Income-generating activities provided women with significant financial resources which in combination with the discussion and reflection in Reflect circles

Women Reflect circle *Source: Moussa Gadio*

contributed to increase their roles in the decision-making process in the family and in the community. That reinforced the status of women and girls and constituted an important change compared to the previous situation where women were living in ignorance and hardship working conditions. Therefore, Reflect helped women, with men's support, in the community to critically analyze their situation and the oppressive acts all around in order to develop a way to free themselves from the internal and external influence of the oppressors.

Literacy and Social Transformation

Considering the literacy rate in Mali, which is 26%, with a higher percentage for men, the issue of literacy still constitutes a big challenge. The philosophy of the Reflect approach on literacy is not literacy for the simple acquisition of reading, writing, and numeracy skills. In fact, the type of literacy that the Reflect approach used was a consciousness raising and action-oriented literacy. Although the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2007) reported that Reflect circles permitted 1,080 members of the Manankoro community to become literate every two years, with 60% of them being women, the influence of literacy and its potential in terms of consciousness raising and social transformation should be seen beyond numbers.

In their Reflect circles, the Manankoro community members wrote and read their world. The UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2007) reported a range of activities to develop a literate environment: development of graphs, community newspaper, signs in and between villages, visual and audiovisual materials. According to Archer and Cottingham (1996), in the Reflect circle,

> *"every participant is encouraged to make a copy of the map or matrix in their book and then write associated phrases, and eventually sentences. They end up producing a real document of their own rather than just having an exercise book full of scribbles".* (p. 13)

Those documents produced by participants were the ones that contributed to the village library and literate environment and described the transformed society in which they wished to live.

Facit

This paper focused on describing and reflecting on some social changes brought through the Reflect approach in the Manankoro community and how those changes related to Freire's concept of social transformation. Merriam et al., (2007) described the Brazilian context of Freire's work as marked with marginalization,

ignorance, and exploitation. These characteristics also applied to the Manankoro community. Building on Freire, ActionAid developed an innovative approach to social education and change called the Reflect approach. In the Manankoro community, people used the Reflect approach to discuss, reflect, and act on issues of real concern to them: Citizenship, health, environment, gender, and literacy. Although further studies and research need to be undertaken for an in-depth analysis of the outcomes of their discussion, reflection, and action, based on the literature developed on the Manankoro community Reflect project, Manankoro people witnessed some critical and community driven social changes in the light of Freire's philosophy of social transformation.

References

Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. (1996). *Action research report on Reflect – The experience of three Reflect pilot projects in Uganda, Bangladesh, El Salvador*. London: Overseas Development Administration.

Chambers, R. (1994). Participatory rural appraisal: Analysis of experience. *World Development, 22*(9), 1253-1268.

Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose reality counts? Putting the first last.* London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Diarra, M. T. (2007). *Quand les faibles réclament leurs droits* [When the weak request their rights]. *Le Cercle: Magazine d'information de Pamoja Afrique de l'Ouest, 1,* 17-19.

Dyer, C., & Choksi, A. (1998). The Reflect approach to literacy: Some issues of the method. *Compare, 28*(1), 75-88.

Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (2007). *Education for critical consciousness.* New York: Continuum.

Gboku, M., & Lekoko, R. N. (2007). *African perspectives on adult learning: Developing programmes for adult learners in Africa.* Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa & UNESCO UIL.

Indabawa, S., & Mpofu, S. (2006). *African perspectives on adult learning: The social context of adult learning in Africa.* Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa & UNESCO UIE.

Maruatona, T. (1996). Reflections on Freirean pedagogy and the transformation of rural Botswana. *Paper presented at the World Conference on Literacy.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Naidoo, J. P. (2002). Educational decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa – Espoused theories and theories in use. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society*. Orlando: University of Central Florida.

UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2007). *Making a difference: Effective practices in literacy in Africa.* Hamburg: UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning.

The Reflect approach has been used in Laos in since 2003. Training was provided to prepare trainers, and a number of pilot projects were launched with Community Learning Centres. The impact on the nonformal education sector has been positive. Activities have become more dynamic and learner participation has increased. Use of the approach in Laos has led to modifications in the methodology itself. In many cases, however, the changes tend to be relatively superficial. Approaches such as Reflect enliven the practice of education and help to strengthen confidence, especially in women. Real change, however, takes time.

Lamphoune Luangxay/Mathias Pfeifer

Challenges of Introducing Innovative Adult Learning Approaches in Laos

Although the Lao people today enjoy peace, political stability and reasonably high economic growth, the predominantly rural population still faces considerable hardship. Those in remote and hard-to-reach areas, often inhibited by a diversity of ethno-linguistic groups, suffer from severe poverty and marginalization. Women are particularly vulnerable. This is reflected in low literacy rates: in the 56 educationally most disadvantaged districts identified by the Lao government, the literacy rates among women are only 37%; in some of the ethno-linguistic groups even less than 5%. (Ministry of Education 2010: 7) One of the most pressing problems for the poor is food insecurity, which affects about two thirds of the rural population.

Non-formal Youth and Adult Education, focusing on literacy, life skills as well as basic vocational skills training, is considered by the Lao government as one possible means of overcoming marginalization and the vicious cycle of poverty. For a long time, however, non-formal Adult Education was mainly limited to the

provision of detached literacy skills, taught in a school-like fashion with little opportunity for active learning of relevant information. In effect, to date non-formal Adult Education is still not sufficient; by and large, relevance and content do not meet the needs of target groups.

The introduction of the Reflect methodology to adult learning in 2003 was heartily welcomed in Laos, because of its innovative attempt to engage participants in self-directed learning processes. Reflect fuses the philosophy of Paulo Freire with the methodology of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and other creative learning methods. Following the Reflect approach, no external curriculum or pre-given primers and *"textbooks"* are supposed to be used, as participants are encouraged to choose topics and develop their own learning materials reflecting their needs. Above all, Reflect promotes *"transformative learning"* and aims at the *"empowerment"* of participants and communities, by linking literacy learning with wider (community) development initiatives and developing the means of communication, including literacy, necessary to shape their lives.

The Arrival of Reflect in Laos

Reflect in Laos was first piloted in 2003 in the context of an ActionAid Vietnam cross-border initiative in eastern Laos. Several Lao Reflect Master Trainers were instructed and later, with ongoing support from Vietnamese experts, in turn trained facilitators in two more pilot projects in northern Laos, including one attempt to implement Reflect circles in the framework of revitalised *Community Learning Centres*. A fourth attempt to pilot Reflect in southern Laos is currently in process, with support by *dvv international,* which recently opened a Regional Office in the Lao capital Vientiane. During the preparatory phase of this latest Reflect pilot project, *dvv international* and its partners tried to gain information in order to learn about experiences made in the existing Reflect projects in Laos. In the course of several study tours and intensive exchanges with participants, facilitators, village and district authorities, as well as the Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE), which coordinates these projects, it was learned that the Reflect methodology apparently brings about new impulses in the NFE sector. The feedback given by all the various partners involved in the pilot projects during the study tours and beyond is predominantly positive. Reflect indeed helps to foster lively discussions as well as more active and meaningful learning in the communities. Compared to the conventional adult literacy classes, a clear improvement can be discerned. On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge the numerous challenges facing the implementation and practise of this innovative approach in marginalised communities in Laos. Further improvement and perhaps even an integration of Reflect in the Lao NFE

policy depend on how these difficulties are dealt with. In addition, it is particularly worthwhile to shed some light on ways in which the Reflect methodology is not only adapted but apparently transformed, which indicates that methodologies are highly dependent on contextual factors.

The transformation of Reflect in the Lao Context

To be sure, diversity of practice is in fact a strength and actively encouraged in the framework of Reflect. However, even fundamental characteristics and principles of the approach are hardly recognisable in circles in Laos. The most prominent innovations of Reflect, like the abandoning of pre-given primers and external curricula and the use of PRA graphics, are affected. For instance, primers are still widely used in Reflect circles in Laos *in combination* with PRA tools promoted by Reflect. The reasons for the continuing use of primers and textbooks are many-fold. First of all, participants as well as facilitators expressed their wish to use these books as they

Reflect circle in Laos *Source: dvv international Asia*

find it immensely difficult, especially for non-literates, to learn (and teach) literacy skills without the help of textbooks. Many participants and facilitators report that they actually prefer a mixed methodology, with primers supporting the learning of literacy skills, particularly in the beginning, while continuously introducing the use of participatory and innovative learning methods. A Reflect evaluation from neighbouring Cambodia[1] indicates that similar attitudes among facilitators and participants towards the use of primers are known there as well.

The extremely poor literacy environment in these remote, rural areas in Laos where Reflect was implemented may also contribute to the fact that participants and facilitators resort to the use of primers. Reading materials, like newspapers, pamphlets, letters, not to speak of books, are scarce or non-existent in most households and in many of the target villages as a whole. Larger settlements and district towns are often a day's walk away, or more. Primers provided by the district education offices are among the few written materials accessible for many of the Reflect participants in rural Laos. The establishment of village libraries is hence crucial and in many villages where Reflect was piloted this has been done.

Apart from those challenges at village level, it is also important to note that the process of gaining acceptance at national, provincial and district level of such a novel approach to adult literacy and learning apparently takes time. The pilot projects in which Reflect is being tested are rather small, while the whole institutional environment in which they operate is still shaped by the notion that adult literacy learning is fundamentally based on primers, in accordance with the current national NFE policy. The external expectation to continue to use primers is hence still strong, even in the pilot projects where a different approach is tested.

Likewise, with regard to the use of a curriculum a similar situation prevails: although in Reflect circles participants are invited to jointly create lesson plans – a freedom which they highly value – this practise is possible only up to a certain point. The official NFE curriculum continues to be an important reference point. Lao NFE policy envisages that roughly half of the topics in adult learning classes, be that in a Reflect circle or a *"traditional"* adult literacy class, are taken from the national curriculum, while the other half is chosen by facilitators and participants themselves according to their needs. This policy is put in place in order to ensure that, upon completion, participants of NFE programmes are able to obtain equivalency certificates to primary schooling.

1 Numerous, mostly unpublished Reflect evaluations from Laos, Cambodia and other countries referred to in this article can be retrieved from the Reflect *Basecamp*, an online platform for exchange and discussions on Reflect. For more information see www.reflect-action.org

Vocational training *Source: dvv international Asia*

Observations of Reflect sessions also indicate that teaching and learning is still conducted very much in a school-like fashion, although certainly more discussions, active learning, games and fun is involved compared to conventional literacy classes. Participants are usually asked to give comments and express their ideas; nonetheless, the Reflect *"facilitator"* appears to continue being the *"teacher"* who still tends to have control of the knowledge. Following the discussions, conventional *"copying from the blackboard"* is still common in some circles. In addition, it was observed that facilitators give marks throughout the learning process, in order to motivate the learners. Again, this practise seems to stem from mutual agreement between facilitators and participants as it reflects the common understanding of education as schooling in rural areas in Laos (and beyond). Reflect circles are still to a great extent perceived as just another form of schooling. Change of this perception comes very slowly, even though Reflect facilitators are continuously exposed to different messages.

The difficulty of creating a meaningful participatory learning process which is supposed to be initiated in the Reflect circles is also apparent when looking at the use and impact of PRA graphics. The production of these is certainly enjoyed by participants, and facilitators are also proud to facilitate analysis and discussions with the help of such new methodology, even though the use of local materials to create these tools is not popular, flipcharts and blackboards are clearly preferred. In effect, an array of maps, matrices and calendars often decorate the walls of the *"classrooms"* in which the Reflect participants meet. When it comes to the actual impact of those analyses, there is however little evidence that these indeed enhance a profound learning process and trigger community action. Analysis tends to be somewhat superficial; development messages conveyed in the Reflect circles hardly differ from those in the conventional adult literacy classes, although due to more discussions and input of participants they are more relevant to the context of the participants and perhaps more likely to be accepted. After problems are analysed and solutions discussed in the sessions, participants usually promise to change their old habits according to this new knowledge before moving on to the next topic. *"Action Plans"* are rarely carried out; it is reported that occasionally participants inform their neighbours about the needs to improve a certain hygiene practice, like boiling water or the advantages of building toilets. Though livelihood skills training and income-generating schemes like pig and poultry raising or weaving are, or were, implemented in many circles in the Reflect pilot projects, they usually did not originate from any sophisticated analysis conducted in the circles and their implementation depended heavily on external support.

Limitations of Methodologies and the Power of Contextual Factors

What are the implications of these experiences with the Reflect methodology in Laos? One issue is obvious: the need for more and better training of facilitators and Reflect Master Trainers is crucial. It can be argued that from the very beginning of the transfer of the Reflect approach from Vietnam, there was a lack of proper appropriation and adaptation to the Lao context.

Poor understanding and training, however, may not be the only reasons for the challenges described above. The experience with Reflect in practice in Laos resonates strongly with findings of ethnographic studies on adult literacy programs elsewhere, including one in-depth research of Reflect circles in the framework of ActionAid projects in Bangladesh and Uganda (Fiedrich & Jellema, 2003), which indicate similar challenges when introducing new approaches and methodologies. In her UNESCO-award winning ethnographic research on different approaches to adult literacy in Nepal, Anne Robinson-Pant (2000: 76) for instance found that *"literacy approaches in practice look very different from in theory"*, because they *"can be transformed in the implementation stage – not because facilitators are insufficiently 'trained' in these approaches but because they respond to local circumstances and demands."* (158) Hence, she observed how *"specific educational innovations, such as LGM [Learner or Locally Generated Materials], may be transformed by the users, who in reality employ a mixture of teaching methods and interpret materials according to the local context and beliefs."* (157) The researchers who closely observed Reflect circles in Uganda and Bangladesh come to a similar conclusion; they too observed how educational innovations of Reflect were often distorted and transformed on the ground. Furthermore, the authors argue that

> *"even with flawless application of Reflect methods in every circle, the meaning and hence the 'impact' of literacy programmes would still have been beyond ActionAid's control. Literacy classes have to be actively invented and negotiated by those involved, within a particular institutional and cultural context."* (Fiedrich & Jellema 2003: 182)

New methodologies are apparently only *one* factor in a given literacy programme, and it cannot be assumed that aspired learning processes can be achieved by implementing a certain methodology. This is also true with regard to intended outcomes such as *"empowerment"*:

> *"Planners cannot assume that a particular literacy approach is linked to a certain development outcome (e.g. Freirean literacy leading to empowerment or functional literacy leading to health awareness)."* (Robinson-Pant 2000: 107)

Literacy course in a community learning centre *Source: dvv international Asia*

Adult Learning and Women's Empowerment

As far as it has been observed and reported, Reflect circles in Laos can hardly be described as the forums for empowerment which the Reflect approach is supposed to create. There is little evidence that emancipatory or transformative learning, or *"concientization"*, take place to any meaningful extent. The literacy programmes which piloted the Reflect approach in Laos are obviously much more of a functional literacy approach nature. Reflect evaluations from many other countries indicate that this is not unusual. In the case of Laos this is not surprising given the dominant discourse of functional literacy focusing on increasing productivity of learners and the assumption that literacy, understood as technical skills independent of the context of application (*"autonomous model"* of literacy) is a magic bullet to many other development outcomes like improved health.

Nonetheless, Reflect evaluations from Laos and elsewhere continue to praise the empowerment gains, especially for women. This is possible partly because empowerment *"has tended to become identified with learner-centred and directed*

activities in the classroom" (Robinson-Pant 2000: 33) and is furthermore often simply *"equated with 'functional' in the literacy context or 'confidence' in relation to women."* (Robinson-Pant 2000: 45) Indeed, many female participants in Laos, which usually make up the vast majority in the circles, report that they enjoy more confidence and respect in their communities. The symbolic value of being literate appears to play an important role as it allows the participants to step up a rung on the status ladder. Women also report that they are now better able to *"give comments"* in groups, and particularly the improved language skills in the official language, Lao, for those belonging to one of the many ethno-linguistic groups who speak another mother tongue, is a valuable gain. While all this is very important, it does not necessarily follow that the inequitable gender relations are questioned or openly challenged. Given the contextual constraints facing most female participants, this seems not to be their priority; although it is surely possible and has been observed in the context of Reflect projects elsewhere that resistance against gender inequalities take place in more hidden spheres.

Above all, the women (and men) in the Reflect circles in Laos seem to be most concerned with overcoming food insecurity and often report that they hope for the chance to attend basic vocational skills training to improve cultivation practises or start animal raising activities, or else learn and improve skills for off-farm activities, such as weaving or food processing. Inasmuch as such skills training is part of the Reflect projects in Laos, as it is for instance the case in the context of the *Community Learning Centres*, the knowledge and skills regarding these issues are also valued higher than the *"mere"* literacy skills. In the Lao context, a major challenge lies in implementing effective ways of combining literacy learning with basic vocational skills training. While Reflect methodology is certainly a starting point, it's particularly the provision of non-formal basic vocational skills training that has to be further improved and expanded. As that training offers the learners a direct chance for improving their livelihoods, it is presumably also in this sphere that learning literacy skills makes sense for participants and thus has a chance of becoming a more sustained practise. An interesting discussion and review of experiences of the issue of integrating literacy and basic vocational skills training can be found in Oxenham et al (2002).

The notion that women in the Reflect circles initiate a bottom-up mobilisation around their practical and strategic gender needs and influence service delivery, like the provision of needed vocational skills training, is currently a hardly realistic vision in the context of rural Laos. As mentioned above, Reflect evaluations worldwide show that this is very rarely achieved. Often Reflect circles are instead turned into self-help groups, and participants and communities have to rely solely on their own resources to build roads or schools. This is not unproblematic, as it tends to

place the onus of poverty reduction on the poor alone. *"You are not responsible for being down, but you are responsible for getting up"* (Ulrich Bröckling), may describe the motto of the empowerment ideology in practise.

Conclusion

The introduction of Reflect in Laos is an enormous step in the right direction. It has been, however, not sufficient to profoundly change the conventional practises and beliefs around education and literacy in Laos. In order to tackle these, advocacy at all levels and constant support of facilitators is necessary. Change is not expected to come at a fast pace. In the meantime, it is important to acknowledge the local teaching situations and beliefs about education and the distortions in practise of approaches like Reflect, which are the result. Labels like Reflect, just as before the *"Freirean approach"*, as well as terms like empowerment, which all come along with high expectations, have to be used more carefully to describe adult literacy programmes and their anticipated outcomes:

> *"There is a danger otherwise, that such terminology remains at a symbolic rhetorical level particularly in plans and reports, only serving to widen the gap between policy makers and implementers."* (Robinson-Pant 2000: 158)

References

Fiedrich, Marc and Jellema, Anne (2003): Literacy, Gender and Social Agency: Adventures in Empowerment. A research report for ActionAid UK. London: ActionAid.

Available at: www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/PDF/Outputs/PolicyStrategy/paper53.pdf

Ministry of Education (2010). National Socio-Economic Development Plan, Education Sector 2011-2015. Vientiane: Government of Laos.

Oxenham, John, et al (2002). Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods: A Review of Approaches and Experiences. Washington: The World Bank.

Available at: www.worldbank.org

Robinson-Pant, Anne (2000). Why eat green cucumbers at the time of dying?: Women's literacy and development in Nepal. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

Available at: www.unesco.org/education/uie/pdf/robinson.pdf

POLICY

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCAT
MENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT · ADU
DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT · ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOP

Education Policy

Policies are not something we can discuss in abstract terms. They always focus on concrete subjects. Whether we are talking about the resolutions adopted by climate conferences, the Belém Framework for Action of CONFINTEA VI, the Education for All agenda, or the Millennium Development Goals, political commitments and objectives always refer to real and tangible areas of life and work. Whether expressly or implicitly, the proclamations and treaties of the major international conferences nearly always contain a component of education. For the interests and concerns of adult education to be taken into consideration at these conferences, however, they must be voiced. For there to be any progress toward the realization of our goals and objectives, we must formulate them. And this takes organizing.

Conversely, adult education in practice is not something that can be described unless its political component is immanent. Adult education addresses and seeks to change the realities it encounters. When farmers organize so as to improve their marketing strategies and increase their profits, they work within a framework of political conditions that start at the local level and extend all the way up to the global level. They must contend with land structures, local market conditions, intermediaries, regulations pertaining to street vending and farmers' markets, but also with competition from subsidized imports from the European Union, export regulations, credit conditions, and seed monopolies. These are political factors that require political action. Adult educators who organize so as to demand better financing of the education sector, more appropriate classroom equipment, recognition of qualifications, provision of further training and opportunities for advancement, also act politically. And when, in the course of training, women come to recognize the ways in which they are underprivileged, and learn how to articulate their disadvantages and demand Constitutional amendments to guarantee their right to equal standing, integrity, and property, they, too, are acting politically.

The decisions we make to classify contributions in the category of practice or policy are often a matter of subjective judgment. Accordingly, it is not surprising that some of the articles in the section of our journal dedicated to education policy discuss the same themes as those you will find in the more practice-oriented sections.

The **European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)** is not concerned with questions of practical and political adult education in Europe alone. In its position statement on the European Union's Green Paper *"EU development policy in support of inclusive growth and sustainable development – Increasing the impact of EU development policy"*, EAEA calls for participation on the part of the European

Union in global cooperation, especially in developing countries, and particularly in the area of education – adult education included.

According to the Statement of Purpose of the *"Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice"*, as formulated on the organization's website at <http://www.mrfcj.org/>, **MRFCJ** is *"a centre for thought leadership, education and advocacy on the struggle to secure global justice for those many victims of climate change who are usually forgotten – the poor, the disempowered and the marginalised across the world"*. On the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Conference of the Parties (COP) 16, which was held in December 2010 in the Mexican city of Cancun, MRFCJ published a **Statement on Women's Leadership on Climate Justice**, underlining the fact that women are the most vulnerable victims of climate change and, as such, must play a key role in tackling the problem. Considering the heightened relevance of this document in the wake of current events, we have decided to reproduce the text here.

The contribution written by **Sofia Valdivielso**, a representative of the Gender Education Office of the International Council for Adult Education ICAE, is an appeal to civil society and its organizations to bring their demands directly to the negotiating tables of political decision-making bodies, and to monitor resulting resolutions and commitments.

EAEA

Comments on the Future Development Policy of the European Union

Introduction

The EAEA is an NGO with 128 members in 42 countries, representing non-formal Adult Education and learning on European level. EAEA itself and many of its members have been engaged in development.

EAEA highly welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to start a policy dialogue about the concepts and the framework of the future development policy. In a period where the EU 2020 strategy provides a new vision for the next decade, development effort should be closely linked to this overall approach. From the perspective of the non-governmental Adult Education sector, the following aspects should be stressed:

1. The main focus of the GREEN PAPER is on economic growth. From our experience in Europe and beyond, we feel an urgent need for a more balanced approach, which reflects the request for a *"inclusive and sustainable growth"* not as one of several separated topics, but as the overarching aim for all development efforts. The danger of dividing societies into those who have and those who are excluded is virulent in all parts of the world. Economic growth alone does not eradicate poverty.
2. It is disappointing that education plays a minor role in the GREEN PAPER. *"No development without education"* should be a fundamental principle of the EU's development policy. As it is a European reality since the Lisbon strategy, these efforts should be embedded into a Lifelong Learning approach, taking into account the right of every human being for education. EAEA would very much like to see the recognition of the power of Lifelong Learning and Adult Education for development. We cannot understand why a concept which was identified as a key factor for the future of Europe is totally ignored for Europe's interaction with the global South. Lifelong Learning for the North and basic education for the South is not a sustainable vision. EAEA supports CONCORD's call for a benchmark of 20% for basic health and education, as well as the call of the *"Belém Framework of Action"* of UNESCO's CONFINTEA VI conference on Adult Education to consider *"new, and opening up existing, transnational funding programmes for literacy and Adult Education, along the lines of the actions taken under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme"*.

3. We appreciate the intention of the Commission to coordinate Europe's development activities. It would not only give Europe as the biggest donor globally a better visibility, but mainly avoid double structures and shape the engagement. It will clearly help recipient countries to manage the diversity of development projects and actors. However, coordination should not mean that projects should be managed or money should be delivered only through the Commission. As a civil society platform, we value very much a decentralised approach, based on the principles of subsidiarity. Many projects can be managed better in a dialogue with national or even regional ministries than with a centralised Brussels-based structure.
4. EAEA suggests a revision of the management tools used by the Commission today. We are highly sceptical of the existing bureaucratic procedures, which capture too much of the energy and resources in administrating projects. A special problem exists with regard to the numerous large scale projects, implemented within a tender procedure, which favour commercial consulting companies. Our partners from Africa, Asia and Latin America reported to us that many of these projects are implemented rather with a view on margins and profits for the implementing companies than on partnership, mutual understanding, capacity building and sustainability with the development counterparts. Unfortunately, this form of project design often excludes civil society actors.
5. The notion of *"development education and awareness raising"* should be replaced by a wider understanding of *"global learning"*. It is our task to set up a dialogue with the European citizens about the challenges of our interdependent worlds, the impact of globalisation and global warming. To develop an understanding of all living on one earth is the challenge, rather than to *"gain the support of European citizens for development cooperation"*, as the GREEN PAPER narrowly poses the question.
6. As stated in the Accra Agenda, civil society organisations from the North and South should play the important role of a watchdog, raising public awareness in both parts of the world for misuse of development funds. Adult Education actors do have a specific role in this setting, as they provide channels for dialogue with the population.

Mary Robinson Foundation

Statement on Women's Leadership on Climate Justice

Climate change is one of most urgent and serious environmental, economic, political, social and humanitarian issues of our time. Yet there is an atmosphere of minimal expectations and low hopes for the outcomes of the international climate negotiations, the COP16 meeting, currently taking place in Cancún, Mexico. Perhaps this is in part due to the unrealistic expectations and therefore inevitable disappointment of COP15 in Copenhagen last year.

But we must take steps to tackle climate change on a worldwide basis and secure climate justice for all. Climate justice integrates human rights and sustainable development and shares the benefits and burdens of climate change equitably, while safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable. If as a global community we hope to respond to this immense challenge, women leaders must play a greater role in innovating, deciding and implementing the solutions that are so urgently required.

Global inequities mean that not everyone is equally able to participate in international decision-making processes, to reduce emissions or to cope with the effects of climate change. A climate justice approach will amplify the voices of those people who have done least to cause climate change, but who are affected most severely by it. They include the citizens of island states and vulnerable countries fighting for their very survival; indigenous communities whose lands and resources are under threat; women farmers feeding their families and growing much of the world's food. And it includes the poorest and most marginalized people world-wide who already suffer most from poverty, hunger, ill-health and injustice.

Many inspiring women are already leading as powerful agents of change in communities, countries and international agencies working on climate, but they remain under-represented in national and global decision-making. In particular, the voices of women from the global South are seldom heard. Their vast expertise and knowledge are largely missing from international discussions. Any fair and equitable approach to climate change solutions must involve women alongside men in every stage of climate policy-making.

We know that women in the global South make up the majority of the world's poorest people, and are also among those worst affected by the current and imminent impacts of climate change. We also know that men and women contribute

to and are affected by climate change in different ways, as the demands made on them by family and community vary. Given existing gender inequalities and development gaps, climate change ultimately places a greater burden on women. As a result, climate justice incorporates a strong gender perspective.

Such gender inequities have motivated many women leaders to take action. Determined work by individuals and women's organisations around the world has achieved significant progress in ensuring gender-sensitive language is included in the negotiating texts under discussion at the UNFCCC climate talks. It's vital that these gains are not rolled back, and that the importance of gender is accepted in key areas where it remains lacking, particularly mitigation and financing.

At the same time, women's leadership is needed to integrate climate justice into the entire range of climate issues on the COP16 agenda, such as adaptation, technology transfer, forests, capacity building, and national planning for both developed and developing countries. It seems likely that the outcomes of COP16 will emphasize processes, monitoring and mechanisms in specific areas – most notably a dedicated climate change fund – that will guide both short term action and any future international agreement. Women leaders must play an active role to ensure that climate justice shapes these building blocks of future agreements.

Low expectations must not be allowed to push negotiations towards implementing approaches that lack transparency and accountability, have insufficient input from civil society, or inadequate safeguards. Instead, COP16 outcomes must guide the international community down a path that promotes and protects the needs of the most vulnerable – whether they are individuals, communities or vulnerable countries.

Climate justice, underpinned by its emphasis on gender, can motivate strong, fair and effective action on every aspect of climate change. Women leaders at all levels advocating for climate justice can help achieve real progress in Cancún. Rather than retreating into cynicism and inaction, at COP16 we can move forward towards the world we need for our children's future.

Released: 2 December 2010 at COP 16, Cancún, Mexico

The Gender and Education Office (GEO) of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) was established to help break down traditional sex roles and to counter implicit gender attitudes that assume the superiority of one sex over the other – a form of hegemony that is also cultivated in language. The point is not merely to recognize the differences between the sexes and respect them as equal. In close cooperation with other regional and global women's networks, GEO pursues political advocacy, particularly at the major UN social conferences, while monitoring compliance with mutually agreed resolutions and commitments.

Sofía Valdivielso

Language, Gender and Equality

A Perspective from ICAE and its Gender and Education Office

Introduction

The crisis of a social system based on the division of roles according to sex is one of the dilemmas facing our emerging information society.

Change in general leads to confusion. We are living in an age when the new system has not yet been born while the old has not yet died. Men as well as women are limited by traditional identities based on sex. In the hegemonic gender models, both sexes have been locked within very rigid roles. Hegemonic masculinity, which consigns rational thinking, control, and power to male identity, has prevented men from developing and expressing the emotional sides of their personalities. And hegemonic femininity, which requires women to be emotional, sensitive, and self-sacrificing, has denied them the right to all those aspects that are held to be masculine. In so far as masculinity has always been defined in opposition to femininity, it has hindered both men and women from becoming integrated human beings. The process of overcoming this dichotomy has already been initiated. But old attitudes and behaviour patterns persist. The number of women who die each year as the result of male violence testifies to the prevailing domination and control of one sex over the other.

In order to overcome this dichotomy and construct more integral and holistic models of identity, we must become more sensitive to the obstacles which prevent

the emergence of societies whose people are diverse but equal. Education as a social process is one of the spaces where gender identities are constructed. A good education based on the recognition of, and respect for, difference is fundamental to overcoming outdated models.

This is a complex task hampered by numerous obstacles. Two aspects, in particular, as I see it, are closely related. One is language – the words we use to describe the realities in which we are immersed. Language may appear to be neutral, but in fact it is not. Behind every word we use to name our world there is a power relation. It is men who have traditionally named reality for women. And, in the majority of cases, we women have accepted the language they use. This uncritical acceptance has prevented us from reflecting on our reality.

The other aspect is the fact that the people in charge of facilitating the emergence of more appropriate identities generally continue to operate with outdated models laden with deeply entrenched prejudices.

In the 1990s, especially after the Peking World Conference on Women, women's issues began to acquire political importance everywhere in the world. Institutions were created, among other things, to foster equality, to monitor adherence to the commitments made by the various governments, and to implement positive action policies designed to narrow the gender gap.

At first, these institutions put us all into one single category. In so doing, they implied a homogenization of all women. We *are* all women. Nevertheless, reality is not something that is singular and universal, but rather plural and multiple. As women we are equal in many respects. But there are also many factors that differentiate us. Disregarding differences can only result in a reproduction of the status quo.

The present article seeks to examine these two dimensions: language and equality. To do so, it will first be necessary to clarify the meaning of a number of concepts. Although we tend to believe that using the same words means that we are proceeding from the same understanding of them, this, unfortunately, is not always the case. Conflict and misunderstanding are frequently the result. In a second step, we will take a closer look at GEO as an example of an educational network which works toward a more equitable and just education.

A Few Conceptual Clarifications

The conceptual framework within which we work is very broad. In our opinion, it is encumbered by social prejudices which, in the majority of cases, prevent us from knowing what position is being represented and what message is being conveyed about women. For this reason it is necessary to clarify certain basic concepts. To

delimit the subject with which we are dealing, given the limited scope of this paper, we have chosen to concentrate on two concepts that we consider important: gender and equality.

Gender

The concept of gender emerged during the 1980s with the aim of breaking with the tradition of biological determinism implicit in the use of the term 'sex'. This new analytic category revealed the cultural character of the identity constructions of men and women.

There is no normative and unequivocal definition of gender. First introduced at the height of a phase of theoretical effervescence, the concept has undergone continuous refinement and further development as research in the field has progressed.

The concept of *"gender"* was first appropriated to emphasize the cultural as opposed to the biological connotations in the word *"sex"*. The basic idea was to underline the idea that women's inferior position has to do with reasons of a sociocultural nature rather than being intrinsic to human nature. This initial interpretation was soon regarded as too limiting. It was criticized for its determinism as well as for the dualistic approach that draws a parallel between feminine-woman and masculine-man. According to these first assumptions 'sex' refers to the biological characteristics which distinguish women from men (anatomical, physiological, hormonal, and other such distinctions), and 'gender' refers to the characteristics attributed to women and men by society and culture. (Cobo Bedía, 1995; Lagarde, 1996).

For Seyla Benhabib, gender is a relational category that seeks to explain the construction of a certain kind of difference among human beings. (Benhabib.1992: 52).

Over the course of the past 20 years, the conception of gender has undergone four fundamental shifts: (Martín 2006):

The shift away from sex-gender identification: At the very beginning, the argument was introduced that biological sex is not destiny. And, as ethnography has demonstrated, there are no innate and universal qualities which are automatically applicable to men and women in all cultures. Accordingly, as a social construction, the concept of gender filled a gap and proved to be a valid and operative interdisciplinary concept.

The shift away from generic duality: Gender, which was introduced as a concept in contrast and reaction to the biological determinism of sex, was likewise constructed as a binary category (masculine/feminine); but because this duality

failed to take other practices and multiple identity constructions into consideration, it proved to be inappropriate. Accordingly, it was redefined as an abstract, multidimensional, and relational category of analysis.

The shift away from sexual duality: Studies on sexuality proposed that the concept of sex is also a social construct, and ethnographers introduced the argument that in various cultures there are other notions of gender besides the categories man and woman. This led to a redefinition of gender, based on the idea that rather than biological sex, there are diverse socio-sexual perceptions which are specific to society.

The shift away from heteronormativity: With the emergence of discourses criticizing that gender ignores sexual practices outside the boundaries of heteronormativity, it became necessary to reframe theories which seek to take into consideration how non-normative sexualities affect the construction of gender.

The different feminist theories agree on the premise that gender is a historical, social, and cultural process rather than a fact of nature. According to this approach, more than a category, gender is a broad theoretical framework of categories, hypotheses, interpretations, and knowledge relating to the collection of historical phenomena constructed around sex. Gender is present in the world, in societies, in social subjects, in their relationships, in politics, and in culture.

Equality

In everyday speech the term equality is synonymous with identity in the sense of identicalness. We say that two things are equal, or that they are identical. We also use the word equal as a synonym for sameness when we say that things are equal in the sense that they are the same. The confusion reflected in the common use of this term tends to lead to the assumption that the opposite of equality is difference. And this, in turn, generates the dilemma that if equality is perceived as something good, it follows that difference is something that is bad and should be eliminated. Or put the other way around, if difference is perceived as good, then the struggle for equality should be abandoned, considering that no one wishes to be identified as equal in a world that celebrates diversity. Taking this line of reasoning to the extreme, if the notion of difference leads us to deny universality, the logical conclusion would be to say that if women – or the poor, or immigrants – are different, the fact simply has to be accepted. As a consequence, an intolerable inequality is reduced to something that is considered perfectly natural.

In a call for terminological precision, Amorós (2005) emphasizes that synonymity of this type is nocuous. She argues that the concept should be used in the enlightened sense, i.e. equality as being entirely synonymous with identity.

> *"We speak of identity when we refer to a set of indiscernible terms that share a common assumption. If we state that "all indios are lazy", or that "all women are emotional", we imply that all the subjects subsumed under that assumption are identical, and that they are, therefore, indiscernible under that common assumption. Nevertheless, when we speak of equality, we refer to a relation of harmonization according to the same parameters that determine the same rank, and make the same comparison of subjects that are perfectly discernible."*
> (Amorós, 2005: 287)

Isabel Santa Cruz (1992) reconstructs the grid on which equality is inscribed. Three concepts emerge from this matrix to give a more precise definition of the concept of equality. The first concept, *"equipotency"*, implies that two people have the same ability to act. The second, *"equivalence"*, presupposes that two people have the same value and are situated at the same level on a scale of values that can perfectly well be different. For example, if we say that justice is as important as solidarity, or that masculine values are as important as feminine values, we are drawing equivalencies precisely because of the fact that they are different. Finally, the concept of *"equiphonia"*, or the capacity to have the same recognition in discourse, assumes the capacity to maintain a discourse that enjoys the same credibility as the other discourse and is perceived as equally reliable. (Santa Cruz, 1992)

Following this logic, the right to difference presupposes the right to equality as understood according to the above-mentioned matrix. Any difference not included on this matrix must be challenged. There are differences that are undesirable because they are unjust. Equality, hence, is something that needs to be constructed. And it needs to be contrasted not with difference but with inequality, for all inequality is ethically intolerable. Accordingly, our task consists of defending and furthering the right to equality because it is not just biological differences that are part of nature, but human differences as well. They are facts of life. Inequalities, on the other hand, are the consequences of unjust human realities.

The Gender and Education Office (GEO) of the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE)

GEO has its origins in the Women's Programme of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), which was originally based in Canada. In 1996, the objectives of the Women's Programme were redefined and adapted to meet new needs in education and gender. In the following year, the Gender and Education Office was set up in Montevideo, Uruguay, and, with the support of the Latin American Popular Education Network among Women REPEM and its infrastructure, was

entrusted with managing and coordinating activities relating to gender issues. The office's chief mission is to promote education as a strategic tool toward the realization of justice and equality in gender relations.

GEO was formed as a multicultural, interregional, and global network. It responds to a wide range of different priorities from diverse regions, and it works locally and globally to establish and promote cooperative and horizontal relations with the various NGOs and networks, but also with stakeholders such as universities. It seeks to disseminate knowledge, to raise awareness, and to foster the sharing of experience and materials relating to education and gender between and among local, regional, and international institutions.

Priorities in the work of GEO include: reinforcing gender mainstreaming in public policies, enhancing women's advocacy work, and monitoring and following up on commitments made in the course of the so-called UN Social Cycle of conferences.

GEO publishes a monthly Internet periodical called *"Voices Rising"*. Geared to people and organizations engaged in the promotion of education and gender, the publication enjoys worldwide readership. The periodical disseminates information sent in by readers interested in sharing their knowledge, and it seeks to facilitate cooperation between and among the various actors in different regions of the world.

The office works closely with other networks, notably with REPEM (the Network of Popular Education among Women), DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), FEMNET (the African Women's Development and Communication Network) and Social Watch (an international network of citizens' organizations), forming in the process what can rightly be called a network of networks.

From its inception, GEO has played a very active role in the sector. It has participated in virtually every conference organized by the United Nations, and always with the same objective: to bring the message and the language of CONFINTEA into each and every one of the spaces created for reflection and debate. This participation has facilitated a better and clearer understanding of the interconnectedness of everything, and has fostered the realization that the problems we currently face cannot be solved by a single agency or a one-sided sector approach.

On the conviction that education is one of the factors that will make this possible, we have therefore formed a network of women feminists interested in developing justice in gender relations. We proceed on the assumption that education is a universal right, and that it is not a concession to be granted, but something that we are entitled to by the mere fact of having been born, regardless of our place of birth, gender, race, or membership in a particular social class. Based on these fundamental principles, we work in three different directions that we consider interrelated and interdependent.

As an education network, our main mission is to affirm and emphasize that education is a strategic instrument toward achieving greater justice and equality between genders, races, ethnic groups, and social classes. To make this happen, it is absolutely necessary, in our opinion, to conduct advocacy work in every sphere where issues related to human rights and education are debated, and wherever policies in those connections are designed.

Over the past decade, in addition to participating at the conferences sponsored by the United Nations, we have played an active role in the events organized by nongovernment organizations. From its very beginnings, we have participated in the World Social Forum, the international organization committee of which ICAE is currently a member.

Our aim in being an active part of this process is to ensure that the resolutions relating to the significance of education for all – girls and boys, and women and men alike – and specifically the resolutions adopted at international conferences on education, are respected and reaffirmed in future conferences so as to avoid the need to *"recreate the wheel"*. Duplication, to our mind, is a waste of energy and does not lead to better results.

In this sense, our presence at these forums enables us to call attention to points of intersection in the various agendas. We can open up spaces of communication beyond the areas that traditionally fall within the domain of education, and we can contribute our insight to the discussion of issues that are not restricted to education. What we learn in other forums, we can introduce in circles that focus on education.

Working along these lines is a difficult and slow process, but we are convinced that it helps us avoid the kind of fragmented thinking that views reality as being organized around single topics or isolated disciplines. It enables us to move forward with a more integral approach which includes, but also transcends, the specific knowledge of different disciplines and spheres.

Research is another dimension which defines the work of GEO (GEO, 1999, 2003….). Besides the fact that we consider it important to demonstrate what we profess, our research provides us with useful tools to support our lobby work. Our first research study involved the elaboration of indicators to follow up on the resolutions adopted by CONFINTEA V. The results of our study were presented two years later at the first follow-up conference held in Manila. We conducted an analysis of indicators relating to gender issues. Our methodology served as the basis for a broader subsequent study coordinated by ICAE. That study, known as the *"Shadow Report"*, was presented at the CONFINTEA midterm review which was held in September 2003 in Bangkok. From then until 2010, when CONFINTEA VI was held in Belém, we directed our energies towards working in networks with other

sectors and stakeholders, on the conviction that cooperation between and among sectors and actors is crucial in the search for alternatives to a multidimensional and complex reality. We have participated in the various World Social Forums, Global Action Weeks, and the Global Call to Action against Poverty. And we have played an active role in organizing follow-up conferences and measures on the Millennium Development Goals and the International Civil Society Forum (FISC) in anticipation of the next International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA.)

A third dimension of our work involves the interconnectedness of local and global issues. In the awareness that global changes have a concrete impact on our local communities, and that global and local processes are intrinsically interrelated, GEO works at both levels, and does so in concert with local networks. We are mindful of the context in which life develops, of our links to the Earth and the territories in which we are located, of the concrete people who live there – the boys and girls, the men and women alike. At the same time, however, we are careful not to lose sight of the global context where decisions are made that affect each and every one of us.

References

Amorós, Celia (2005). *La gran diferencia y sus pequeñas consecuencias…para las mujeres* [The big difference and its small consequences...for women]. Madrid, Cátedra.

Benhabib, Seyla (1992). Una revisión del debate sobre las mujeres y la teoría moral [A review of debate on women and moral theory]. In *Isagoría* no. 6, pp. 36-64.

Benhabib, Seyla (1990). El otro generalizado y el otro concreto (The generalized other and the concrete other]. In Cobo Bedía, Rosa (2006) *Interculturalidad, feminismo y educación* [Interculturality, feminism and education]. Madrid, MEC and Catarata p. 85.

Freire, Paulo. and Macedo, Donaldo (1989). *Alfabetización. Lectura de la palabra y lectura de la realidad* [Literacy. Reading the word and the world]. Barcelona. Paidós and MEC.

Lagarde, Marcela (1996). *Género y feminismo. Desarrollo humano y democracia* [Gender and feminism. Human development and democracy]. Madrid: Horas and HORAS.

Martín Casares, Aurelia (2006). *Antropología de género. Cultura, mitos y estereotipos sexuales* [Anthropology of gender. Culture, myths and sexual stereotypes]. Madrid, Cátedra.

Molina Petit, Cristina (1994). *Dialéctica de la Ilustración* [The dialectics of illustration]. Madrid: Anthropos.

Santa Cruz, Isabel (1992). Feminismo y ética [Feminism and ethics]. In Amorós, Celia (2005) *La gran diferencia y sus pequeñas consecuencias…para las mujeres* [The big difference and its small consequences...for women]. Madrid, Cátedra p. 287.

Subirats, Marina y Brullet, Cristina (2002). Rosa y azul: la transmisión de géneros en la escuela mixta. [Pink and blue: the transmission of genders in co-educational schools] In González, A. y Lomas, C. *Mujer y educación* [Women and education]. Barcelona, Graó pp. 133-167

Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Adult Education for All – The XIIIth German Adult Education Days (Volkshochschultag)

The slogan of the conference, *"Adult Education for All"* is closely related to the international debate on *"Education for All"*. It expresses our belief that Adult Education is a Human Right for all. More than 1,000 delegates from Germany, Europe and other parts of the world are expected to exchange on burning issues, celebrate the power of Adult Education and stress the importance ideas of Lifelong Learning in times of crisis.

The Adult Education Conference aspires to be the top event and policy educational highlight for the work of Adult Education centres. With the participation of senior politicians, renowned speakers and instructors, with exciting topics and a effective publicity campaign, DVV is striving to organize a headline-catching conference.

The event will be opened by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Christian Wulff; the Federal Minister for Education as well as the European Commissioner for Education and Culture are going to present their views on the future of Adult Learning. The Minister, Ms. Schavan, announced that her speech will develop the government's view on the importance of Lifelong Learning for the marginalised. The program will focus on overarching issues and therefore will refrain from subject-specific events and workshops. In addition to three plenary sessions, substantive discussions will be held in six forums; each event will be a highlight in itself, tackling key issues of the German and global debate:

Social cohesion and integration

How can Adult Education tackle the growing gap between rich and poor? What can be done to foster the intergenerational contract? What is our role concerning integration, migration and intercultural learning?

Living Democracy – Shaping the future

What is the future of civic education? How can we ensure future sustainability of our democracy in Germany and Europe? How do new forms of political engagement effect Adult Education?

The benefit of continuing education

Can we provide evidence on the impact of Adult Learning? Are there any best practices from Europe and beyond? What data are decision-makers going to expect from us?

Advancement through education

What is the relevance of the key competences model skills for education and career? LLL in the workplace. How can we promote learning; training and employability in times of shortage of skilled labour? How can we best provide second and third chance education?

Climate Change and Sustainable Development

What is the role of Adult Education in the area of environmental concerns? What does the United Nations Decade of Education for sustainable development mean for us?

Local education landscapes in times of crisis

Is it correct talk about deconstructing education? How can we increase participation? What is the role of Adult Education centres in local learning environments?

In the evening, on the 12th of May, along with all our guests, we will celebrate with music, performances and a lot of possibilities to meet and network.

The conference will take place in Berlin's conference center, bcc, at the centraly located Alexanderplatz (www.bcc-berlin.de). All sessions, including the plenary session and the workshops will be translated into German and English.

The registration for the event will be open from the beginning of 2011 at www.volkshochschultag.de

For any additional information, please contact (www.volkshochschultag.de/en).