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**Beyond Primary Education:
Challenges and Approaches to Expanding Learning Opportunities in Africa**

Session 6

**Quality and Relevance of
Post-Primary Education:
Demand and Supply of teachers for
Post-Primary Education, Curriculum
and Skills Development**

**Lifelong Learning Connections:
the Nodal Role of Diversified Post-Primary
and Post-Basic Approaches**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since its foundation 20 years ago ADEA has acted as a sounding board for many innovations and critical educational issues geared to promoting education in Africa. It has signaled the importance of quality education undertaking a landmark study on quality determinants in African education and responding to the outcomes of this study with a range of targeted services. Subsequently ADEA has carried out investigations into effective quality schools, literacy programmes and early childhood care and development programmes.

In the same vein, ADEA is now exploring the vast domain of post-primary education. This is a logical step stemming from the expanded access to primary education and increased completion rates. The intention is to improve quality and remedy the lack of continuing education at the post-primary and post-basic levels for millions of children and young people searching for learning opportunities connecting with and enlarging their basic skills and competencies. A variety of modalities and routes are being used to cater for secondary education provision, TVET opportunities and continuing and further learning and training for adolescents, young people and adults. These also provide a path to those graduating from literacy, NFE adult education channels and skills acquisition of various types. The Maputo Biennale will explore the theme of post-primary education in all its dimensions including conceptual underpinnings, policy and planning, funding schemes, governance issues and the curriculum and related aspects.

In this presentation I wish to argue that LLL perspective provides at the outset the necessary framework to connect and integrate all these approaches in an anticipatory way, avoiding fragmentation and the need for crash solutions and emergency remedies. The presentation concentrates on the learning connections dictated by the LLL approach and the implications of this approach for post-primary educations. Four assumptions are made:

- 1) The LLL perspective entails a concern for all post-basic education as it is based on the concept of a learning continuum, embracing and integrating all kinds of learning and the demanding creation of conditions for learning to be lifelong and life-wide. By starting from this conceptual basis it will be possible to avoid improvisation and hasty remedial policies. The LLL approach means recognizing called the dire need to accommodate secondary level and continuing education opportunities for those completing primary and initial learning.
- 2) The holistic and integrated nature of LLL is reflected in a form of curriculum development that provides diversified contents, caters for the needs and demands of different groups and covers general as well as technical and vocational education and training.
- 3) A built-in mechanism of recognition, validation and certification of all kinds of formal, non-formal and informal learning must be part and parcel of LLL.
- 4) There is a need to craft sector-wide strategies integrating NFE, adult and life-skills programmes and selected examples from Africa.

2. LLL AS ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES FOR POST-PRIMARY AND POST –BASIC EDUCATION

LLL is not a fiction, a utopian idea or a mere piece of rhetoric. When we speak of adopting LLL as a new paradigm for education and learning in the 21st century we are not simply using a slogan or proclaiming an abstract “edutopia”. LLL implies defining in each particular context, sometime for

each individual learner or group of learners, the precise learning content and modalities called for. LLL is a continuous process, present in all cultures, societies and religions, providing opportunities over the entire life span to communities individuals and organizations, who or which are confidently able to handle and make effective use of knowledge, values and competencies and also to contribute to their creation and transformation.

The idea of LLL rests upon integrating learning and living both vertically and horizontally:

Vertically: over an individual's whole life from birth to death, connecting various developmental stages of the learner (infant, child, adolescent, and adult) and different levels of education (pre-school, primary, secondary, higher etc).

Horizontally: linking learning to all spheres of life -family, community, study, work and leisure. It also involves the task of linking different types of education-formal, non-formal and informal.

In landmark documents such as the Faure Report (Learning to Be, 1972) to the Delors Report (Learning: the Treasure Within, 1996) LLL has been recognized that, as a guiding and organizing principle of educational action and reform, as well as something that is integral to a meaningful human life, which could equip people to tackle whatever challenges they face throughout their lives. An individual should be able to act upon his or her life and have the capacity to perform with ease and self-control the roles and functions expected demanded in different situations. He/she must be able to live as a family member, as a worker, as an employer, as a member of society, a citizen of the nation and ideally a world citizen. Conversely, a society or its collective constituencies (communities, groups and families) should have a commitment to learning and be able effectively to fulfill its role as transmitter of competencies, skills, know-how, wisdom, attitudes and values of conviviality, respect and "learnability".

The Delors Report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century conceived of learning as a multiple process involving four pillars: learning to do, to know, to be and to live together. Subsequently there have been calls for an additional pillar signifying learning to change and transform oneself, to take risk, to apply, to carry over what has been learned from one situation to another. This fifth pillar is a reminder of the need to regard critically everything that belongs to the status quo and to be ready: to change the situation so as to gain a better quality of life.

Three broadly prevailing misconceptions should be dispelled with regard to LLL:

1. LLL is neither a new concept nor a system only for rich and developed countries.
2. LLL is not limited to adult learning (the CONFINTEA V expanded paradigm is confusing in this respect) but concerns all forms of education.
3. LLL is not linked to employability and the world of work but entails also active citizenship, social participation, leisure and self-fulfillment and learning for enlightenment.

Three major questions often asked need to be raised and addressed:

How can we get away from viewing LLL as a slogan and move into action?

How should we promote LLL to really ensure learning throughout life?

How should LLL be grounded in educational policy and practice?

- LLL is not a slogan but a systematic approach and organizational modality valuing all types and forms of education. It is all a matter of adopting such a framework. LLL recognizes the totality and the importance of learning, continuity and flexibility.

- Lifelong learning has a holistic and integrative nature covering all stages of human development and presupposes that learning opportunities are available outside the formal school system. It implies that learning needs and demands are met in multiple institutions or through multiple modes: school, home, community workplace, media, books and computers, games, leisure. It ensures that a wide range of knowledge, skills, talents, wisdom and values are systematically acquired and can be reinforced not only in formal institutions but also through non-formal and informal modalities. Attitudes and practical experience that are untapped must be further developed for personal, family, community and social awareness and development. Thus, there is a need for strong co-operation between formal and non-formal institutions, so that they reinforce each other. There is also a need for networking at national and international levels as well as a need for organizing, permitting and promoting the convergence of all available learning systems, means and modalities.
- There is a need to optimize individual learning by strengthening social support in such a way as to bring it within reach of more people, especially those who are disadvantaged and marginalized and to stimulate and raise learning demands among those who are prevented from participating.
- There must be a better financing of conducive learning environments, creating close and organic links between education, culture and media.
- There is a need to create open learning communities.

It must be clear that needs and demands of an individual cannot be met only in a particular period of his or her life (childhood, youth or adulthood), but must be met throughout life.

3. CURRICULUM INTEGRATION ACROSS A BROAD ARRAY OF SUBJECTS AND COMPETENCIES

LLL is life itself. The continuing acquisition of knowledge, skills, and wisdom and behavior patterns is probably the most distinctive feature of the human species. The way the body of knowledge is created, organized, transmitted, mediated and learned involves many forms of learning. Besides varying degrees of formalities and the different stages of education-basic, secondary, higher, continuing etc., there are various different modes of learning: face-to-face interaction, self-learning or self-directed learning, distance and open learning. All these forms of learning can develop the competencies needed for an individual to lead an overall successful and responsible life as well as to face present and future challenges in contemporary society. This is the main purpose of LLL and the key to it can be summed up in the phrase “learning to learn”. Learning to learn is the foundation for LLL. Learning to learn implies being able to assess how new tasks, to transfer competencies to new situations, to analyze problems, to put order into the knowledge acquired, to handle with ease the relationship between the abstract and the concrete and between the general and the particular, to relate knowledge and action and to co-ordinate training and information¹. Both individual and social competencies have to be acquired, consolidated and renewed. This involves transmission through various educational institutions and acquisition through various channels and modalities.

LLL can help cultivate values such as respect for the traditions of indigenous peoples, for different religions and for the environment. International competition and globalization require flexibility and adaptability to earn a decent earning and master the complex tools for managing social transactions and participating in the civic and political life.

¹ Lengrand, P. (1975), „An introduction to Lifelong Education“, Croom Helm, London, UNESCO, Paris

At the same time LLL can provide the conditions and capacities for genuine empowerment and inclusion. This necessitates working through formal, non-formal and informal education, which is why there is a need for a close co-operation between these sectors.

Connecting learning worlds, bridging between levels of education and learning, integrating content and valuing all kinds of learning and training achievements- these are the essential aims of LLL. The LLL approach to the organization of curriculum-in particular the integration of general knowledge with practical life skills and specialist work and business-oriented skills-, can be the integrative aspect linking the different forms and types of learning and creating conditions for continuing learning, and for the accumulation and validation of competencies and capabilities acquired over time.

In existing programmes, the curriculum pedagogical approach is adapted to the needs of the learners by adding a significant component of competencies.

The notion of basic life skills rests on the assumption that there exist certain general skills or competencies and the view that the human being is more a social being than an isolated individual. The capacity to live decently as a human and social being, as a citizen and then as an employee, worker or entrepreneur involves certain key competencies such as critical thinking and critical acting to transform inequality, poor conditions of dependency and one-sided, excessive behavior. Key competencies do not operate in isolation and should be identified independently of age, gender, status etc. They should also be viewed as a constellation of competencies. Some of them, like critical thinking or respect of the others, must be learned at a very early age, but should be developed throughout life. The key competencies such as communicating, critical thinking, readiness to change, creativity, ability to live together, are the base on which others can be built up. They open the door to mastery of other competencies. They are multifunctional. LLL and the development of key competencies can help individuals to live and create a harmonious, equal and democratic society, free from extremism.

The development of these life skills is the specific role of learning and training institutions- including formal, non-formal and informal modalities- devised by societies and nations to prepare citizens and individuals. Equal access to post-primary and post-basic education, including training for life skills and basic vocational skills, can only be extended to all if there is a system of “lifelong learning...integrating general education and vocational training and re-training, social and cultural learning needs. It calls for more and more systematic ways to continue after literacy classes for youth and adults, for entry points from out of school classes into the formal set-up, and thus a systematic approach to value and credit learning outcomes from the diversity of non-formal education and skills training”²

4. A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF LEARNING

Lifelong learning requires two major efforts or shifts. First, every student who leaves the system of initial education must do so only if he/she has attained a level of learning ability that equips him/her to benefit from future exposure to learning; in this respect, the terms foundation and platform are employed. Second, adult learning has to be stimulated, be it in formal or in informal settings.

About one-third of those leaving school in most OECD countries do so without a proper foundation or platform to build a career. Either they drop out before they attain any qualification or they do not continue to a course that would provide them with a vocational qualification enabling them to get a

² Duke, C. And Hinzen, H. (2006), Basic and Continuing Adult Education Policies. In Adult Education and Development, Vol.66, pp.131-167, Bonn, IIZ/DVV

job with future prospects or to be self-employed. Investment in post-initial learning is currently heavily concentrated among those with a high level of initial schooling.³

Informal learning is the main modality through which most people acquire knowledge and competencies. Nevertheless there is a widespread lack of awareness of the importance, the real contribution and the pervasive nature of informal education.

According to the NALL (New Approaches to Lifelong Learning), nearly all Canadians (over 95%) participate in some form of informal learning that they can identify as significant. This involves an average of 15 hours a week per person.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1995 out of the 44.5 hours of training per worker, 13.4 hours consist of formal training and 31.4 of informal training⁴.

A survey conducted in Burkina Faso shows that informal modalities are the ones predominantly used by more than 98% of the population, followed by non-formal approaches, 70% of which are provided by non-state bodies.⁵

In Africa, the discriminatory model of education is widespread and uneven distribution of wealth, skills and knowledge is everywhere in evidence. The post-primary models proposed will lead to a better distribution of the benefits of learning and improve access to higher education and higher order training. “With the exception of Zimbabwe and Nigeria, less than 25% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa can be expected to complete secondary school by age 24. Even in countries with almost universal access to primary education, completion of secondary remains extremely low. For example in Uganda 95% of the population enters primary school by the age of 10, but only 15% of women and 13% of men can be expected to complete secondary school. In Malawi, 90% of boys enter primary secondary school but only 10% can be expected to complete it.”⁶ “In Uganda and Tanzania primary school graduates will multiply between two and three fold before 2010 with no prospect of similar rates of growth in secondary school entry”⁷.

Some countries mistakenly have waited until forced by the pressure of numbers either from the primary school leavers or increased numbers of learners with basic education- to attempt to put in place a comprehensive provision of post-primary and post-basic education. These countries were confronted with huge costs that could either not be met or were not sustainable. Again, the response is to have a comprehensive integrated system of learning, from the outset, using multiple curricula, integrating and articulating different types of learning, backed up by a system of recognition and validation. In such cases there is a need for a systemic nature to the content. Furthermore the conceptual aspect should be supported by clear operational practices. Such an approach has a built-in component of higher order learning, moving up to higher education and beyond. Non-formal education will have an important role to play in the coming years not only because UPE is not yet a reality in many African countries, but also because non formal education can be a preparation for vocational training for many informal sector participants and thus facilitate integration of young people into the job market. The reform of post-primary education in Africa is

³ Oosterbeek, H., “Innovative way to finance education and their relation to lifelong learning” in: Education Economics, vol.6, no.3, 1998, p. 219-251

⁴ Livinstone, D.W. “Adults’ Informal Learning Definitions, Finding, Gaps and Future Research”, NALL Working Paper, no.21, 2001, p.19

⁵ ADEA, (2001), Newsletter, vol. 18, no.2-3

⁶ Glasmann, D, Hoppers, W. De Stefano, J. “Transitions from Primary to Post-Primary Education: Using non-formal learning opportunities to increase access and relevance”, 2007, Background Paper for ADEA Biennale 2008, p.5

⁷ Lewin, K.M., “Planning post-primary education: taking targets to task” in: International Journal of Educational Development, no.25, 2005, p.408.

not only justified by recent growth in primary enrollments and improvement in completion rates. Again, the level achieved and the competencies acquired are often not in phase with the context of African countries, being frequently of little relevance in terms of content and quality, not commensurate with needs and expectations and out of touch with job opportunities and the requirements for self-employment. This situation calls for the implementation of LLL policies catering for the whole education sector, embracing all educational levels giving priority to the interests of the society. The challenge faced by most African countries is thus to focus on building a foundation for LLL which goes beyond UPE and creates not only a structure but an organic system of secondary, technical and vocational education that will enable young people to complete school or to graduate from NFE courses and to continue learning and acquiring the necessary competence for a job or self-employment.

Defining the foundation required for lifelong learning is not an easy task. Some countries are currently spending massive amounts of resources on low achievers without any great success. If this policy were intensified, it might prove to have a very low cost-effectiveness. Low achievers in initial education are, however, not necessarily of lower ability. Their lack of success in initial education merely indicates that traditional types of instruction are inappropriate for them. There are two possible lines of attack: first, by seriously trying out new pedagogical tools; second, by shifting to forms of education for young adults that incorporate part of the foundation. One possible overall remedy for the problematic of low achievers is the broad implementation of LLL offering suitably diversified alternatives, different and complementary routes and opportunities to catch up, to improve skills and competencies and to acquire new knowledge and capabilities.

Flexible delivery needs to be organized and funded with specific cohorts in mind. Research in both developed and developing countries confirms that teachers and good teaching are by far the most important factors in the enjoyment of learning. In short, methods of delivery, learning opportunities, pedagogic goals and achievements need to be diverse as the learner body.

5. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Many non-formal education programmes have sought to provide a solution and reduce the disadvantage of those individuals who either have no access to formal schooling or have prematurely dropped out school for different reasons, by creating learning modalities adapted to the varying needs of the learners. “In Anglophone African countries there is a tendency to try and expand complementary forms of NFE in order to enhance equivalent access to formal primary education. In many Francophone countries, the policy preference for assisting the unschooled and dropouts tends to be to develop and expand parallel NFE programmes aiming to instill the knowledge and competences to lead productive and meaningful lives in their home communities. These programmes tend to orientate the curriculum fully to the local context and the links with the formal education system are generally of less importance. Thus, NFE programmes may have similar names (community schools, mobile schools, shepherd schools, market schools etc.) but they are inspired by different philosophies and guided by rather different policy and support frameworks.”⁸ A variety of different approaches have been taken by governments in the attempt to create a range of learning opportunities.

⁸ Glasmann, D, Hoppers, W. De Stefano, J. “Transitions from Primary to Post-Primary Education: Using non-formal learning opportunities to increase access and relevance”, 2007, Background Paper for ADEA Biennale 2008.

In some countries NFE approaches are developed as completely separate modalities of basic education with their own philosophies, policy frames, provisions and funding such as Mali and Burkina Faso. In others such as Uganda and Namibia governments seem keen to retain the integrated system. In Namibia this has been done by constructing parallel tracks with bridges between them. These different viewpoints also find their expression in different definitions of what constitutes non-formal and formal education.

In terms of resources, some countries prefer to establish public-private partnerships with separate governance structures, curricula, teachers and teacher training and separate ‘national funds’ (Burkina and Mali). Other countries prefer to ‘mainstream’ such programmes within national support structures, funding, supervision, inspection and assessment, even if this may involve public-private partnerships (Uganda, Namibia). Where there are efforts to maintain a high degree of systems integration, even with different leaning pathways, there tends to be more interest in creating national qualification frameworks as an overall umbrella (as in Namibia).

The African region is witnessing more and more policies and strategies that are making links between the different forms and stages of learning. These links can be seen at the *systemic level*: for example links between formal and non-formal education, community schools as alternative system within formal education as well as the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) and other accreditation systems for example South Africa and Namibia. Other links that can be seen are institutional and programmatic. At the moment more linkages exist at the programmatic and institutional levels than at the systemic level.⁹

Where countries have adopted a ‘lifelong learning’ approach, this appears to assist greatly in constructing equivalencies and bridges across the two ‘sub-systems’ as part of the general effort to improve *life-wide access* to learning opportunities and *life-long continuation* of learning (i.e. enhance both *horizontal* and *vertical* articulation). This tendency appears to be stronger in more developed countries of the South like Namibia than in less developed countries because of resource constraints in building up such parallel system.

In Namibia, a national vision involving an integrated approach to basic education has been evolving since independence in 1990. This culminated in the Vision 2030 statement, which, in a bid to move towards Namibia becoming a knowledge economy, calls for rapid economic growth to be accompanied by equitable social development.¹⁰

The Education and Training Sector Improvement Plan, (ETSIP), represents the Education and Training Sector’s response to the call of Vision 2030. Its key purpose is to substantially enhance the sector’s contribution to the attainment of strategic national development goals, and to facilitate the transition to knowledge based economy.

In Namibia NFE equivalent education is part of the ‘formal system’, defined as all learning that leads to certification. Within this frame, progress is being made towards elaborating a lifelong learning perspective by constructing parallel tracks: one through the regular school system, the other through the national literacy programme (NPLN) followed by the Adult Upper Primary Education Programme (AUPE), leading into further academic education by distance (NAMCOL) or non-formal skills training and employment preparation programmes (Namibia, DABE, 2003). NAMCOL provides courses at both junior and senior secondary level, and attracts some 25.000-30.000 learners per year to these programmes. Thus, much of ‘NFE’ for youth and adults consists of

⁹ Katahoire, A.R., (2006), „Selected cases of Fruitful Interactions between Formal and Non-Formal Education in Africa“ working document, Biennale on Education, Libreville, 27-31.3.2006

¹⁰ 2006, Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP): Planning for a learning nation. Programme Document: Phase I (2006-2011), Windhoek, Republic of Namibia

‘formal education to be attained through non-formal (i.e. non-conventional) channels, such as literacy and distance learning’¹¹.

South Africa:

The South African Educational Policy Framework as regards LLL:

- The new democratic government in South Africa in 1994 prioritized the construction of a single, *equitable* system of *quality* education within a *system of LLL*.
- This vision was first set out in the Policy Framework for Education and Training written by the Education Department of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994:
All individuals should have access to lifelong education and training irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age.

Specifically the education policy framework has been set by at least *seven major* pieces of legislation:

The SAQA Act of 1995 established the South African Qualification authority (SAQA) and created the scaffolding of a national learning system intended *to integrate education* and training at all levels and across sectors. The SAQA plays an important role in the valorisation of adult literacy learning and delivery through certification by embracing lifelong learning and making it possible for learners to *change or move across* and progress along different education, training and career *paths*¹²

1. In 1996 the National Education Policy Act and the South African Schools Act were passed, the latter making schooling compulsory for children aged 7 – 15. Learners should complete grades one to nine which is the General Education and Training (GET) band. After completing grade 9, learners can exit the formal education system to seek employment or continue studying for three more years to obtain the *National Senior Certificate*, which completes the Further Education and training band. Learners can remain at school or transfer to the Further Education and training college (FET) to obtain this certificate.
2. In 1997 the Higher Education Act made provision for a unified and nationally planned system of higher education and created a statutory Council on Higher Education (CHE), which advises the Minister and is responsible for quality assurance and promotion.
3. Further Education and Training Act of 1998 created a strategy which provided the basis for developing a nationally co-ordinated system, comprising the secondary component of schooling and technical colleges¹³.
4. The Skills Development Act of 1998, allowed for the setting up of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).
5. The Skills Development Levy Act of 1999, like the previous act, aimed to enhance the levels of education and training and the learning cultures. Both of these acts

¹¹ Idem.

¹² Katahoire, (2006), p.17

¹³ FET (Education White Paper 4, 1998) includes learning programmes that are registered on the National Qualifications Framework. It constitutes a large, diverse and critically important part of the education and training system, with nearly 8 000 providers, excluding private companies, and almost 3 million learners. FET accounts, conservatively, for a national investment of public and private funds of over approx. US.\$ 1.25 billion annually. Apart from the sheer scale and complexity of the FET system, its importance stems from the fact that learners are situated at the cross-roads between General Education and Training (GET) and entry to HE and the world of work. FET is an important allocator of life chances. As such, it provides both initial and second-chance opportunities to young people and adults

complemented other legislation and introduced new institutions, programmes and funding policies.

6. In 2000 the Adult Basic Education and Training Act, provided for the establishment of public and private adult learning centres, funding for ABET provisioning, the governance of public centres, and quality assurance mechanisms for the sector.
7. In 2001/02 the framework for a national quality assurance system was established with the accreditation of 31 Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs). This accreditation process included the Council for Higher Education (CHE) as well as the 25 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAS).

A similar system is operating in Mauritius. Less sophisticated and structured approaches are prevailing in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

6. CONCLUSION

There are many different views concerning the aims of LLL. However, there is a broad agreement among policy-makers, practitioners and stakeholders all that LLL is meant to be for all and should continue throughout life and that there is a need for strong co-operation between formal and non-formal education. If LLL includes all sectors of life and society, then its potential for transformation is far-reaching: it can help to alleviate poverty, ensure democracy, combat inequality and extremism, promote world peace, create a better balance between developed and developing countries and encourage people to live decently as human and social beings in a harmonious society understanding and respecting themselves and others, tolerating difference and diversity and being always open to dialogue and new perspectives.

(To be continued).....

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