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Engaging in Literacy

Decentralization, Management of Diversity and Curriculum Renovation: A Study of Literacy Education in Four African Countries (Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda)

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Working Document
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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABEC	Adult Basic Education Course (Botswana)
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training (South Africa)
ABLP	Adult Basic Literacy Programme (Kenya)
ACE	Adult and Continuing Education
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency (Uganda)
ALBED	Adult Literacy, Basic Education and Development [Foundation] (South Africa)
BALP	Basic Adult Literacy Programme (Kenya)
BEUPA	Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas (Uganda)
BNLS	Botswana National Library Service
BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
C/NFE	Complementary and Non Formal Education (Kenya)
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDA	Community Development Assistant (Uganda)
CDO	Community Development Officer (Uganda)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States of America)
DEO	District Education Officer (Uganda)
DNFE	Department of Non-Formal Education (Botswana)
DVV-IIZ	German Adult Education Association Institute for International Cooperation
EFA	Education for All
EFA-NAP	Education for All National Action Plan (Botswana)
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy [programme] (Uganda)
GTZ	German technical Assistance
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency (Iceland)

IACE	Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, Makerere University (Uganda)
LABE	Literacy and Adult Basic Education (Uganda)
LAMP	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (UIS)
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Kenya)
MPET	Master Plan for Education and Training (Kenya)
NALSIP	National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan (Uganda)
NARC	National Rainbow Alliance Coalition (Kenya)
NCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NDP9	National Development Plan 9 (Botswana)
NFE	Non Formal Education [programme] (Kenya)
NFS	Non formal Schools (Kenya)
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NOVIB	Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand (Netherlands)
NLP	National Literacy Programme (Botswana)
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centre (South Africa)
PAMOJA	REFLECT network in Africa
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Uganda)
PLP	Post Literacy Programme (Kenya)
ProLit	Project Literacy (South Africa)
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SANLI	South African National Literacy Initiative
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDIP	Social Development Sector Strategic Investment Plan (Uganda)
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority (South Africa)
SIL	Summer Institute for Linguistics (United States of America)
SOCADIDO	Soroti Diocese Integrated Development Organization (Uganda)
TIQET	Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (Kenya)
UGAADEN	Uganda Adult Education Network
UGOWEFO	Uganda Old-Women Welfare Foundation
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
ULALA	Uganda Literacy and Adult Learners Association
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WUS	World University Service

1. ABSTRACT

1. This is a situational study of literacy education provision in four sub-Saharan African countries (Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Botswana) that focuses on the decentralization of programme management (particularly in relation to policies, planning, implementation strategies, curriculum and practices) to meet the diversity of language, culture and contextual requirements in these countries.

2. The study starts with an analysis of the decentralization discourses applied to education and looks at the confusing terminology denoting literacy provision: literacy, adult basic education and non-formal education.

3. It describes the literacy situation and various forms of provision by the state and civil society, as well as education policies, strategies and practices. It assesses the likely impact of the situation and possibilities for reaching the Education for All literacy goals. It also looks at the extent to which decentralization and curriculum renovation respond to learner diversity and need.

4. General findings suggest there are both similarities and differences in the way adult literacy policy and provision are   affected by decentralization and by associated curriculum reforms and innovations in these four countries. Recommendations are also made towards ways of achieving EFA targets.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5. This is a situational study of literacy education in four sub-Saharan African countries (Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Botswana) that focuses on the decentralization of program management (particularly in relation to policies, planning, implementation strategies, curriculum and practices) to meet a diversity of language, culture and contextual needs. The study examines the decentralization discourse that informs some governmental and educational reforms in Africa, and considers whether or not decentralization and curriculum renovation are responding to these diverse contexts. It also assesses the likelihood of reaching the Education for All literacy goals, and attempts to clarify the terminologies of literacy, non formal education and adult basic education in the light of local understandings.

6. A short chapter on **Information and information systems** addressing literacy issues notes the difficulties in obtaining documentary evidence for comparative study and argues the need for some consolidated digitised resources for literacy and other forms of adult education in Africa.

7. The four Anglophone African country case studies relate to two sets of adjacent countries in East and Southern Africa. The literacy situation and the various forms of adult literacy provision are analysed and some projections regarding literacy rates are made. For instance, in Kenya, the illiteracy rate projection suggests that though the percentage is lower, in effect, the raw number of illiterates continues to grow. Researchers have noted that in spite of a pro-decentralization policy centralized control remains strong and decentralization is beset by a range of weaknesses.

8. In Uganda, literacy levels are more or less static (though the raw number is likely to increase by about 200,000 by 2015, with a larger increase among men). Alternative models of literacy support in the context of poverty eradication and social development have been presented in a number of planning documents. There are a number of non formal programmes with literacy components (and six of these programmes were evaluated in 2004). Religious and non-governmental organisations are significant partners in provision with developed networks and forums. Since 1992, due to a process of decentralization, there has been some willingness to allow alternative curricular approaches alongside the government's Functional Adult Literacy programs, the formation of a number of partnerships with civil society organisations, and relative freedom in the choice of language(s) in adult education.

9. Although South Africa projects a decline in illiteracy levels by 2015, statistical analysis suggests that rises in adult literacy levels will be small and that the actual number of functional illiterates may therefore increase. This is in spite of extensive post apartheid adult basic education policy.

10. Despite a strong appearance of decentralization, there are opposing tendencies at play. There are moves to reduce the number of provinces and reign in decentralization in the supposed interests of good governance. There is also ambiguity in language policy; although South Africa declared all eleven main languages official, *in practice* this has meant the increasing dominance of English.

11. In neighbouring Botswana, the state is the major agent of literacy through the National Literacy Programme, which is showing signs of enrolment drop off, lack of effective decentralization and stagnation.

12. Literacy level projections suggest that Botswana is capable of significantly reducing illiteracy, though the current pace is slow with a looming problem of significant male illiteracy. At policy and planning level there is support for adult literacy programmes, with some small scale developments in alternative curricula e.g. in relation to workplace learning. The NGO sector is also very small but has provided curriculum innovation in minority languages, which are not catered for by the state programme.

13. General findings:

- Most countries have supportive constitutional statements about the right to literacy and basic education but **literacy policies, plans and processes** are somewhat marginal (and often not fully implemented),

- There is little literature on **good practice** except in the case of some evaluations from Kenya and Uganda (including interesting observations on literacy education and livelihoods training),

- A **major problem** is the split in the two East African countries of responsibility for literacy, adult basic education and non formal education between two separate ministries,

- There is limited evidence of **curriculum renovation**.

Of the three main approaches to literacy, the official *formal literacy programmes* are becoming more formal, with certification, standards and a National Qualification Framework (similar to the direction South Africa took but with lacklustre results).

Literacy and livelihoods has had much attention from development agencies and researchers but little evidence of going to scale.

Local radical community development is espoused by some NGOs and is currently most evident in the REFLECT method.

- the chances for **sustainable endogenous support** for literacy education are probably very limited in view of the poverty of most adult literacy learners,

- fulfilment of **diverse needs and interests** as a clear result of decentralization is not obvious though certainly some NGOs have responded directly to local needs and delivery vacuums.

- Issues **of participation and democracy** do not feature strongly in the four countries, though networks of literacy NGOs are active in several countries.

- **Education for All targets** will not easily be met in East and Southern Africa: more energetic commitment is necessary.

14. Recommendations:

The likelihood of achieving the Education for All targets might be enhanced by:

1. better **clearing houses for documentation** and research on adult literacy and non formal education
2. **reconceptualization of the formal state literacy programmes** (which currently lack the momentum to meet the Education for All goals by 2015),
3. New forms of partnerships, networking and collaboration to ensure **continuing vitality of NGOs** that may be more closely in touch with the changing needs of their communities

3. Introduction

15. This is a situational study of literacy education in four sub-Saharan African countries (Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Botswana,) that focuses on the decentralization of programme management (particularly in relation to policies, planning, implementation strategies, curriculum and practices) to meet a diversity of language, culture and contextual requirements.

3.1. The Decentralization Discourse

16. Decentralization of government (political, fiscal, market and administrative) from the centre to local or regional levels of government, local institutions, private sector or non-governmental organisations is a global trend which has impacted on all sectors, including the education sector. Decentralization is perceived as a partial solution to various education management challenges in Africa. It is motivated by a variety of ideological, political and fiscal agendas though generally assumed to create greater accountability, improve service delivery, expand access to services, provide more rapid responses to local needs and bring government and decision-making closer to the people. The related terms delegation, deconcentration and devolution, relate to the nature or degree of authority or power being transferred in decentralisation.

17. *Delegation* refers to the assignment, usually by administrative decree, of decision-making authority to a lower level or to other public or private agencies. The transfer is only of some powers of decision-making and management over personnel and budgets. Compliance to higher level policies and directives remains.

18. *Deconcentration* refers to the fuller, but not complete, transfer, usually by administrative decree, of decision-making authority from higher to lower levels (or to regional parts of the bureaucracy within the same level of government). No independent authority is given and deconcentration shifts the authority for implementation of rules, but not for the making them.

19. *Devolution* refers to the full, legal and permanent transfer of decision-making authority from a higher level of government to a lower level (or to regions or local communities or to independent bodies). Devolution almost always includes the transfer of authority over several sectors – not only education – to lower levels of government.

20. In practice, decentralization occurs in situations of significant economic constraints, and often entails a shift of financial responsibilities to lower levels (regional or local government, community organizations, and/or individuals), ostensibly to ensure more efficient and cost-effective uses of limited resources. In practice, the actual means of decentralization may vary considerably ranging from communal devolution to marketization and corporatisation (Uphoff, 1992).

21. Education decentralization and management reforms have involved attempts to dismantle centralised education bureaucracies and to create devolved systems entailing varying degrees of institutional autonomy, deconcentrated regional and district administration, and forms of school or education centre-based management. Certain educational functions (such as control over school governance, textbook development, and building maintenance) are more likely to be decentralised than control over system financial management, curriculum development, teacher education or examinations. Effective educational decentralisation requires a common commitment by all the actors involved to partnership and cooperation (including actors establishing their credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the traditional central authorities), improvements in educational production and sustained effort at endogenous financing of education. Decentralization creates a

need to build capacity at all levels. Actual evidence of the effects of decentralisation on equity has been mixed.

22. The educational functions that can be decentralized can be categorised thus:

- **Administrative**: Personnel management, financial management, sites and resources, management information systems, planning and structures, monitoring and evaluation,

- **Curricular**: Organization of curriculum and instruction, curriculum development, materials, curriculum monitoring and evaluation.

23. Lack of resources, bureaucratic resistance, low capacity of local government, and lack of consultation and coordination between different levels of government have slowed the devolution of power. Some of the inhibitors can be categorised thus:

Lack of structural change in the central government control and administrative system, including:
- Pseudo-decentralization aimed at gaining greater political legitimacy, and a decentralization which is administrative only ,
- Top-down hierarchical management structures which dominate institutional arrangements, with Accountability directed upward rather than downwards,
- Unwillingness to delegate authority and poor and inflexible management by senior officials,

Lack of competent and efficient managers and an absence of viable management systems
Opposition to decentralization changes by educators who see it as involving more work and educational management reforms that focus mainly on resource mobilization

The resulting poverty of communities.

24. Effective decentralization of educational management requires the following:

Involvement of all the education stakeholders, with parties held accountable for outcomes

Changes in roles, responsibilities and administrative behaviour at all levels, resulting in an Institutional framework based on empowering the participation of communities and officials at all levels.
Restructuration of national and/or regional departments of education to take on new functions to support sub-national entities and sites
Information management systems which are client-oriented, and organisational changes accompanied by attempts to improve teaching and learning
Officials, principals and community members at the lower levels with the capacity to implement improvements in the particular educational environment
Authorities and officials working in genuine partnerships with civil society and community stakeholders with capacity to support, train and partner with local community members
The recognition that community support is a process, not an event and that it takes time.
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3.2. Contextual realities – can education and development goals be met?

25. The need for African countries to meet the looming deadlines of the achievement of Education for All is both an encourager of decentralisation reforms as well as a reminder of the contextual realities and difficulties within which literacy provision takes place.

26. In Africa, delayed implementation of planned programmes, undesirable constraints (access to education infrastructure, lack of resources, economic impoverishment), and a lack of power sharing at various decision making levels indicate that Education For All literacy goals will not be met by 2015 unless will and resources come together in new, imaginative and multi-sectoral ways.

3.3. The four countries and their situation

27. The four countries selected for this study are two pairs of geographically adjacent Anglophone African countries, Kenya and Uganda in East Africa, and South Africa and Botswana in Southern Africa. Their populations range from extremely small (Botswana with less than two million people) to moderately large (South Africa has a population of over 45 million) and there is a similar degree of economic variability between them, Kenya and Uganda are low income countries, South Africa and Botswana middle income. Foreign aid (and debt) is of significant importance to Uganda and Kenya, less so to South Africa and Botswana. South Africa and Uganda have only relatively recently emerged from periods of political turmoil, Kenya has recently retuned to multi-party democracy, whereas Botswana has been a stable democracy since independence in 1966. All these countries, as is true for African countries generally, are engaged in a massive development struggle against considerable odds (one of which is the HIV and AIDS pandemic), to enable their citizens to have a better life: politically, economically and culturally. All four countries have significant adult literacy or basic education initiatives.

Table 3.1   Statistics on the four countries

Country	Population	Population growth rate	GDP per capita (purchasing power parity (US$)	Education as % of GDP	Transition from primary to secondary schooling	Literacy level for those aged 15+
Kenya	33,829,590	2.56%	1,100	7.0%	72%	85.1%
Uganda	27,269,482	3.31%	1,500	2.5%	42%	69.9%
South Africa	44,416,000	0.6%	10,910	5.8%	92%	86.0%
Botswana	1,750,000	0.9%	9,200	2.2%	94%	80.0%

3.4. Literacy, non-formal education and adult basic education

A number of definitional problems arise in connection with the terms "literacy", "adult basic education", and "non formal education". Official statistics on literacy tend to use simple definitions of literacy as equivalent to a particular level of formal basic education or as the capacity to read and write simple statements (in any, or one of a set of official or dominant, languages). Even such simple definitions of literacy are problematic. Some countries classify as illiterate only those who have never been to school (as South Africa's official UNESCO statistics do). Others define as illiterate any person who has not reached a chosen level of schooling, and some actually test certain literacy and numeracy skills (as in Botswana).Surveys separate from the national census would be a more effective means of gathering data on literacy levels.

28. The problem worsens when describing the difference between   a "literacy" programme (teaching fundamental reading, writing and numeracy skills) and "adult basic education" (providing the equivalent to the primary education in schools, which is much more than reading and writing and doing sums for it involves gaining a whole body of what is considered useful knowledge, skills and attitudes).

29. Understanding what is meant by "non formal education" may be equally confusing and can include all education carried on outside the formal school and higher education system, except vocational training, any education that is not certificated or an education that is delivered in a non-formal or informal style (but which may be quite formal in the system or certification sense).

30. With the new discourse of "lifelong learning", variant understandings of the relationship of lifelong learning to literacy and basic education have emerged in some countries. There is a need for standardisation of the terminology relating to literacy, adult basic education, non-formal education and lifelong learning, not in any restrictive or prescriptive way, but simply to aid understanding and comparability of the data and research emanating from countries in Africa.

3.5. Local understandings of literacy, curriculum, decentralization and diversity

31. There appear to have been four main types of literacy provision in African countries:

Campaigns of alphabetisation with strong political backing and usually centrally controlled. These were typical of the immediate post independence period in Africa. They were often inefficient and poorly targeted but had successes in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

Functional literacy programmes (as distinguished from the basic literacy or alphabetisation campaign or programme) which seek to link literacy with livelihoods, skills training and development. Though clearly useful, often their scale of operation is quite small in practice.

Formal primary school equivalence basic education is increasingly been introduced along side basic literacy programmes in countries such as Botswana, Uganda and South Africa (in the latter case it started with this form, which has not been particularly successful in quantitative terms, and may now be reconsidering other more non-formal options).

Innovative participative programmes usually run by NGOs or agencies. There is not much evidence of these operating on any scale. The REFLECT methodology pioneered by the international NGO Action Aid appears to be increasingly used in a number of countries, such as Uganda, Botswana and South Africa. It mixes Freirian pedagogy with participatory rural appraisal techniques and is used not only for literacy but includes general community development.

32. In some cases, actual programmes may be of a mixed type, such as Botswana's National Literacy Programme which had both the strong political backing and centrally controlled curriculum and management of a campaign and the approach of a formal primary school equivalence basic education. The relationship of literacy provision to development or income generating activities seems obvious and there are examples in all the four countries studied of functional literacy programmes and projects that intersect with development activities. However, there is little data available to us to determine what this means in practice and/or to prove that adult literacy and basic education is genuinely enhancing or stimulating development and poverty alleviation.

33. Curriculum is also open to myriad interpretations, ranging from everything that happens in educational activities to the content of an official syllabus document. Curriculum reform in practice is never simply a matter of changing the syllabus or the official guidelines. Clearly, decentralization of curriculum development and implementation will mean very different things depending on one's understanding of curriculum.

34. The same caveats apply to the concepts of decentralization and diversity. Whilst not all decentralization failures can be ascribed to simple misunderstandings of terms, seemingly powerful concepts can be very rapidly rendered impotent by reform in which a decentralization, participatory or diversity discourse is largely rhetorical with unchanged set of practices . Decentralization can be seen not so much as a strategy but as an ideological vision for sharing power and responsibility at all levels from the ground up. In the context of illiteracy, so inextricably intertwined with issues of poverty, marginalisation and powerlessness, decentralised, implemented provision capacitated by real authority and resources, can be seen as a precondition for the literacy programmes that address grassroots needs.

4. INFORMATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR LITERACY

4.1. Methodology & Literacy Statistics

35. A comparative study of this type really requires a full range of documents relating to literacy: policy (Government White Papers, policy related legislation, policy implementation plans, Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans); strategy and implementation (implementation plans, regulations, implementation manuals); curriculum (syllabi, curriculum statements, curriculum outlines, standards, outcome statements); descriptions of content and instructional materials; monitoring and evaluation documents (statistics, impact studies, evaluations); and advocacy and fundraising materials. Very little of this is accessible and in most cases what can be located on the internet is restricted to evaluation and impact studies commissioned by international agencies, academic papers, advocacy and fund raising material (NGOs, government ministries) etc. Documentation on NGO programmes is also scant to non-existent However, bibliographic and internet scan raised a number of interesting issues that deserve more consideration. This underlies the need for more consistent and standardised documentation if proper comparisons are to be made.

36. Where literacy statistics are used they are mainly drawn from the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006 which itself draws on data processed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (UNESCO, 2005b). The Report 2006 is based on data for the 2002/03 school year, the latest available from this source at the global level. Where other literacy data is used the sources are referenced. The reliability and degree of currency of statistics is vital for comparative studies. Problems facing analysts are compounded when statistics (and extrapolations from them) can yield such divergent results as shown in the two graphs below:

Graph 4.1 Projections of illiteracy rates – Kenya (2002 and 2005)

Erreur ! Des objets ne peuvent pas être créés à partir des codes de champs de mise en forme.	**Erreur ! Des objets ne peuvent pas être créés à partir des codes de champs de mise en forme.**
Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2002. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Literacy and Non Formal Education Section. 2002, July 2002 assessment. In: Page, J.E. 2004. The literacy decade: getting started 2003-2004. Paris: UNESCO, pp. 66-79	Data source: UNESCO. 2005b. Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006. Annex 2. Paris: UNESCO, pp. 286-287

5. FOUR COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

5.1. Illiteracy projections in Kenya

37. Previous projections had suggested a dramatic decline in illiteracy from about 3.4 million in 2000 to about 1.9 million in 2015 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2002). These new EFA estimates, though predicting a continuing modest decline in the percentage of the illiterate indicate escalating raw numbers. They also predict, based on improving literacy levels amongst young women, near gender parity but with relatively higher male illiteracy levels amongst those aged 15 to 24. Literacy levels are predictably lower in rural areas and amongst the poor (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2005a, p. 16).

38. The Department of Adult Education intends to hold a national literacy survey in 2005 to obtain more accurate data. UNESCO, in conjunction with its Institute of Statistics has selected Kenya as one of the two countries in sub-Saharan Africa, together with Niger, to participate in the pilot of the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP).

5.2. Policies, planning and provision of literacy and NFE

39. In Kenya the largest provider of adult education is the Department of Adult Education in the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services (it has never been in the Ministry of Education but has always been lodged in a ministry dealing with social services). Policy guidelines, professional support and coordination are managed nationally. Provincial Adult Education Officers coordinate at provincial level and train adult education teachers, and District Adult Education Officers implement programmes at district level, recruiting part-time instructors and supervising staff. Adult Education Advisory Committees help manage literacy programmes at community level.

40. The number of educators employed dropped from 8,000 (1996) to about 6,500 in 2003: 2,000 of them full time and with some adult education qualification and 4,500 part time and with only limited training. The teacher: learner ratio was 1:18 which translates into there being about 117,000 learners. However, there has been an embargo on new appointments since 1992. Materials were previously outdated primers and instructors relied heavily on materials meant for children in schools. However, since 1997, the Department of Adult Education has adapted "old reading materials for use in adult learning" and printed new titles for the Post Literacy Programme in collaboration with other Ministries and NGOs (Department of Adult Education, 2003, p. 8)

41. In Kenya the programmes made available to adults by the two ministries directly involved in education include:

Basic Adult Literacy Programme (BALP) for illiterate adults who want to learn how to read, write and do simple computations (number work) and which is equivalent to levels 0 to 4 of the Lower Primary of the formal school system.

Post Literacy Programme (PLP) where adults apply and sustain their literacy skills by integrating literacy learning with the learning of English, Kiswahili, Civics and Social Ethics, Environment and Health, Applied Science and Technology, Business Education, Mathematics, and Agriculture. It is the equivalent of levels 5-8 (middle and Upper primary) in the formal education system. It targets adult literacy graduates and out of school youth.

Non-Formal Education Programme (NFE) Programme (overseen by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology) which uses the formal education curricula for primary and secondary levels of education but learning is conducted in non-formal settings. (Here the term non-formal is rather oddly used of courses which are formally certificated, but differ from formal schooling in being delivered without significant state support or with a more non-formal teaching approach). It

targets out of school children, youth and some adults who wish to sit for national examinations and be awarded certificates by the Kenya National Examinations Council.
Vocational and technical education for primary and secondary school graduates.

42. Funding and technical support for literacy and NFE are from government, supplemented with contributions from NGOs, development agencies and donors (such as German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the ADEA Working Group on Non Formal Education, UNICEF, UNESCO, the German Adult Education Association (DVV-IIZ) and local authorities. From the 1980s and early 1990s only a small percentage (10% or less) of adult learners enrolled taking these voluntary proficiency tests and passing them. Bunyi (2005, p. 8) reports statistics showing that from 1979 to 1990 some 2.5 million people were enrolled but only 10% passed the proficiency tests, and from 1991 to 1995 some 582,664 were enrolled and only 38,717 (6.6%) passed.

43. Kenya also has a sub-system of non-formal education for out-of-school children and youth that is directed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, whose Directorate of Basic Education oversees non-formal education centres and schools. These centres serve the many children and youth who are out of school due to diverse circumstances (mainly related to dire poverty) but who still have the right to free compulsory quality education which is provided through this complementary and flexible approach. Given the current policy of free primary education in Kenya the Ministry is faced with the challenge of mainstreaming this type of non-formal education in spite of its many problems.

44. Planned and ongoing reforms include the legal recognition of NFE centres through the Education Act so that they can benefit from similar services to those in the formal education system, including increased institutional and professional support for NFE initiatives (curriculum development, teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, resources etc.).

45. The *Education Sector Report 2005* (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2005a, p. 34) accepted that the whole Adult, Continuing Education and Non-Formal Education sector faced several challenges including regional and gender disparities, lack of clear transition mechanisms, inadequate financial and human resources, lack of quality assurance, linkages and equivalences, as well as a large number of un-coordinated service providers. The Report subsequently anticipated expenditure for non formal schools of 45 million Kenyan shillings (about US$ 590,000) for 2005/2006 rising to 96 million (about US$ 1,250,000) for 2007/2008.

5.3. Policy, plans, campaigns and projects

46. In 1997, a commission produced a *Master Plan for Education and Training (MPET) 1997 – 2010* which urged the strengthening and expansion of the Adult Basic Literacy Programme (ABLP) to cater for adults and the growing number of out-of-school youth which had arisen due to the inefficiencies of the formal school system. However, the National Development Plan for 1997 to 2001 made no budgetary provision for adult education. In 1998, draft Non Formal Education policy guidelines were produced which looked at goals, management, resource mobilisation and quality assurance, and provided a policy rationale for Non Formal Education which would operate alongside the Basic Adult Literacy Programme and the Post Literacy Programme. In 1999 the government established a Desk within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) to coordinate C/NFE activities and to drive policy development.

47. Another report on *Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training* (TIQET) of 1999 recognised the very diverse nature of Adult and Continuing Education provision and that the government alone could not adequately meet the needs of adult learners. It also noted the important role played by non-governmental agencies. Another report, the *Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP) 2001-2003* viewed basic education for adults and youth as having an important place in poverty reduction though adult education is not mentioned.

48. The new National Rainbow Alliance Coalition (NARC), which won the 2003 elections, committed itself in its *NARC Manifesto 2002* (section *5:2.3*) to strengthen and expand a comprehensive adult and continuing education programme with its own examinations and certifications by the Board of Adult Education. The new government launched a Free Primary Education programme with dramatic results – a leap in enrolments from 5.9 million to 7.2 million. Information gathered in the process of implementing and monitoring the programme indicated that about 600,000 school-age children and youth were still out of school and that about 300,000 may attend Complementary and Non Formal Education programmes. The government aims to extend free primary education to such children in line with its commitment to provide quality universal primary education by 2008 and education for all by 2015. The Ministry of Education's 2003-2004 national survey on education and training institutions included Adult and Continuing Education/Complementary/Non Formal Education (C/NFE) programmes, in an effort to establish a reliable C/NFE database for improved planning and policy implementation. The recent attention given to Complementary and Non Formal Education is clearly related to the impact of the decision in 2003 to drop all school fees for primary schools which saw a leap in enrolments from 5.9 million to 7.2 million and the consequent capacity problems (Osman, 2005, p. 1).

49. The Ministry of Education has also developed a draft Board of Adult Education Bill and a new national policy guidelines for Adult and Continuing Education/Complementary/Non Formal Education (C/NFE). A Third Draft of these new guidelines is now available (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2003/2004) but the policy guidelines review process has not been finalised.

50. The main challenges facing literacy programmes according to the Director of Social Services Delivery of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), Mr Bwibo Adieri, are related to the low level of enrolment due to the stigma associated with adult learning; low recognition of marginalised groups such as women, the disabled and remote area dwellers; the irrelevance of some literacy programmes and weak collaboration and networking among the stakeholders resulting in poor community support. (Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, 2004, p. 17).

51. However, the Ministry of Education intends to promote and extend partnerships in a bid to increase fiscal and structural capacities, as spelt out in the *Kenya Education Sector Support Programme 2005 - 2010* document (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2005b, p. vi). It states that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology will continue to form and to work through strong partnerships with all stakeholders including communities, civil society, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), NGOs, religious organisations, other Government institutions, development partners and the private sector. The small and focused literacy programmes of NGOs are often much more effective than those of the government in imparting critical literacy skills and empowering adult education.

52. The government recognizes the important role played by adult and continuing education (ACE) as well as by non-formal education schools (NFE) in offering opportunities for those outside the formal school system to benefit from education and training, thus helping the government to achieve the Education for All targets and the Millennium Development Goals. To enhance the role of these institutions, the government will develop a national qualification framework to provide opportunities for linking with the formal education and training system, hence allowing re-entry at all levels. The government will also collaborate with various providers and stakeholders to mobilize resources to support ACE and non-formal schools, register all ACE and NFS centres and develop and regularly review their curriculum to ensure parity with the formal system. The government will also conduct regular literacy surveys, register eligible learners for national examinations and provide training opportunities to instructors.

5.4. Decentralization and curriculum renovation

53. Under international influence, Kenya adopted a more pro-decentralized approach to governance, planning and implementation in the mid-1980s, but in practice centralized control remains strong. District and local levels remain underpowered to take policy decisions. Bunyi (2005, p. 11) notes that the Department of Adult Education's decentralization strategy has not been effective for a variety of reasons: lack of clarity of functions between the central government and districts, inadequate resources, inadequate implementing capacities of officers, non-operational Adult Education Advisory Committees, lack of community participation in adult literacy, a weak and ineffective Board of Adult education and a general lack of integration with other government ministries, NGOs and civic bodies.

54. However, decentralization is clearly a *de facto* reality in terms of the provision by NGOs and other private organisations of literacy and basic education for adults and out-of-school children. Positively, the state's tolerance of a 'non formal education' component, however messy and problematic, does indicate a certain decentralization of power (motivated though it may be by the fact that the state cannot possibly meet all of the demand). Questions remain around what happens in the future when the relationships between these agents become the more direct object of legislation and regulation and whether or not decentralization is embedded in these changes.

55. In terms of curriculum innovation, the more formal, school equivalence academic literacy provision in the Basic Adult Literacy Programme show almost no increase in learners. The Post Literacy Programme also seems relatively stagnant in terms of growth and resources (particularly in numbers and quality of teachers, with a sensitivity to the needs of adult learners). Positively, Kenyan adult education and non-formal education appears to have for some time taken seriously the linking of literacy and adult basic education with skills and income generation training. This has allowed for some innovation, even if funding remains a serious problem with possibly a lack of inter-ministry interaction.

5.5. Illiteracy projections in Uganda

56. The *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006* has no projections for Uganda for 2015. The 2015 projections are from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Page, 2004, pp. 66-79). Though the percentage of illiterates in the population is slowly dropping, the number of illiterates is projected to increase by about 6% between 2000 and 2015, from about 3.9 million in 2002 to about 4.1 million in 2015. The increase in male illiteracy numbers (by about 9%) is faster than amongst women (about 7%). There is considerable regional variation in literacy levels with much lower levels in the north.

5.6. Policies, planning and provision of literacy and NFE in Uganda

57. A needs assessment survey in 1992 led to a government decision that year to revive a literacy programme and a pilot Functional Adult Literacy phase started in eight districts. This provided curricula in the following areas: agriculture, cooperatives, marketing, health, gender issues, and civic consciousness. Serious effort and expertise went in preparing curriculum and materials in response to the needs survey. The 1995 Constitution enshrined education as a fundamental right. In the same year there was a review of the pilot literacy project, which indicated a very positive response. It recommended consolidating and expanding the Functional Adult Literacy Programme. Set up under the oversight of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, it was active in 26 districts by 1999 and in 37 districts by 2000 with some 127,000 learners (though Katahoire (2002, p. 3) notes that the programme is only operational in a few parishes in each district).

58. In 1999 an evaluation of the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Programme sought to look at its outcomes and also to compare it with the Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) approach (Carr-Hill, 2001). It found that the majority of 800 literacy participants surveyed in eight districts had attained a level of reading, writing and numeracy higher than that of primary grade four. They outperformed grade 4 schoolchildren in comprehension and calculation but not in writing. Only a few comparisons could be made between FAL (with its national general curriculum and primers) and REFLECT (with its locally customised curriculum). REFLECT seemed more effective with already schooled participants, whereas FAL was more effective with non-literate adults. However there appeared to be no difference in knowledge, attitudes and practices between the two groups. All programmes were less costly than primary schooling (US$60 per pupil completing grade 4 in four years) – FAL ($4 to $5); REFLECT ($12 to $15); Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization (SOCADIDO) ($20). The FAL cost was low because the instructors were unpaid volunteers who had less schooling, initial training, refresher training, and supervisory support.

59. A World Bank evaluation recommended more government involvement with NGOs (Carr-Hill, 2001; Oxenham, 2002). Oxenham's summary of findings and recommendations in this report are extremely useful (Oxenham, 2002, p. 4): the evidence from Uganda appears to imply that:

Programs run by governments can be as effective as those offered by other agencies. (This does not argue that governments should be the only agencies to undertake literacy programs. The NGOs in Uganda clearly deliver equally effective programs),

Reliable delivery and sound instruction are more important than methods and materials,

Frameworks to encourage active, complementary partnerships between governments and other literacy agencies would best serve the people who could benefit from basic education.

In addition, the records of NGOs in taking initiatives, exploring fresh approaches and in sustaining public interest in adult basic education indicate that policy makers in Uganda should capitalise on and promote these synergies,

The self-targeting nature of adult basic education as an instrument benefits poor people, especially women – (most of the sampled graduates were women and came from the poorer households of their communities),

Accommodating two streams of demand for adult basic education: from the wholly unschooled and from the partially schooled is desirable. Enrolling partially schooled people along with unschooled people could inhibit the latter and frustrate the aims of a program.

Adults of all ages are able to learn the basic skills of reading, writing and calculating: the Ugandan evidence shows that some 200-300 hours of instruction by relatively untrained instructors can enable even older, non-literate adults to achieve and retain literacy skills.

There is a need for a longer view of literacy education as part of a progressive and cumulative process to enable the "average" adult to attain adequate mastery of the basic skills and to continue learning how to apply them productively. The Ugandan evaluation found many people continue in literacy classes long after they had graduated, simply because they wished to maintain and improve their skills.

There is a need to develop ways of combining basic education in a vernacular with an introduction to an official language. The findings in Uganda corroborate those in other multi-lingual countries, where only one or two official languages enable people to deal with official signs, documents and procedures, as well as facilitate access to waged and salaried employment. The widespread desire in Uganda for instruction in English has its counterparts all over Africa and elsewhere.

60. In 2000, there was a needs' assessment survey on the Functional Adult Literacy Programme for the Karamoja (a disadvantaged pastoral community). Another survey took place in Kalangala district in 2002 and recommendations were that the Functional Adult Literacy Programme should be developed at both basic and post-basic levels, including various forms of livelihoods related to skills training and materials development taking the local context into account.

61. Another study (Katahoire, 2002) on skills and literacy training for better livelihoods looked at two approaches – one where livelihoods training was incorporated into literacy programmes and the other where literacy instruction was incorporated into livelihood skills training programmes. Three Uganda cases examined the government's national Functional Adult Literacy Programme (FAL) (with a special focus on literacy activities incorporated into the economic activities of women's groups in the Rukungiri District, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Action Aid's FAL programme in Buwekelwa and its REFLECT programme in Bundibugyo. The study found that in these cases more weight was given to literacy and that a better balance between literacy instruction and livelihoods training was required. There are three categories of staff serving in the Functional Adult Literacy programme: about 670 supervisory Community Development Officers (CDOs) and Community Development Assistants (CDAs) who generally have a degree, diploma or certificate and about 20,000 Literacy instructors who are unpaid volunteers, usually recruited locally. They have usually had at least two years of secondary education and receive brief training at the district level or by NGOs. They are generally not well motivated. There is much variability between districts in the standards of training and support from the CDOs and CDAs.

62. Instructors in NGOs and private sector agencies are better paid and better qualified and trained. However, there was little difference in performance between state and NGO facilitators (Carr-Hill, 2001). A government National Training Team works to build the capacity of district officials to run a District Training Team and the Nsamizi Training Institute of Development is the official institute for literacy and non formal education training (UNESCO, 2004b). The Institute of Adult and Continuing Education of the Makerere University (IACE) delivers degree and diploma courses and also prepares training materials.

5.7 Alternative models of literacy support

63. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, as part of Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), developed a multi-sectoral Social Development Sector Strategic Investment Plan (SDIP) which sees functional adult literacy as important in community mobilisation and empowerment. A specialised five year National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan (NALSIP) has been developed in accordance with this. As a result, Functional Adult Literacy programmes have been able to access Poverty Action Funds which are disbursed by central government as conditional grants to local government. Local government revenues from taxes can also be used for this and local authorities are sensitized to "continue planning and budgeting for adult literacy" (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2003, p. 3).

64. The Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA) provides skills training together with literacy education. Communities and adult learners are involved in planning and implementing programmes as a way of promoting community ownership and sustainability.

65. Future actions planned as part of poverty eradication and social development include: (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2003, pp. 13-14):

Consolidation of a comprehensive policy on adult literacy and education

Significantly increased financing for adult literacy

Development of a national qualification framework incorporating a qualification framework for adult literacy

Development of a functional management information system to ensure adequate monitoring, evaluation and feedback

Establishing an effective and sustainable research programme for systematic research development-diffusion process in all aspects of adult education

Improving the capacity of literacy facilitators through enhanced training, motivation and status recognition

Strengthening partnership with Civil Society Organisations in the provision of adult education

Strengthening support for learners' organisations and their involvement in adult education management, especially monitoring.

66. In 2004, an evaluation (JRB Consulting Associates, 2004) of six non-formal education programmes (ABEK, COPE, BEUPA, NFE, ELSE, CHANCE) recommended that the coordination of non-formal education should be institutionalised within the relevant departments within the Directorate of Education through the Department of Guidance, Counseling and Special Needs Education and supported by Pre-Primary and Primary as well as Teacher Education. Ideally, non-formal education should be constituted into a full fledged Department and Kyambogo University should develop instructor courses. The report made a number of specific recommendations about instructor training and service and the accreditation of qualifications on a future National Qualification Framework (NQF).

5.8. Decentralization and curriculum renovation

67. Uganda appears to have seriously engaged in a process of decentralization though it has been criticised as overambitious, inadequately financed, and reliant on an overly centralized technocratic approach and a system of local patronage. A decentralization policy in 1992 led in 1993 to the setting up of Local Government Councils followed by the initial stages of fiscal decentralization to thirteen districts and Urban Councils in 1994. The 1995 Constitution and Local Government Act of 1997 gave elected local governments responsibility for the allocation of public resources, integrated participatory planning, budgeting and investment management. The 1997 Local Government Act provided for five levels of local government: village, parish, sub-county, county and district. District (45) and sub-county levels (800) have political authority and significant resources.

68. Central ministries remain responsible for the implementation of national policies, the monitoring and inspection of local governments, setting standards, mentoring, technical advice' support of supervision and training. The District Councils have "autonomy" over primary and secondary education, primary health services, and basic services in water provision, roads, planning, and licensing. Primary education, community-based health services, hygiene, and low-level health units, are being devolved to sub-district levels. These policies resulted in the de-linking of 26 vertically organized departments at the district level from their respective ministries, and the creation of a local government administration. More recently redistribution of powers to locally elected bodies are aimed at improving accountability and responsiveness to local pressure backed by procedural changes aimed at disciplining local government.

69. There was a similar process in decentralizing educational administration which emphasized local management of schools, particularly in relation to the post 1997 implementation of free primary education. Authority over primary education was devolved to the District level with District Education Officers (DEOs) appointed by the District Council, as the implementers. The District Education Officers are responsible, in conjunction with communities, for the efficient and effective delivery of primary education, though some education services may be devolved to the lower councils. The Ministry of Education remains responsible for policymaking, investment management, and quality assurance. The government encourages involvement of parents and the community in education through contributions of additional resources.

70. Uganda's official policy on multilingualism which encourages the use of relevant local languages (not necessarily mother tongue) in initial schooling, together with Swahili and English as compulsory languages, has allowed relative freedom for the use of languages in adult education. The choice of language in government basic literacy programmes for adults is the responsibility of local authorities (Okech, 2001).

71. A Conference held by the Adult Education Network in 2002 made a number of recommendations (UGAADEN, 2002c) that included the following:

The relevant Ministry and the stakeholders need to carry out an assessment to demonstrate the linkage between adult education and poverty reduction.

A structure or policy framework to bring together the players and all other relevant stakeholders should be put in place.

Training, financing and implementation should be integrated.

Though it is difficult to separate adult education and literacy, it would be unwise to bring adult education under the Ministry of Education (MoE). This is because MoE is more conversant with formal education. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is better placed in this area and adult education should remain under it.

UGAADEN should do some consultation with those whose views have not been heard and contribute to the NALSIP.

72. Prior to this, in 2001 Carr-Hill reported (xviii-xviv) that:

> the overall picture of the FAL programs is that they continue to expand at a very low unit cost but that, because they rely almost entirely on volunteer labour, they are in danger of losing momentum. The danger to the programs is increased by the fact that the financial input by the central government has decreased in relative terms, from 50 percent to 30 percent, against donor funding over the past few years.

73. This suggests that, unless the state Functional Literacy Programme is reformed and reinvigorated, that the future of innovation will lie with NGO partnerships.

5.9. South Africa: Illiteracy Projection

74. The *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006* has no projections for South Africa for 2015. The 2015 projections are from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Page, 2004). The number of total illiterates is projected to decline from about 4.7 million in 2001 to about 3 million in 2015. The gap between male and female illiteracy will become negligible. However there has been a rise in the raw number of illiterates since 1990 and the widening of the numbers gap between male and female illiterates.

75. Unfortunately these estimates rest upon a categorisation of illiterate as meaning "never been to school" and, given the functional illiteracy of those who dropped out with less than grade 7 schooling, these illiteracy estimates could more or less be doubled and these figures show that by 2001 there had been no decrease since 1996 in the actual number or percentage of functionally illiterate adults in spite of the state system of adult basic education and training and its parallels in the business sector and non-governmental organisations (Aitchison and Harley, 2004). In other words, the UNESCO and EFA projections of a decline in illiteracy between now and 2015 will be extremely difficult to achieve.

5.10. Policy and Planning

76. The new democratic government elected in 1994, through its new national Department of Education, developed a Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training and a National Multi-year implementation plan for Adult Education and Training: Provision and Accreditation in 1997 as well as a series of more technical policy documents. In 2000 the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (Department of Education, 2000) was passed. The Act was largely devoted to the regulation of public adult learning centres (PALCs) in schools controlled by the nine provincial education departments. A more recent policy development, though not enshrined in any white paper or legislation was the setting up of the South African National Literacy Initiative in 2000. In effect this initiative was a recognition that the very formal certificated adult basic education and

training (ABET) system that was being set up and implemented was not substantially addressing the problem of illiteracy and a more campaign orientated literacy mobilisation was necessary.

77. Adult education is run by the provincial departments of education in school buildings after hours. However, this system has not experienced the expansion foreseen in the *A Multi-year implementation plan for Adult Education and Training* of 1997 and very few of its recommendations were capable of being implemented without substantial resources (which were not forthcoming – adult education still receives less than 1% of the overall education budget). The state public adult learning centres (PALCs) remain essentially untransformed and ineffective. It was estimated that there were about 386,335 adult basic education learners in 2001 being taught by 16,281 educators (mostly schoolteachers doing extra work) at 2,494 sites though these figures have been contested and shown to be somewhat unreliable (Aitchison and Harley, 2004). However level of standards and qualifications registered on South Africa's new National Qualification Framework and the certification of both learners and practitioners show a marked development alongside some interesting curriculum projects (Aitchison, 2003).

78. In late 1999, the new Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, announced the formation of the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) which was to be run separately from the national Department of Education and approach literacy in a more non-formal and campaign orientated way. It ended up totally controlled by the Department and abandoned an early innovative plan. Although there was an interesting outsourcing or subcontracting of work to the distance education University of South Africa, which used substantial donor funding to pay their students studying to be ABET facilitators to run literacy groups, SANLI also failed to reach anything like the numbers they had hoped for.

79. Other government departments play a smaller role in the provision of ABET, which is usually for their own staff and outsourced to commercial training organisations. At the national level there is an Inter-departmental committee that deals with adult education and has representatives from 16 departments, including the armed forces and police. The Department of Labour trains a large number of learners every year through the national Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) set up in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998 (Department of Labour, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2005a, 2005b). Some of their resources are being directed to the illiterate unemployed and it is likely that this provision (via outsourcing to commercial or NGO providers) will expand in future. The South African Broadcasting Corporation developed an Educational Broadcasting Plan in conjunction with the national Department of Education. ABET support is provided by both ABET television and ABET radio.

80. Though NGOs had been a major driving force for literacy and adult basic education in the 1980s and early 1990s, after 1994 funding dried up, as a consequence of the redirection of foreign donor money into government and mismanagement within the sector itself. The literacy NGO sector is now a shadow of its former self, though there is one substantial and efficiently managed NGO survivor, Project Literacy (ProLit), which has a national presence and a budget of about R45,000,000 (about US$6,700,000). There is also an Independent Examinations Board (IEB) that has done much work on the assessment of adult learners in ABET. Some support is still being provided to NGOs and the Adult Learning Association by the German Adult Education Association and other donors. An attempt to set up a funding conduit/contract managing agency, the ALBED Foundation, has so far failed to gain the necessary donor and development agency support.

81. In the mid-1990s the business sector was probably the largest delivery agent of adult basic education (Harley *et al.*, 1996; Aitchison *et al.*, 2000). However, business support for ABET has been reduced in a situation of continuing massive unemployment in which there is no incentive to educate the illiterate or poorly educated. There are a number of for profit commercial training organisations that provide ABET.

82. The situation in the Higher Education sector has also deteriorated in the last 15 years with the effective closure of a number of University adult education departments, many of which had been influential in literacy and adult basic education policy, materials and practitioner development.

5.11. Trends in decentralization, curriculum renovation and partnerships

83. One of the puzzling facts about South Africa's lacklustre delivery of literacy since democratization is that key elements for success appear to be in place. Legally there has been significant decentralization of the control of education, there was previously a vibrant civil society/NGO sector with great innovative capacity in literacy, and official encouragement of partnership between government, the business and NGO sectors.

84. Unfortunately, the decentralization process has little substance and is beset with ambiguities. To assess decentralization in post-apartheid South Africa requires a nuanced understanding of the nature of the political settlement that led to democratisation and the necessary political and bureaucratic compromises it involved. Prior to democratization in 1994, South Africa had four provinces and a number of what were in effect ethnic reservations (the so-called "independent homelands" and the "self-governing territories") for significant numbers of the (mainly rural section of the) indigenous population. Originally the four provinces had control of school education and teacher training and exercised considerable control of curriculum, teacher training and the ethos of the education system. However, over time these provincial powers were systematically eroded by the ruling party in the interests of a centrally determined and pro-apartheid curriculum. The final form of the apartheid education system was, organisationally, not a unitary or integrated system but a "system of systems" fragmented along racial, ethnic, and regional lines. At a national level there were 15 different ministries of education!

85. In the political settlement, and particularly in the constitutional negotiations and their compromises, the African National Congress (the dominant party in the future government which had strong centralizing tendencies) agreed to a future South Africa divided into nine provinces (some of them hardly viable economically) which would *inter alia* control the actual provision of all education except higher education. The central government retained the power to set "norms and standards". This compromise was made to reassure the representatives of the "white"minority who saw provincialisation as a means of preserving some control of, or influence on, sensitive domains such as schooling. It indicated a strong move towards decentralization both geographically and from national to provincial government yet lacked the enthusiasm of central government.

86. However, many educational reforms instituted by the new African National Congress led government after 1994 favoured decentralisation and aimed at a more democratic, participatory and egalitarian education system, devolving a degree of power down to local schools and their newly instituted governing bodies.

87. In terms of effective policy making, the South African system has become increasingly centralized. Although the now nine provincial education departments were in charge of schooling and adult basic education the curriculum framework was entirely a central government imposition. South Africa's Departments and Education and Labour adopted a fairly extreme form of outcomes-based education, with a centrally run National Qualification Framework. Most qualifications (except in Higher Education) would be "standards-based" and *de facto* this led to a strong centralized "curriculum" (for though in theory an outcomes-and standards-based system allows for almost unlimited variation in curriculum, course content and materials in practice the effect was the opposite).

88. During 2005 it became clear that the government was increasingly unhappy with the provincial and local levels of government and a task team began investigating ways to tighten control over provinces and local government, including measures to attach much tougher performance management conditions to funding transfers in areas such as health, education and housing. The ruling party has increasingly seen the provinces as an unnecessary and costly additional layer of government, particularly because of perceptions that provincial governments have been inefficient, corrupt and

ineffective in service delivery and incapable of formulating independent legislation, although constitutionally entitled to do so. Most recently, on 14 December 2005, the Minister of Provincial and Local government, Sydney Mufamadi, declared that a possible reduction in the number of the country's nine provinces was likely before 2009 and the constitution needed to be amended to counter the current veto powers on issues of national interest, good governance and development. He argued that the establishment of the nine provinces had developed and entrenched new interests (***Natal Mercury***, 2005, p. 1).

89. In practice then, decentralization in education and particularly in adult basic education and literacy, (in many countries the weakest and least prestigious part of the educational establishment), has been thwarted by a strong desire for centralized political and curricular control and by a weak, inefficient and under-resourced bureaucrats in the provinces. The vibrant NGO literacy sector has been virtually destroyed in the last ten years as funding dried up and the partnerships offered by the state were few and one-sided. The current possibilities for a re-conceptualisation of adult basic education and some form of major literacy campaign are thought by many critics to be weak to near hopeless because the damage to potential innovators has already been done and resources needed to revitalise the sector show no signs of being allocated.

90. Unlike Kenya and Uganda, religious bodies are not directly active in the literacy field. There remain a few NGOs with some influence on developments and, in the case of one of them, Project Literacy, have won large contracts for outsourced delivery of some adult basic education and training work. There is also an interesting but small network of REFLECT using organisations supported by the Southern Africa coordination office in Cape Town.

5.12. Decentralization and curriculum renovation – some conclusions

91. South Africa has clearly made enormous efforts to both decentralize across a range of sectors and to massively reconfigure curricula for literacy and adult basic education and training. In its constitutional settlement it created nine new provinces out of the old four and devolved certain powers to provincial and local levels. An attempt was made to build a new adult basic education and training system using public schools as sites. In the interests of greater democratisation schools and public adult learning centres were empowered with governing bodies. At central level new outcomes-based curricula were developed for schooling and adult basic education that, in principle allowed for a maximum of curriculum innovation by providers. Impressive institutions were set up to build a National Qualifications Framework allowing for easy articulation of qualifications and credits and to galvanize skills development – the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). For the first time all the main South Africa languages were declared official. Use was made of outsourcing to implement certain adult basic education projects. There was expertise and critique (the latter not always welcomed) available from higher education institutions.

92. Given the above it is disappointing to report that all is not well and that South Africa may well not meet its goal of achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 (Department of Education, 2002, p. xiii). The reasons for this are multiple.

93. Firstly, the decentralization discourse, though used, has ambiguous impact. The current government is not entirely happy with the quasi-federal and partially decentralized political system agreed to as part of the end of apartheid settlement. Some of the reasoning behind this unease clearly has to do with the need to build up a new nation and to ensure effective government.

94. Secondly, and particularly in respect of literacy and adult basic education, impressive policies have not been well implemented and enrolments are stagnant. South Africa opted for a highly formalised certificated adult basic education system that, apart from increasingly looking like schooling, has delivered derisory numbers of graduates. It is possible that these formal systems have

natural limits. The Ministry of Education recognised this problem and tried to start more campaign orientated literacy initiatives, but with little success. A new re-conceptualisation may be underway.

95. Thirdly, the curriculum innovations and high quality materials that used to come from the NGO sector have dwindled with the NGO literacy sector's decline (though there are still some active agents doing high quality work).

96. Fourthly, the promise of a new deal for small languages implicit in the declaration of the eleven official languages has not borne fruit, because of the increasing dominance of English in government and business.

97. Fifthly, the current practice of partnerships between government and providers is not ideal. Although the rhetoric of partnership is strong (and prominent in all the policy documents on literacy and adult basic education), in practice they tend to be one-sided or, using rather mechanical tendering processes, effectively eliminate the possibility of NGOs or networks of NGOs from participating.

5.13. Botswana : illiteracy projections

98. The *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006* has no projections for Botswana for 2015, presumably because it projects a virtual elimination of illiteracy by then. The 2015 projections are from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Page, 2004). The number of illiterates is projected to decline dramatically between 2000 and 2015, from about 234 thousand in 2000 to about 136 thousand or less in 2015. The expected percentage and raw numbers decline in female illiteracy is particularly striking but also to be noted is the current rise in the raw number of illiterate males.

99. Generally there has been a steady rise in literacy levels from 34% in 1980, 69% in 1993 to 81% in 2003 (Hanemann (2005, p. 8). This data has been informed by two National Household Surveys on Literacy in 1993 and 2003 which estimated national literacy rates through both direct and indirect measures (Central Statistics Office, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c) and there are plans to hold similar surveys every ten years.

100. The 2003 survey indicated an adult literacy rate of 81% among the population aged 15 years and over, an increase of 12% from the 69% of 1993. The highest rate of over 90% was among the youths of age group 15 to 29. There was a female adult literacy rate of 82% compared to 80% for males. The highest literacy gap between males and female of 10% was found in the age group 65 to 69. In only eleven out of 26 districts did men have a higher literacy rate than women.

101. Botswana is close to eliminating the gap between male and females. However, there is a growing literacy gap in favour of females in the age group 15 to 24. Whether the gap can be completely eliminated may partly depend on literacy programmes becoming more popular with men. There is evidence from some studies that men often have negative perceptions of literacy programmes, perceiving them as being for women. A point that needs to be noted about the gap between male and female is that an effective good quality school system that ensures that most children complete at the very least a full primary education will ensure the closing of the gap. Indeed it may well start to reverse the position with educationally successful females outnumbering the males if other factors (such as a traditional male involvement in cattle rearing in rural Botswana) discourage male persistence..

102. The 2003 survey found, that of people who claimed to be able to read but had never been to school or had left school before Standard 5, some 52% felt this was the result of their limited schooling, and 32% as a result of literacy programmes. Some 12% learned to read on their own. The survey also provides useful (though easily predictable) evidence on which groups have low literacy levels and remain relatively unengaged in literacy programmes: older adults, older women, and people

from remote rural areas, linguistic and ethnic minority groups, and out-of-school children. **Policy, planning and provision**

103. The main literacy and non formal education provider in Botswana is the Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE) (Ministry of Education, 2005) which is currently responsible for the provision of learning opportunities outside the school system for those who wish to complete basic level of education or to continue their education and training to a higher level as well as work and community related skills. Currently the Department is concentrating on two major programmes: Adult Basic Education (up to grade 9 equivalence) and Distance Education (mainly through the autonomous Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL).

104. Another government unit, the Botswana National Library Service (BNLS) runs a joint **Village Reading Rooms project** with the Department of Non Formal Education. They also jointly produce a series of easy-to-read functional books for new literates.

105. In 1972 a UNESCO consultant proposed a literacy campaign to reach 250,000 people over a period of 18 years. It was rejected by government at the time though the Botswana Extension College was established in 1973. In 1976 the Government review of the education system, which developed a *National Policy on Education,* recommended the Government take up out-of-school basic education and literacy as a national initiative (Ministry of Education, 1977). The result of this policy was the establishment of the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) in 1978. In 1977 the Botswana Extension College ran an experimental adult literacy programme and another in 1978 and the Department of Non-Formal Education was constructed out of the Extension College and made responsible for adult literacy work.

106. The National Literacy Programme (NLP) was piloted in 1977 and 1978 and developed on the basis of the findings of an inter-ministerial task force established by the Ministry of Education in 1979 to formulate adult education policies and strategies. *The Eradication of illiteracy in Botswana – A National Initiative: A Consultation Document* (Ministry of Education, 1979) aimed to enable 250,000 illiterate adults and youth (40% of the population aged 15-45 years) to become literate in Setswana and numeracy by 1986 and generally to enhance their cultural, social and economic life and ability to participate as citizens.

107. The programme was formally launched in 1980, backed with mainly foreign donor funding, in five of Botswana's districts and in 1981 became nationwide. Because illiteracy was not eradicated in six years the government decided to institutionalize the programme from 1985, took over an increasing proportion of the costs, and added further programme objectives related to remote rural areas and income generating activities during the process of the *National Development Plan Six* (1985-1991).

108. Generally evaluations found the programme reasonably effective in teaching literacy and basic education to a level comparable to that in primary schools but there was a high drop-out rate,   a lack of qualified staff, administrative weaknesses and low morale amongst the volunteer Literacy Group Leaders who did the teaching. However, many of the recommendations, notably on decentralization, were not followed up. The external evaluation of 1986/1987 described the programme as highly centralized, implemented by a single department, using a conventional approach to literacy and tightly controlled by the government. It used Setswana as the only language of instruction. District adult education officers had limited responsibility and there was little involvement by the local government departments in the districts or by NGOs. There were deficiencies in cooperation and coordination. Literacy provision was seen as the sole responsibility of the Department of Non Formal Education and this made it difficult for other agents to engage in this work.

109. In 1993 the first national literacy survey found that the National Literacy Programme was only reaching about 14.2% of the eligible population.

110. The Second National Commission on Education (1993) observed that there were high levels of drop-out and inefficiencies in the organisation and the subsequent *Revised National Policy on*

Education (1994) (still the officially prevailing policy guideline for the education sector) recommended improvement and expansion of the mandate beyond just adult literacy provision. (Ministry of Education, 1994). The Department of Non Formal Education should give greater priority to post literacy activities and introduce an "Adult Basic Education Course" to provide adults with the equivalent of Standard Seven schooling and also provide training in technical and business skills for the rural and urban informal sector.

111. In 1998 a *National Plan of Action for Adult Learning* was prepared by the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO and argued that literacy should be relevant to people's social and economic contexts.

112. In 2001, the DFNE introduced an Adult Basic Education Course (ABEC) in a one year pilot project and used South African Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) materials. In 2005 the UNESCO Institute for Education was asked to develop a curriculum for this planned Adult Basic Education programme equivalent to Standard Seven (Hanemann, 2005, p. 15).

113. Another document, the *Education for All National Action Plan* (EFA-NAP) recognised the constraints for the National Literacy Programme caused by a lack of policy guidelines on learning outcome standards, assessment and accreditation. These were: a lack of certification, which disadvantaged them in comparison to people leaving the school system, - a National Qualification Framework was seen as one solution to this and quality, coordination and resourcing problems with various providers Provision was uneven, particularly in rural and poorer areas and a major challenge was to reduce drop outs and increase participation by males in the rural areas. Other challenges were language barriers and the reliance on volunteer part-time staff.

114. The *EFA-NAP* proposed to reduce illiteracy by 20% by 2009 and to achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for men. The main implementation strategies proposed by the EFA-NAP are the revision of the national literacy programme and integration with other non-formal education programmes; the development of a literacy extension programme; the linkage of adult literacy programmes with commerce and industry and integration into learners' life styles; and the development of appropriate materials and methodologies. However only 1.2% of the proposed *Plan* budget is allocated to adult literacy. About 77% of this would be spent by the DNFE (UNESCO, 2002, pp. 21 and 23). The EFA-NPA did criticize the inadequate funding and marginalization of the non formal education sector.

115. Although the initial design of the National Literacy Programme may have been influenced by public consultations, its planning and implementation were heavily centralised, a chorus of commentators have critiqued this and urged radical and comprehensive reform (Youngman, 1997; Nyirenda, 1997; Manowe and Onkabetse, 1998; Mpofu and Youngman, 2001; Maruatona, 2002; Maruatona and Cervero, 2004; UNESCO Institute of Education evaluation, 2004; and Maruatona, 2005. Criticisms include

      program provides little scope for local variations
decision-making authority is concentrated at the top of the organizational hierarchy with bureaucratic procedures which inhibit decentralization
      stuck in a traditional paradigm ignoring cultural and political conflicts a promoting a very conventional and uncritical view of literacy
      low and declining enrolments
      centralized teacher centred curriculum and centrally produced materials
      lack of resources
      weak mobilizing capacity and collaboration with other organizations

Recommendations include:
      the need for a more dynamic language policy that recognised the linguistic diversity of the country
      better regulation of resource sharing with the Department and local authorities
      need for decentralized planning

need for participatory approaches

116. Currently, the Ministry of Education itself accepts the need for changes (Ministry of Education, 2005):

It was a state sponsored programme with some degree of political will behind it, though that political will may have overemphasised the centralised control evident in its approach, curriculum and implementation.

There is evidence of a lack of involvement of other agencies, such as NGOs and churches, as partners in the programme.

The programme was well exposed to a number of evaluations and monitoring checks though there is some ambiguity as to whether evaluation recommendations actually led to major renovations rather than technical adjustments.

The main current direction seems to have been towards a more formalised adult basic education schooling equivalence model rather than attempts to extend to the programme to marginalised and hard to reach communities.

117. That the National Literacy Programme has problems is clearly indicated in the statistics. Enrolments peaked in the mid-1980s (38,660 participants in 1985) and have steadily declined since (to 12,004 participants in 2000). The drop-out rate appears to be increasing annually and the recruitment of literacy teachers or instructors has also gone down. The UNESCO Institute of Education evaluation of 2004 noted that low and irregular attendance rates represented one of the greatest challenges for the programme.

5.14. Evidence of curriculum renovation

118. Other National Literacy Programme initiatives include the Literacy at the Workplace Project, Income Generating Projects, the Village Reading Rooms, and English as a Second Language.

119. The **Literacy at the Workplace Project**, though conceived in the 1980s, only started as an organised initiative in 1991. The project aims is to reach non-literate people at their places of work. The target organisation is responsible for providing or identifying a venue for classes, arranging a class schedule, releasing employees to attend classes, and for paying the instructor, who is trained by the Department, which also provides the teaching materials. Though slightly more than 51 organisations have participated in the Literacy at the Workplace Project since its inception, the actual number of participants is quite low, 665 in 2003 (Mukumbira, 2005).

120. An **Income Generating Activities Project** provides training in production and business management skills to people who participate in the National Literacy Programme. This gives participants the opportunity to use their literacy and numeracy skills in real life situations, and thereby strengthen and consolidate them.

121. The **Village Reading Rooms project** is run jointly by the DNFE and the Botswana National Library Service (BNLS). It was conceived in the 1980s as a post-literacy programme to offer the newly literate an opportunity to read beyond their primers. However Mulindwa and Legwaile (2000) point out the problems of the multiple ownership of the project, clashes of interests, lack of consultation with literacy learners, unsuitable opening hours, and unsuitable location.

122. The **English as a Second Language programme** is an outcome of the 1984 and 1987 evaluation studies of the National Literacy Programme (Mukumbira, 2005). These evaluations show the need and demand for English as a Second Language for communication, further studies and employment.

123. Interesting though these projects are, they do not provide evidence of any substantial change in the approach to curriculum development. Typically, workplace and income generation activities remain small scale.

124. A thorough evaluation study by Mafela *et al* (2000) on the impact of five non formal education programmes gives some insight into the status of non formal education in Botswana and the extent to which these programmes are effective. The evaluation produced a long list of 55 recommendations (Mafela *et al*, 2000, pp. 146-153) that both overtly and implicitly suggest there is a need for substantive curriculum development and different approaches in the five areas, namely workplace literacy, income generation projects, distance learning, non formal night schools and community schools in remote area settlements. It is also clear that those partnerships that do exist are at best weak.

125. In all, though these initiatives are clearly breaking some of the formality of the main literacy programme, they are not on a large scale and do not seriously change current patterns of centralized management, delivery and curriculum design. This problem is most strikingly seen in relation to the 28 minority languages, spoken by about 30% of the population.

5.15. The issue of minority languages and literacy

126. Botswana, like many newly independent developing nations, adopted an assimilationist model of social development and constructed a nation state with one dominant language, Tswana, and with English as the language of government and schooling beyond primary 4.English has become increasingly dominant under the influence of global trends, to the disadvantage even of Tswana, the national language. There are 28 other languages but even the Department of Non Formal Education has no policy that supports mother tongue instruction in them, though it has recently provided some practical support. The National Literacy Programme followed the Tswana and English only policy (Scanlon, 2002). Though some staff of the National Literacy Programme wanted local languages to be used at beginning stages of literacy and even authorised their use in particular districts, overall the argument was won for using Tswana as a unifying force.

127. Hesselbring (1990) found that speakers of minority languages had the lowest rates of literacy and wished to learn to read in their own language. In recent years a number of scholars have argued that the National Literacy Programme has produced minimal results (Chebanne *et al*, 2001, Mpofu and Youngman (2001) and argue that renewing the programme requires a commitment to cultural pluralism and diversity (various forms of grass-roots cultural assertion by minority groups have begun in Botswana). A number of registered NGOs have helped such forms of cultural and language assertiveness but these operate on a very small scale.

128. Nyati-Ramahobo (1998) noted that there had been modifications to Botswana's previously exclusive language policy. ((The Revised National Policy on Education of 1994 permitted the use of local languages in the first few years of primary school and the 2001 National Policy on Culture said that the other languages of Botswana should be valued and developed.). There were now more possibilities open for the use of the other languages represented in the country. This provides a more conducive environment for NGOs to use other languages in education and out-of-school literacy programmes.

129. What is clear is that decentralization which would address the more direct needs of minority language speakers is largely being undertaken by NGOs (often Christian-based and with a particular take on ministering to the needs of people of all languages) but that the partnership between these NGOs and the centralized National Literacy Programme is at best very weak. There are no official public-private partnerships or contract schemes in place.

5.16. Decentralization and curriculum renovation – some conclusions

130. Botswana is a country with a very small population and an only recently acquired degree of modest wealth. An obvious question that arises in relation to government bureaucracy is what degree of decentralization is appropriate. Certainly there is general acceptance of decentralization discourses in relation to the public service at large and to the education system in particular.

131. It is clear that there is a capable and democratic central authority and effective policy making and planning at the centre. (The Department of Non Formal Education has developed a strategic plan for 2003-2006). This institutional capacity is important and probably sustainable.

132. It is also clear that there is a culture of evaluation – the National Literacy Programme has had at least three internal and three external evaluations as well as being the subject of several research studies and featuring in two reviews and six major policy or strategic plans.

133. What is more at issue is the effectiveness of decentralization, particularly in relation to implementing adult literacy. A study of the Botswana documentation gives an overwhelming sense of the National Literacy Programme as a good centrally controlled and monitored initiative having reached its natural limits, and that changes – in management, in curriculum development, in trying new strategies – that would be necessary to more or less eliminate illiteracy, are not yet being effectively implemented.

134. There are few signs of decentralization in any meaningful sense, though there are nominally decentralized structures at regional, district, cluster and village level and there is a National Commission on shared resources. But initiative at the district level is not supported and if practised, happens in spite of the centre. The slight loosening of a totally negative attitude to literacy instruction in the small minority languages is apparent in NGOs, faith based organisations and minority cultural groups but not in the Department of Non Formal Education. It can hardly be described as partnership. Alternative curriculum formats – such as the REFLECT approach – are present but small in scale and not necessarily indicative of local curriculum renovation capacity.

Overall it is a situation where decentralization and an associated curriculum renovation might well bear positive results – if engaged in positively and in genuine partnership with a range of appropriate actors (possibly starting on a very small scale along the lines suggested by Nyirenda (1997)), including those NGOs, cultural and religious groups that are themselves innovating.

6. SOME GENERAL FINDINGS

135. It is difficult to ascertain what impact decentralization (if present) is having on literacy education. Adult education's often marginal status is a partial explanation for the dearth of documentation. Most countries have some general constitutional statement about the right to basic education (and South Africa specifically on the right of adults to basic education). There is a limited range of policy documents that refer to adult education and literacy (sometimes just in passing) and there are some planning documents (again often with literacy as only a small component). In other cases, as in Kenya, policy guidelines on adult education have not been finalised.

136. Although the desirability of partnerships between state, the business sector and NGOs is often fore grounded in policy and implementation plan documents, the actual processes by which stakeholders are consulted or engaged in policy partnership are inadequate or opaque (or simply very poorly documented).

137. In the East African countries adult education appeared to be split between two ministries. This invariably makes for confusion and dissipation of scarce resources. However there are other dangers associated with consolidation under the formalising and schooling centred ministries of education (as in South Africa and Botswana).

138. One of the acid tests of decentralization is the genuine involvement of all stakeholders and real partnerships. What is particularly interesting in the East African literature are the accounts of what appear to be genuine elements of partnership between the state and civil society (NGOs, Faith Based Organisations, International NGOs and agencies, CBOs, universities) – in programmes, research, evaluations, workshops and conferences. By contrast, the tone in the Southern African literature is tenser. Some partnerships between state and NGOs and universities exist (in policy work, contractually-based provision, etc.), but they may be more of the horse and rider type of partnership. Indeed the South African NGO and university sector is harshly critical of the government' negative and destructive attitude to civil society involvement in literacy (in spite of mellow pronouncements on the need for partnerships in policy documents). Innovative capacity in NGOs has in fact been rapidly and almost irretrievably destroyed by short-sighted bureaucratic 'dog-in-the-manger' behaviour by the central Department of Education over the last ten years. In Botswana the language issue complicates the possibility of real partnerships between state and NGOs (and particularly Faith-Based Organisations with a particular view on the importance of all languages).

139. Caution has, however, to be expressed in relation to expectations of equal partnerships between state and civil society in those countries where the main and absolutely dominant literacy provision is by the state and, quantitatively, provision by NGOs and faith-based organisations is on a very small scale. South Africa is perhaps the exception where the business sector has been a major, if not the major, provider of literacy and adult basic education.

140. There was little evidence in the literature of major curriculum innovation, apart from in South Africa, (where there may have been too much) and one or two obvious trends in other areas.

141. There are essentially three approaches in use:

> The first is dominant in the **official formal literacy programmes**. Literacy is taught as it is to children, in a fairly academic way, in school like settings (even if, as in Kenya, they are described as "non formal education"). Attempt to temper this approach with practical, livelihoods related training, generally founder because of inadequate funding, educators who are not skills trainers, or smallness of scale. The natural next step for this approach is that it becomes more school like and formal and hence the various "post literacy" and "adult basic education" developments in the state systems.

South Africa has gone furthest down this path with enormous centrally driven energy and there is now a huge superstructure of standards and qualifications (but a growing consensus among literacy experts that it has been a costly failure). (At this point it may be worth noting that the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF), whatever its intentions, has not made it easier for adult learners to get their learning recognised and arguably, it has made it more difficult. The evidence is overwhelming that the formal programmes are not reaching the truly illiterate and are almost totally lacking in innovation capacity. Yet it was interesting that the other three countries were all intent on some sort of emulation of South Africa's National Qualifications Framework. The second option is the **literacy with livelihoods** approach, which has been advocated by various researchers and agencies for the last decade. Unfortunately, there is not much applied research that provides evidence of this being done successfully to scale. One of the problems is the very contextuality of skills training and the curricular acumen that designing good courses in differing contexts demands. It certainly suggests a much more responsive and adaptable type of curriculum development that can only really operate in an enabling environment and with some resources. Currently East Africa seems to provide the best environment for such explorations and the development of responsive and adaptable curricula. But for the enabling environment to be capitalised on would require trained and skilled facilitators and other resources. In South Africa there have been attempts to link formal adult basic education with formal skills training but the jury is still out whether this has succeeded.

The third approach, a much more **local radical community development** one, is essentially held by some NGOs and has largely, if the surveyed literature is anything to go by, been dominated by the REFLECT method. There is some irony in the findings by some researchers that suggest that in spite of its intense local and tailor made approach, it is mostly taken on by the already schooled. However there are great possibilities here – if the environment is enabling, if government is not threatened by local community empowerment, and if the skilled facilitators are trained.

It must be noted that in the main these three approaches are not really the result of any curriculum development on the ground. Rather they are imported approaches accepted more or less as a whole and then adopted and adapted locally (again there are ironies in REFLECT's United Kingdom produced main materials).

142. All four countries report more or less chronic under-funding for literacy and adult basic education for adults. Innovation in this context of scarcity is usually reliant on external funding, from foreign aid, donor agencies and transfers from faith-based communities (even relatively wealthy South Africa has used mainly foreign aid for experimental adult basic education projects and literacy campaigns).

143. In this context, the notion of decentralization as being a means to generate more endogenous financial support suffers from the critique that those most needful of literacy education usually represent the most marginalised in society – the very poor, the most rural, those from minority languages, etc. This does not totally disempower decentralization from having an influence on generating local resources, but shows its limitations in doing so.

144. Another promise of decentralization is that it enables the voices of the poor, minorities, marginalised people, particular cultural groups, etc. to be listened and responded to, and subsequently impacts on equity.

145. It is difficult to assess the evidence here because it is either ambiguous or lacking. Clearly, NGOs seem to respond best and most quickly to diverse needs. This is most starkly obvious in Botswana with small NGOs working with language and cultural minorities. But this is not necessarily ascribable to any policy of decentralization. South Africa's implementation plans repeatedly claim to serve "women, the rural people, the poor" without much evidence of real attempts to do so through appropriate local literacy curricula and provision. NGOs and the runners of non formal schools in

East Africa are responding to need but it is difficult to see this as clear evidence of positive decentralization rather than committed people filling a vacuum of delivery. In Uganda and Kenya there are some traces of positive evidence, largely because of regular evaluation reports of non formal projects that even the state is beginning to respond to previously marginalised voices. The gist of this finding is that it is in the "messier" situations of two relatively poor East African countries that we find some signs of curriculum innovation and renovation that offer some hope and progress for the marginalized. *De facto* decentralization may have helped this.

146. Literacy education in most of its forms seems to attract mainly female learners. One of the novel problems that is starting to occur in countries with well functioning schools systems is that it may soon be males who form the most resistant core of the illiterate for a number of economic and gender related reasons. This trend is evident in the illiteracy statistics drawn from young people aged 15 to 24.

147. A conventional prescription for effective decentralization is that it needs effective capable states to deliver on development commitments allied to a culture of participation that facilitates the popular mobilization to sustain political will to achieve these goals. The evidence from the surveyed documentation is not very forthcoming with evidence of popular mobilization and participation. The larger state sponsored functional literacy programmes speak of bureaucratic management rather than of popular participation. Networks of NGOs and CBOs do help implement and monitor progress towards EFA goals particularly in East Africa (where the non formal schools for out of school children in Kenya are the most striking example of de facto decentralization and community participation) but they are generally on a much smaller scale than the state offerings. In South Africa there has been noticeable decline in the NGO/CBO sector.

148. The prospects of reducing illiteracy by 50% in all four countries by 2015 seems unlikely if current trends hold true. Kenya is in trouble according to the latest EFA illiteracy projections. Uganda after some recent progress, may remain static or with a slight regression. South Africa's illiterates grew in number between 1990 and 2001 but the country foresees a significant reduction (though the data on which this projection of a reduction by 2015 is based upon is contested and a more static outcome may be more realistic). Botswana will see a reduction but not as great as that which they had hoped for.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

149. Each African country or sub-region needs to have a place where **adult literacy documentation** (policies, plans, budgets, curricula, materials, evaluations, impact studies, research studies) can, at the very least be collected, digitised and placed on a website. Ideally this would be a university adult education research centre or institute which would have continuity and some research capacity to synthesize information into research outputs. Clearly such a venture would require international funding. All these websites could be mirrored at each centre.

150. There is need for a reconceptualization of the formal state literacy programmes as they lack the momentum and capacity to meet the Education for All goals by 2015. This conclusion arises from considering three facts, the basic statistics of stagnant or declining enrolments, the failure to increase state funding, and the findings of evaluations. They are not reaching the unschooled. State education bureaucracies need to confront this challenge and inter alia consider some creative partnerships.

151. New forms of partnerships, networking and collaboration to ensure the **continuing vitality of NGOs** which may be more closely in touch with the changing needs of their communities. If NGOs and other civil society bodies are essential for any Education for All partnerships, then they need to address their own need for sharing information and curriculum development collaboration. The history of partnerships, networks and associations has been chequered. New forms of being together need to be devised and made sustainable. Otherwise NGO interventions, however creative, will remain on too small a scale to make much difference.

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