

**Lifelong Learning and Governance.  
From Programming to Action – Selected Experiences  
from Asia and Europe**

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by DVV International and partners

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For additional copies please write to [info@dvv-international.la](mailto:info@dvv-international.la)

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Editors: *Heribert Hinzen, Joachim H. Knoll*

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*Heribert Hinzen/Joachim H. Knoll*

LIFELONG LEARNING BETWEEN PROGRAMMING AND GOVERNANCE

ການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ ລະຫວ່າງແຜນງານ ແລະ ການປົກຄອງ

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*Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan*

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## LIFELONG LEARNING BETWEEN PROGRAMMING AND GOVERNANCE

### Introduction to the issue

In “Bildung und Erziehung”, we already put several times attention on lifelong learning, in which institutional and educational theory were ever mentioned in practical as well as in theoretical terms. Emanating from the point of view that lifelong learning includes every step of the individual lifetime, statements have been taken about which educational step makes which contribution to lifelong learning (LLL); it has been thought about primary and secondary education as well as the tertiary and quaternary level of the education system. At the same time a double consideration needed to be observed: every educational level is an entity of its own and at the same time part of an “educational chain” connected with the preceding and subsequent educational processes.

In light of educational theory one has to reflect whether the traditional term ‘education’ as well as the formal educational qualifications require a new line of vision, changed by social needs, where education is substituted by competency or qualification, and where the formal qualifications are replaced by “educational outcomes” based on the outputs of formal, non-formal and informal education.

There are specifications in the ongoing discussion which surely are not insignificant for the public perception of lifelong learning. Those specifications refer on the one side to the historical genesis of lifelong learning, and on the other side to the meaning of

LLL and its single educational stages, as well as its shimmed behavioral dimension of LLL, in detail: in how far does lifelong learning change educational-political concepts and structures.

In the context of a historical tracking we indicate<sup>1</sup> that the genesis of lifelong learning can be described and split into two stages, as *Kjell Rubenson* made clear<sup>2</sup>. According to *Rubenson* - and *Albert Z. Tuijnman, John Field, Paul Belanger* and also authors of the history of education at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>3</sup> belong as well into this context, - the first stage of this century is derived from *Edgar Faure's* publication "Learning to be" (Paris 1972); certainly prior connected to the early UNESCO terminology "lifelong education", while the second stage, led by the EU and OECD using the term "lifelong learning" in the years 1990 in *Jacques Delor's* "Learning: The treasure within" (1996) reaching a first publishing peak and later continuing with prognostic EU transfer models as for example the "Memorandum" (2000, now 2011 in revised form) and the European Qualification Framework (2005)<sup>4</sup>. In the former mentioned tracking we followed the thoughts of *Cy (Cyril O.) Houle*, who draw the attention in Chicago during a study stay and who pointed intensely to his empirical work "The inquiring mind"<sup>5</sup>. Houle's publications are always historically reinsured, as the lifelong learning does, too. He clarifies that lifelong learning is connected to Judaism as a learning community, always understood (secularly) as an instruction to cope with life and deal with a work-life balance. Based on the latter, a genealogy of Jewish educational philosophy – based on Talmud and Thora – can be drawn up which intersects with the educational doctrine in the sphere of Salon culture and with Wilhelm von Humboldt's educational writings at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Those facts possess of an immense long tradition, even though the fascinating term "LLL" has not been available before. The history on adult education hardly recognized the connection to cultural and real history, and this



could probably be a reason why this genealogy did not receive further attention. An exception is certainly the historical monograph by Josef Olbrich<sup>6</sup>. In the end, this origin is not significant for current discussions anymore.

If specifications are made, then it should be indicated that the term LLL has been more specified by UNESCO world conferences (especially CONFINTEA V and CONFINTEA VI) as in earlier rhetoric.

Consequently, and according to adult education, there are two understandings available of LLL: First, adult education was meant to be programmatically brought up for discussion (e.g. to BMZ – Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development - or the World Bank) - and second, LLL was meant to develop itself as a governance instrument that shows its practical orientation in its advantage by educational-political action.

Both conferences (CONFINTEA V and VI) should be considered more intensively under the arc of suspense of controlling and acting, without just repeating which is already mentioned in the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)<sup>7</sup>.

In ongoing discussions before and after the named world conferences, they agreed on definitions that mark LLL. That's why it can be assumed that parameters are more or less established and that the emphasis is defined by different educational standards and its ethical implications. In "Memorandum's" revised version (EU, Council resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning<sup>8</sup>) we read: "Lifelong learning covers learning from pre-school age to postretirement. Adult learning is a vital component of the lifelong-learning continuum, covering the entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities, general and vocational, undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training"<sup>9</sup>.

Here as well as in other sections adult learning is especially emphasized, because: “there is growing consensus that adult learning is currently the weakest link in developing national lifelong-learning systems” (p. 2). Formulated for international discussion, it is self-evident from the German point of view.

Here in this area, NGO's did relatively early reevaluate the contents and procedures of education in the non-formal sector which was encouraged by the internationalization of adult education, motivated by the UNESCO-Recommendation on the Development of adult education (Nairobi 1976). Consequentially, NGOs claimed that adult education might and should develop key competencies in the educational process and as such must be accepted as an essential part of national education systems. Initially recognized in the context of the German Volkshochschulen (adult education centers), it is contemporarily self-evident that adult education is no more limited to personal fulfillment. CONFINTEA V made up a catalogue with regard to the content (“Hamburg Agenda for the future”), which has been established considerably through the assistance of German representatives of adult education (Jakob Horn, Wolfgang Leumer, Joachim H. Knoll, and Rita Suessmuth). Additionally, we are reminded of an earlier contribution in 2003 from R. Suessmuth: She points out the multidimensional content of adult education and mentions beside personal education the importance of education in being socially acceptable and promoting employment (later on employability). One passage about “adult education as a part of lifelong learning” (Erwachsenenbildung im Konzept des Lebenslangen Lernens) from Rita Suessmuth, at that time president of DVV already, is called: “It will depend on in how far formal, non-formal and informal educational processes are recognized as mutual equivalent education forms within educational systems. Adult education needs to become an integral part of educational systems – in order to establish a thorough

foundation to realize the concept of LLL.”<sup>10</sup> This comment steps into a future teaching mission of non-formal educational institutions – in this case of adult education – and connects this vision with controlling through and within the existent educational system.

It is indeed surprising that participants in such world conferences from ‘Laender’ and Federal Ministries to draft LLL as an integral part of the educational system have not been sufficiently recognized in terms of educational policy.

According to the Belem Framework for Action<sup>11</sup>, UIL carried out a “Monitoring of and Support to the Follow-up of CONFINTEA VI” with an online questionnaire<sup>12</sup>, which results will be published next year. A limited knowledge of the process says that the parameters for LLL could be gathered for several countries – saying that LLL activities can be followed – but that certain designs could not become perceptible to get LLL concepts fully embedded into the respective educational system. Governance is indeed suggested as an option for action but in how far budgets and organigrams will need to get changed still remains a future issue. Simultaneously it can be seen that nationally e.g. in out-of-school institutions, the concept LLL gets higher interest. Recently you can observe an interesting attempt to introduce out-of-school education as non-formal education into the existent educational system. Lutz Stoppe, former state secretary in the Ministry of Family Affairs in the state North-Rhein-Westfalia, and connected to the German Youth Institute, stated in an interview: “Only if out-of-school youth education wins the respective recognition in policy and administration as well as from employers and training centers, it will become a part of educational concepts with equal rights.”<sup>13</sup> In the magazine of the German Youth Institute, which has been cited and can also be read as a commemorative publication for Benno Rauschenbach, it can be obviously noticed that a significant change

of out-of-school youth education is supposed to be introduced; titles as “Ein anderer Blick auf Bildung” (‘Another look at education’) signal that the gaps

- between formal, informal and non-formal education and
- between education and competencies or qualifications,
- between formalized achievements and ‘educational outcomes’

need to become bridged and closed. Hereby, Rudolf Tippelt does not escape the difficulty: “There were and there are difficulties to record methodically exact data from the informal education for youth and adult age, but meanwhile, participation in informal education can be measured by several group specific differences”. While doing that, the “national qualification framework” will probably give further instructions, albeit there will still be some obstacles in the instrumental set of rules and regulations.

Now that the call to action from UNESCO world conferences has arrived we have to ask ourselves if models of governance have been started already and if the LLL indicators or parameters are empirically sound enough that they can be used for a better report on regional differences and educational ethnical profiles. (See in this respect the internet presentation of the Bertelsmann Stiftung).

In the review of world conferences of adult education (CONFINTEA I to VI)<sup>14</sup> it can clearly be seen that their conception and programmatic weight differs widely. In terms of content, especially the 3<sup>rd</sup> world conference in Tokyo (1972) and the 5<sup>th</sup> in Hamburg (1997) have sustainably influenced adult education, also in national context. The world conference in Tokyo is at the beginning of a long evolution which end is marked by the approval of the “Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education” (Nairobi 1976). For the first time, its presentation of adult education in a modern and especially worldwide design will be possible. Nowadays, this document is certainly not adequately up-

to-date, although presentiments of the LLL concept appear as well as thoughts of an “educational chain”, which both played an essential role back then in the thoughts of John Lowe and which both contributed to the recommendation<sup>15</sup>. Nowadays, the reminiscence of this document fulfills a certain role in international discussion, intending a modernization in terms of language and content<sup>16</sup>. It has been reported about a respective meeting of experts: “While the experts acknowledged the forward looking and emancipatory spirit of the 1976 Recommendation, which has not lost its critical substance, they underlined the need to re-formulate substantial parts in light of the changed reality and new challenges in adult learning and education. They discussed related consequences”<sup>17</sup>. Exclusive and considerable modernization and rewriting of the document<sup>18</sup> – in such an extent that historical quality would hardly be perceptible – would facilitate intensified governance through e.g. guidelines in terms of content. In our opinion, the only alternative is to write a new document which is oriented on the significant world conference in Hamburg. Its “Agenda for the future” contains several essential elements which could be quite substantial for thematic governance in adult education. Unfortunately, the production of such a conceptual continuum has been overlooked in the preparations for the last world conference in Belem.

“Governance” became a significant topic in meetings to prepare the world conference in Belem and finally receives considerable and insistent expression in the final document of Belem. The Pan European Region in December 2008 in Budapest<sup>19</sup> as preparatory conference marks significant recommendations in terms of content, and leaves governmental potentials in educational policy undetermined.

In terms of content, the agreed guidelines of a modern and broad concept of adult education are determined: “It is

recommended that policy frameworks: Cover the formal, non-formal and the informal forms of ALE. Take into account the personal, social, health, economic, cultural, intergenerational benefits of adult learning..." And in respect to governance it is mentioned: "Governance issues should be addressed with a view creating the local, regional and national framework, structures and partnerships – including public authorities, social partners and civil society – essential for the development, coordination, funding, provision, quality management and monitoring of ALE". This expressed critical reservation has to consider that the educational systems in the European education frame are highly differentiated and are inferior to federalist guidelines. Consequentially, it is recommended to look at – a general European regulation in mind – the precedence or at least the equal rank of national structures. That is why here in this area wider recognition of "educational outcomes", documented in a national education passport, is still difficult to implement in education policy; obviously, there are increasing examples which prove that not exceptionally the school leaving examination or equivalent school trainings (equivalent recognition on master level) guarantee the right to higher education.

The final document of Belem (2009) "Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future"<sup>20</sup> appeals undoubtedly for an option of action, which first specifies the 'education' term in social and personal terms and second intends to oblige the educational policy in the respective systems express changes in administration, too. Hereby, lifelong learning is addressed by the words: "The role of lifelong learning is critical in addressing global educational issues and challenges". Lifelong learning "from cradle to grave" is a philosophy, a conceptual framework and an organizing principle of all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic

values". In terms of educational theory, Jacques Delors adds the 'four pillars of education' to this statement: learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together.

According to the options for governance, educational politics enter into personal commitments which implementation will surely raise certain difficulties in its parliamentary and administrative institutions. If it were only about 'inter-ministerial cooperation', agreements would be produced quite easy, but the entire integration of an educational ministry into the content and instruments of guidelines, which are also formulated for an international educational policy in Belem, may be more difficult – "creating and maintaining mechanisms for the involvement of public authorities at all administrative levels".

Next to that the question should not be left aside whether and which motivating and inspiring role UNESCO might have in future – considering the financial crisis which has been caused by the US' resignation of its paying obligations – (decreasing from the original budget in 2012/13 of 653 million down to 465 million US\$).

When preparing for this collection, we took in the "from rhetoric to action"-discussion and specified significant aspects, which we indicated in ongoing international documentations. We begin with the statement of the governance issue, which has been mentioned in a basic study by Dr. Alexandra Ioannidou already. Following is Frank Frick, program head of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, demonstrating lifelong learning parameters in a European context. Dr. Angelika Huefner, former deputy general secretary of KMK (Conference of the German Education Ministers), presents the LLL concept according to federalist educational policy and Prof. Dr. Anke Grotlueschen, working on autochthonous and allochthonous illiteracy, will discuss the latest research on literacy in Germany. An

example from the World Bank (Knoll) can teach us how far rhetoric and action diverge in international dimension.

Hamilton, Osborne and Tibbitt pose the question on the necessity of lifelong learning to the universities and which role they fulfill in regional development wherein state institutions, economy and communities of common partnerships benefit. Chris Duke builds a first bridge to Asia and takes up a discussion which began in 4/2011 of *Bildung und Erziehung* as “Erwachsenenbildung in Suedostasien und Pazifik” (Adult education in Southeast-Asia and Pacific); especially his understanding that based on the common European starting point such diverse Asian developments strike out on their own now. One of those ways has been examined by Arne Carlson and Jin Yang, exemplifying China; an immense spread throughout institutional, financial and programmatic discussions and offers lead nowadays to developments of “Learning cities and learning regions” that are faster realized than somewhere else. Heribert Hinzen takes a look at 3 years regional reconstruction work of DVV International in South-and Southeast-Asia to analyze, document and finally compare the interlinking of developmental and educational processes in separate countries and those of diverse regional agendas and organizations.

In addition to the regular issue of *Bildung und Erziehung* where most articles are in German, the DVV International office in Vientiane, Lao PDR, publishes again an enlarged English version for partners especially in South and Southeast Asia. Having this readership in mind, the editors decided to provide five additional documents which have been presented and produced during conferences in Asia during 2013: In Hanoi, Vietnam, on Promoting Lifelong Learning for All: Advocacy Brief from the Seminar on National Policy Frameworks for Lifelong Learning in the ASEAN Countries; the Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities: Lifelong Learning for All: Promoting Inclusion, Prosperity and



Sustainability in Cities; and from Jecheon, Korea, the CONFINTEA VI Regional Follow-up Meeting in Asia and the Pacific. Four years later: Taking stock of the Belem Framework for Action”, the Action Plan for Adult Learning and Education (ALE). Two keynotes were presented in Korea. Prof. Kim Shinil has been at Seoul National University for most of his professional career; in 2006 he was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education. He looks at the developments to a lifelong learning society in Korea, and argues the case for a higher attention of literacy work in the region. Maria Khan is the Secretary General of the Asia Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), and she especially contributed the view of civil society toward the implementation of EFA commitments, and points at the accountability of Governments as well as NGOs towards the education and learning needs of the majority of youth and adults in the region.

It is our assumption that these additions will increase the usefulness for our readers as this issue covers now experiences from several countries in Europe and Asia, presents some of the current global debates in the education and development agenda, and provides an orientation for actions to be taken now and in the nearer future. For readers in Cambodia and Lao PDR there is another additional service: The English titles and abstracts are translated into Lao and Khmer language for a better initial understanding of often quite complex discussions.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joachim H. Knoll, Ein neuer Begriff für eine alte Sache?, in: Bildung und Erziehung Jg. 60.(2007) Heft 2, S. 195ff; jetzt überarbeitet in: ders., Eine neuer Begriff für eine alte Sache in: Irene Diekmann, u.a. (Hrsg.) „... und handle mit

Vernunft“, Beiträge zur europäisch-jüdischen Beziehungsgeschichte, Hildesheim 2012, S. 530.

<sup>2</sup> Kjell Rubenson, Livslangt lärande, in: Per-Erik Ellström u.a., Livslangt lärande, Lund 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Sh. dazu als eine eher wenig beachtete Quelle: Eleonora Sapia-Drewniak et al., Adult Education at the Beginning of the 21st Century, Opole 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Sh. dazu in der grundlegenden Publikation von Rainer Brödel, LLL, Lebensbegleitende Bildung, Neuwied 1998, meinen Beitrag: Joachim H. Knoll, „Lebenslanges Lernen“ und internationale Bildungspolitik, S. 35ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cyril O. Houle, The Inquiring Mind. A Study of the adult who continues to learn, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 1961.

<sup>6</sup> Josef Olbrich, Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildung in Deutschland, Opladen 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, published by Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg 2009; die nächste Ausgabe, die die Erträge der CONFINTEA VI einbeziehen wird vorgelegt in: UIL (ed.), CONFINTEA VI, final report, Hamburg 2010, CONFINTEA VI, Belem Framework for Action, Hamburg 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Sh. dazu auch den Kommentar von Ekk ehard Nuissl, in: Infobrief, Praxishandbuch Weiterbildungsrecht, Editorial Erwachsenenbildung 2020, S. 1f. European Union, Resolutions, Council 2011/C 372/01, S. 3f.

<sup>9</sup> Rita Süßmuth, Lebenslanges Lernen, Erwachsenenbildung, Beschäftigungsförderung, 16./17.10.2003 Skopje, [www.DVVInternational.de](http://www.DVVInternational.de) Publikationen.in aktueller Form sh. jetzt: „Die Volkshochschule – Bildung in öffentlicher Verantwortung“, dvv Bonn, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future, Confintea VI, Belem, Dec.2009, UIL Hamburg 2010.

<sup>11</sup> A dult education on the move, Follow-up news no. 4, Oct.12, UIL Hamburg.

<sup>12</sup> Lutz Stoppe, Ein neuer Bildungsalltag, in: impuls, Das Bulletin des Deutschen Jugendinstituts, 4/2012, S. 34f. Sh. dort auch die konzise Zusammenstellung von Rudolf Tippelt „Zentrale Voraussetzungen für ein neues Verständnis von Bildung“, S. 43.

<sup>13</sup> Joachim H. Knoll, The history of UNESCO international conferences on adult education- from Helsingör (1949) to Hamburg (1997): international adult education through people and programmes, in: Convergence, Vol. XL (3–4), 2007, S. 21 ff.

<sup>14</sup> John Lowe, A Retrospective International Survey of Adult Education. Montreal 1960 to Tokyo 1972, Paris 1972. Später hat sich John Lowe vor allem auf die Übergänge von der Sekundarbildung zur Bildung im tertiären

Sektor konzentriert und den Gedanken „Widening Acces to higher Education“ favorisiert.

<sup>15</sup> Übrigens hat Paul Bertelson, vormalig verantwortlich für die Erwachsenenbildungsabteilung bei der UNESCO in Paris, bereits in einer Plenarsitzung in Hamburg eine Überarbeitung der Recommendation angeregt, leider ist sein Beitrag nicht weiter verfolgt worden.

<sup>16</sup> Sh. zur „Revision of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education“, Follow-up news no. 4, Dec. 2012, UIL Hamburg.

<sup>17</sup> Dazu eine Online-Diskussion UIL, HH. 16.10.2012.

<sup>18</sup> Confintea VI Preparatory Conference in Europe, Budapest, Hungary, 3.-5. December.

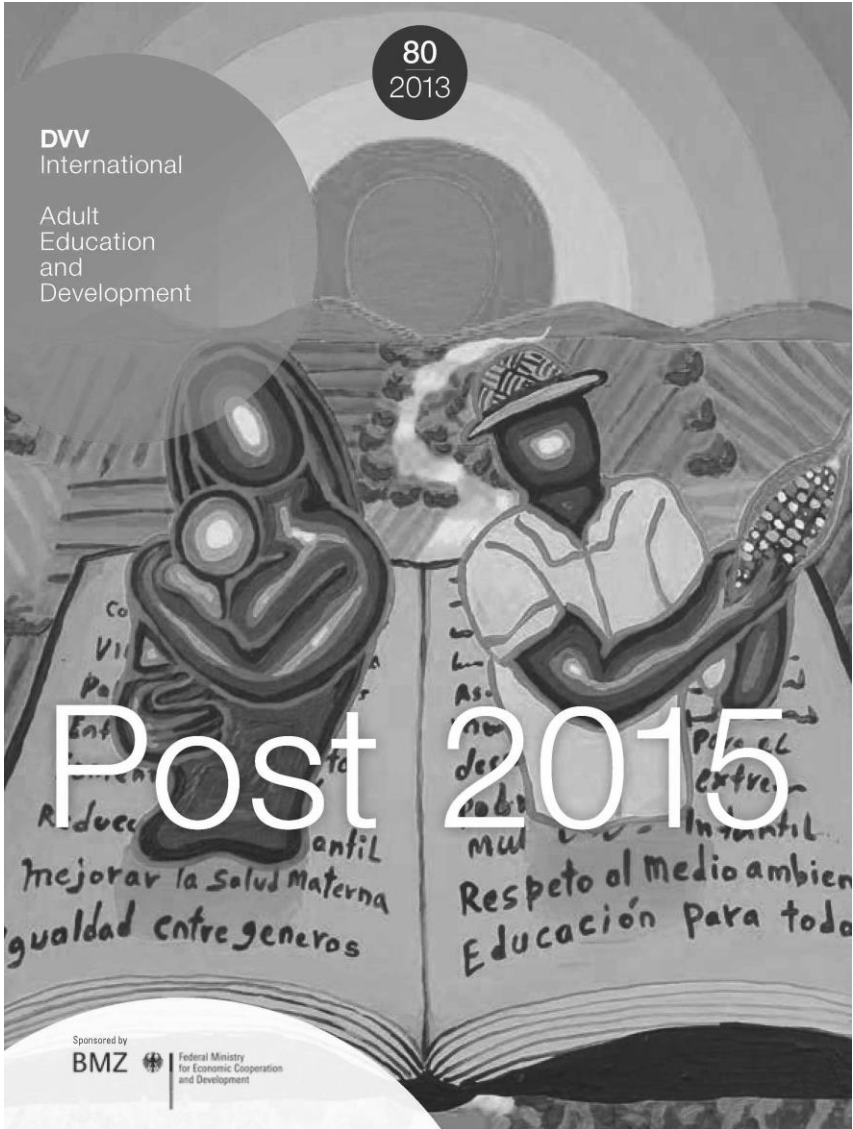
<sup>19</sup> 2008; [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org). Confintea VI.

<sup>20</sup> Confintea Vi, Living and learning for a viable future:the power of adult learning, Belem, 1.-4.12.2009, [www.unseco.org](http://www.unseco.org).

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## THE POLICY, POLITY AND POLITICS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

*Summary:* This paper examines how lifelong learning as policy (that is as a political program) is implemented in the processes of politics (that is the formation of consent and the resolving of conflicts between groups of contested interests) taking into account the polity dimension, that is the institutional rules, the organization of the state and task responsibilities in a multi-layered system. Politics, policy and polity are in the English speaking world (especially in the USA) an undividable three-point term, whereas in Germany the basic understanding emphasizes politics, especially state processing and controlling. Based on empirical data from an international-comparative project in three European countries, the paper presents the adaption and implementation of lifelong learning as a governance model in the internationalized education policy.

**ນະໂຍບາຍ, ຮູບແບບ ແລະ ຂັ້ນຕອນຕ່າງໆ ທາງດ້ານການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ**  
*ບົດສັງລວມ:* ເອກະສານນີ້ແມ່ນການພິຈາລະນາກ່ຽວກັບນະໂຍບາຍທາງດ້ານການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ (ມັນເປັນສ່ວນໜຶ່ງຂອງແຜນງານຂອງລັດ) ທີ່ໄດ້ຈັດຕັ້ງປະຕິບັດໄປຕາມຂັ້ນຕອນຕ່າງໆຂອງລັດ (ນັ້ນແມ່ນການເລີ່ມຕົ້ນໃນການເຫັນພ້ອມເຊິ່ງກັນ ແລະ ກັນ, ແລະ ການແກ້ໄຂບັນດາຂໍ້ຂັດແຍ່ງຄືນໃໝ່ ລະຫວ່າງກຸ່ມທີ່ມີຜົນປະໂຫຍດທີ່ແຕກຕ່າງກັນ) ມີຮູບຫຼາຍແບບ ຫຼາຍມິຕິ ທັງນີ້ກໍເພື່ອນຳເອົາມາພິຈາລະນາຄືນໃໝ່. ເຫຼົ່ານັ້ນແມ່ນກົດລະບຽບຂອງສະຖາບັນ, ອົງການຈັດຕັ້ງຂອງລັດ ແລະ ໜ້າທີ່ ທີ່ເປັນຄວາມຮັບຜິດຊອບທີ່ມີລະບົບຫຼາຍຊັ້ນ ຫຼາຍຂັ້ນ. ຄຳວ່ານະໂຍບາຍ, ຮູບແບບ ແລະ ຂັ້ນຕອນຕ່າງໆ ໃນໂລກຂອງພາສາອັງກິດ(ໂດຍສະເພາະແມ່ນທາງສະຫະລັດອາເມລິກາ) ສາມຄຳສັບນີ້ ແມ່ນບໍ່ສາມາດແຍກອອກຈາກກັນໄດ້, ຊຶ່ງຢູ່ໃນປະເທດເຢຍລະມັນເອງ ພື້ນຖານຂອງຄວາມເຂົ້າໃຈແມ່ນເນັ້ນໃສ່ທາງດ້ານການເມືອງ, ໂດຍສະເພາະແມ່ນຂັ້ນຕອນ ແລະ ການຄຸ້ມຄອງຂອງລັດ. ໂດຍອີງໃສ່ຂໍ້ມູນທີ່ເປັນພື້ນຖານໂຕຈິງໂດຍການປຽບທຽບທາງດ້ານສາກົນຈາກໂຄງການ ຈາກສາມປະເທດໃນທະວີບເອີຣົບ, ອີງ



and education policy have been run under the control of the nation-state and were a core element of its sovereignty and autonomy. Even if this is still true to a varying extent in many countries, recently there is a shift in the examination of issues concerning educational governance.

Over the last 15 years there is explicit reference in education policy and research to global phenomena such as globalization, world culture and knowledge economy and the influence of international and supranational organizations such as the UNESCO, OECD, World Bank and EU (cf. MEYER et. al. 1997, ROBERTSON/DALE 2009, PARREIRA DO AMARAL 2011). Trends towards transnational convergence and harmonization in education undermine the "uniqueness" of national education systems, whereas the emergence of new actors and new arenas in education policy additionally question the "sovereignty of nation-state formation" (MITTER 2006).

With an international comparative study at the University of Tuebingen, Germany, we sought to answer questions regarding educational governance and the impact of the EU and OECD in this field taking as a case the concept of lifelong learning. The project goals were to reconstruct the concept of lifelong learning and to examine its implementation at a national level taking into account the policy, polity and politics dimension (cf. IOANNIDOU 2010a).

To do so the following questions have been addressed: How lifelong learning as policy, that is as a political program, is implemented in the processes of politics, that is the power struggle between groups of contested interests and the formation of consent? To what extent does the polity dimension, that is the institutional rules, the organization of the state and task responsibilities of other non-state actors in a multi-layered system enforce decision making in this field?

In order to explore these questions we selected three European countries, that is Germany, Finland and Greece, one supranational organization, the European Union (EU), and one international, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The paper is structured as follows: I first outline the analytical perspective of educational governance; Then, I highlight selected empirical findings of the study that illustrate the adaption and implementation of lifelong learning in the national policy agenda. Emphasis is given on the identification of influential actors, their action orientations, their action resources and interactions as well as on the impacts of their actions. In conclusion, I provide some reflecting remarks on lifelong learning as a governance model in education policy.

## From State-centered Regulation to Multi-layered Governance in Education

Analytical perspectives on issues concerning regulation and control of education systems were from the very beginning and for a long time state-centered. There was much faith both in the capacity of the nation state to manage, regulate, guide and control functional systems such as the economic or the educational system as well as in the feasibility of the functional systems to be efficiently managed, regulated, guided and controlled by the nation state. However, during the late 1960s and particularly in the 1970s many sociologists and political scientists argued vigorously against these propositions drawing on a number of empirical policy analyses and on the growing influence of systems theory (MAYNTZ 1997, MAYNTZ 2004). Policy-making was seen as increasingly involving,



partially cooperative, partially conflictive exchanges and interactions between the state and a range of private, public and voluntary organizations. The term “governance” was proposed in the political sciences to replace the traditional term “controlling” (MAYNTZ 1997, p. 278). The latter, it was argued, no longer reflected the patterns that emerged as a result of mutual interactions and interdependencies among actors from various levels, of which the state was only one.

The term “governance” has been widely disseminated and stimulated scientific discussions in a range of academic disciplines. In the last years it has been extensively used in political sciences, in political economy, in sociology, and also in different connotations, analytical or normative (e.g. “good governance”) (cf. BENZ 2004). The term has been recently introduced in the educational sciences as well. Questions concerning the coordination and management of mutual interdependencies of various actors of the education system have been examined under the generic term “educational governance” (cf. ALTRICHTER ET AL. 2007, AMOS 2010, AMOS et.al. 2011). The new term clearly recognizes the dynamics that arose from the emergence of policy actors at various levels (local, regional, national, transnational) and emphasizes a variety of patterns of interaction (networks, coalitions, majority rule, negotiations) among them. These policy actors operate as a non-hierarchical, multi-level governance system with no clear sovereign authority, but still with capacity of policy shaping (cf. MAYNTZ & SCHARPF 1995). The emergence of “new arenas of education governance” (MARTENS, RUSCONI & LEUZE, 2007) make it evident that new concepts are necessary for the analysis of the governance capacity and governance practices of the main actors involved in education policy beyond the nation-state.

## The Policy, Polity and Politics of Lifelong Learning

The concept of lifelong learning has a long history but it (re-)gained popularity as an educational reform concept in the 1990s (cf. KNOLL 1998, 2005, KRAUS 2001). As an international reform concept it exceeds narrow national and geographical boundaries and demonstrates a harmonized "policy talk" throughout the globe, even if policy action differs from country to country. EU, OECD and UNESCO play an important role both in the dissemination of the lifelong learning agenda as well as in policy formation at national level.

In the pages that follow I will focus on the policy, polity and politics of lifelong learning. Drawing on findings from a comparative research study I will try to answer the following questions: How a global education policy concept such as lifelong learning has been adapted in national education policy? Who are the key actors in this field? What are their action orientations? What kind of resources do they use in order to achieve specific outcomes? How do they interact within institutional settings? What is the impact of their actions?

Theoretically, the study presented is based on the approaches of path-dependence (PIERSON 2000, MAHONEY 2000) and actor-centered institutionalism (MAYNTZ/SCHARPF 1995), both emanating from Political Sciences. The adaption of the concept of lifelong learning and its implementation in Greece, Germany and Finland can be explained with reference to the theorem of actor-centered institutionalism "as the outcome of interactions among intentional actors - individual, collective, or corporate actors. Though, these interactions are structured, and the outcomes shaped by the characteristics of the institutional settings within which they occur". (SCHARPF 2006, p. 17)

In the framework of actor-centered institutionalism, actors are characterized by their orientations (perceptions and preferences) and by their capabilities that is their material and immaterial resources. The identification of key actors, their action orientations, their capabilities and their modes of interaction within institutional settings are crucial in this theoretical context.

Policy making, by definition, involves intentional action by actors who are most interested in achieving specific outcomes. Both the EU and the OECD are, according to Scharpf, complex actors who purposefully and strategically act to achieve specific goals. Their ability in strategic action depends firstly on the convergence or divergence of the perceptions and preferences, that is the action orientations among their members and secondly upon the institutional settings that make an internal conflict resolution more difficult or easier (ibid., p. 108). According to the approach of actor-centered institutionalism, the institutional context within the EU and OECD favors political decisions taking place in varieties of negotiations or by majority decision rather than being determined by unilateral action or by hierarchical directions.

In this rather action-theoretical context, historically evolved culture-specific diversification, path-dependent development and the persistence of institutions, might be underestimated. The notion of path-dependence in comparative-historical analyses, whether they be social, political, or cultural, is linked to the idea that "history matters". When adapting the theorem of path-dependence in comparative education research, we look for historical paths, cultural traditions, specific trajectories of institutional development, and critical junctures. According to this theorem, the adaption and implementation of a global educational policy concept such as lifelong learning at a national level can be enforced or prohibited according to historical paths, institutional organizational forms and the cultural traditions or

conventions of a country. National path-dependencies exist in every country. Empirical findings to education policy borrowing point out that there exists "an antagonistic tension between, the transnational diffusion of modern models and rules and the self-evolutive continuation or even revival of culture-specific semantic traditions" (SCHRIEWER/MARTINEZ 2004, pp. 36-37, cf. also STEINER-KHAMSI 2004).

Methodologically, the study presented is based on expert interviews and document analysis. In order to explore the intentions, interests and interactions of major stakeholders, expert interviews were conducted with key actors from the educational policy administration and the educational research. Complementary, in terms of contextualization and validation of the experts' views, education policy documents such as programmatic texts, memoranda, guidelines, communications, recommendations, reports, conference papers and legal acts between 1996 and 2008, were analyzed in order to manifest the political discourse, to reveal culture-specific semantic traditions and to identify path-dependent development patterns.

Greece, Germany and Finland have been identified as suitable cases for investigating the adaption of the lifelong learning agenda at national level. The selection was made on the basis of structural features (including the structure of the education and training sector and the type of governance in education) and on the basis of quantitative indicators (including participation in continuing education and lifelong learning). The European Union (EU) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have been selected for the comparative research design as a supranational and an international organization with major influence and agenda setting capacity in the field of lifelong learning.

By the presentation of selected empirical findings from the above mentioned study I will follow for analytical reasons the distinction between policy, politics and polity, even if the term is actually undividable.

Regarding the concept of lifelong learning and its adaption within national *education policy*, the findings of the study confirm that lifelong learning has become a “master narrative”, the “new educational order” (FIELD 2005) in all three countries under examination. The findings of the document analysis as well as of the experts’ interviews point out that at the level of political rhetoric (“policy talk”) the national debate is almost entirely determined by the rhetoric of the EU and the OECD. Lifelong learning as a political program is considered as a vehicle for the promotion of both active citizenship and employability in all three countries. Nevertheless, the findings illustrate how different is the notion of lifelong learning in Germany, Finland and Greece even though the political rhetoric is identical. The connotations of the term “lifelong learning”, the driving forces for promoting this idea and the priorities given in each country appear to be different.

In Germany, the idea of lifelong learning is mainly linked to employability and is considered as a vehicle for maintaining the competitiveness of the German economy with an emphasis on continuing professional development and training and on promoting diverse forms of learning, validation and certification. In Finland, whose educational system is characterized by excellent permeability between the different levels of education and an integrated system of validation and certification of informal learning, the contribution of lifelong learning both to maintain social cohesion and remain competitive is highlighted. In Greece, due to the lack of a wide spread tradition in adult education and lack of structures and mechanisms for validation and certification

of informal learning, the connotation of lifelong learning indicates a strong link to institutionalized adult education.

The findings clearly point out that the concept of lifelong learning seems to become an educational norm and part of the educational narrative in all three countries. A concept that was initially developed at the international level and formulated by international organizations (Council of Europe, UNESCO, OECD, EU) gradually became part of the educational discourse at national level. Its inclusion in the official discourse in Greece, Germany and Finland initially took place on a declarative level by the national authorities before it was broken down, depending on the type of governance in education (centralized for Greece, regionally in Germany, local to Finland) to the regional and local level. Nevertheless, there is empirical evidence that the adaptation and implementation of lifelong learning in the three countries is significantly path-dependent, i.e. it is infiltrated by national traditions and culture-specific patterns of meaning and enforced by specific trajectories of institutional development.

Looking at the processual dimension, what we call *politics*, with regard to the implementation of lifelong learning, one should focus on policy actors, their worldviews, interests, capabilities and actions. The empirical findings illustrate the emergence of a transnational educational space in which powerful actors interact with each other on a variety of institutional settings i.e. public, private, non-governmental and at various levels i.e. local, regional, national, supranational. It is evident that in a multi-layer system the various actors come into different constellations and build interdependent relationships with each other. Within this context, policy formulation and the formation of consent among different groups of actors demand high coordination in order to enforce decisions, since it is likely that no single actor will be able to

determine the outcome unilaterally. What matters is the actor constellation, according to actor-centered institutionalism.

When asking for key actors in the field of lifelong learning, the verdict of the interviewed experts is astonishingly uniform. EU and OECD are unanimously identified by the experts as influential collective actors with certain action orientations and capabilities that are institutional resources and instruments of political influence. According to Scharpf (2006) institutional resources include both tangible means such as money, technology, intangible means such as privileged access to information as well as institutional rules - that means rules by which relations and interactions among the actors are regulated, such as collective decision-making process or veto rights.

The OECD, for example, using its surveys, international comparative reports and evaluations can spread good practice or use “the name and shame” strategy (e.g. PISA). The European Commission emphatically asks for regular education monitoring and reporting from its member states in the framework of the open method of coordination or even through legislation (e.g. EU-Adult Education Survey) (cf. IOANNIDOU 2010b). Furthermore, by means of their publications the EU and the OECD develop and disseminate concepts, norms, and models and generate normative pressure upon their members.

In addition to the collective actors, EU and OECD, there are some individual actors such as policy officers at European and national level, as well as consultants, experts and researchers whose actions have an impact on the adaption and implementation of lifelong learning at national level. The findings show very clearly that, besides the institutional resources, the influence of the individual actors derive mostly from their personal characteristics. It turns out that experience, knowledge, communication skills and openness in varying degrees constitute the intellectual resources of

the individual actors. Furthermore, the findings suggest that these actors often come together in diverse constellations and generate a kind of closed elite circle that decisively influence the policy and politics of lifelong learning.

It is worth mentioning that these actors show convergences in their cognitive, normative and evaluative orientations, in their worldviews and preferences. For example, they all consider systematic and evidence-based knowledge as essential for rational policy making. These shared values, perceptions and preferences facilitate the decision-making process and increase the capacity for strategic action in non-hierarchical contexts.

Looking at the *polity* dimension of lifelong learning, one should focus on the institutional context, the organization of the state, and task responsibilities of other non-state actors. In the transnational educational space, which is a non-hierarchical multi-layered system with a blend of actors, there is no single actor able to determine the outcome of a policy intervention unilaterally. Political power in case of lifelong learning is distributed both internal and external to the state. Within this context the institutional resources of the actors, money, technology, but also intangible resources, such as privileged access to knowledge and information are crucial. It is evident that in the absence of action resources, even the strongest interests and the most enlightened perceptions will fail to make a practical difference. It is also evident that actors have unequal access to resources. The instruments of political influence such as money, power and knowledge are unevenly distributed creating dependencies and interdependencies between the actors (cf. IOANNIDOU 2007).

The findings support further the assumption that the institutional context enables decisions that take place through negotiations rather than by majority rules or unilateral actions or hierarchical direction (SCHARPF 2006, pp. 90ff.). Thus, it favors the



work in networks and working groups, since decisions there take place on the basis of negotiations. In the EU context, the coordination of action usually takes place in the form of negotiations or as a majority decision. For example, the adopted indicators and benchmarks for lifelong learning are the product of continuing negotiations between Member States and Commission. Nevertheless, unilateral actions cannot be excluded because of the bureaucratic hierarchy of the EU. In the OECD context, due to its constitution, decisions derive from negotiations, sometimes even as a majority decision, but never in the form of hierarchical direction.

## Conclusion: Lifelong Learning as a Governance Model?

This article has focused on the policy, polity and politics of lifelong learning. It suggests that the adaption and implementation of lifelong learning at national level can be considered as a governance model in education policy. According to this model the state is not the only player but a whole set of different actors, individual and collective, including supranational and international organizations, experts, researchers, representatives of regional and local bodies, social partners and civil society organisations are increasingly infiltrating its policy making domain. Drawing on empirical findings from a comparative research project the analysis highlights the emergence of a transnational educational space in which influential actors from different levels interact with each other on a variety of settings.

The emergence of a transnational educational space undermines the long term development of purely national education policies and weakens the role of the nation state in shaping educational policy. Supranational and intergovernmental bodies like the EU and the OECD emerge as major centers of

influence in shaping educational policies. These organizations promote new tools and practices of governance beyond hierarchy and market.

For these reasons, research on education policy is crucial to be extended to other actors and actor constellations, to other units of analysis beyond the national and sub-national level as well as to new forms of societal action coordination beyond hierarchy and state-control.

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#### Biographical note

*Alexandra Ioannidou* holds a PhD in Social Sciences and works as a project manager for the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation in Athens. Her current research interests are linking education with the labour market, qualifications frameworks, educational governance, lifelong learning and vocational education and training.

#### Correspondence:

Chris. Smirnis 2C, 14561 Kifisia/Athens, Greece

Email: alexa.ioannidou@gmail.com

alexandra@fes-athens.org

## THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY CONCEPT OF THE KMK ON LIFELONG LEARNING

*Summary:* In this article the educational policy concept of the KMK (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany) on Lifelong learning is described as an educational chain according to the areas of governmental responsibility of the KMK (the Federal Republic of Germany is built on states or provinces, called in German language Land, or in plural Länder). This concept starts with early childhood education at the elementary and primary grade, it continues in comprehensive quality assurance programs in lower and upper secondary education (secondary education grade I and II) and is finally leading to forms of vocational education and to education and training of adults. Lifelong learning is understood by the KMK as an essential component of educational strategy which takes concrete forms in official documents and in its standing committees. The KMK conceptually regards basic education as being a necessary prerequisite of Lifelong learning on all stages of this educational chain. Compensatory elements additionally complete an ideal framework for education.

### **ແນວຄວາມຄິດດ້ານນະໂຍບາຍການສຶກສາຂອງ ເຄເອມເຄ ກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນຮູ້ ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ.**

*ບົດສັງລວມ:* ໃນບົດຄວາມນີ້ກ່ຽວກັບແນວທາງດ້ານນະໂຍບາຍຂອງການສຶກສາຂອງ ເຄເອມເຄ (ກອງປະຊຸມ ຄະນະລັດຖະມົນຕີຂອງກະຊວງສຶກສາ ແລະ ວັດທະນະທຳ ຂັ້ນແຂວງຂອງ ລັດຖະບານເຢຍລະມັນ) ການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດແມ່ນຖືກອະທິບາຍວ່າເປັນລະບົບຕ່ອງໂສ້, ໂດຍອີງຄວາມຮັບຜິດຊອບຂອງລັດຖະບານໃນຂອບເຂດຂອງ ເຄເອມເຄ (ລັດຖະບານເຢຍລະມັນແມ່ນແຍກອອກເປັນລັດ ຫຼືແຂວງ, ແປຈາກພາສາເຢຍລະມັນຮ້ອງວ່າດິນແດນ)ແນວຄວາມຄິດນີ້ແມ່ນເລີ່ມມາຈາກການສຶກສາຈາກໄວເດັກຈາກຫ້ອງກຽມ ແລະ ຊັ້ນປະຖົມສຶກສາ,



of an educational administration. Also a detailed discussion about educational competences and spheres of responsibilities in the Federal Republic of Germany would be quite inviting. We do not provide both of them, neither basically nor detailed. For the moment, we agree on the fact that we do not refer to the label Lifelong learning as summarized in the EU-programs as COMENIUS (school education), ERASMUS (higher education), LEONARDO DA VINCI (vocational training) or GRUNDTVIG (adult education). We also agree on the fact that Lifelong learning is not only considered as the phase of adult education.

We will follow a full comprehension of lifelong learning as far as it refers to the tasks of KMK. Consequentially, we speak about learning throughout the whole lifetime, excluding early childhood care in parental home. Even though the latter is of essential importance, we refer especially to formal learning processes without denying a close link between formal, informal and non-formal education. Considering this perception of Lifelong learning, it does not stop with a degree in formal education just as adult education does not start as soon as formal education stops. Hereby, competences and responsibilities of the ministries of education and culture get interlinked with those of other ministries of the Länder, several Federal ministries and/or communities too. We will be in charge to clarify the educational policy concept of the KMK to a complex version of Lifelong learning as well as to illustrate measures and strategies for implementation.

The work of the KMK is reflected within its committees: In the school committee, higher education committee, and the culture committee, in the committee for international affairs or also for vocational education. There was no committee for Lifelong learning, and there is no committee for further education anymore. For the KMK, Lifelong learning presents much more a responsibility and a meaningful strategy to connect different measures instead of

an independent, limited scope of tasks. The committee of further education, which has been equated for a long time with lifelong learning work, did not have an easy development within the organs of the KMK. In 2004, this committee has been disbanded by a threat to resignation by the Land Lower Saxony, and was finally ceased to the reform required by KMK. The reform was about reduction and condensation of responsibilities, e.g. by reducing committees. Just this committee has been hit because further education is not as widely regulated by the state than all the other education sectors. This structure is characterized by plurality and competition among responsible bodies. To the KMK, it means that many responsibilities of the former committee of further education are taken over by other committees or are transferred back to the Länder (state level). Only recently, in 2008, it has been changed again. Increasing challenges in adult education led to a new establishment of a working group of general and political further education. This group has also been motivated when realizing that deleting adult education from the KMK, then this sector suffers a considerable break down in the educational chain. This working group could get established as an advisory committee in terms of a full understanding of Lifelong learning.

## 2. Questions related to responsibilities for Lifelong learning

The constitutional reform in 2006 and a change in § 91b of the Basic Law helped to renew the education sector and responsibilities of the Federal level and the Länder respectively. The so-called cooperation ban defined the exact limits within their inner relations, but it requires at the same time just as agreed upon cooperation in their external relations. But still, the ministers of



education remain mainly responsible for school and higher education issues. The crucial part of responsibilities in terms of educational policy of ministers of education is kept by school and higher education. The fact that the constitutional reform changed only responsibilities rather than finances makes it contestable and open for proposed changes.

With respect to the responsibility towards sectors and disregarding the current discussions about the cooperation ban annulment, basically, the cooperation between the KMK and Federal ministries, especially the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), is working very well. This becomes also clear in current topical discussions as there are many reports and statements about experiences in Lifelong learning, and even more important in common forums for debate and projects. For instance, projects initiated by the BMBF as “Lernende Regionen – Förderung von Netzwerken” (learning regions – support for networks) in 2001 or “Lernen vor Ort” (learning in communities) in 2009 as continuation of the learning regions project. The latter is also about Lifelong learning which was able to liberate itself from the narrow sense of adult education. Here they were and are – the project is within the second funding period – motivating incentives with considerable means of the BMBF and the European Social Fund to establish an adequate educational organization. This organization is meant to connect educational provision in administration, and work it out for users in order to plan and realize individual educational chains; these could be for basic education, compensatory learning, vocational further learning or personal development.

Education development plans arise from school development plans in which regional statements about educational opportunities can be made and therefore offer monitoring knowledge; not only for ministries but also for regional

administrators responsible for education. Goals are the districts and cities independent from district administration. A coherent educational management must be developed on community level. But by trying to build bridges across decentralized but partly quite independent and self-confident communities and the highly centralized federal level, it is clear that it does not work without the third pillar: the Länder. The Länder strongly contribute to all educational projects, but it is also about the question of perpetuating the funding period. The most important criterion remains transferability. Every project initiated by the federal level is a blessing and a curse for the Länder at the same time. Although there are opportunities established to test issues of educational policy, the problem is often the expense of lasting financing of new projects during a fixed financial budget period.

Interestingly, the school gets increasingly more important as a local factor and becomes an attractive object for communities. Influence and decision making powers depend on legally anchored distinction between internal and external school supervision. But still, pedagogical decision criteria of the KMK compete with economic and demographic-political interests of communities. It is known that regional successes in education can be decisive for the establishment of certain factories. Educational failures – probably only through the reduction of secondary schools – can cause the contrary. Population development, prosperity and cultural wealth depend increasingly on regional educational opportunities. Further educational opportunities for adults do not play an insignificant role in compensatory education or professional development, although, as good and successful they may be working; an increase in the recognition of the importance of adult education would do well.

### 3. The educational policy concept of the KMK for Lifelong learning

In the already elaborated broader understanding of lifelong learning as including the entire life span, according to the KMK, we refer to the educational chain which starts with early childhood education at elementary and primary level, continuing in full quality assurance programs in secondary school levels I and II, finally intersecting with formal as well informal programs of adult education in studies and occupation. The philosophy of this educational chain has its roots in the realization of several researches of educational participation and efficiency: Who has, that one receives! Or: A good basic education ensures continued participation in education, and ensures therefore further educational success. This is not just about learning outcomes, but also about learning experience and motivation. Failures do not automatically affect failures in the educational career, because the German education system offers a variety of possible ways to education for comparable objectives as well as several compensation opportunities. But still, learning experiences are crucial when it comes to further learning in life and building up on learning success.

#### 3.1 Elementary education

Let us have a look at the educational chain in detail. In the last years, early childhood education has been significantly favored on the national, but especially on the international level, too. Repeated OECD-statements according to the educational yield and changing financial support by the World Bank reveal that strengthened financial support for all forms of basic education, and reduced funds for adult education. This obvious strengthening of early

childhood education is not self-evident for Germany and takes place step by step. For a long time, the kindergarten, once an important export hit of German education, was more a crèche for child-care and less an early childhood education place. Necessary changes caused by learning deficits, noticed in international educational studies, take slowly effect. In contrary to many other European countries, the training as a kindergarten teacher in Germany is still not equivalent to the primary school teacher. This is why linguistic deficits in early childhood cannot be worked out before primary school. Especially children who do not or hardly speak German in their parental home will not have a sufficient and necessary linguistic fundament for primary school. The same goes for the very basic acquisition of natural-scientific and mathematic knowledge and abilities.

Consequentially, the KMK established intensive consulting about the acquisition of knowledge and competencies, and opportunities for compensatory education. For the training sector of kindergarten teachers, for which ministers of education have their respective responsibilities, followed a clear confession to more scientific education and to a main emphasis on training, especially in linguistic issues, natural-scientific phenomena and numeral understanding. But as educational policy decisions referring to contents in the elementary sector can only be made in cooperation with the Family-Youth-Conference, common consulting became necessary. Two agreements were made: The common frame for Länder for early education in kindergarten (2004) and the decision about the intersection between elementary and primary level (2009). The implementation of these agreements has initially been accompanied by conferences overall Länder and area of responsibilities and gets further support in charity projects and the production of materials in order to work in kindergartens and day nurseries properly. The ongoing strengthening of the first

level of the educational chain for lifelong learning has been moved back to several Länder and is recognized by the respective educational institutions.

### 3.2 The school

Educational monitoring of school development is still related to national and international benchmarking studies such as PIRLS/IGLU, TIMSS, PISA and the cross country studies VERA 3 and VERA 8. Additionally, there are publications of OECD like “Education at a Glance” which report every year in September about basic data of educational systems in OECD countries, as well as the every-two-years published Report on Education of the Federal and Länder authorities.

Agreements in Konstanz (“Konstanzer Beschlüsse”) in 1997 decided to ensure quality and development in education of the German school system. This resolution engaged the Länder to participate in comparative educational studies. This has been noted as necessary as the international competitiveness of the German educational system and the international protection of work and education opportunities of German youth were otherwise not guaranteed anymore. The development of educational standards has been defined as well as monitoring by the mentioned national and international school benchmark studies. In the following years, this has been enlarged to a general strategy for educational monitoring which has been passed in 2006 with the following four pillars: International school benchmark studies, central verification of reaching educational standards by comparing Länder, comparative studies for national verification of performance of several schools and educational reporting on the Federal and Länder authorities. This will have wide consequences for each of the 16 individual federal states, the Länder. The ministers of

education in Germany commonly decided to go for inner school and teaching reforms. Content related teaching and learning plans were meant to be left and to focus on the acquisition of competencies in class. Learning to learn became essential, offering intelligent knowledge instead of accumulating dead knowledge in the classroom. This was and is not easy. The newly required openness of learning, reaching certain standards without setting general solutions in advance which regularly are verified and needs to endure in national and international competitions, demands a lot from the teachers, students and the system of 'school' until today. Of course, there are supporting systems as specialist national and international conferences implemented by systematic training of trainers as well as by teachers in the area. But the most effective instrument until now has been the inauguration of an Institute of the Länder to develop quality in the education system (IQB) at the Humboldt University in Berlin. To this institute were handed over responsibility of national comparative studies, and it also develops and publishes examples for changing teaching competencies in the central subjects and helps in implementation. It takes delegated teachers of the Länder in the circle of scientists and proceeds with a continuous, immanent further training. It brings trainers of the Länder together as well as responsible personnel from specialized administrations to implement and evaluate comparative studies and work, and helps in basic questions of data interpretation. The IQB became a model for many comparable institutions in the Länder also. For that reason, a particular competence network could be build up for the entire Federal republic of Germany.

This monitoring system is a response to strengths and weaknesses of the educational system and forms the central element of the KMK concept for Lifelong learning. This concept is completed with educational measures for the benefit of individual student groups: Language learning programs for children with a

migration background - often crossing generations together with their mothers, extension of full-time day school programs - especially to offer opportunities for children who come from educational disadvantaged parental homes, deepening and extending opportunities related to vocational lessons, especially for students who pursue a degree in secondary school level I, and measures in school structures to facilitate a longer, common learning. The change to the acquisition of competences meant also a change in individualized teaching, which next to acquisition of specialist knowledge includes the ability to learn the acquisition of knowledge and further, to learn how to apply knowledge to different situations. This is one of the main fundamentals of every sort of later learning – if this can be experienced in joy, there is no obstacle for a life lighted up by motivation to learn.

### 3.3 Higher education/ Universities

According to the strategy of safeguarding and developing quality, universities passed a similar development as the school. Universities and its students were also meant to be competitive within European and international higher education relations. In most of the studies, the Bachelor has been established as a basic education, a first job-enabling degree but also a flexible fundament for further learning processes. A complex accreditation system ensures the required implementation corresponding to internationally validated qualifications. Qualitative standards have unfortunately only been developed for teacher training courses, but at least for every kind of specialized studies as well as for educational sciences. In 2004, the KMK passed “the standards of teacher training: educational sciences” as well as the “federal common for requirements in specialist sciences and specialist didactics in teacher training” in 2008.

Actually, academic further training – according to Lifelong learning – belongs to the core tasks of universities. But the continuous increase of the number of students and on-going structural underfinancing of the higher education system caused that the university never really became a place for adult learning; according to further learning of adults, neither for scientific pre-educated people nor for non-academics. In 2009, there has been a timid opening by a Länder agreement made for people who do not have an official access to higher education but a professional experience that allow to enter into certain studies at university, there are also increasing opportunities for seniors. Both of them have a participation rate less than one percent.

### 3.4 Vocational education

In 2009, the KMK's participation in the national pact for apprenticeship and recuring of qualified employees was meant to focus on the transfer from school to vocational training and to ensure school requirements. Those were meant to facilitate a good vocational training place and to ensure a comparatively good degree in their vocational training. It was and is important to bridge the gap between pedagogical and economic interests, to make opportunities for vocational training independent from the economic cycles, decrease significantly the rate of drop-outs, and further prepare successfully and satisfactorily with realistic encounters for a professional working life. Meanwhile, questions about basic education, in this case vocational basic education, get more important. In times of increasing globalization, shortening modernization and innovation periods do not facilitate job future once you have decided for a certain apprenticeship. Training should also provide basic economic, commercial and technical knowledge in order to be prepared, qualified and flexible for new



situations with new challenges. Pedagogical concepts are especially meant to guarantee future opportunities for students by facilitating lifelong learning within a sufficient vocational support as a useful theoretical supplement to the practical part of the apprenticeship. The KMK has – as a partner of the ‘national pact for apprenticeship and safeguarding of qualified employees’ – taken over the above mentioned task, by intersecting of the Länder with the federal ministries and representatives of employers of the chamber of industry and commerce. It is important that the theoretical (schooling) part remains equally important to the practical part and that the training keeps maintaining a wide and open view. According to vocational training, the construction of a comparable network of standards and verification as well as a new culture of tasks which enables the acquisition of future open competencies is still in its infancy.

#### 4. Adult education

Ideal-typically considered, the educational chain which we described until now could be described as a balanced and good educational fundament to build on in further life periods, independent from pursuing an academic or vocational education. Unfortunately, the chain does not always work out as linear as desired. Until now we did not focus on failures, missing parental contribution, learning deficits by entering a new field in the German educational system, drop-outs from the educational chain because of refusing to learn, or destruction of learning motivation, or wrong opportunities at the wrong time. For that reason, educational opportunities for adults and adolescents in the public sector are basically justified. They are meant as compensatory learning to make up for educational qualifications or as supplement

of insufficient language skills. This is different in the private sector. Vocational training here is now motivated by increasing salaries expectations, pursuing better working conditions or believing in an enhanced protection of cancelling and unemployment. Both cases, discernible in school participation and learning success but also in adult education participation reflect social inequalities. Participation rates of adults with an advanced high-school diploma are five to ten times higher than adults with a lower high-school diploma. Older people tend to participate less in further learning opportunities than younger people. The Federal Republic of Germany and its respective Länder are challenged to establish basic conditions and incentives to avoid further social inequality which could not be balanced in elementary, primary or secondary school. And just because especially the non-public sector tends to withhold opportunities for low qualified people, the compensatory adult education keeps belonging to the state.

We are moving at the borderline of original coordinating obligations and responsibilities of the KMK. Each of the Länder has its own further education law and its own further learning opportunities. Both offer full counseling, interlinked with respective education providers, regional universities, regional centers for education of democratic citizenship and the KMK. They refer to the local adult education center (Volkshochschule) as well as to several other educational institutions for adult education. They offer E-Learning, help for vocational re-entries, inform about lay-off possibilities and about financial help for further education. In Germany, there are standardized quality frameworks and quality control mechanisms missing, not only in the demonstrated contents, but at its teachers, too. There are not many summative evaluations and as a consequence few opportunities to correct failures or verify different offers. There are not many opportunities for adults in further education – and not to stay unnoticed – the

existential protection for teachers in adult education as well as for its clients is very often equally precarious.

The most important project, which all Länder, in cooperation with the federal level keep moving, is the “National strategy for literacy and basic education for adults in Germany”. For a long time, there were no reliable data on literacy rates available in Germany. This has first been changed with a study called “leo. Level-One Studie. Literalitaet von Erwachsenen auf den unteren Kompetenzniveaus” (Literacy of adults at the lower level of competencies) which was implemented by the University of Hamburg, and supported by funds of BMBF in 2009. Surprisingly, there are about 14 per cent functional illiterate people as part of the working population in Germany, and even more surprising is the finding that school attendance does not protect from this functional illiteracy; a considerable amount of those 14 per cent are not unemployed at all, but following a regular working life.

In 2012, the Federal level and the Länder agreed on a common national strategy to reduce the amount of functional illiterate people. Although there is a considerable number of them employed, it has been not possible to include employers representation into the national strategy and to refuse their argument that basic education is exclusively the task of the state, disregarding the personal life situation in which the people are at the moment. It is obvious that this literacy campaign will not be an easy undertaking. On the one side, the target group is not easy accessible. On the other hand, it is an expensive undertaking as it is about more learning places, more educational opportunities, more learning materials and more adult educators, but also, because – different from school or university – there first must be built a community based learning system in the adult sector to develop and ensure the verification of qualitative standards. This is why

assurances from the Länder for a full literacy strategy are still weak, and depend on the commitment of further partners.

## 5. Concluding remarks / Outlook

Here ends the demonstration of lifelong learning as it can be seen in current work and working fields of the KMK. We did not report “from the cradle to the grave”, but from the kindergarten to the adult sector. The fundamental element of all the parts of the educational chain is the construction of an educational foundation for respective sectors, on which learning person can build: language acquisition and basic mathematic-natural science thinking in the elementary sector and at the basic school, not funnel knowledge, but a structurally, competence-oriented acquired knowledge. The most important basic fundament is the first degree at the secondary level I. Despite the framework established from the KMK in 2007 “Handlungsrahmen zur Reduzierung der Zahl der Schuelerinnen und Schueler ohne Schulabschluss, Sicherung der Anschluesse und Verringerung der Zahl der Ausbildungsabbrecher” (Action-framework for the reduction of girls and boys without school leavers certificate, assurance of the next level-up and reduction of drop-outs from training), numbers of unsuccessful participants are still too high. There is almost no possibility to enter an apprenticeship without a school leaver certificate, and without apprenticeship there is almost no possibility to start a successful working life. There is still a considerable amount of basic knowledge missing which is necessary to enter in the process of lifelong learning. The basic level of university education is going better currently. The share of students increases continuously, the Bachelor is more and more recognized as a degree enabling to enter a profession, and the opening of universities to people

without access certificate to higher education began. Adult education, compensatory for low qualified people, is still expandable, qualitatively as well as quantitatively. A continuous further education – despite of changing requirements in the employment world – is especially anchored by already well educated people. In order to motivate the low qualified people with negative educational experiences and to include them into the labour market, incentives need to be strengthened and the chance of a successfully completed education measure should not be ignored.

Lifelong learning has clearly passed the dimension of individual knowledge acquisition. Acquisition of education and the educational level of a society became an economic and well-being factor. They became an indispensable part of functioning democracies and a necessary, but unfortunately not sufficient fundament for a peaceful living together. Here, we do not only refer to a continuously more connected cosmopolitan society, but especially in a neighborhood, that is marked by different cultures, religions, customs and historical experience. Lifelong learning assumes to be a joy while learning and winning new insights, and this goes for every age and learning level. Those who missed or lost that joy of learning have a right to compensate. The willingness to learn independently starts at early childhood education and continues at school and its educational contents in which an apprenticeship and university fundament are established. As those conditions strongly influence further motivation and qualification, each sector has its essential responsibility. The biggest challenge to demand this responsibility depends on every single person.

## Biographical note

*Angelika Huefner*, born and grown up in Rhineland, nearby Duesseldorf. Studied history, educational science and french language and literature in Cologne, Freiburg and Duesseldorf. Professional activities as teacher, deputy headmaster and head teacher at schools in the hilly area to the east of Cologne, in Essen and in Duesseldorf. PhD in Dr. päd. at the Universität Duisburg. 1991 move to Berlin. First employed as school supervision, then as pedagogical expert in the office of the minister for education in Berlin. 2004 move to the secretary of the KMK (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany). There employed as a deputy of the general secretary until 2012.

Address: Brucknerstrasse 46a, D-12247 Berlin;

E-Mail: [Angelika.huefner@t-online.de](mailto:Angelika.huefner@t-online.de)



ផ្ដើម ។ ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះបានសង្ខេបនូវលទ្ធផលរកឃើញសំខាន់ៗប្រៀបធៀបជាមួយនឹងលទ្ធផលស្រាវជ្រាវពីប្រទេសអង់គ្លេសនិងបារាំងទៀតផង ។ នៅពេលខាងមុខទៀតផ្អែកលើលទ្ធផលនៃការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ គំនិតចាស់គំរិលដែលមានសព្វថ្ងៃអំពីអនក្ខរជនវិជ្ជាជីវៈនឹងត្រូវស្ទង់ដេញដោយគ្នាយ៉ាងដិតដល់ថែមទៀត ។

## The leo. – Level-One Survey

Germany was late in running a national literacy survey. In England and in France first national results were published in 2003 and 2004 respectively. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) even provided data about several countries in the 1990s. The first German national survey – the leo. – Level-One survey – presented its results in spring 2011. The study was funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and run by the Hamburg University and TNS Infratest Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research).

The main objective of the survey was to quantify the extent of functional illiteracy within the German adult population. According to its results, 14.5 percent of those aged 18 to 64 are functionally illiterate, far more than estimated before. These results have a strong impact on the system of adult education as the participation in classes providing reading and writing skills is rather poor and amounts up to not more than 20.000 course participations p.a. (KARG et al., 2010, p. 9).

A second objective was to describe the composition of the group of functional illiterates. On this basis common stereotypes about functional illiterates will have to be revised. It becomes clear that it is not appropriate to compare the group of participants in



basic education courses with the large group of addressees we know relatively little about.

The leo.-survey was carried out as an add-on to the Adult Education Survey (AES) which is part of the EU Statistics on lifelong learning and was run in Germany 2010. The survey covered a sample of 7.035 adults aged 18 to 64 years. This sample was supplemented by an additional sample of 1.401 people with low school degrees to guarantee sufficient interviewees from the lower educational segment where poor literal skills were to be expected. After having completed the interview for the AES the interviewees were asked to complete a number of tasks concerning reading and writing which were presented in a so called 'puzzle booklet' and additionally in a so called 'alpha booklet' for those who had shown poor results in the puzzle booklet.

The established definitions of functional illiteracy had to be operationalized to meet the requirements of developing items for a survey. In the late 1970s the UNESCO distinguished between illiterates and functional illiterates.

"A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life. (...) A person is functionally illiterate who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development." (UNESCO, 2007, p. 529) For our study this definition seemed to be too general and too vague to be translated into specific items testing reading and writing skills. These skills should be differentiated more precisely. It should be possible not merely to argue if a person is functionally illiterate, but to describe which particular skills this person has or doesn't have.

That is why the so-called Alpha-Levels were developed. They differentiate the Level 1 into smaller units and are based on

different theories of reading and writing and refer to the length of a word/text, the different strategies of reading and writing, described as logographic, alphabetic and orthographic (FRITH, 1986, p. 72), as well as the customariness of a word and their typography. They are based on 78 can-do-descriptions (GROTLÜSCHEN et. al. 2011). The Alpha-Levels (alpha 1 to alpha 5) describe much more precisely the literacy skills of a person concerning reading and writing.

Empirical results show that the main predictor for item difficulty is the length of a text. Speaking of functional illiteracy one has to remember that most of the people affected can read and write, but that their skills are very limited. Alpha-Level 1 describes persons who are able to read or write single letters. On Alpha-Level 2 a person is able to read or write single words still being unable to cope with sentences. On Alpha-Level 3 a person manages single sentences but fails to read with understanding texts belonging of more than one sentence. Up to Alpha-Level 3 we speak of functional illiteracy, from Alpha-Level 4 onwards we speak of literacy (GROTLÜSCHEN & RIEKMANN, 2011, p. 2).

A part of the items used for the study originated in the project "lea. - Literalitätsentwicklung von Arbeitskräften" (Workforce Literacy Development) (GROTLÜSCHEN et. al., 2011). The development of further items was carried out within the leo.-project. All Items developed were orientated at the can-do-descriptions of the Alpha-Levels.

## Results

Functional illiteracy affects an accumulated 14.5 percent of the working-age population in Germany (Alpha-Level 1-3, 18 - 64 years of age). This figure translates to 7.5 million functionally illiterate

people who can read or write single sentences, but not continuous text - even if it is brief. Due to their limited written language skills, people affected cannot properly deal with everyday requirements of life in society.

Only half a percent of the adult population is on the lowest Alpha-Level 1, i.e. does not reach the word level in reading and writing. Another 3.9 percent is on Alpha-Level 2, i.e. does not reach the sentence level, but can read and write single words. A further 10 percent of the population is on the following level. They can deal with brief sentences, but have problems with whole texts and try to avoid them. At 7.5 million, the number of functionally illiterate people in Germany is nearly twice as high as formerly estimated (GROTLÜSCHEN et al., 2012).

Survey data help to explain part of the reasons for functional illiteracy. IALS stated to be able to clarify about 25 percent of the variance (OECD & STATISTICS CANADA, 2000, p. 55), the leo.-study is able to explain about 30 percent still leaving challenge for further investigation. A regression analysis showed that the strongest predictors for functional illiteracy are the level of school degree and the first language learned in childhood. The crucial importance of education and schooling had been stated earlier by the IALS (OECD & STATISTICS CANADA, 2000, p. 22). Data show as well that the educational background within the families serves as predictor for illiteracy. The impact of being child of parents without school degrees is even stronger than the impact of age or gender (GROTLÜSCHEN et al., 2012, pp. 3-42).

If the German results are compared with the results of other European National Studies about literacy, it should be remembered – as LIMAGE and JANHEAU (2009, p. 18) pointed out –, that it is difficult, and sometimes misleading, to draw simplifying comparisons between the results of different national tests. Beneath different methods of measurement and data processing

the problem of different samples must be taken into account (BROOKS, 2009, p. 26). Nevertheless, despite all necessary caution some of the main results will be compared with outcomes of corresponding studies.

In France, in 2004 the IVQ study identified 9 percent of the adult population as functionally illiterate (ANLCI, 2005, p. 3). Recently published first results of the follow-up study seem to show a decrease in this proportion to 7 percent (JONAS, 2012). This change is explained with a cohort effect. It should be noted however that in contrast with the leo.-study, only people who had attended school in France were surveyed. Adding those having been schooled in other countries the proportion rises to 11 percent in 2011.

The British government decided to run a national survey (Skills for life survey of needs) (2002/2003). In England, some 16 percent of the people between 16 and 65 years fall into level one, i.e. the level of low reading and writing skills (BROOKS, 2009, p. 28). Quite similar to the distribution of functional illiterates to the German Alpha-Levels, the biggest proportion of people with poor literacy are located on Entry Level 3, while the ratio of those with the poorest results (Entry Level 1 and 2) is significantly smaller.

## Gender and Age

While in the German adult population as a whole some 14.5 percent are functionally illiterates this proportion is clearly higher within the male population (17.4 %) than within the female population (11.6 %). This means that within the group of functionally illiterates the ratio of men and women is far from equal. About 60 percent of the functionally illiterates are men accordingly only 40 percent are women.

The results for France concerning literacy and gender are quite similar to the results for Germany. In France, about 59 percent of the functional illiterates are men (ANLCI, 2005, p. 6). About two thirds of the functionally illiterate men are employed while only about half of the functionally illiterate women are employed. Moreover the ratio of fulltime employment is much higher within the male than within the female subgroup. This is a striking result because it serves a hint about how to get in contact to functional illiterates. Getting in contact within the world of labor should be a promising perspective – but especially for men (BUDDEBERG 2012, pp. 195–198).

There are differences in the writing and reading performance between different age groups. The culturally pessimistic assumption that younger cohorts perform weaker than older age groups can be rejected. Within the 18 to 29-year-old age group the smallest proportion of functional illiteracy can be found with 12.9 percent, highest proportion has been found within the eldest group, those being 50 to 64 years of age (BUDDEBERG, 2012, pp. 200–201). The IALS also had reported better results within younger cohorts. According to IALS it can be stated “that in every participating country when only age is considered, younger adults aged 26-35 have higher literacy scores than adults closer to retirement aged 56-65”(OECD & STATISTICS CANADA, 2000, p. 33).

## First Language Spoken

The relation between first language and literacy in German written language is not easy to be judged. Is it adequate to label persons as functional illiterates who learned German during adolescence or adulthood as functionally illiterates? Isn't it an application of double standards to compare these two groups? Following IALS

and PIAAC, we decided to maintain the term functional illiteracy for the native speakers as well as for persons with another first language. But of course this perspective continuous to consolidate the linguistic-cultural dominance of German and could be questioned critically. The discussion can be followed in GROTLÜSCHEN et al. (2012).

Of the 7.5 million people with functional illiteracy, 4.4 million (58%) learnt German as their first language. A further 3.1 million (42%) learnt another language first. From the reversed perspective it can be shown that – as expected – the ratio of functionally illiterates within the population with another first language than German is significantly higher than within the group of those having learned German as first language in childhood.

## School Degrees

Some 19.3 percent of functional illiterates have no school qualifications, a further 47.7 percent have basic educational qualifications. But 12.3 percent of people who are functionally illiterate also have higher qualifications – which are quite a substantial figure. The Skills for Life survey found similar results at the Entry Levels (WILLIAMS 2003, p. 67). The phenomenon can partly be explained by the migration of persons with high school degrees acquired abroad. It must as well be considered that there must be a considerable degree of loss of competences during adulthood (WÖLFEL et al., 2011, p. 3). Reasons for such loss might be acquired disabilities, chronic diseases or drug abuse. Moreover the ‘impact of time out of work on literacy and numeracy skills’ (BYNNER & PARSONS, 1998) must be taken into account.

## Employment

As IALS pointed out literacy and employment form a two way relationship. Literacy serves to improve job opportunities. "At the same time, the workplace is a factor in literacy acquisition and maintenance, a place where a considerable amount of reading, writing and arithmetic takes place"(OECD & STATISTICS CANADA, 2000, p. 36).

Of the functionally illiterate people in Germany, about 57 percent are gainfully employed and about 17 percent are unemployed. Within the working population functional illiteracy is less prevalent than within the group of the unemployed. Some 12.4 percent of the working population is functionally illiterate. Some 31.9 percent of unemployed people are functionally illiterate.

According to the results of the Skills for Life study 2003 66% of the persons on Entry Level 3 or below are occupied, most of them in fulltime employment. This ratio is below, but not much below, the persons on Level One or above (WILLIAMS, 2003, p. 123) and it appears similar to the results concerning employment in Germany displayed above.

## Comparing Studies on Participants and Studies on Addressees

The leo.-survey was the first national study about functional illiteracy presenting data about size and structure of the entire group of functional illiterates. Before that knowledge about functional illiterates had mainly been drawn from studies about participants in reading and writing classes. These results raised a certain image about functional illiterates. It is obvious that the

group of participants (about 20.000 p.a.) only form a very small subgroup within the group of addressees (7.5 million).

Thus it has to be discussed if results of studies about participants draw a realistic picture of functional illiterates. The short answer is: They do not. Obviously the structure of the group of functional illiterates has always been misconceived.

While the above mentioned results of the leo.-survey lead to the conclusion that functional illiterates form a rather diverse group concerning sources for illiteracy, employment, school degrees, native language and other parameters, studies on participants, on the contrary, form the picture of a rather uniform group of persons without a school degree, without employment and without a social network.

The AlphaPanel, a study on participants in reading and writing classes in German adult education centers show that the vast majority of participants (80%) is without any school degree (ROSENBLADT & BILGER, 2011, p. 17). The leo.-study shows the inverse result concerning the addressees as a whole. Similar discrepancies can be illustrated concerning employment. The degree of employed persons is bigger within the group of functional illiterates (57 %) than within the group of participants (48 %). On the other hand, the degree of unemployment is higher within the group of participants (29 %) than within the group of addressees as a whole (17 %) (GROTLÜSCHEN et al., 2012, p. 154). Evaluating the household situation it can as well be shown that within the group of functional illiterates no clearly higher degree of social isolation can be stated compared with the entire adult population. Within the group of participants, however, the degree of those living alone is three times as high. Once again reference to studies on participants as single source of data will lead to misconceptions which serve to maintain existing clichés of functional illiterates.



## Discussion

We have to admit that we still know very little about the group of functional illiterates who do not participate in adult basic education. This poses questions for adult educators throughout Europe: How could we reach the people in question, so that everyone knows that there is at least a chance to improve their skills if they deem it necessary. But we might also find a group of people who are, for different reasons, not interested in improving their literacy skills. It might be a privileged and also arrogant view to assume that everyone who is functionally illiterate must have the wish to improve their skills.

As a first political reaction the authorities in Germany will focus on workplace literacy in the upcoming years. And there will be research about this field and new didactical material will be developed like in other European countries before. As shown in the results above, this strategy will reach first of all men who are employed. Functional illiterates who are not employed and have even weaker competencies are not reached with this strategy.

This serves as a hint that we should learn more about the surrounding field of the functional illiterates. The social networks of the functional illiterates never received attention, although biographical research shows that functional illiterates do have at least one confidante: spouse, children, or friends (DÖBERT & HUBERTUS, 2000, p. 70). Informing these confidantes could be another path to reach and inform functional illiterates.

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### Biographical notes

*Grotlueschen*, Prof. Dr., is a professor for Lifelong learning at the University of Hamburg. Her main working fields are target group research and interests, in literacy, learning resitances and e-Learning as well as political and cultural education.

*Riekmann*, Wibke, Dr. is an academic staff at the University of Hamburg. Her main working fields are literacy research, work with youth and youth associations, participation, democratic and political education.

*Buddeberg*, Klaus, M.A. is an academic staff at the University of Hamburg. His main working fields are literacy research and inclusion within adult education.

Universität Hamburg, Fakultät für Erziehungswissenschaft, Psychologie und Bewegungswissenschaft, Arbeitsbereich Lebenslanges Lernen, Binderstraße 34, 20146 Hamburg.



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# 1. The Renaissance of Lifelong Learning

Be it lifelong, throughout life or across all the phases of life: this is a much discussed topic. Education is the primary raw material of the knowledge society. The German working group for innovation in further education, *Innovationskreis Weiterbildung*, for instance stated that “learning throughout the course of one’s life is one of the paramount tasks of education policy”<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, various programs are dedicated to this topic at the level of the EU and the federal government. The latter has set itself the objective of increasing participation in lifelong learning from the current 43% to 50% by 2015.

The increase in attention is closely connected to globalization. Wherever flexible capital, excess labor and information are available at all times and everywhere, innovative ability, organizational talent and communication skill becomes the decisive advantage: the skills that people possess are the most important factors in competition.

In view of the particular demographic situation, the school system is not the only focal point in Germany – the system of vocational and social education is also of prime importance. This system must find answers to the central challenge of the impending

lack of technical skills. According to current forecasts, the labor force potential will decrease by around 6.5 million people by 2025. Prognos Institut estimates a shortage of 5.2 million skilled workers by 2030.<sup>2</sup> Besides immigration, the most important strategy for a solution to this problem is regarded as being the further education of the low-skilled. However, it is not only a question of the economic performance of our society but also about equal opportunity. 6.1 million people in Germany have no vocational training and their risk of unemployment is almost 4 times as high as workers with vocational training (21.9% to 5.7%). Equally dramatic are the findings of the Level One study, which identified 7.5 million people in Germany as functionally illiterate.<sup>3</sup> These people are at risk of basic exclusion from participating in important cultural and political opportunities.

As a result, there is the risk of an increasing division in society. On the labor market this can be seen, among others, in the increase of precarious employment relationships with serious social consequences. This is evident in the income development in the years 2000 to 2010 when the monthly, real gross income in the lowest four income groups (deciles) of all dependent employees dropped by 13.1 to 23.1%, whilst the upper four income deciles remained practically stable (-2.7 to +2.1%).<sup>4</sup> These figures are especially sensitive in a socio-political context when one sees this as a particular German hereditary phenomenon of social immobility. An analysis of SOEP data shows “that the influence of family background on individual work income, family income, hourly wages as well as educational achievements is significantly higher in Germany on an international comparison. Family background accounts for 40% of the inequality in individual work income. When it comes to achievement in formal education, the influence of family background even accounts for more than 50%.”<sup>5</sup> There is hardly another country in which the social mobility of

children is prejudiced as strongly by level of education, income, parenting styles and parental values.<sup>6</sup>

Looking at countries such as Sweden and Denmark sheds light on the fact that family background does not necessarily need to be an unchangeable fate. The social mobility of migrants in Denmark is almost as high as amongst Danes without a migration background. It is apparently less the family and cultural background, but more the national education system, that is the deciding factor for opening opportunities for social advancement.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, a debate on the institutional framework conditions of the German education system was started. This is all the more important as a lack of equal opportunity in the education system has a significant effect on economic and social achievement as well as on democratic participation. A strong national economy and an equal opportunity society are therefore not contradictory – it is time to clarify this myth.

## 2. The empirical evidence: neither high performance nor equal opportunity

International benchmark tests studies regularly lead to heated education policy debates but generally help in their objectification. A good example of this is the results of the PISA studies for Germany: in almost all areas the level of performance was below the international average, almost a quarter of students only have minimum reading competence and educational achievement is to a large extent dependent on the social situation.<sup>8</sup> The situation does not look much better for learning in later phases of life: too many remain behind.



## 2.1 Participation in further education and financing: whoever has will be given more

Taking a look at the statistics on further education in Germany results in a surprising picture: despite technology, higher competitive pressure and structural changes, participation and further education is stagnating. Although a slightly above average number of adults take part in further education and training on an international comparison, participation has, however, stagnated at 42% - 43% for more than 10 years.<sup>9</sup>

A further differentiation shows that the decline in formal further education between the age groups of 19 to 34-year-olds and 35 to 49-year-olds is particularly high at approximately 80%. Apparently, when it comes to formal education, the dogma "first job equals job for life" still applies. This is also indicated by the low number of older students enrolling for courses. Despite the increase in horizontal, professional mobility, the percentage of students over the age of 30 enrolling for courses in the winter semester 2011/12 was 2.7%, which is a decrease of 0.7% compared to winter semester 2000/01.<sup>10</sup> This is hardly surprising considering the continuing culture of full-time study. The percentage of part-time students in Germany is thus only between 4% and 5%.<sup>11</sup> Formal education thus mostly ends with the initial vocational training or course of studies as the organization and financing of education is systematically only geared to young adults.

The trend that more and more social actors are withdrawing from the responsibility for the initial vocational training is disconcerting. The partners in the education pact may be euphorically saying: "The economy has significantly exceeded its promises to create 60,000 new traineeships and 30,000 new training programs at companies annually".<sup>12</sup> The number of

companies who no longer train is, however, also little communicated as is the ratio of trainees to companies not (or no longer) providing training. Statistics prove that German companies have, for many years, no longer provided training programs. These statistics reached an historical low in 2010 with 22.5%. Incidentally this also applies to the trainee/employee ratio, which is also at a low with 6%.<sup>13</sup> The percentage of companies active in further education, as the German writer's group for education reporting, *Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung*, pointed out in recent years.<sup>14</sup>

According to the Adult Education Survey 2010, in addition to the overall lower participation in further education and training, the level of education and qualifications significantly influenced the sociodemographic characteristics of participants. People with a higher education entrance qualification, at 56% participated more than twice as frequently in further education as people who had at most a secondary education certificate (27%). (Source: AES 2010 – TNS Infratest Sozialforschung)

Besides the level of education, occupational status has a decisive effect on participation in further education – 71% of “ordinary” workers do not participate at all in further education; for white-collar workers this is only 45% and for government officials only 27%. The size of the company also plays a role. For employees in small companies, the statistical chance of an employee of taking part in company training programs is 46% lower compared to employees in large companies (250 - 999 employees).

Finally, migration background continues to play a decisive role. For people with a migration background over the age of 30, the statistical chance of participating in further education drops compared to people with no migration background (by up to 50% for 50-60 year olds).

The only positives appear to be the participation rates of women and the older population segment. The percentage of men and women is almost the same at 41% and 43% respectively. The older population segment has clearly caught up in recent years in terms of further education – probably an effect from the change in the legal situation due to early retirement, partial retirement and later retirement age. The participation of 50-64 year olds in further education at 38% is comparable to that of 19-34 year olds (40%). In comparison: in 1979, the participation rate of the older population was at 11%.

In summary, a look at the further education statistics reveals that the Matthew principle has applied for many years almost unchanged: “Whoever has, more will be given”. In addition, the investments of significant actors do not indicate an increase in the significance of learning amongst adults. The 2012 German report on education finance, *Bildungsfinanzbericht 2012*, indicates a serious decline in investment in the further education and training of the unemployed: whereas the federal agency still paid EUR 7.8 billion for education promotion in 1999, only EUR 2.5 million were invested in 2011.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.2 Willingness for further education low amongst the educationally disadvantaged

It has been shown that “uneducated” population groups have a below average rate of participation in lifelong learning. The benefit of (further) education is, however, well known and expressed, among others, in wage effects, workplace security and better opportunities for changing or re-entering workplaces.<sup>16</sup>

It would be a premature judgment to only explain this phenomenon by means of human capital theories, and to point to

the lower benefits to companies of investing in further education for low-skilled employees. The reasons for this are largely due to the educationally disadvantaged themselves: lack of expectations of benefits, negative experiences in past education, fear of failure and an inhibiting personal environment erode the tendency to participate in further education. Added to this are the lack of knowledge of further education offers and the lack of transparency with respect to the compatibility of an offer with one's own career.<sup>17</sup> More capable workers, highly qualified individuals and Germans without a migration background find it easier to access further education – even for longer and higher quality courses. The orientation to and evaluation of the various offerings is also easier for them. Past educational experiences have proven that learning is positive and is therefore associated with promotion and self-realization. Acquiring education thus has a cumulative nature in Germany. Social inequalities and inequalities in education after the initial vocational training are therefore not balanced out by further education but tend to be exacerbated.

### 3. Methods to Raise the Level of Participation in Education of the Educationally Disadvantaged

Many demands are currently being made to promote lifelong learning – and systematizing these demands is a challenge in itself. The issues revolve around the objectives such as extending non-formal learning across the entire employment history or specific measures such as facilitating studies while working (part-time) or the instruments for financing education for the older population. In terms of content, proposals at times aim for business use and, at times, for the strengthening of political involvement, social

participation and voluntary work. Further distinctions are made between formal, non-formal and informal learning or primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary education. And, last but not least, there are many concerns around financing and structural issues – and ultimately educational federalism in which it has been experienced that transparency is often left out of the picture.

Given the diversity of topics, the primary focus of this article is on the group of educationally disadvantaged persons. This group is easily glossed over in particular also due to the, what at first glance appears to be a meaningful, increase in participation in further education of more than 50% by 2015. Although the increase in participation in further education makes this more accessible to additional groups, those who have been educationally disadvantaged are not expected to benefit unless new approaches to forms of learning, counselling and skills recognition simultaneously specifically tackle the barriers to further education.

### 3.1 Adaptive Forms of Learning

It is often said that only a small proportion of people who are educationally disadvantaged are reached by the measures and programs instituted for qualification. In addition to educationally disadvantaged individuals' low affinity for further education, an additional factor on the part of the intermediate institutions is named in education research: the "double entrenchment of distance to education". "Not only individuals are distant to institutionalized (further) education, but, conversely, institutional further education is socially and culturally distant from these addressees"<sup>18</sup>. This double distancing also contributes to educational offerings not adequately reflecting the requirements and motivational backgrounds of the educationally disadvantaged.

They have often had negative experiences in the school system. Courses with overly theoretical and regimented, classroom-style teaching methods therefore rarely promote a willingness to engage in further education but rather tend to bring up memories of scholastic failures and fear of failure.

Promising ways are shown by tailored learning programs that generate a love for learning with playful elements, offer quick learning achievements by means of an individualized approach and make it possible to maintain the family/life balance by means of flexible learning both in terms of time and location. Adapting the respective type of learning, as well as considering the pace of learning and individual learning relations, are promising strategies for reaching “educationally distant” target groups.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.2 Open-access counselling services

Educational counselling in Germany does not meet the requirements of lifelong learning. The national forum on counselling, *Nationale Forum Beratung*, criticized this clearly in its 2009 white paper: “Fragmented areas of responsibility, frequently without adequate coordination and networking, as well as a lack of resources make a coherent counselling system for (vocational) life almost impossible. Even the counselling services on offer in accordance with the German Social Code (SGB II, SGB III, SGB, VIII and SGB IX) are, in practice, no longer adequately coordinated with each other or networked to each other.”<sup>20</sup> Especially for educationally disadvantaged adults, counselling is offered more selectively, although it is precisely these adults who have the greatest need due to their low level of qualification, lack of resources, poor social support and lack of offerings from companies. However, there are doubts about just developing a

comprehensive counselling service as it remains unclear whether participants in further education will even use these offerings as “participants in further education tend to obtain information on further education more frequently in their immediate environment than on counselling services”<sup>21</sup>. Information provided by line managers, friends, acquaintances, relatives and work colleagues play a significantly greater role, according to information received from them.<sup>22</sup> Besides scope, quality and transparency, the issue at hand is therefore how further education counselling will even reach the target groups. Under discussion are therefore counselling approaches in the education participants’ neighborhoods, which should ensure counselling is based on participants’ real life circumstances, be offered locally at an individual level and support the learning process in a goal-oriented way and provide transparency regarding courses and qualifications that follow on from past educational achievements.<sup>23</sup> The main principles of this type of outreach education work are open access, resource orientation, greater awareness of social background and benefit orientation, offerings that are relevant to life circumstances and interest orientation as well as the avoidance of typical barriers.

### 3.3 Skills Recognition

The EU introduced a new and comprehensive understanding of learning with its “Memorandum on Lifelong Learning”.<sup>24</sup> Learning takes place not only in educational institutions but also at the workplace, during recreation time and in the family. As a result of this new understanding of learning, informal learning in particular is accorded a higher status. A variety of activities should make it possible to see skills acquired informally (e.g. European CV, Europass vocational training, European Language Portfolio).

Learning efforts are categorized in the triad: formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The issue of the recognition of informally acquired skills was given additional impetus with the adoption of the German qualification framework (*Deutsche Qualifikationsrahmen: DQR*). The latest request by the European Commission to the member states to provide specific resources and find ways to systematically and enforceably recognize informal and non-formal skills by 2018 gives the issue even more momentum.

On the other hand, there is the traditional education track in Germany. It is deeply rooted in society and connotes uniformity, solidity and verifiability – assumptions that do not always stand up under empirical verification.<sup>25</sup> The countries' responsibility for education has a stimulating effect with interesting solutions but is also coupled with complexity, incompatibilities and diversity of processes. Despite complaints about the lack of specialist skills, the pressure currently does not appear to be adequate to establish a systematic development of skills reserves. This might be because there are still not enough people with the desired qualifications or emigration from Spain or Eastern Europe appears to be more attractive than modernizing favoured structures and rules. Access to professions is still strongly regulated by examination regulations and requirements thereby also securing the interests of professional organizations.

Amongst the European countries, Switzerland, Austria, France and Great Britain – not to speak of the Scandinavian countries – are examples for a more highly developed attribution and recognition system. In Finland, employees, for instance in the plumbing trade, can register for an apprenticeship exam and acquire their apprenticeship diploma by practically proving their abilities.



In Germany, education traditionally focuses on completing various courses leading to subsequent qualifications – mostly in the form of theoretical examinations (education track). The systematic recognition of practical skills (vocational experience) or even modular (training) qualifications for removing the artificial barriers of the vocational system are under discussion, however, not yet a reality. Work experience only entitles admission to external examinations pursuant to Section 45 BBiG [German Vocational Training Act] and Section 37 HwO [German Crafts Code]. These encompass the entire theoretical and practical canon of company-based and vocational training. Accordingly, this access pathway is used by approximately 2/3 of people who wish to complete a secondary training program. The enormous challenges of the external examinations are therefore no real opportunity for acquiring a professional qualification for the educationally disadvantaged.

Portfolio approaches for categorizing skills below the level of current vocational trainings are still in their infancy (e.g. *ProfilPASS*, *Berufswahlpass* [career choice passport]). In order to open up real vocational (training) opportunities for educationally disadvantaged adults, a pathway via training modules seems to be indispensable. Providing a modular pathway to overcome an otherwise impossible qualification hurdle for educationally disadvantaged adults by providing manageable challenges will ensure the flexibility required to harmonize with their respective educational ambitions, employment situation and family life.

The portfolio approaches for identifying skills must in addition be focused more appropriately on target groups such as the elderly, migrants and school dropouts. They should have as little similarity as possible with examination or learning situations and focus on practically relevant skills instead of school knowledge. Playful processes such as simulations of serious situations,

assessment approaches or practical job testing are more suitable. In addition, these would also only be promising if sufficient information and counselling services are available. The potential of game-based learning, proven over many years, promises significant advances especially if the interdisciplinary collaborative work of pedagogics/didactics, information technology, etc advances.<sup>26</sup>

Flexibility and the removal of artificial barriers in the education system have only improved amongst the more highly qualified in recent years. Achievements in professional life are more frequently attributed to study achievements and admission to certain subjects is now possible in all the federal states without a secondary school leaving certificate. However, the regulations in the federal states differ significantly. These positive experiences should also be a motivating factor to open up advancement opportunities for educationally disadvantaged adults.

#### 4. Requirements for Successful Reform Processes

The complexities of education policy reforms should not be underestimated as they are overshadowed by issues of cross-sectoral and multi-level policies. Actors at the federal, regional and municipal levels must be coordinated. Meaningful arrangements must be accompanied by measures in labor market, corporate and family policies as well as financial policies so that the desired effects do not merely dissipate. In addition, path dependencies in education policy are particularly strong with the result that historical-cultural influences and ideological warfare engender the pronounced persistence of existing institutions and regulations. International standardization in the field of education also provides less pressure on reforms than, for instance, in the fields of

telecommunications, transport or environment where technical standardization has induced significant changes in recent years.

Nevertheless, education policy reforms are possible and the increasing shortage of skilled labor will probably exacerbate the existing pressure to act. Four aspects must be considered here:

- Clear impact objectives. Political objectives are often formulated as “soft” and input-oriented. The following questions must be considered: Have the target groups of the educationally disadvantaged been clearly defined? Are the reach, quantity, timeframes and (result) qualities aimed for clearly named for the (impact) objectives? Are interdisciplinary impact objectives identifiable with the respective contributions of the individual departments ?
- Interdisciplinary dialogue and consensus building. New forms of learning that consider an individual’s past educational experiences require new didactic approaches as well as individual support and counselling services. Without interdisciplinary dialog between pedagogics, media studies, information science, etc it will be difficult for new teaching and learning forms to come into existence.
- Coordination of actors. If more than 50 ministries at the federal and regional level (labour, education, finance, family,...) institute programs with education policy objectives, no regulations on skills identification and recognition can come into existence without coordination or incentives for cooperation.
- Transparency and evaluation. In order to understand interdependencies in education reforms, these must be evaluated and the data published. Only in this way is it possible to gain a critical and unvarnished overall view against which the two perspectives mentioned at the outset – i.e. high

performance and equal opportunity – can be valued using concise sets of indicators. It is understandable that this approach is not always received well in politics – in particular for failed measures. However, for publicly funded programs decided on by publicly elected parliaments, the data also belong to the public and are not the private property of the Minister of Culture.

Initial experiences with a nationwide strategy in lifelong learning that considers the aspects of transparency, interdisciplinary coordination, consensus building and the determination of impact objectives have been gained in Austria in recent years. These should serve as an impetus for the German reform discussions, as Germany likewise has a federal state tradition as well as an education system with relatively high artificial barriers and a strong focus on formal qualifications.

#### Notes

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#### Biographical Note

*Frank Frick*, political scientist, Director of *Lernen fürs Leben* focuses on vocational training/school-career transition, lifelong learning, further education of low qualified persons and policy reforms.

Address: Bertelsmann Stiftung, Carl-Bertelsmann-Strasse 256, 33311 Gütersloh, Germany

*Joachim H. Knoll*

## WORLD BANK DEVELOPMENT POLICY AT A TURNING POINT?

*Summary:* This article examines the views of senior World Bank staff on new guidelines for development aid funding in the context of the current internal reform of the Bank. The World Bank has adopted a reformed “Education Strategy 2020” in which education is recognized as a means of combating poverty, as a result of which direct support for national budgets will be gradually reduced. “Education” is still predominantly defined by the Bank as primary and basic education, with much lower importance accorded to subsequent phases of education, while international NGOs have long had a broader understanding of education, and in CONFINTEA V, UNESCO defined a wide range of educational priorities for development policy. The World Bank is now starting to follow a similar strategy, seeing education as part of the “Millennium Development Goals”. This new participatory strategy will encourage recipient countries to contribute their own ideas for reform to World Bank policy.

### **ຈຸດປ່ຽນແປງດ້ານນະໂຍບາຍການພັດທະນາຂອງທະນາຄານໂລກ?**

*ບົດສັງລວມ:* ບົດຄວາມນີ້ແມ່ນການພິຈາລະນາຂອງພະນັກງານອາວຸໂສຈາກທະນາຄານໂລກ ກ່ຽວກັບການແນະນຳ ໃນການໃຫ້ທຶນຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອເພື່ອການພັດທະນາຕໍ່ສະພາບປະຈຸບັນຂອງ ການປະຕິຮູບພາຍໃນທະນາຄານ. ທາງທະນາຄານໂລກໄດ້ຮັບຮອງເອົາການປະຕິຮູບ “ຍຸດທະ ສາດການສຶກສາ 2020” ທີ່ຮັບຮູ້ ແລະ ເປັນທີ່ຍອມຮັບແລ້ວວ່າ: ການສຶກສາແມ່ນວິທີທາງໃນ ການຕໍ່ສູ້ກັບຄວາມທຸກຍາກເຊິ່ງຈະສົ່ງຜົນເຊິ່ງຈະສົ່ງຜົນ ຕໍ່ການໄດ້ຮັບການສະໜັບສະໜູນດ້ານ ງົບປະມານແຫ່ງຊາດທີ່ຈະຫຼຸດລົງເທື່ອລະກ້າວ. “ການສຶກສາ” ທາງທະນາຄານໂລກໄດ້ກຳນົດ ເປັນສ່ວນໃຫຍ່ວ່າ: ການສຶກສາຂັ້ນປະຖົມ ແລະ ຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານ, ມີຄວາມສຳຄັນຕໍ່າຫຼາຍໂດຍອີງ ຕາມໄລຍະໃນຂອງການສຶກສາທີ່ເກີດຂຶ້ນຕາມພາຍຫຼັງ. ໃນຂະນະທີ່ອົງກອນບໍ່ທັງຜົນກຳໄລ ສາກົນ ແມ່ນມີຄວາມເຂົ້າໃຈອັນຍາວນານ ແລະ ເລິກເຊິ່ງກວ່າຂອງກ່ຽວກັບການສຶກສາ;





are not yet so far advanced that they guarantee a positive future, but commitments have been made that will silence much recent adverse criticism.

The criticism arises from the previously opaque nature of the organization, which has often baffled industrialized countries. JEFFREY SACHS, the Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and an adviser to the General Secretary of the United Nations, BAN KI MOON, sets out some of the criticism in his statement entitled “A World Bank for a New World”, although it can also be found elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> In his statement, which has attracted widespread support, especially in the United States, SACHS points first to the close political links between the United States Administration and the World Bank. Presidents of the Bank are proposed and in effect nominated by the President of the United States, are intimately associated with the elite of the US world of banking and are generally drawn from among a pool of loyalists within the US President’s own Party. Since the World Bank was established in 1944, its 11 Presidents have almost without exception fulfilled these criteria of proximity to the Administration and particular financial background. The most recently departed President, ROBERT BRUCE ZOELLICK (2007 – 2012), who succeeded the renowned PAUL WOLFOWITZ, is typical of these interconnections between politics, banking and the economy: he held government offices under BUSH senior and junior including Deputy Secretary of State, and served previously as Managing Director of the financial institution Goldman Sachs. When he left he was honoured with academic distinctions including a research post at Harvard University and a leading position at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington. There were indeed rumours in Washington that he would be given a senior government post if the Republican MITT ROMNEY were to win the election in November 2012.<sup>2</sup> However, although Zoellick followed

the World Bank tradition of lack of transparency in budgetary allocations, he stepped outside this stockade by arguing that policy on spending and the awarding of projects should be made more open, and by introducing a process of greater public awareness in the Bank's development policy. In articles written at the time of his departure, he complained that countries in transition, "middle income countries such as Mexico, Brazil and India", were given preference in the award of loans and that "there is nothing left for emergency top-up loans to really poor developing countries." This reproach is significant because it touched on the ideological foundations of the World Bank, most importantly the automatic assumption that the primary duty of the Bank is to combat poverty. None the less, the further criticisms of ZOELLICK made by SACHS are generally fair, namely that the leadership of the World Bank lacks the clear planning and strategic thinking needed to resolve current global issues in development policy, and that there are no apparent plans to go beyond EFA (Education for all, UNESCO 2000) and the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals, UN 2001) into areas such as health education and newly delineated forms of adult education.<sup>3</sup> SACHS states, for example, that: "the Bank completely fumbled the exploding pandemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria during the 1990's..." and "For around 20 years...the Bank resisted the well-proven use of targeted support for small landholders..." and more generally, "the Bank's new president should have first-hand professional experience regarding the range of pressing development challenges." The logical conclusion is drawn that "creative solutions" are only conceivable if the leadership of the World Bank can extricate itself from its close ties to the American financial sector and the political embrace of the US Administration.

At the suggestion of the US President, the South Korean-American doctor JIM JONG KIM was named the new President of

the World Bank on 23 March 2012, defeating the challenge by the Nigerian Finance Minister HGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA, and the change-over took place on 1 July 2012. JIM JONG KIM was President of Dartmouth College and thus embedded in the US system of elite universities, and had been for many years a medical practitioner working in and for developing countries, focusing on preventative health care alongside the fight against TB. A candidate was thus chosen who was familiar with the practice of development aid, had worked in many advisory capacities himself (e.g. WHO), and brought relevant academic skills to the post. He certainly also has the skills to liberate the World Bank from its statutory restraints of recent years. At the very least, his selection brings with it the expectation that the Bank will look well beyond its internal constitution. The admission by the new President that he understands little about economics and finance is if anything a point in his favour and can easily be counterbalanced by his practical experience in development.<sup>4</sup> It may also be seen as a fortunate coincidence that a number of firmly entrenched Executive Directors left their posts at the same time, so that fresh staff are in post not only at the very top. The change brought about by the replacement of MICHAEL HOFMANN by INGRID HOVEN at the German Office of the World Bank Group should not be overstated, however, even though significant differences have already appeared in the annual reports of the two Executive Directors.<sup>5</sup>

## Organization

The practical and financial power of the World Bank is impressive, but it has shown little originality in its planning in recent years. In line with other critics, MICHAEL HOFMANN complained of the huge

imbalance that was already legendary: “The World Bank was therefore able to achieve proportionately far less for the poorest countries than for advanced developing countries. Further thought therefore needs to be given to innovative financial instruments in order to mobilize resources for poor countries.”<sup>6</sup> The 2011 Annual Report prepared by INGRID HOVEN adopts a more encouragingly reformist tone, calling attention to the “internal modernization agenda of the World Bank” alongside the increased range of tasks resulting from the “political upheaval in the states of North Africa”.<sup>7</sup> This modernization agenda is defined in the statement: “Greater networking between think-tanks in threshold countries and countries on both sides of the Atlantic will aim at enhanced conceptual and interdisciplinary diversity in the production of knowledge and will lead to greater client proximity. This focused handling of issues relating to global public resources offers opportunities for greater co-operation between the World Bank and German academe, both practitioners and institutions, which we actively support.”

This shift in the outlook and profile of the World Bank, which is taking place almost subcutaneously, is hampered by the cumbersome nature of the organization, which cannot implement reforms rapidly because of its sheer size. However, there are both external and internal forces acting on the World Bank, especially among the recipients of development aid, which are pushing it towards projects not previously within its portfolio.

There is no need to go into the structure of the organization in detail here, but brief mention of the scale of its funding and staffing levels will clearly show that reforms will inevitably take several years. Moreover, the forces of internal resistance appear to be out of sympathy with the aspirations and practical suggestions of developing countries, and similarly, there are differences in thinking between the US Administration and American

organizational practice on the one hand, and the spontaneous local delivery of development aid on the other. These differences will not easily be overcome. Anyone who has ever attended World Bank events and observed its methods of working, attitudes and feelings of self-importance, will have doubts as to its readiness for reform.

The World Bank is a vast organization with 11,000 staff from 161 countries. The Annual Report continues: "In addition to the headquarters in Washington, the World Bank Group maintains country offices in around 120 states, where about a third of staff work." However, the incipient change can be seen in the statement: "This strong local presence significantly enhances co-ordination with partner governments, other donors, single-issue funds, foundations and non-governmental organizations. The Governors represent the 187 member states of the World Bank Group. These are generally the Finance or Development Ministers of the member states." And in respect of the volume of funds distributed, the Report says: "In this financial year the World Bank Group approved some 72 billion US\$ in loans, grants, shared funding, investments and guarantees... The World Bank Group is thus a multilateral development bank operating worldwide and one of the largest development agencies in the world."

The Annual Report also makes plain that the World Bank still provides direct budgetary assistance – although the trend is downwards – as well as funding specific projects aimed primarily at combating poverty in line with the MDGs, thus more or less continuing the earlier tradition of structural adjustment loans. However, the somewhat self-critical remark is also made that the Bank "regularly monitors the budgetary management of partner governments and draws conclusions for future co-operation." This reflects a concept of development aid which is no longer practised by other donor organizations, particularly non-governmental organizations working on the ground, in that such a procedure

frequently implies indirect expectations of political solidarity which seldom go beyond rhetoric.

## Activities

As a symbol of its intended reforms, the World Bank has recently begun embellishing its name with the term “**Knowledge Bank**”, claiming that it will provide knowledge and information in nearly all development-related fields such as infrastructure, health, education, good governance and, increasingly, climate protection. In doing so, the Bank is coming closer to the strategic thinking running through its proposed “**Education Strategy 2020**”.<sup>8</sup>

At this point there is no need to spell out the stages of development policy. Most of the concepts that have become the norm were formulated some time ago by UNESCO and the advisory bodies that support it, such as the national UNESCO Commissions, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (previously the UNESCO Institute for Education) in Hamburg and the UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning in Paris. The International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V in Hamburg and CONFINTEA VI in Belem) have then attempted to draw together the individual elements into an overall concept of development aid. A subjective selection of the documents underpinning the debate about the pointers for contemporary development policy would principally comprise “Education for All”, the “Millennium Development Goals” and the “Hamburg Agenda for the Future”. To these should be added national strategic plans such as, in Germany, the Federal Ministry of International Co-operation (BMZ) paper “Ten Goals for Education” (Zehn Ziele für Bildung), although this is not entirely up to date in its references to the education of adults.<sup>9</sup>

For the World Bank, the focus of development policy is on poverty reduction through education, education being defined solely on the basis of the above-mentioned readily available documents, with little influence from the vision current within the international educational research community that goes beyond euphoric declarations. For example – and this view is shared by the BMZ – the phases of lifelong learning only extend as far as tertiary education, and there is no mention of adult education as perceived early on by UNESCO as a continuum of lifelong educational events. Among the Millennium Development Goals, the only aspect of education that the World Bank singles out as relevant to its concept of development policy is universal primary education, together with specific mention of the promotion of gender equality. The World Bank has indeed created a separate budgetary support line for primary education which initially focuses on out-of-school learning. The heading on the Bank’s website reads: “The Education for All Fast Track Initiative is now the Global Partnership for Education”, adding that: “The Fast Track Initiative officially became the Global Partnership with an announcement and unveiling at the United Nations General Assembly on September 21, 2011. This change builds on the initiative’s successes over the last 10 years and is part of a redoubled commitment to making sure all children in low-income countries have access to quality education and opportunities to learn.”

In the last 20 years, numerous attempts have been made to reform education as part of development policy; emotive words and all kinds of neologisms have appeared in the debate, and many reform ideas have either not been thought through or not related to an overall plan. Particularly in the field of development in and for African regions and/or countries, the principle of nation building played a key role for a comparatively long time because it was thought that national identities could be created on the basis of

existing traditions. This tendency to promote security within a national context, with its emphasis on geographical boundaries and regional linguistic peculiarities, was often adopted with little discussion (in Ghana, for example), and models based on the so-called colonial languages (English and French) were replaced in local literacy plans by literacy in the regional languages. The World Bank provided considerable resources for such programmes, including payment of teachers' salaries, and there is no denying that non-governmental organizations also took part in these initiatives and made great efforts to teach language skills (e.g. in Ewu in Ghana). Today, the reform pendulum appears to have swung in the opposite direction, so that there is now little mention of nation-building, and the attempt is being made to develop new reform plans based on concepts of globalization. The academic dissertation by BLACKSON KANUKISYA, "Globalization Impacts on Adult Education",<sup>10</sup> sheds considerable light on this topic, pointing out that it may overlook the advantages of education based on tradition. Evidence is put forward of plans built on slogans that teach one single viewpoint and of overarching global theories that no longer relate to individual cases or to practical development activities.

It would be preferable to put together an overall strategy from the numerous disparate elements, without ignoring national and ethnic peculiarities. Concepts that ought to be incorporated into such a strategy could include "educational outcomes" in place of formal certificates,<sup>11</sup> which would follow fairly logically from the notion of non-formal (adult) education, and a system of levels of skill within a national or even a European skills framework in place of educational goals in the way that these have been understood in the past.<sup>12</sup> These concepts, and the subject-matter associated with them, have already become widely accepted and they are seldom now seen as belonging solely to the context of lifelong learning.



We are talking here about missed opportunities in the history of development policy, one example of which might be the Hamburg Agenda for the Future. The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) held in Hamburg in 1997 set out a range of educational goals in its “Agenda” which could easily have unified development policy, or at least have taken forward the principle of “unity in diversity”.<sup>13</sup> In this document, UNESCO spelt out the range of adult education tasks inherent in international development. The lack of examination until now of the curricular and strategic implications of this document is one of the missed opportunities. ROSA MARIA TORRES, Director of the Fronesis Institute, has raised this issue in public, directing attention to the shift “from education to lifelong learning” and saying that: “...few understood and adopted such change of focus in the 12 years between CONFINTEA V and CONFINTEA VI.”<sup>14</sup> In preparatory discussions for CONFINTEA VI, I have sometimes remarked that CONFINTEA V still needs to be understood and translated into practice, but such calls have met with no response. Unfortunately, UNESCO too often seems to be seduced by the idea that it is only novel innovations that are capable of attracting attention while there is in reality no shortage of people who regret that the vision of adult education found there has not been adopted internationally. The “ten themes” in the Agenda reflect an overall concept that might have brought development partners together. These ten headings still need further elaboration:

1. Adult Learning and democracy: the challenges of the twenty-first century
2. Improving the conditions and quality of adult learning
3. Ensuring the universal right to literacy and basic education
4. Adult education, gender equality and empowerment of women
5. Adult learning and the changing world of work

6. Adult learning in relation to environment, health and population
7. Adult learning, culture, media and new information technologies
8. Adult learning for all: the rights and aspirations of different groups
9. The economics of adult learning
10. Enhancing international co-operation and solidarity

The “Global Report” points out that this list needs now to be defined more clearly, expanded and modified against a background of worldwide financial and economic turbulence, and that it is finally time to spell out the potential development activities based on it. The document goes on to state: “Today’s international financial crisis, as well as urgent development challenges, has created a critical moment. If adult education is to play a role in improving the quality of economic and social life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, considerably more resources – efficiently used and distributed – are necessary. Absolutely essential is a shared vision of adult learning and education that is achievable and that can engage all stakeholders. Vulnerable and marginalized groups need to be at the centre of this vision. CONFINTEA VI offers an opportunity to break new ground and to identify clear objectives and feasible lines of action to be achieved in the coming decade. Moving from rhetoric to action is an imperative.”<sup>15</sup> However, it is also remarked that: “The absence of Adult Education as an MDG strategy, despite overwhelming evidence of its transformative power, is astounding,” and the 2011 Annual Report of dvv-international states simply that: “The results of the CONFINTEA VI global conference held in late 2010 in Belem, Brazil, were very slowly adopted internationally.”<sup>16</sup> However, despite all comments to the contrary, it is certain that development policy liberated itself nationally and internationally

from a narrow view of its remit in 2011, and that educational aid, the field of particular interest to us, became recognized as an essential element of development. The criticism none the less remains that there is little evidence of co-operation between national and international, governmental and civil society development aid institutions, despite the existence of statements calling for such co-operation in UNESCO and OECD programme documents. An announcement by the World Bank headed “How Global Partnership for Education works” also offers some support. But there is in addition some justification for the criticism that the definition of education in the context of development is generally inadequate, and that there is little awareness of the relevant international discourse.<sup>17</sup>

## Education Strategy

It would be unduly pessimistic to discount the World Bank’s new “Education Strategy 2020” since this would be to overlook a promise of support that will no doubt be fleshed out more fully in the next few years. What we described at the beginning as the hope that staffing and administrative changes will give the World Bank a new impetus will in all likelihood be realized and it can be assumed that the Strategy will reshape the Bank’s range of activities.<sup>18</sup>

This document, which runs to around 100 pages, refers in essence to the well-known concepts and goals of international development, EFA and the MDGs, but it also draws on the previous experience and projects of the World Bank, which have chiefly been in the field of non-formal, vocational adult education (Lessons from Previous World Bank Group Work in Education, p. 45 ff), although “success” has been defined largely by the amount of money spent.

The overarching idea that might be used as the heading for the Strategy is summarized in three short sentences: **Invest early. Invest smartly. Invest for all.** What this will mean in the future is explained more fully as follows: “Learning for All means ensuring that all children and youth – not just the most privileged or the smartest – can not only go to school, but also acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to lead healthy, productive lives and secure meaningful employment”(p. V).

This is very similar to the wording in other reform documents since the concept of learning on which it is predicated relates to the acquisition of skills and abilities that will enable the learner to lead a satisfactory life in the “world of tomorrow”, and it is encouraging that these skills are not solely the rational competences required to earn a living (VEQs or NVQs). Rather, they include what might be called general education with a universal set of values, or in the words of OSKAR NEGTE, opportunities are provided to combine cognitive learning with elements of emotional learning.<sup>19</sup> This is certainly a novelty in the annals of the World Bank.

But this innovation needs to be handled with care:

1. In the Strategy, the purpose of “education” is primarily to promote development and growth.
2. Support for education is seen as a ten-year project that is the culmination of the Bank’s previous 49 years (sic) of effort in that field.
3. Education is to be regarded as a system that extends beyond schooling and improves the quality of continuing vocational and out-of-school education.
4. Thus it is to be understood as an amalgam of pre-school education, school education, and out-of-school education oriented towards the labour market.

5. Particular attention is to be given to “Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)” because these provide the “profile and skills demanded by labor markets”.

It is regrettable that the opportunity has been missed to see adult education conceptually as one entity within a continuum of lifelong learning because it is very probably only the World Bank that has the funds to implement the kind of overall programme called for in the Agenda for the Future. Two things stand out in the way in which the Bank perceives the system, and these combine tradition and modernity: on the one hand, the Bank is concerned – in part as an unspoken follow-up to CONFINTEA V and VI, EFA and the MDGs – to stabilize and further improve the quality and organization of national education systems by providing them with an institutional framework in which primary education is given precedence over subsequent phases of life and learning. And on the other, the institutional and administrative chains that bind education systems are to be loosened, as we have already remarked, to the extent that learning outcomes take the place of formal qualifications and notional length of schooling: “The new strategy focuses on learning for a simple reason: growth, development, and poverty reduction depend on the knowledge and skills that people acquire, not the number of years they sit in a classroom.” (p.3)

At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) of 22 June 2012, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) expressed gentle criticism of the World Bank’s heavy emphasis on primary education as a means of reducing poverty. The ICAE Newsletter has this to say about the Final Document: “...the document fails to recognize that an integral aspect of human rights for all necessarily includes universal access to free education at secondary and tertiary levels too. In addition the document fails to recognize the need for lifelong learning –

including formal, non-formal and informal education at all levels...".<sup>20</sup>

At first sight it might look as if the Education Strategy were a finished document, but a few parenthetical remarks and comments contradict this impression. There is, for instance, repeated reference to the need to take account of educational opportunities in the tertiary field although, as in other documents, it is not stated exactly what is covered by the term, and adult education itself is not expressly mentioned, or at best in the phrase, "out-of-school learning in the labour market."

The Education Strategy makes a commitment to carry out a thorough educational survey in a country before introducing the intended reforms, and not to implement elements that are found not to meet the needs and aspirations of that country. From the sentence, "At the country level, the Bank Group will focus on supporting reforms of education systems" (p.5), it could be concluded that a request for support for adult education will not automatically be refused. This could be the means by which countries can achieve the mutual agreement on reforms that is repeatedly mentioned. At all events, reform will in future be guided more by the needs of the society and its existing models (p.7). Overall, the centralized perception and management of reforms will give way in practical and operational terms to a more participatory view of reform.

The openness and innovative intentions of the World Bank are made clear in the passage headed "From Strategy to Action", which anticipates the involvement of thorough educational research: "To generate knowledge about education reforms and interventions, the Bank will provide system assessment and benchmarking tools along with data, to assess the capacity of an education system to improve learning outcomes; assessments of student learning and achievement that cover the basic

competencies of reading and numeracy, as well as other skills, including critical thinking, problem solving, and team skills; and impact evaluation and other analytical work that can inform policies and interventions, together with knowledge exchange and debate that facilitate learning across partner countries and organizations.” (p.8)

If we take the three indicators of modernization at the World Bank together, staff renewal, internal reform and the Education Strategy, then the answer to the question that we put at the outset, whether the World Bank is at a turning point, is clearly “Yes”. However, there will be much more paperwork to come, and as in the case of other large organizations in the field of education, critical reservations should not be withheld since a gulf invariably opens up between rhetoric and action. The World Bank’s partner countries need to be encouraged to put forward their own ideas for reform more forcefully; the hope for the future lies in participatory educational reform.

#### Notes

- 1 JEFFREY SACHS, A World Bank for a new world, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/a-world-bank-for-a-new-world>
- 2 PATRICK WELTER, Ein Freund der Deutschen, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 30. 6. 2012, p. 16. The heading points out that Z is from a German immigrant family and played a key role in the Two-plus-Four negotiations on reunification.
- 3 UIE, Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, Hamburg 2009.
- 4 I must rely here on the popular descriptions available on the Internet since there is currently no comprehensive bibliography.
- 5 e.g. Jahresbericht des deutschen Exekutivdirektors bei der Weltbank, Geschäftsjahr 2010 and Jahresbericht, Geschäftsjahr 2011, [www.worldbank.org/eds05](http://www.worldbank.org/eds05) ; an overview of Germany’s role in the World Bank Group is given in: Deutschland 60 Jahre Mitglied der Weltbank, BMZ Newsletter, September 2012.
- 6 Jahresbericht 2010, op. cit., p. III.
- 7 Jahresbericht 2011, op. cit., p. IV.

- 8 Learning for All, Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development, World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020, Washington 2011, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)
- 9 See: JOACHIM H. KNOLL, Neues Verständnis von Bildung, in: Weiterbildung, 2, 2012, p. 28 ff; Zehn Ziele für Bildung, 1. 3. 2011 published in draft and now completed with minor alterations (May 2011). Cf. JOACHIM H. KNOLL, Bildung und Erwachsenenbildung als Bestandteil sozialstruktureller Reformprozesse in der Entwicklungspolitik, in: Bildung und Erziehung, No. 4, 2011.
- 10 BLACKSON KANUKISYA: Globalization on Adult Education. A Comparative Study of Adult Education Policies and Practises in Tanzania and Uganda, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo 2012. This study may properly be regarded as comparative and is more than an international report.
- 11 HEINZ-ELMAR TENORTH, Scheinkonflikte und offene Fragen, Der Sache nach ist Outcome-Orientierung nichts Neues, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 5. 7. 2012, p. 6.
- 12 HELMUT MEIßNER, Es wimmelt vor lauter Kompetenzen, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 5. 7. 2012, p. 6.
- 13 UNESCO Institute for Education, Adult Education, The Hamburg Declaration, The Agenda for the Future, Hamburg 1997 and [www.education.unesco.org](http://www.education.unesco.org) "This Agenda for the Future sets out in detail the new commitment to the development of adult learning called for by the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning."
- 14 ROSA MARIA TORRES in: JIN YANG and RAUL VALDES-COTERA (eds.), Conceptual evolution and policy development in lifelong learning, UIL, Hamburg 2011, p. 43; [www.fronesis-institute.org](http://www.fronesis-institute.org)
- 15 Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, op. cit., p. 19. On further developments in the direction of options for action see: Monitoring the Implementation of Belem Framework for Action: overall strategy, [www.uil.unesco.org](http://www.uil.unesco.org) . For an overview of how to move from rhetoric to action see: ALEXANDRA IOANNIDOU, Steuerung im transnationalen Bildungsraum. Internationales Bildungsmonitoring zum Lebenslangen Lernen, Reihe Theorie und Praxis der Erwachsenenbildung, Bielefeld 2010. Die thematische Öffnung der Erwachsenenbildung in Deutschland in: dvv (ed.), Die Volkshochschule – Bildung in öffentlicher Verantwortung, Bonn 2011.
- 16 dvv-international, Developments 2011, International and National Educational Processes, in: Annual Report 2011, Bonn 2012, p. 5
- 17 See for example articles in the International Journal of Lifelong Education and, as an example of a good national overview: ANN HODGEN, Post-Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning across the U.K., London 2011. The heading "Adult Literacy and Non Formal Education" on the



- “Education” page of the World Bank website reveals the narrowness of the concept particularly clearly.
- 18 Human Development Network, The World Bank (ed.), *Learning for All, Investing in People’s Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development, Educational Strategy 2020*, Washington: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org). The pages of acknowledgements to well-known and less well-known celebrities are disturbing and do not add to the seriousness of the programme.
  - 19 OSKAR NEGTE, *Erwachsenenbildung und der politische Mensch* in: ÖVHS, March 2011, p. 12; it might be said more concisely that cognitive learning should be supplemented by social and emotional learning so that factual knowledge and orientation are combined, to use the terms of H. ROTH.
  - 20 See: *Voices rising, RIO+20*, 6.7.2012, p. 1, [www.icae.org.uy](http://www.icae.org.uy) ; on the conference itself see also: *BMZ, Newsletter*, July 2012.

### Biographical note

Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. *Joachim H. Knoll*, Emeritus Professor of the University of Bochum. Joint Editor of the journal *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*. Latest publications include: *Erwachsenenbildung*, 3 vols., 2002-2009; „...Preußens Himmel breitet seine Sterne“, *Beiträge zur Kultur-, Politik- und Geistesgeschichte der Neuzeit*, 2 vols., HASKALA, 2002. His service has been recognized by the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame where he is a member since 2006.

Address: 22767 Hamburg, Breite Str. 195, Germany

E-Mail: [Joko.Knoll@t-online.de](mailto:Joko.Knoll@t-online.de)

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## PROFILING REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

*Summary:* This article explores the engagement profiles of higher education institutions (HEIs) and highlights issues that add value to their espoused ‘closeness’ to regional government, business and communities.. It reveals those domains where there is a mis-match in current engagement practice, referred to here as the *engagement gap*. It is argued that regional authorities should be encouraged to ‘reach in’ to demand more of the HEIs in their localities, steering them to fulfil their responsibilities to be lifelong learning organisations.

### **ຂໍ້ມູນທີ່ມີການພົວພັນໃນລະດັບພາກພື້ນຕໍ່ການສຶກສາຊັ້ນສູງ: ສິ່ງທ້າທາຍ ແລະ ໂອກາດ.**

*ບົດສັງລວມ:* ບົດຄວາມນີ້ແມ່ນຜົນຂອງການວິໄຈໃນການດຳເນີນງານຂອງສະຖາບັນການສຶກສາຊັ້ນສູງ (ສສຊ) ແລະ ບັນຫາພື້ນເດັ່ນແມ່ນການເພີ່ມມູນຄ່າໂດຍການໃຫ້ການສະໜັບສະໜູນ “ຢ່າງໃກ້ຊິດ” ໃຫ້ແກ່ລັດຖະບານໃນລະດັບພາກພື້ນ, ທຸລະກິດ ແລະ ຊຸມຊົນ. ຊຶ່ງມັນສະແດງໃຫ້ເຫັນຂົງເຂດທີ່ບໍ່ສອດຄ່ອງຂອງການປະຕິບັດ ຕໍ່ການດຳເນີນງານໃນປະຈຸບັນ, ສິ່ງທີ່ລະບຸມານີ້ເປັນຊ່ອງຫວ່າງໃນການຖືກຖຽງກັນວ່າ ອຳນາດການປົກຄອງໃນລະດັບພາກພື້ນຄວນໄດ້ຮັບການສົ່ງເສີມໃນການ “ເຂົ້າເຖິງ” ຕາມຄວາມຕ້ອງການຫຼາຍກວ່າ ສະຖາບັນການສຶກສາຊັ້ນສູງ (ສສຊ) ໃນທ້ອງຖິ່ນຂອງພວກເຂົາ, ເພື່ອທີ່ຈະໃຫ້ການຊີ້ນຳຕໍ່ພວກເຂົາໃຫ້ມີຄວາມຮັບຜິດຊອບເພື່ອທີ່ຈະກາຍເປັນອົງການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ.

អຸທູບຈູນຮູ້ນີ້ເປັນຜົນຂອງການສຶກສາຄົ້ນຄວ້າທີ່ເຮັດຂຶ້ນໂດຍສະຖາບັນການສຶກສາຊັ້ນສູງ ແລະ ບັນຫາພື້ນເດັ່ນແມ່ນການເພີ່ມມູນຄ່າໂດຍການໃຫ້ການສະໜັບສະໜູນ “ຢ່າງໃກ້ຊິດ” ໃຫ້ແກ່ລັດຖະບານໃນລະດັບພາກພື້ນ, ທຸລະກິດ ແລະ ຊຸມຊົນ. ຊຶ່ງມັນສະແດງໃຫ້ເຫັນຂົງເຂດທີ່ບໍ່ສອດຄ່ອງຂອງການປະຕິບັດ ຕໍ່ການດຳເນີນງານໃນປະຈຸບັນ, ສິ່ງທີ່ລະບຸມານີ້ເປັນຊ່ອງຫວ່າງໃນການຖືກຖຽງກັນວ່າ ອຳນາດການປົກຄອງໃນລະດັບພາກພື້ນຄວນໄດ້ຮັບການສົ່ງເສີມໃນການ “ເຂົ້າເຖິງ” ຕາມຄວາມຕ້ອງການຫຼາຍກວ່າ ສະຖາບັນການສຶກສາຊັ້ນສູງ (ສສຊ) ໃນທ້ອງຖິ່ນຂອງພວກເຂົາ, ເພື່ອທີ່ຈະໃຫ້ການຊີ້ນຳຕໍ່ພວກເຂົາໃຫ້ມີຄວາມຮັບຜິດຊອບເພື່ອທີ່ຈະກາຍເປັນອົງການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ.

ផ្នែកស្រាវជ្រាវដែលគ្មានការគាំទ្រពីរដ្ឋាភិបាលបានលើកទឹកចិត្តអោយទទួលបានយកតម្រូវការជាច្រើនបន្ថែម ទៀតក្នុងគ្រឹះស្ថានអប់រំខ្ពស់សិក្សានៅតាមតំបន់របស់ពួកគេនិងដើម្បីជួយដឹកនាំពួកគេអោយបំពេញនូវ ការទទួលខុសត្រូវរបស់ខ្លួនដើម្បីប្រកួតប្រជែងក្នុងការរស់រាននៅជាអង្គការរៀនពេញមួយជីវិត ។

## 1. Introduction

The Pascal University Regional Engagement (PURE) initiative is an extensive international research and development project that has been carried out in 19 regions across the world (see DUKE/OSBORNE/WILSON 2013). The project has revealed both a desire on the part of regional authorities in many parts of the world to engage with HEIs, but also an uncertainty about how to develop a successful and sustainable relationship with the higher education sector. The research appears against a backcloth of vigorous debate both in and between universities, and in government policy in a number of countries, about public funding for higher education and about what is variously described as universities' community service, lifelong learning, third mission, or, as used here, regional and community engagement roles. The debate has at its core the assumptions that both regions and HEIs can benefit through partnership and that universities can contribute more to civil society in return for public moneys invested in them.

## 2. The regional engagement debate

The current world-wide interest in regional engagement is in itself not new. It is generally acknowledged to have its roots in the Land-Grant Colleges in the US and civic universities in the UK (McDOWELL 2003; SANDERSON 1972). To the story should be

added transnational progressive reform sentiment, which in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the establishment of University Extension colleges and university social settlement houses across the (then) British Empire and in North America (HAMILTON 2008).

As an ideal, regional engagement requires that universities share their knowledge, resources and skills, and listen and learn from the expertise and insight of the different communities with which they engage (BEACONS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 2010). The focus is on exchange and not simply knowledge transfer. In recent years regional engagement has received fresh attention as part of a broader debate on higher education (OECD 1999, 2001). National and international discourse has focused on the need to make HEIs more 'relevant', 'efficient', more transparent and more accountable, and more international and competitive (SLOWEY/SCHUETZE 2012, 3). A general concern has been expressed that teaching and research activities in universities are often not sufficiently aligned with specific economic and social objectives (CHATTERTON et al. 2000, 475). The OECD has highlighted the need for HEIs to reconcile the tensions between two competing rationalities; the higher education rationality of detachment and the science and technology driven-rationality of close interaction with business and the community (OECD 2007). Overall there is a sense that universities should not be allowed to 'stand apart' and that regional engagement may provide at least part of the remedy. Many universities and university networks have responded to this challenge, as is evident in the work of the *Big Tent*<sup>1</sup> of networks concerned with promoting community engagement in universities around the world.

Public spending pressures in different parts of the world have added urgency to the debate as HEIs come to terms with the changing public funding models that are emerging in different countries. This in part manifests itself in governments being

increasingly pre-occupied with securing impact at regional, national and international level from public investment in higher education (INMAN/SCHUETZE 2010;MOHRMAN/SHI/FEINBLATT/CHOW 2009).

A further impulse for regional engagement is interest in the notion of lifelong learning. In the 1990s lifelong learning was seen as a key higher educational mechanism to underpin the development of the 'knowledge economy' and therefore a tool in the drive for modernisation and development (SLOWEY/SCHUETZE 2012, 7). In Europe, the Bologna Declaration in 1999 saw lifelong learning as an essential tool in helping higher education face societal challenges of competitiveness and use of new technologies to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and quality of life. By 2008 54% of HEIs in Europe claimed to have established strategies for lifelong learning (DAVIES/ FEUTRIE, 2008). The interrelationship between lifelong learning and higher education is vital for how HEIs address regional engagement. Factors vital for support of lifelong learning such as quality teaching, widening participation, services to business and communities and other contributions to civil society are central to regional strategies of HEIs (WATSON 2009).

### 3. An engagement model

Regional engagement, as used here, refers to the set of relationships through which HEIs and their staff and students connect and share their work with the public. In practice all HEIs have a complex network of links with their surrounding region, some formal, some driven from central management, many more dependent on the initiative of faculty members, and many more again arising from student learning programmes, or informal

student activity. It is through this web of relationships that an HEI presents a profile of engagement to its region and local communities.

The particular profile of engagement will be influenced by many factors including the historical mandate and role, tradition and culture, and geographical location of an HEI (SCHUETZE 2010, 13). Just like regional authorities, a higher education provider has to 'manage' its relationships with a complex array of other organisations within its environment. Engaging with numerous regional stakeholders can present institutions themselves with many challenges.

The profile of engagement which a HEI has with its surrounding region can be seen as the result of its efforts to establish and maintain its position with regard to three important contexts within which it operates. These are set out in Figure 1 below.

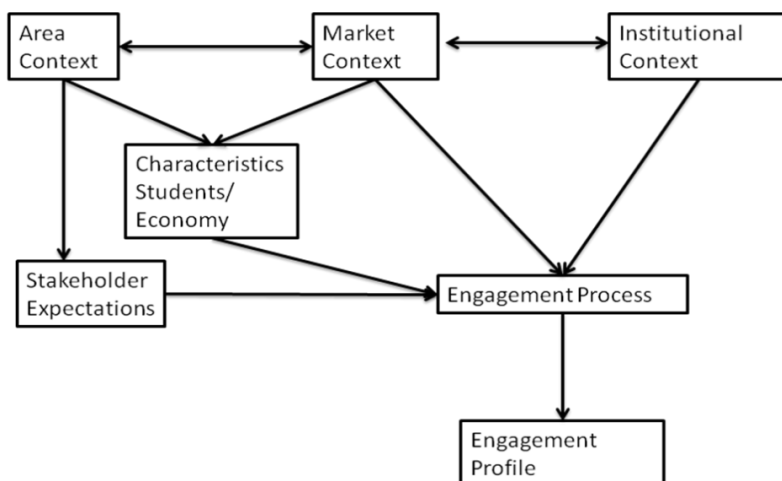
The *Area Context* refers to the social, economic, cultural and geographical characteristics of the region in which it is located, which are likely to influence, among other things, the background of the students who attend, the opportunities for applied research in local industries and public agencies, and the expectations of public bodies and other stakeholders of the provider.

The *Market Context* refers to HE providers being a part of a market regionally, nationally and internationally. Institutions will be subject to market pressures arising particularly from the funding regime in which they are placed, and through their strategic decisions and marketing will look to position themselves in such a way to sustain themselves within the market, with important implications for the priority which is attached to aspects of regional engagement.

The *Institutional Context* is important because having taken a strategic position, HEIs have to establish arrangements to support

this through institutional allocation of resources, management practices and incentives for staff to deliver programmes consistent with the desired direction. This may be particularly problematic in universities which tend to be large, diverse, 'loose' organisations, and in which objectives of individual scholarship may not be consistent with institutional desires for public engagement activities.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic model of regional engagement



The pattern and profile of regional engagement will be the outcome of the interaction between actions taken in each of these different contexts, and especially shaped by factors such as the funding regime in which it is placed; institutional policy choices relating crucially to the emphasis placed on research relative to teaching, the emphasis placed on the pursuit of international standing relative to national or regional orientation and the extent to which regional engagement activities are recognised and incorporated into resource allocation within the institution. The judgements



made by higher education providers on these issues are likely to lead them to prioritise the broad elements in their mission - research, teaching and regional/community engagement - in different ways as they seek to define their role and place within the world of higher education.

There are a number of ways in which higher education providers' responses to these pressures might be classified. In the US for example, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) has developed a system of classifying 'institutions of community engagement' (CFAT 2010). Carnegie takes into account such indicators as 'institutional identity and culture' and commitment to 'outreach and partnership'. In recent years the debate has focused on the extent to which engagement is seen by HEIs as a core element of their mission (KELLOGG COMMISSION 1999). It is suggested that increasingly HEIs might look to position themselves in one of a number of categories; one such categorisation distinguishes elite institutions, research intensive institutions, teaching institutions and regional institutions. To these may be added specialist institutions with a particular focus on an aspect of science, or as schools of music or art, whilst others again are 'short-cycle' providers offering mainly vocational degree programmes. For the purposes of the discussion here we will adopt a categorisation according mainly to the priority 'mission' of the institution, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Main categories of higher education providers

| <b>Category</b>    | <b>Mission priority order</b>              |
|--------------------|--|
| Research intensive | (International) Research, teaching, region |
| Teaching           | Teaching, research, region                 |

|                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Regional intensive | Region, teaching, (applied) research |
| Specialist         | All in specialist field              |
| Short cycle        | Vocational training, region          |

It will be seen that all categories espouse each ‘mission’ to some extent: the distinction between categories rests on the relative priority afforded to each. Regional intensive universities for example place significant emphasis on engagement at the local and regional level. In many countries, the regionally focussed university remains in an uncertain position in many countries given prevailing national and increasingly international, policies and perspectives in higher education. In some parts of the world however the concept of a regional intensive university is finding increasing legislative and programme recognition. In Sweden, for example, changes in higher education legislation during the 1990s, whilst giving universities more autonomy over their internal affairs, placed greater responsibility on them to work with their communities, in particular with industry and business (See BENNEWORTH/OSBORNE 2013). Elsewhere, regional universities themselves have formed associations e.g. in Australia and in South Africa, to help higher education better adapt and contribute to government regional policies in these countries.

#### 4. Regional role and impact

SWERISSON (2010), drawing on the Australian context, has summarised the key facets of the role of a successful regional intensive university. These include increased educational opportunities for young people and mature students in the region; processes and entry pathways to encourage the entry of students

from disadvantaged backgrounds; improved productivity through local workforce development, research, innovation and infrastructure development through partnerships with local government and business; research and knowledge exchange to address for example regional social and environmental issues, facilitating the development of the arts, sport, culture and recreation. Of course, not all of these are the exclusive preserve of a regional intensive university, nor need all facets be evident to ensure the success of regional engagement activity. However in combination, and if embedded as a core part of the mission and strategic management of the institution they do suggest a profile of engagement with regional and community stakeholders with potential to have significant impact.

If done well, regional engagement generates mutual benefit for both HEIs and regions. An OECD (2007) study maintains that regional engagement activity comes from appreciation of shared interests and that this shared interest is primarily economic. For HEIs, according to the evidence of the PURE international project, regional engagement can build trust, understanding and collaboration, and increase the higher education sector's relevance and contribution to, and impact on, business, public policy and services, social and cultural life and wider civil society within their region and local community. It can enable universities to meet the challenge of the need to demonstrate the impact of their research. One report suggests that HEIs might benefit from enriched research, teaching and learning; it can help them demonstrate accountability in a climate of increasing scrutiny; it can motivate and develop staff and students; it can help to maximise the flow of knowledge and learning between universities and society; and in the process contributes to social justice (BEACONS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 2010).

For regions, HEIs are major employers, significant consumers of goods and services and their presence will have obvious implications for housing, transportation and other infrastructure development. Knowledge transfer can assist regions to develop sustainable policies and practice as increasingly demanded by national governments. The provision of resources for continuing professional development and training locally offers the potential to raise skill levels in the local population and can stimulate lifelong learning and in turn boost the local economy. More fundamentally the recognition of universities as an important aspect of regional development policies is now increasingly clear in many parts of the world (OECD 2007). The significance for regional development placed on innovation, knowledge creation, human resource development and social capital in achieving regional growth and development accord HEIs a significant role in their regions. In Australia for example a study has shown that regional universities can make a substantial contribution to regional economies and their collective contribution to the national economy can also be significant (CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY/ SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY 2009). DUDERSTADT (2011) provides another rich example of the extent of expectations of higher education in regional development in relation to the Midwest of the US.

The impact of regional engagement activities extends beyond the economic and includes among other outcomes the localisation of the learning process through work-based learning, graduate employment in the region, continuing education, professional development and lifelong learning activities, cultural and community development, social cohesion and sustainable development on which innovation depends (CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY/ SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY 2009, 15). Whilst there are numerous examples of economic analysis of the impact of

HEIs on regional economies, the impact of HEIs on the social and cultural quality of life in regions, and their contribution to wellbeing, regional identity and sense of place are less well understood. HEIs contribute to the range of cultural events and facilities in their geographical areas. Culture is of growing significance in regional development both as an economic activity and as a dimension of community identity, and underpins the attractiveness of a region. Acknowledging the social and cultural impact of engagement adds to understanding of the significance of HEIs for the vibrancy of regional life as well as its economic development. This broader potential provides compelling arguments for regions to 'reach in' to HEIs to demand more of higher education as an asset in their localities.

## 5. Engagement for a purpose

Despite the possibilities afforded by regional engagement activity, the data from the PURE global regional study shows that HEIs across the world are positioning themselves in distinctly different ways when defining their own mission and strategy with regard to engagement and the contribution they make to the development of the local region. Regional impacts and benefits arising from HEIs are not systematically realised. The research suggests that regional engagement activity world-wide can often be piecemeal, ill thought through and not part of a broader strategy. It would appear that HEIs often seem unaware of, or are unwilling to exploit the possibilities open to them through such work. A range of obstacles have been identified which can inhibit the development of a productive relationship. There appear to be multiple barriers, for example because of structures and traditions which make engagement difficult to achieve (e.g. INMAN/SCHUETZE 2010).

The preoccupation in higher education with rankings has also played a role in discouraging engagement activity as some institutions seek to prioritise improving their ranking in league tables such as those of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) which are almost exclusively based on research performance. In the UK the government report 'Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research' emphasised the expectation that UK research organisations make a strategic commitment to public engagement and that researchers be recognised and valued for such activity (RESEARCH COUNCILS UK 2010). Researchers themselves often remain unconvinced of the merits of regional engagement. A survey in the UK reported that 64% of scientists felt their research prevented them from getting involved in public engagement whilst a further 20% agreed that scientists who engaged were less well regarded than other scientists (THE ROYAL SOCIETY 2006). One problem is that the criteria of 'world class' effectively excludes key dimensions of regional engagement such as services to business and communities and widening participation. In this often less than encouraging climate, regions may themselves feel powerless to exploit the potential of having an HEI on their doorstep. Research on regional engagement often concentrates on the perspectives and experiences of HEIs to the detriment of understanding of factors which inhibit engagement from the regional position. Regional policy, by definition, is about place and community. Regional cities and communities develop their social and economic identity around place. They compete for business and economic development, infrastructure and services, and they promote and support local sporting, social and cultural organisations and activities. Increasingly they need to see local universities as assets for their communities, not only to provide accessible high quality educational opportunities, but also to contribute to local economic, social and cultural development. In

these days of severely constrained public expenditure, they must strive to make the best of any assets within their region.

The implication is that both regions and HEIs could do more to come together to realise the potential impacts and benefits of regional engagement and that regions in particular can take the lead in driving the process forward. Some regions, having been asked questions as part of the PURE study concerning their engagement practice, began to fundamentally revise their stance towards HEIs. They moved from a position which saw little benefit from HEI engagement to one where priority was being attached to establishing a systematic framework of relations with their local HEIs. The stakes are high and the PURE international study shows that benefits for regions are established in both more developed and less developed countries world-wide, including both urban and rural areas (DUKE/ OBORNE/WILSON 2013).

## 6. Identifying the engagement gap

The PURE study has compared engagement practices of HEIs and regional authorities within 19 regions to identify the strengths and weaknesses of engagement within each region. The research also reveals a regional engagement gap: a mis-match between HEI engagement and regional expectations and development priorities. Recognising the scope of the engagement gap is only the first step. This kind of analysis also forms the basis on which regions can formulate a set of expectations of HEIs and approach them with a view to establishing the kind of role they might play in securing benefits for regional development and improved efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of regional policy and services.

## 7. Benchmarking engagement

In some of the regional studies within the PURE study attempts were made to systematically analyse engagement profiles for HEIs using a benchmarking instrument based on an instrument first developed by CHARLES and BENNEWORTH (2002). The instrument can be used to provide a graphic representation profile of the strengths and weaknesses of engagement practice (rather than provide some overall measure of the quality of engagement) in order to help partners and institutions decide on prioritisation and improvement. Data from one regional study, Glasgow and the West Of Scotland, is used here to illustrate the different profiles of engagement associated with HEIs in the region which exemplify the different categories of HEI identified above.

Benchmarking is now a well-established element in processes of continuous improvement in business and, increasingly, in public sector organisational performance. It draws on aspects of other approaches including survey approaches, project analysis and templates, and institutional reviews by questionnaire. It can be seen as part of a culture of self-improvement within an HEI and within a strategic discussion with regional partners (CHARLES et al. 2010, 82). It is based on the assumption that systematically collected data from different organisations or parts of organisations can be used comparatively to understand organisational strengths and weaknesses, and to identify aspects of performance in which change should be a priority. Performance can be compared internally across similar processes in different parts of the same organisation, or across organisations in the same 'business' sector, or with acknowledged international leaders irrespective of sector.



The focus in the PURE study was on benchmarking a range of processes through which HEIs might seek to engage with regional stakeholders for mutual benefit. Following the approach developed by Charles, regions and HEIs within the PURE study were encouraged to benchmark their engagement practice across a number of domains which have been shown to be important for regional competitiveness. Whilst there is no universal agreement on these engagement domains, for the purposes of this study, 8 such domains were identified, namely:

- Embedding engagement in institutional practice
- Developing Human Capital
- Developing Business Processes and Innovation
- Developing Regional Learning Processes and Social Capital
- Community Development Processes
- Cultural Development
- Promoting Sustainability
- Enhancing regional infrastructure

The first of these is focussed on those processes within the institution which demonstrate commitment to engagement and through which engagement practice is promoted, embedded and supported, whilst the remainder relate to specific aspects of regional development. Each of these domains<sup>2</sup> has a number of specific aspects of engagement activity associated with it through which the engagement in that domain is operationalised.

The benchmarking process requires institutions to rate their practice on each aspect on a five-point scale, and offer a limited amount of quantitative data and supporting notes to indicate the scope, scale and quality of activity to justify the rating. The ratings can then be compared to produce a profile of engagement activity within each domain, and combined to provide an overall domain rating. The domain ratings can in turn be

compared to provide an overall engagement profile for the institution across all domains. It is important to recognise that these are ratings, not precise measurements, although some expert moderation of ratings can be applied to improve comparability across institutions. However, what is important in the development of the profile is the relative strength of practice across domains within each institution – the shape of the profile rather than the specific scores from which it is derived.

## 8. Comparing engagement profiles

The PURE study in Glasgow and the West of Scotland identified a number of engagement profiles which could be associated with different kinds of higher education providers within the region. These are illustrated below. The study benchmarked regional engagement over a number of social, economic and cultural domains. The profiles reflect the ratings of particular HEIs within the region on the domains of engagement identified above, but excluding the infrastructure domain on which no data was collected.

The West of Scotland is an area of considerable social and economic diversity. It has huge potential for regional engagement activity. The HEIs in the study included a research intensive university, a regional intensive university and a relatively small specialist intensive university with a tradition for high quality vocational education.

In Figures 2-4, performance on each domain has been scored on a five-point scale, five representing good practice and one poor or un-developed practice. The allocated score is a judgement across performance on the various aspects of

engagement activity – usually six or seven – associated with each, so a particular domain rating may be achieved through a varying combination of strengths and weaknesses on the more specific aspects of engagement associated with it.

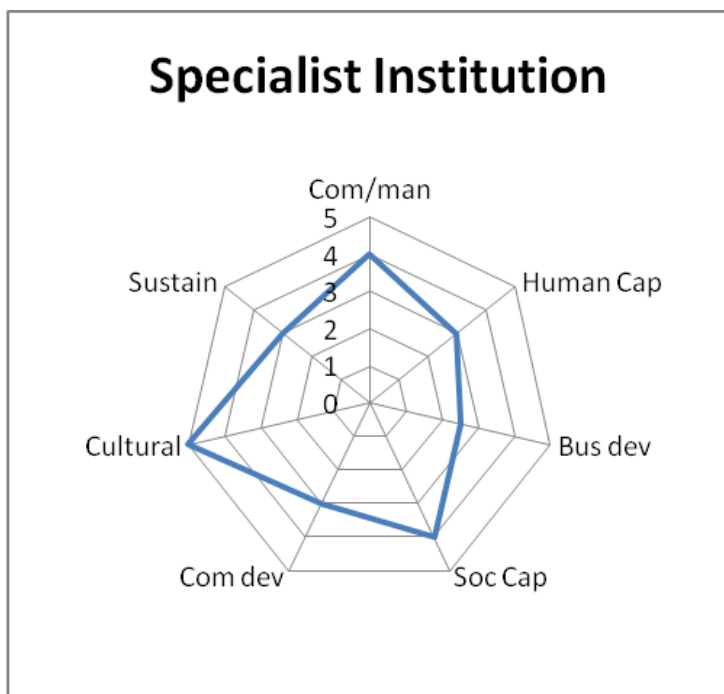


Figure 2 – Benchmarking Result in a Specialist Institution

It is stressed that these are self-rating scales which only give an indication of performance. The ratings were provided by staff in those parts of the university most concerned with a particular aspect of engagement. Ratings have been moderated by the authors in a very few cases to reflect experience of engagement practice elsewhere. The resulting profiles were fed back to each institution with the opportunity to propose revisions if they felt the

analysis misrepresented their practice. All of the institutions reported here were content with the profiles provided.

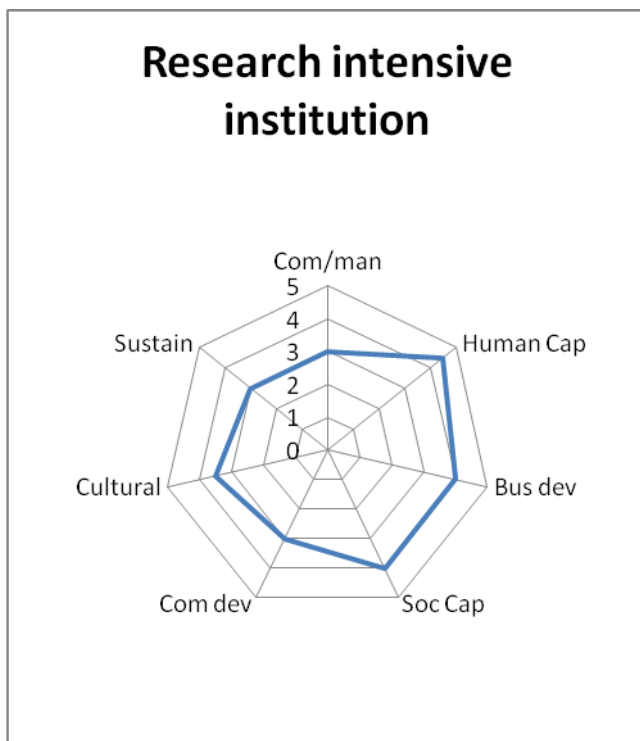


Figure 3 – Benchmarking Result in a Research-intensive Institution

The profiles provide a broad picture of the strengths and weaknesses of HEI practice, as a basis for discussion of ways performance might be improved to more readily meet the needs of both the universities and the regions. The results were also intended to make regional authorities more aware of any gaps in provision and as a consequence encourage them to seek more informed closer relationships with the HEIs in their localities.

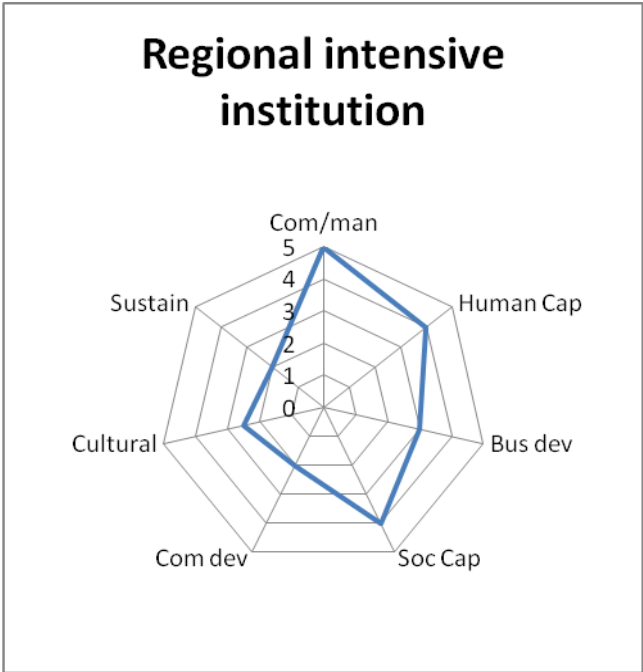


Figure 4 – Benchmarking Result in a Regional Intensive Institution

These points can be illustrated in several of the domains of engagement. For example, whilst all institutions demonstrated commitment to regional engagement in their mission and strategy statements, they varied considerably in the extent to which engagement activity was embedded in areas such as resource allocation and incentivised in staff assessment. The research intensive university, whilst clearly embracing regional engagement, did so only alongside a more prominent commitment to international research. The strengths of the research university appeared to be in human capital development, business development and social capital development which were central to the focus on skills development in the Glasgow and west of Scotland PURE study.

The research university had the least developed committee/management arrangements for regional engagement among the HEIs included here. This is in contrast to the regional intensive institution where an engagement strategy was endorsed at all levels of management and was reflected in faculty planning, and in staff promotion criteria. The commitment to regional partnerships was enshrined within its mission and strategy statements. Historically a strong commitment to regional engagement was one of the key drivers in the creation of the regional intensive university and had guided its strategic development. Staff viewed serving the region in which it was located as 'part of the job'. It had built on an institutional history of strong links to the community and to industry, mainly as a result of strong technical and vocational focus over many years. It strove to present itself as the regional university for the west of Scotland. The regional intensive institution had a clear approach to relationship building with the region and with business, starting often with student placements and developing to other problem-solving and development issues. In the case of the specialist institution, regional engagement was imbedded in its mission and strategy. The specialist institution had recently refreshed its vision, mission and strategy documents, which make a clear commitment to regional engagement, and elaborated this at the regional, national and international level. The importance of engagement was recognised both for the interests of the institution itself, but also for the benefit of the greater Glasgow area. The social mission was also important to the specialist institution and there was a recognised need to extend reach to 'bring regional benefit back in'.

There were differences between the three institutions in terms of scope and emphasis with regard to the human capital development domain. All three HEIs contributed to human capital through their education and teaching functions. However in

comparing all three institutions, the regional intensive university was stronger on access and progression arrangements, student support and more flexible and modular course design. It articulated a clear strategy of social inclusion, in schools, in accessing higher education, and in student support. Links with Further Education colleges were strong, facilitating progression through to degree level. The research intensive university demonstrated higher level human capital development through higher degrees and other post-graduate activity. Some of the specialist institution's staff had been specifically appointed to promote aspects of human capital development, for example in widening access and knowledge transfer. One significant outcome was that the specialist institution had an above average proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities, with good student support services in place.

Similar differences were discernible in the character of engagement with business-more emphasis on applied research and problem-solving with SMEs in the regional intensive university and more emphasis on spin-out companies and business incubation in the research intensive institution. There were tensions within the specialist institution about the current low priority given to the commercial sector. However the potential for application of, and innovation from, ideas and knowledge generated seemed considerable. The main focus for the specialist institution was on continuing education courses for the public. There were fewer examples of provision for industry and employees at the specialist institution although were plans in the pipeline at the specialist institution to extend CPD activity.

## 9. Issues for HEIs and regions

The different engagement profiles in Glasgow and the West of Scotland raise a number of important issues of interest to regions keen to establish effective engagement between regional stakeholders and working relations with their local HEIs. It is possible to identify different roles of particular universities within a region through their profiles of regional engagement. Collectively, providers show a commitment to regional engagement and, between them, can demonstrate strong practice across a range of aspects of engagement important for regional economic, social and cultural development. In a region containing a number of HEIs it is important that this differentiation in role between universities is recognised and valued both by regional stakeholders and within the higher education 'marketplace'. It is 'horses for courses', recognising that each HEI can play to its strengths should assist regional thinking about which partner to approach on particular development issues.

It is also possible to identify some aspects of engagement which would be crucial to the fulfilment of the 'regional intensive' concept for example, and which might be held to mark the distinctiveness of the regional role. For example, within a given region some HEI provision needs to be close to the government and public authorities and with the non-for-profit sector. This 'closeness' might be expressed, as it was in the 'regional' institution cited above, through the signing of memoranda of understanding and service level agreements with key bodies in the region which would specify the kinds of contribution and volumes of services to be offered.

A regionally intensive approach also suggests that universities would be well placed to provide degree programmes of



direct relevance to the needs of local employers, and through informal local labour market intelligence, to develop programmes in anticipation of changing skills requirements. There was evidence of this from the example of the region intensive university in the west of Scotland where new degree programmes in 'public service' were being devised in consultation with public authorities aimed at helping breakdown traditional service boundaries and encouraging a more holistic approach to innovation in public services provision.

The region intensive concept requires that universities be close to their local economies and business communities. There was evidence in the Scottish region that the regional university was able to relate successfully with a predominantly SME-based economy, through patient relationship building with small businesses, based on student placements, modest problem solving, and developing to more substantial applied research and consultancy for product development. It could also provide business services, such as product testing, to support local business as well as enriching the student experience. The other two HEIs focussed on partnerships with larger companies but tended to find the SME sector more problematic. The specialist institution plans for short course CPD work demonstrated that a potential gap in their provision could be closed for the benefit of businesses and employers in the region. The key to success in this area was that the regional university in particular had sustained relationships, mainly around staff development, with the provision of specific programmes with these same larger companies.

This closeness to business on the part of the region intensive university was also valuable in increasing social capital within the business community, facilitating relationships between businesses in the region, and sustaining a problem-solving 'self-help' group of businesses and university staff. The knowledge and

trust developed between a region intensive university and the regional business community leads not only to a sensitivity to emerging skills needs but also opens up a flexibility in course design to address them which is not always evident in other types of less responsive institution.

Regional engagement requires that HEIs are close to their communities. The research intensive university had a commitment to providing access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It also supported the idea of the 'educated citizen' through the provision of adult learning opportunities intended to take the scholarship of the institution to the wider public. However illustrating broader debates on the priorities of such institutions the research intensive university had recently questioned whether such locally focussed work was compatible with their 'global ambitions'. The region intensive university maintained campuses in local areas across the region which allowed access to higher education for people who would otherwise be unable to do so. It also offered innovative outreach programmes and student support to help students not only 'get in', but also 'get through' higher education programmes through modular structuring of courses, allowing flexible timetables for delivery, and timescales for completion of degree programmes. A high proportion of students in regional intensive universities are likely to be drawn from the region, and to continue to live and work in the region. In this way universities make a direct impact on the skills available in the region in a way that other institutions with geographically much wider student flows cannot do.

The domain of cultural development was given different degrees of prominence by each of the HEIs. There may be some unexploited potential here and in a partnership area regions could wish to look at more closely. It has already been noted that universities can be key assets for regional cultural strategies

through their resources, their training roles and their potential as centres of innovation and cosmopolitanism. The specialist institution was particularly strong as one might expect from the expertise of staff in the cultural life of the region. It was notable that the regional intensive institution did not score as well on cultural development although it delivered activity in related areas such as support for creative industries. None of the HEIs excelled in the domain of community development although all demonstrated examples of good practice. The less well developed areas at the research institution included both community development and cultural development. Whilst there were some significant activities in these domains within the research university, it is for debate as to how these aspects can be enhanced and sustained as part of the current research institution strategy and mission. Any commitment to these domains would more easily translate into practice if better imbedded in an integrated fashion into strategic thinking. Community development is a crucial dimension of regional engagement. It seeks to minimise the effects of social exclusion and it is generally recognised that HEIs often have the skills and resources which can assist disadvantaged local communities to promote better health, and to help bring about community regeneration. Again regions may wish to demand more of their local HEIs to help tackle the severe social difficulties experienced by local communities.

The area of research threw up a number of issues for HEIs and regions. For the regional intensive university the progression it offered its students depended on close links with the schools and colleges within their region. It needs to be clear what the value added to this progression is arising from its university status. Crucial to this is the recognition that a regional intensive university needs to be both a regional actor and a 'scientific' actor, bringing advanced research and knowledge to local innovation processes.

Whilst it is important to get people 'in' and 'through' higher education it is also important to allow students and the regional community to 'get on'. The regionally intensive university's connection with the wider research community both nationally and internationally was therefore vitally important. As KONVITZ (2011) has recently pointed out, because universities are uniquely not bounded by jurisdictional limits, they have the scope to bring otherwise disparate groups together to address issues of priority for the region, and may have a leadership role in taking the regional response forward. As one senior manager in a university in the west of Scotland PURE study put it 'the university has to go outside the region in order to bring benefits back in'.

Regional intensive universities need to maximise their opportunities arising from the need for applied research at the regional level to participate in national and international research programmes, and to promote their own research profiles and opportunities at post-graduate level. It has to be said that national policies on the funding of research in many countries do not make this easy for HEIs who are not 'research intensive'. But the very patient relationship building that has often served regional intensive universities and regional stakeholders well in many respects, can also be extended to the wider research community, bridging the gap between 'blue skies' and applied research and promoting local innovation and business incubation and spin outs in the process.

The priority placed on research by the research university also raised important issues. The value placed on the 'global' aggregation of knowledge means that research intensive universities may see themselves as being 'in' but not 'of' a region so that regional engagement can often be marginalised. However as PEARCE et al. (2007) have argued the purpose and function of HEIs could extend beyond knowledge production and transfer to include

the co-creation, exchange and mobilisation of knowledge through systematic approaches to community-university research partnerships, to the benefit of all. It is for research intensive universities to take up these challenges and opportunities and for regions to help set the agenda.

## 10. Closing the engagement gap

Tackling the engagement gap requires clear appreciation on the part of the region as to the character of the relationship which is sought. Regions need to consider a number of key issues. Engagement by its nature can be a loose term. Engagement can extend from very basic representative attendance at formal meetings, through information-sharing, resource-sharing, and along a continuum of ever closer joint working embracing shared objectives with sanctions for non-participation, and ultimately to the creation of new organisations for the delivery of particular requirements. How far along the continuum do regions wish to go in building a relationship with HEIs? Should the relationship be strategic or programme specific?

It is vital that any engagement partnership 'takes two'. A fruitful partnership will depend on acknowledging the context in which each partner is operating, on leadership and commitment, and is likely to be sustained by both strategic discussion and practical demonstration of what can be achieved in specific programme applications. Regions should consider the kinds of contributions from HEIs they could expect in securing a wide range of policy objectives. These might be drawn from any of the engagement domains identified earlier, including city and regional planning, support to business, lifelong learning community development, heritage and culture, public health and well-being,

and sustainability. In practical terms, examples of collaborative engagements found in the PURE study include:

- Enhancing available analytical capacity through jointly staffed analytical units
- Developing joint business incubation facilities
- Exploiting the knowledge capital in a region through knowledge-sharing and innovation arrangements
- Improved staff training programmes
- Participation in student intern programmes and short-term 'problem –solving' placements
- Supporting HE-based continuing education programmes
- Trialling innovative service delivery models
- Following up international connections for the benefit of the local region.

## 11. Conclusion: regions 'reaching in' as well as universities 'reaching out'

This article has explored the features of the profiles of engagement of HEIs and for the benefit of their potential regional partners has drawn attention to some issues that add value and give expression to HEIs' 'closeness' to regional government, business and communities, consistent with their status as universities. The HEI profiles also show where improvements might be made to further enhance engagement activity. It has been shown that all HEIs may have a role to play. HEIs are seen as important in regional development, and regional engagement is increasingly expected of them in justifying public funding. Regional engagement is now accepted as part of what HEIs do, but the profiles of regional engagement developed in the PASCAL PURE study emphasise the

very different patterns of engagement between different institutions within a region. Some HEIs identify particularly strongly with regional engagement in their mission, and could be said to form an emerging category of regional intensive universities, to be distinguished from research intensive and specialist higher education providers who place more emphasis on research and teaching but who also contribute to engagement activity. For regions the challenge must be to 'join up' the different contributions of HEIs for maximum impact.

Business and regional policy makers often complain that 'getting in' to what HEIs have to offer is never easy. This requires clarity about what is sought and determination to establish innovative partnership activities to secure the benefits required and expected. It is increasingly recognised that there are benefits from regional engagement for both regions and HEIs. For HEIs, benefits span improvement to the student experience, improvements to the relevance of teaching and learning, and those which open up research opportunities. Regions can benefit from systematic engagement with HEIs in different policy domains for the realisation of regional objectives in policy development and service delivery.

From a regional perspective, the study in the West of Scotland and similar findings from the PASCAL international programme provide regions with clear appreciation of the character of the relationships they should seek with HEIs. The contention is that it is time for regions to use this knowledge to 'reach in' to HEIs and seek out solutions to the issues they face. With clarity about what is sought, and determination to establish innovative partnership activities to secure the benefits required and expected, closing the engagement gap wherever it exists will bring benefits for regions, HEIs and wider society at large.

## Notes

- 1 The Big Tent is a Global Alliance of international networks concerned with university engagement with communities. See <http://pobs.cc/msu2> for its most recent communique.
- 2 A full listing of the domains and their associated aspects can be found at <http://pure.pascalobservatory.org>

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#### Biographical notes

*Dr. Robert Hamilton* is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Open Studies, University of Glasgow. He co-ordinates the University of Glasgow programme of adult and continuing education short courses and events for the public which each year attracts 5,000 students. His research interests include aspects of the history of adult education in Scotland and America, Learning Cities, and regional engagement of HEIs. He is an Affiliate of the PASCAL International Observatory.

*Professor Mike Osborne* is Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning, School of Education, University of Glasgow and experienced in adult education, VET and Higher Education research, development and evaluation. He is Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning and is Co-director of the PASCAL International Observatory. He co-ordinates the PASCAL

study of universities and regional engagement projects being undertaken for the EC on lifelong learning for transition in mid-life and innovation in HE.

*Mr. John Tibbitt* is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow and Co-Vice Chair (Policy) of the PASCAL International Observatory. He is an experienced social researcher who has undertaken and managed programmes of research for policy in university, local government and central government settings. His recent research and consultancy activities have included the areas of lifelong learning, regeneration, neighbourhoods and schools, and social capital.

Addresses: Dr. *Robert Hamilton*, Centre for Open Studies, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G3 6NH, Scotland

E-Mail: [Robert.Hamilton@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Robert.Hamilton@glasgow.ac.uk)  
[Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk)  
[John.Tibbitt@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:John.Tibbitt@glasgow.ac.uk)

Chris Duke

## LIFELONG LEARNING BEYOND EUROPE - MIGRATION TO ASIA OR ANOTHER TRANSFORMATION?

*Summary:* The practical meaning the continuing policy priority of lifelong learning has changed greatly as economic perspectives have come to dominate. In this Asian century the term is being adopted over the past decade: as another cultural imposition from the North, or enriched and reinterpreted. Asia is huge and hugely diverse, East Asia a global economic driver. International and regional networks and forums play out social equity versus economic competition differences. European use has narrowed down from social transformation to skill-training, and the learning city idea has lost some momentum. Possibly new models in Asia built on a socio-economic synthesis in response to global crises will flow back to enrich approaches in the 'old world' as well as across the South.

### **ການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດຈາກທະວີບເອີຣົບ - ການເຄື່ອນຍ້າຍເຂົ້າໃນອາຊີ ຫຼື ການປ່ຽນແປງຕ່າງໆ**

*ບົດສັງລວມ:* ໃນທາງພາກປະຕິບັດແລ້ວໝາຍຄວາມວ່າ: ບຸລິມະສິດຂອງນະໂຍບາຍແບບຕໍ່ເນື່ອງດ້ານການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດມີການປ່ຽນແປງ ຢ່າງໃຫຍ່ຫຼວງໃນຂະນະທີ່ແນວໂນ້ມທາງເສດຖະກິດໄດ້ເຂົ້າມາຄອບງຳ; ໃນສະຕະວັດນີ້ຢູ່ໃນຂົງເຂດອາຊີ ເລື່ອງນີ້ຈະມີການປ່ຽນແປງຫຼາຍຖ້າທຽບໃສ່ທົດສະວັດຜ່ານມາ: ຄືເປັນການນຳເອົາວັດທະນະທຳອີກແບບໜຶ່ງຈາກເອີຣົບ. ການຕີຄວາມໝາຍ ແລະ ການເສີມສ້າງແນວຄວາມຄິດໃໝ່ໆ, ອາຊີແມ່ນກວ້າງໃຫຍ່ ແລະ ມີຄວາມຫຼາກຫຼາຍ, ອາຊີຕາເວັນອອກເປັນໂຕຂັບເຄື່ອນດ້ານເສດຖະກິດທົ່ວໂລກ. ເຄືອຂ່າຍທາງສາກົນ ແລະ ພາກພື້ນ ແລະ ກອງປະຊຸມສາກົນໄດ້ສະແດງອອກດ້ານສິດສະເໝີພາບທາງສັງຄົມ ກັບການແຂ່ງຂັນດ້ານເສດຖະກິດທີ່ມີຄວາມແຕກຕ່າງ. ທາງຂົງເຂດເອີຣົບ ແມ່ນນຳໃຊ້ໂດຍການຫຼຸດຜ່ອນ ໃນການຫັນປ່ຽນທາງສັງຄົມ ມາເປັນການຝຶກອົບຮົມທາງດ້ານທັກສະ, ແລະ ແນວຄວາມຄິດຕໍ່ຕົວເມືອງແຫ່ງການຮຽນຮູ້ໄດ້ຫຼຸດທຳແຮງບາງສ່ວນ. ອາດຈະເປັນຮູບແບບໃໝ່ໃນອາຊີ ທີ່ສ້າງຂຶ້ນຈາກການສັງເຄາະເສດຖະກິດ ແລະ ສັງຄົມເພື່ອຕອບສະໜອງຕໍ່ວິ

វិភាគការងារដែលត្រូវធ្វើឡើងវិញក្នុងការងារ "តំណែង" ខ្ពស់ជាងមុន និង ខ្ពស់ថ្មី។

អត្ថន័យក្នុងការអនុវត្តជាក់ស្តែងជាអាទិភាពលើគោលនយោបាយបន្តនៃការរៀនពេញមួយជីវិតមានការ ប្រែប្រួលជាច្រើនប្រៀបដូចជាទស្សនវិស័យនៃសេដ្ឋកិច្ចដែលបានមកគ្របដណ្តប់អង្គឹងដែរ ។ នៅក្នុង សតវត្សរ៍អាស៊ានបច្ចុប្បន្ននេះត្រូវបានកែសម្រួលក្នុងរយៈពេលប៉ុន្មានទសវត្សរ៍កន្លងមកនេះ គឺជាការ) ។ ទ្វីប (ឆ្នាំអាមាត្យទទួលយកវប្បធម៌ដទៃពីភាគខាងជើង ឬជាការលូតលាស់និងការបកស្រាយឡើងវិញប អាស៊ីគឺមានវិសាលភាពធំទូលាយនិងមានវប្បធម៌ផ្សេងៗដោយឡែកពីគ្នា ចំនែកអាស៊ីបូព៌ាគឺជាអ្នក ផងដែរ ។ វេទិកានិងបណ្តាញការងារជាតិនិងអន្តរជាតិដើរតួនាទីសំខាន់ដឹកនាំសេដ្ឋកិច្ចពិភពលោក ណាស់លើសមធម៌សង្គមនិងភាពខុសគ្នាលើការប្រកួតប្រជែងសេដ្ឋកិច្ច ។ ការប្រើប្រាស់ទ្វីបអឺរ៉ុបបានធ្វើ អោយតូចចង្អៀតលើការផ្លាស់ប្តូរសង្គមទៅរកការបំប៉នជំនាញ និងគំនិតបង្កើតទីក្រុងប្រកបដោយការរៀន សូត្រនោះបានបាត់បង់នូវសន្ទុះរីកចម្រើនខ្លះដែរ ។ ដូចនេះគំរូនៅតំបន់អាស៊ីនេះបានធ្វើសំយោគសេដ្ឋ កិច្ចសង្គមក្នុងការឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងវិបត្តិពិភពលោកដែលនឹងហូរត្រលប់មកវិញទាំងដើម្បីបង្កើនគោលវិធី នៅក្នុងពិភពលោកចាស់ក៏ដូចជាតំបន់ភាគតូចទាំងមូលផងដែរ ។

### 1. Lifelong learning – what it was and is now, how and why it is changing

The concept of lifelong learning was fashioned by policy-oriented scholars and intellectual leaders working with and through international governmental bodies in Europe: notably the Council for Europe, OECD and UNESCO, in the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It flourished briefly in the seventies, waned in visible interest in the eighties, and emerged transformed as a new policy prescription in the nineties. It has continued to thrive as a concept, a policy prescription, and a subject of scholarly study, from about the time of the European Year of Lifelong Learning, 1996, the year

which also saw published a second, rich if not highly influential, UNESCO Education Commission Report. This Delors Report followed the Faure Report a quarter century earlier, in a tradition of visionary ambition to re-conceive and transform education in the service of a transformed society (UNESCO 1972, 1996, OECD 1974).<sup>1</sup> That transformation awaits Europe, although much of it is supported by the European Commission in the name of lifelong learning.

Two features stand out in the next twenty years among the whirl of ideas and short-lived policy changes prior to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). These further animated without greatly enriching or even clarifying what was meant or done. 'Lifelong learning' was almost universally adopted in the discourse, guidance and policy prescriptions of intergovernmental organisations and other national and international bodies that are influential in Europe and beyond. In terms of spending power the European Commission (EC) dwarfs all others. Writings about lifelong learning continue to proliferate, mainly among academic educationists. Whole encyclopaedias and handbooks, monographs and compendia are written about lifelong learning (TITMUS 1989, ASPIN et al. 2001, JARVIS 2008, PETERSON et al, 2010, BAGNALL 2012). New journals have the term in their titles or carry articles on the subject. One of the first, the *International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE)*, has been published for over twenty-five years. A four-year-old Asian newcomer to the adult education and lifelong learning field is the *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (IJCELL)*, published separately in Chinese and English. Fittingly, it comes from Hong Kong, in East Asia.

We return presently to the terminology of *education* and *learning*, and to the change from what has been called first generation lifelong learning to what has taken its place. We will touch on the relationship between the history of ideas and of policy

aspirations which are implemented, modified, or let go according to the wider spirit of the age: the political and social philosophy, ethical and cultural system, values and zeitgeist of the period. Highly as we may value education, it is largely a dependent variable shaped by more powerful economic, political and philosophical variables.

Let us turn first to Asia – part of the larger world beyond Europe and those other countries having similar political systems and traditions. Is the now long-established idea of lifelong learning still and perhaps only to be mainly a construct of the wealthier economies of Europe and similar places, even though the language and work of the OECD and the EU has global influence?

## 2. Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Fifty years ago the ‘pre-globalised’ world was divided three ways: the first world of the West including Europe; the (less used ) ‘second world’ denoted the Soviet bloc; the third world including Asia was seen as poor, backward, un- or underdeveloped. The typology was refined by identifying a ‘fourth world’ within the wealthy first world, referring sometimes to deprived and depressed indigenous minorities, sometime simply to the very poor within rich countries. The dichotomy between advanced or developed - that is the industrialised wealthy - and the un(der)developed became, in slightly less blunt but still inexact terms, the North including Europe and the South including Asia, most of which is north of the Equator. Asia was also more hopefully called ‘developing’. The term assumed essentially linear technical and economic progress, trailing behind on the road that Europe had walked earlier. An implied inferiority, of being behind as well as

poorer, was unavoidable. Moreover, most of Asia had been colonised and economically exploited by European nations

Unremarkably, following political, military, and often cultural and social domination, peoples becoming independent from the forties onwards no longer wished to be 'junior Europeans'. Initially ambition led those who could to go to North America or Europe for education and often a career. Now the scales are tipping: fees from Asian students are important, even essential, to universities in the North including the USA, Australia, New Zealand as well as in the British Isles. Increasingly, continental nations teach in English; but now a reverse flow for higher education studies is swelling, as well as a 'South-South' flow within the region.

This is already being called the Asian century. China and then India are soon set to overtake the leading economies of the West. The huge Asian region is better differentiated: its diversity is unmistakable. Asia, especially East Asia, is becoming the new global economic powerhouse; other parts of Asia, South-East as well as India, are booming. The two largest of the five BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – are Asian. Another emergent and rapidly rising part of the Asian region is ex-USSR Central Asia.

### 3. The migration of lifelong learning to Asia

The term lifelong learning is used almost universally in the North: it features strongly in the policy propositions of recently joined European Union (EU) Members and of others East European countries aspiring to join. Finding words on the Worldwide Web and in EU documents is easier than making them work in practice. Despite the global reach and strong influence of European policies

such as the Bologna Accord for higher education, the same cannot so far be said for the Asian region.

Another intergovernmental organisation, the World Bank, is influential. Like the EU and unlike UNESCO and the OECD it disperses large funds. The Bank engages with lifelong learning from time to time. Other recent attempts to explore the meaning of lifelong learning and apply it in Asia appear to be getting commoner. For example, in October 2007 the UNESCO Regional Office in Asia convened a meeting of experts from across the region for this purpose. This meeting was jointly sponsored with Japan and held in Tokyo, in industrially advanced East Asia like the new journal IJCELL. Earlier the long-established UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE) in Hamburg had changed its name to Lifelong Learning (UIL) as the term gained European currency. UIL seeks to promote the language, meanings and practices of lifelong learning in different parts of the world.

Beyond the wealthier and technologically most advanced East Asian part of Asia, UNESCO early in 2013 convened a Seminar on National Policy Frameworks for Lifelong Learning in Hanoi. Here the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation SEAMEO recently approved the establishment of a SEAMEO Regional Center for Lifelong Learning. Participants were invited from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Singapore. Here the focus is on lifelong learning as a national policy framework in countries of South-East Asia. On the other hand a powerful Asia-wide international non-governmental organisation, the Asian and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education ASPBAE, founded in 1964, has retained its acronym in replacing 'Bureau' in the last decade not with Lifelong Learning but with Basic. Why in a global era is adoption so slow? Does lifelong learning not transplant well, only applying within the



particular historical and cultural context of Europe? Or will it flourish also at least in the more prosperous parts of Asia?

There may appear to be no *a priori* reason why not. Widely shared experience of European imperialism may explain initial reluctance. There are concerns about new forms of intellectual as well as economic imperialism, perhaps a deep but unspoken obstacle (WALTERS 2012). If lifelong learning is seen as part of persisting European cultural domination there could be reluctance to adopt it. Lifelong learning has significantly changed its meaning and policy imperatives in European literature and practices from the last years of last century. This may confuse its understanding and use as a policy framework, especially if it is seen as empty rhetoric. The problem may be exacerbated by the difficulty of translating concepts and terms reliably between languages with different linguistic and cultural-historical roots. *Education* is more visible and tangible, adult and basic education easier to grasp and act on. In Europe we might say that language follows the euro: if there are EU funds available for programmes on lifelong learning, or the learning city or region, it costs little to use the right words.

#### 4. Other names and approaches to learning priorities in Asia, East and South

What are the educational priorities in Asia? Perhaps the same policies are being pursued in all world regions but the language varies? Another possibility is that the old world and its education have become mired in assumptions, institutional infrastructures and interests, limiting the way that the lifelong learning idea can be implemented. Can it transform society and make it fit for purpose in a 'world utterly changed', as the 2010 biennial OECD

Institutional Management in Higher Education Conference (IMHE) theme called it?

The way that lifelong learning was refocused and narrowed down to vocational education and training for international economic competition and labour market purposes did not go unchallenged. A paper lead-authored by the now Deputy Director of UIL over a decade ago (MEDEL-ANONUEVO et. al. in *Revisiting Lifelong for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2001, p. 65) provided a critique of the ‘narrow instrumental vision promoted by neoliberal discourses and practices: a vision predominant in policy circles at the time, but problematic for many educators. Terms such as “lifelong (l)earning” or “learning to earn” reflect the thin nature of the actions such vision promotes’.

ASPBAE has steadfastly prioritised in its lobbying, animation and field activities those in greatest need – the poorest of the mainly rural poor (see COOMBS 1980, HINZEN et al 2009, also the language and work of the ASPBAE General Assembly held in Phnom Phen September 2012). In terms of North-South dialogue one national German adult education agency has been a reliable partner and critical friend to ASPBAE for 35 years. The language of adult, or adult basic, education for development has been kept, as has recognition of the massive scale of illiteracy and too low basic educational attainment, gender inequality, and grinding poverty among many millions especially in South Asia into this the ‘Asian century’.

ASPBAE’s lobbying and action framework is largely global, set by UNESCO, the leading intergovernmental organisation for education. The sixth of UNESCO’s twelve-yearly International Adult Education Conferences, now called CONFINTEA, was held in Brazil in 2009. These events provide periodic review and propose forward planning cycles, especially for adult literacy and basic education. The leading international nongovernmental

organisation, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and ASPBAE as its Asian partner, engage with this process and lobby intensively. More sharply focused, with attainment targets set for 2015, are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce poverty worldwide, and the EFA programme Education for All.

In its early years from the sixties to the eighties ASPBAE was firmly grounded and partly led from East Asia: Hong Kong and Macao as well as Singapore, Japan and the Republic of Korea. In later years this region has been largely absent from its work: an example of how reality has moved beyond conventional thinking, both East-West and North-South. In demographically as well as industrially advanced Japan lifelong learning (also called social education) is long established. More generally though there is a lurking sense that adult basic education is for the poor and the South, lifelong learning for the wealthy and the North. More rarely this is being made explicit. In Africa, for comparison, there is a growing voice for indigenous knowledge and wisdom; for finding 'an African way' (HOPPERS 2012). Europe is still the source of our language and dominant ideas, as Shirley Walters points out (SLOWEY/SCHUETZE 2012, 254-55). This may no longer be so warmly embraced. Does lifelong learning suffer collateral damage from this?

With the approaching end of the MDG and EFA (Millennium Development Goals and Education for All) cycles of work in 2015, and the question of what follows next, it might be reasonable to expect that universal lifelong learning will be adopted as the overarching purpose. This paper suggests that this is less likely than Faure in 1972 and Delors in 1996 might have led us to expect.

## 5. Changes to lifelong learning in the world of the EU and OECD

When first formulated and as first understood, the term lifelong learning was welcome in the adult education community. It strengthened the case for treating the education of adults seriously and incorporating it into planning, legislation and funding. *Learning* democratically emphasised the freely choosing individual student rather than the provider, or more pejoratively the client in the education industry.

It became common as part of the democratic and individualistic aspect of learning to replace the term education with learning, for example in the title of the monthly *Adults Learning* produced by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education NIACE England and Wales. Lifelong learning is in principle both life-wide and lifelong. In practice the focus remained on educational provision whether formal, non-formal or, more ambiguously, informal. Most policies have to do with the nature, purposes, resource allocation and outcomes of the education budget. Community efforts to nurture wider learning outside school and college were always rare: the community Learning Exchange in Melbourne Australia in the seventies was one example. Few scholars seriously addressed the full potential of life-wide lifelong learning - that is, the learning environment in which people both live and work.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this larger vision of learning lifelong and life-wide was simply too hard to handle and apply.

Before long more critical adult educators began to see lifelong learning and adult education as oppositional. Lifelong learning was seen as a threat to the broad social and liberal values and purposes of adult education for socially just, culturally enriched civil society, in which education for adults as for the

young catered for the full spectrum of personal and social as well as economic needs. This period saw the high tide of postmodernism, critiqued as value-free if not amoral relativism. Then the triumph of neo-liberalism in the Reagan-Thatcher years saw its rapid spread across Europe, including the East, and globally. This may at least partly explain the accompanying displacement of the broader vision of Faure and Delors.

By the nineties 'lifelong learning' became common in the policies and programmes of the EU. The ambitious first generation lifelong learning vision was replaced by a focus on education and skills for work and economic progress, translated as employability. This became a main and often almost the only criterion for both school and higher education. At the same time tighter and narrower quantifiable monitoring and quality control became normal. Second generation lifelong learning is in practice restricted mainly to the education and training of youth and adults. Often this became in the English language a synonym for vocational education and training or VET. Innovation for national and regional competitiveness in a global, nominally free-trade free-for-all, made lifelong learning as VET the means to equip and use, rather than waste, labour market potential in this economic cause. In the UK, a European leader in the global neo-liberal enterprise, broader-purpose adult education struggled to justify itself in terms of preventing the waste of human resources. Wider values, from individual equal opportunity to social inclusiveness, cultural enrichment and an active citizenry, survived in rhetoric but withered in influence and resource allocation.

One particular policy application has grown out of the idea of lifelong learning. It is important because it adds a social dimension to the purposes of lifelong learning, and is closer to the initial ambitious intent of Faure. This is the ideas and to some extent practices which use learning as a prefix: learning societies

and organisations, learning cities, communities, regions etc. Much of the EU's development work, and much of the research and development (R&D) activity of OECD, has sought to develop 'learning regions'. This is principally as a means to economic development and prosperity, but sometimes with wider civic, social, health and well-being and environmental aspirations. In recent years however the early energy to promote 'learning cities' in Europe has tended to stall (YARNIT 2011, 2013).

## 6. A different future for lifelong learning globally

We conclude with an assertion about lifelong learning, and speculation about its future. The diminished scope and meaning of lifelong learning is a loss everywhere. The unqualified embrace of neo-liberalism for a competitive economy comes at a cost now unaffordable. The *a priori* credo that an abstraction called *the market* knows best is remarkable, as if the market removed the need for long-term planning. Planning is essential to redress the perverse environmental and social consequences of an unrestrained free-market: rising inequalities between and within nations across health and welfare, well-being, environmental and other socio-civic arenas (see for example WILKINSON/PICKETT, 2009, STIGLITZ 2012); and the devastating consequences of global warming.

What is called for is far-reaching rebalancing of policy priorities between economic, social and ecological objectives. Such a changed cultural and policy context will demand more clear and vigorous policies and strategy for lifelong learning. Education requires tangible educational investment in schools and teachers. Post-colonial Asia has consistently seen adult education, especially literacy, basic education, and skills for survival and economic

growth, as essential. The priorities of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals are judged to be vital, although disappointing from an adult education and full lifelong learning perspective; so is the shortfall from targets. Asian nations are no less hard-nosed about education, skills and training for economic development than others. Whatever the policies however, the larger part of learning still takes place informally; that is to say outside organised education, in communities, neighbourhoods and workplaces. This is also where the practical solutions to the big problems will be made to work.

Can this iron reality of social learning produce richer third generation lifelong learning in Asia? Could this retain the hard economic edge of the second generation, while recovering the breadth of vision of the first, not as a leisure-time luxury but as an imperative for survival in a stressed world. There may be roots in and connections with older traditions and forms of knowledge in these societies as a foundation for wider and deeper lifelong learning. If so, what might this look like? The sources of the original policies are mainly European or American. So is the neo-liberal ideology and policies that have survived the global financial crisis seemingly unscathed. Will it be 'business as usual' with lifelong learning little more than VET and the paradigms of struggling Europe still imported into Asia? Or will there be a reverse flow?

Earlier models of post-colonial development had Asian nations following the educational and other pathways to prosperity of the North, as fast as the cost of new educational infrastructure and human resource development would allow. Where this differed it was with the innuendo that adult basic education was for poor nations, lifelong learning for the rich. This is not surprising, given the premium on professional and skill updating in advanced economies. It has become outdated, however, with the new and

massive changes: in global demographic and other forms of mobility; and in GDP and the growth-rates of nations of the East.

Most transformative of all for lifelong learning may be the Internet. WWW, the Worldwide Web, is rapidly becoming universally accessible at an affordable cost. Continuous innovation and lowering cost promise access to more information than any school or school system could ever provide from its own face-to-face resources. Aided by the facility of the young for new IT, it promises to leapfrog earlier phases of development and could be rapidly transformed into society-wide knowledge, and enhanced capacity to understand and use it. It needs a benevolent supportive environment and direct forms of local support to succeed. So far, most education discussion and impact analysis of new ICT has concentrated on substituting mass and remote for cost-intensive classroom transmission. More broadly e-commerce, e-shopping and social networking via Facebook, Twitter etc. have dominated.

Used and enabled wisely, the Web could nurture a society-wide learning environment. Here, access to limitless information becomes access to effective power-to-do. This differs absolutely from what Illich and Verne in a memorable phrase about deschooling called 'imprisoned in a global classroom'. The technology levels an uneven field. It is a realistic expectation that parts of Asia may soon outstrip Europe in wide and wise exploitation and application. Thus equipped, with growing wealth and influence, much of Asia, South and South-East as well as East, may reinstate lifelong learning in new ways.

We are already witnessing a reverse flow of social learning and innovation from the Asian region into Europe, along with Asian capital, workers and students. Maybe the new economies and governance systems that make western democracies feel uneasy can also combine older cultures and ways of knowing and doing



with the new. Europe's confusion about its future might in turn be addressed by lifelong learning as more decisively applied in Asia.

## Notes

- 1 A third such UNESCO Education Commission report is in the making in 2013.
- 2 The notable early exception was Canada's Alan Tough (Tough 1971), where David Livingstone partly sustained the approach in work at OISE in Toronto. In England Konrad Elsdon and associates undertook groundbreaking empirical work on learning in ordinary life through local associations and networks. In Australia much earlier, working with associates in Europe and North America, Fred Emery developed open systems thinking especially as applied to the organisation of the workplace, as a key to enabling the lifelong learning society. Work-based and workplace learning has continued as an important strand for interweaving (higher) education with other parts of the social structure, as has service learning in the USA and beyond.

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#### Biographical note

*Chris Duke*, historian, sociologist and now honorary professor of lifelong learning at four Australian and UK universities, led academic and operational adult-continuing-lifelong learning departments in Australia, England and the UK and was CEO of an Australian university. An international and comparative scholar of adult, non-formal and lifelong education and learning, he has worked extensively in Asia, with governmental bodies including the EU, OECD and UNESCO and as a leader in professional and lobbying bodies including ASPBAE, ICAE, NIACE, PASCAL, AAAE (Australia) and UACE (UK). His driving passion is to see education enable and serve people equitably, and to empower and enable active citizenship.

Address: Professor Chris Duke, 26 St Marys Crescent, Leamington Spa CV31 1JL England

E-Mail: [chris.duke@rmit.edu.au](mailto:chris.duke@rmit.edu.au)

## LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL IN CHINA: PROGRESS, LESSONS LEARNED AND THE WAY FORWARD

*Summary:* In the last four decades since UNESCO's publication of the landmark report *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow*, many countries have embraced the report's recommendation that lifelong learning is a 'master concept' and 'guiding principle' in transforming education. Recognising China's endeavours to advance education reform in the lifelong learning perspective and develop a learning society in recent years, this paper first of all looks at the progress made in building a lifelong learning system in China, spanning from the development of the formal education to the advancement of modern distance education and the utilisation of information and communication technology. Secondly, the paper tries to draw some lessons learned from policies and practices in China which might be inspirational to other countries. And finally, in view of some challenges and opportunities for education and learning created by China's rapid economic development and social transformation, the paper elaborates on the way forward to achieve the goal of lifelong learning for all.

### **ການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດສໍາລັບທຸກຄົນໃນປະເທດຈີນ: ຄວາມຄືບໜ້າ, ບັນດາບົດຮຽນ ແລະ ທິດທາງທີ່ຈະກ້າວໄປທາງໜ້າ**

*ບົດສັງລວມ:* ໃນໄລຍະສີ່ທົດສະວັດທີ່ຜ່ານມານັບຕັ້ງແຕ່ອົງການຍຸເນສໂກໄດ້ພິມເຜີຍແຜ່ບົດລາຍງານທີ່ມີສໍາຄັນຄື ການຮຽນຮູ້ທີ່ຈະເປັນ: ໂລກຂອງການສຶກສາໃນມື້ນີ້ ແລະ ມື້ໜ້າ, ຫຼາຍປະເທດກໍໄດ້ຮັບເອົາຂໍ້ສະເໜີແນະຂອງບົດລາຍງານວ່າດ້ວຍ ການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດເປັນ “ແນວຄວາມຄິດຫຼັກ” ແລະ “ແນວທາງທີ່ສໍາຄັນ” ໃນການປ່ຽນແປງການສຶກສາ. ການຮັບຮູ້ຂອງປະເທດຈີນ, ທີ່ຈີນເອງພະຍາຍາມທີ່ຈະກ້າວໄປສູ່ການປະຕິຮູບການສຶກສາໃນ ລັກສະນະຂອງການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ ແລະ ການພັດທະນາການຮຽນຮູ້ທາງສັງຄົມໃນປີທີ່ຜ່ານມາ, ອີງໃສ່ຜົນຂອງການບົດວິເຄາະນີ້ກ່ອນອື່ນໝົດຕ້ອງເບິ່ງຄວາມຄືບໜ້າໃນຂະບວນການກໍ່ສ້າງ



## 1. Introduction

Rooted in many cultures, societies and religions, it could be claimed that the notion of lifelong learning has existed throughout recorded human history. The Chinese saying, "It is never too late to learn", is an excellent example of this fine tradition since ancient times. Lifelong learning has been central to UNESCO's mission to promote every individual's right to education. UNESCO's two landmark reports, *Learning to be* (FAURE 1972) - and *Learning: The treasure within* (DELORS 1996), have contributed to the development of policy and practice in lifelong learning and to the creation of learning societies in UNESCO Member States. Encompassing formal, non-formal and informal learning, lifelong learning emphasises the integration of learning and living - in life-wide contexts across family and community settings, in study, work and leisure, and throughout an individual's life.

Today, in the knowledge-based global economy, future prosperity and security as well as peace, social harmony and nurturing the environment will depend on people's access and capacity to make choices, to adapt to rapid change and to find sustainable solutions to pressing challenges. Lifelong learning is thus the essential organising principle for reaching this goal. However, in reality, there is still a discrepancy between policy-makers' acceptance of lifelong learning on the one hand, and relative lack of workable policies and strategies on the other. While the lifelong learning discourse needs to be consolidated further, the priority in many countries is to translate the discourse of lifelong learning into policies and strategies for implementation.

Recognising China's endeavours to embrace the concept of lifelong learning, advance education reform and develop a learning society in recent years, in this paper, we would like to look at the progress made in China, to try to draw some lessons learned, and

finally, to elaborate on the way forward to lifelong learning for all in China.

## 2. Remarkable progress

Since 1990s, in line with economic growth and social transformation, lifelong learning has received more and more attention in China. The *Law on Education of the People's Republic of China* - promulgated in 1995 - stipulated that “the country should gradually establish and complete the system of lifelong education”. Since then, China has explicitly put the establishment of a lifelong learning system and building a learning society where lifelong learning is a reality for all, as one of its goals to build a well off society.

### 2.1 Great achievements made in developing formal education at all levels

Formal education is key to lay the foundation of the capacity to pursue learning throughout life. Recent years have witnessed rapid expansion of formal education at all levels in China. According to official statistics for 2010, the gross intake ratio of the three-year early childhood care and education reached 56.6%, the net enrolment rate of primary school-aged children reached 99.7%, and the gross enrolment rate of lower secondary schools reached 100.1% (MOE 2011). Upper secondary education and higher education also witnessed fast growth with the gross enrolment rate of senior high schools reaching 82.5% and that of higher education institutions reaching 26.5% in 2010 (MOE 2011). The total enrolment in higher education reached 31.05 million in 2010,

indicating that China has now entered the stage of mass higher education.

## 2.2 Adult and continuing education become an integral to China's lifelong learning system

During the past decades, all sectors of society, encompassing governmental agencies, educational institutions, communities, industrial and commercial enterprises, have jointly exerted efforts to foster the healthy growth of continuing education in China, giving rise to various modes of adult and continuing education. A large number of adults are participating in continuing education programmes to improve their qualifications and skills. According to available statistics (MOE 2011), in 2010, the total number of adults participating in various non-degree higher education courses reached 3.32 million person-times, while those participating in various secondary education courses reached 52.91 million person-times. China's efforts in increasing literacy are well recognised in the international community and its massive national literacy campaigns have resulted in a remarkable decrease in the number of illiterates. From 2000 to 2010, the size of the illiterate adult population dropped by 30.4 million and the adult illiterate rate declined from 6.72 per cent to 4.08 per cent (NATIONAL STATISTICS 2011). In 2010, some 902,600 illiterate adults became literate through participation in literacy programmes (MOE 2011). In addition, adult and continuing education and training courses conducted in various sectors have helped millions of adults to upgrade their basic skills and qualifications (HAO 2011).

### 2.3 The burgeoning development of learning cities/communities and community education

In parallel to the wide acceptance of the concept of lifelong learning as a guiding principle for educational development and reform, some pragmatic and operational approaches have been adopted to implement lifelong learning in the international community. The development of learning cities/communities in China is a case in point. In 1999, Shanghai Municipality took the initiative to make great efforts to build a learning city in Shanghai. Beijing Municipality followed suit in 2001 with the determination to become one of China's foremost learning cities in 10 years' time. Since then, more than 60 cities have set up their goals for constructing a learning city, that include Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Jinan, Changzhou, Nanjing and Dalian, to name but a few. The development of learning cities has become a burgeoning phenomenon in the whole country.

In connection to learning communities, community-based education and learning constitutes the cornerstone of a learning society, playing an important role in creating a favourable environment for lifelong learning and a learning society. The Department of Vocational and Adult Education of MOE (2004) issued *Suggestions on Promoting Community Education*, to promote lifelong learning via building learning organizations, namely learning corporations, learning units, learning districts, learning neighbourhoods and learning families, and in the meantime confirmed that the function of community education and learning was to accelerate the construction of a lifelong education system.

According to a survey by the MOE, 114 national experimental or pilot learning communities have been organised in 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. The number of pilot learning communities organised by provincial authorities



exceeds 4,000 (HAO 2011). In Beijing, for example, every downtown area has established a community education network, led by community colleges and adult education centres, and 80% of streets have established community education and learning centres (YUAN 2012). In Shanghai, there are widespread three-tiered communities of education institutions at the district, street and neighbourhood levels, known as community colleges, community schools and community learning sites. These kinds of institutions provide abundant learning activities, including cultural education and vocational training, as well as learning activities for healthcare and sports (LI 2011).

#### 2.4 Advancement of modern distance education and development of information and communication technology

The rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT) has brought unprecedented opportunities to lifelong learning in the international community, and China is no exception. ICT has provided a strong impetus for China to build an effective lifelong learning system and a thriving learning society with relatively limited educational resources. In recent years, educational platforms based on networks of modern communications, including services provided by satellites, internet, and radio and TV broadcasting stations, have been able to provide more options and more convenient modes of self-directed study for ordinary people to pursue lifelong learning. The expansion of distance education has also contributed to the training of industrial workers, as well as the in-service training of other categories of professionals and workers.

Large cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan and Hangzhou have kept up vigorous efforts towards the establishment of an e-

learning platform. For example, Shanghai has implemented three projects (LI 2011). The first was the establishment of a satellite networks platform for lifelong education, which has set up a resource repository containing a great number of excellent curricula. This satellite platform broadcasts educational programmes for 8 hours every day, and delivers a significant amount of educational video material to sub-districts and communities, which helps citizens there to enjoy the learning service in their own communities. The second was the creation of the Shanghai Lifelong Learning Network ([www.shlll.net](http://www.shlll.net)) in 2009, which interconnects all levels of the lifelong education system. The third was the establishment of the joint development mechanism for web resources, which encourages diverse social forces to work together in developing learning resources and in building a database for lifelong learning. In addition, the Network has been offering a variety of online learning modules, providing platforms for interactive discussion, and carrying out activities such as sharing learning outcomes and promoting lectures, in order to support self-directed, flexible and happy learning.

### 3. Lessons learned

In line with its rapid economic growth and social progress, China has, to a large extent, realised the transformation to a country with large human resources, and a dynamic lifelong learning system has taken shape. The following lessons can be drawn from China.

### 3.1 Improving governance: Formulating a comprehensive and trans-departmental coordination mechanism

Lifelong learning is a social, a political, an economic, a health and sometimes even a spiritual phenomenon (LONGWORTH 1998), and the construction of a learning society brings about fundamental, systematic and complicated social changes. Its success depends not only on strong political will and excellent governmental support, but also on a joint promotion model which engages the government, enterprises, educational institutions and non-governmental organisations, as well as individuals. In China, one of the difficulties in promoting the construction of a learning society is the formulation of a comprehensive management mechanism that can coordinate all levels and kinds of education and learning resources, and that can plan, implement and manage various learning activities.

To overcome this difficulty, some municipalities have improved the governance of building a learning society and created encouraging experience. In Beijing, for example, the Municipal Leadership Group for Constructing the Learning City and its office were set up. The Leadership Group - with participation of representatives of 29 party and governmental departments as well as civil society organisations - is in charge of implementing the policies and measures in promoting the learning city construction, organizing and constituting work objectives, implementing plans and policy documents, studying important issues in learning city construction, and assessing progress (YUAN 2012). Shanghai has also created an effective mechanism. The municipal government established the Shanghai Advisory Committee for Learning Society Construction whose main duties are planning, guiding and coordinating.

### 3.2 Quality enhancement going hand in hand with the expansion of access to learning opportunities

Recognizing some of the negative consequences of examination-oriented education, which sometimes runs contrary to both the learners' desire to learn and the cultivation of good learning habits, China has launched a series of reforms to cultivate more creative citizens. Most notably, in 1999, the Government made the *Decision on Deepening Education Reform to Promote Quality Education* (CPC 1999), and sought to reform testing, reduce examinations, and encourage local authorities to experiment with their own examination regimens, encourage more diverse curricula, and greater choice for students in subject matter. Since then, guided by the concept of quality education, school education in China has embarked on a new stage focusing on in-depth reforms and quality improvement. Enhanced reforms have been made in teaching content and methods, especially prioritizing individual learners' interest in learning and their ability of self-directed learning.

As a result of these reforms, a more open and flexible school education system has been developed to meet the diversified needs of learners. In the words of a vice mayor of City of Changzhou (JU 2011): "we feel that school education is badly in need of reform which will gear it towards cultivating pupils and/or students into lifelong learners, so that they can lay a solid foundation for their further study in the years to come. In recent years, elementary education in our city has centered upon students' competence in autonomous learning, which has been achieved by changing teachers' classroom practice and by curricular reforms. In addition, we have also taken successful approaches to the development of students' interest in ways of learning." It is expected that improvement of education quality in China will equip learners with a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

For enhancing the quality and relevance of vocational education, more than 30 industrial advisory bodies were established to provide guidance and technical support for carrying out occupation analysis, curriculum development and pedagogical reform. A competence-based curriculum development model which pays more attention on the actual competence requirement of the industries has been adopted. The curriculum matter of the vocational courses has become more practical, and course management more flexible. Vocational schools are encouraged to establish close links with enterprises, allocate more teaching and learning time for practical skills training and internship in enterprises. Furthermore, it has now become a usual practice for vocational school teachers to hold two professional qualifications: one as a qualified lecturer, the other as a qualified engineer or similar qualification, and for students to receive a vocational school diploma and a vocational qualification upon their graduation (YANG 2004).

### 3.3 Paying close attention to social inclusion and meeting the learning needs of disadvantaged groups

To support students from poor regions and families to get access to formal education, China has carried out the reform to introduce a system for guaranteeing funding for rural compulsory education, by exempting students receiving compulsory education in rural areas across the country from paying tuition and miscellaneous education fees, providing them with free textbooks, and giving living allowances to students from poor families who stay in school dormitories. In addition, China has given financial support to students from poor families at regular undergraduate institutions,

and vocational colleges and secondary vocational schools in the form of grants.

In the field of adult and continuing education, China has also supported disadvantaged groups. Through training for laid-off workers, the government has taken action to help laid-off workers cope with their difficulties and upgrade their skills for new employment. Since 1998, the government has launched several nationwide re-employment projects to provide re-employment training and job counselling services, as well as additional vocational skills and entrepreneurship training for millions of unemployed workers. Together with the acceleration of industrialization and urbanization in China, more rural labourers are moving out of the agriculture sector to seek non-agricultural jobs. In 2010, the number of migrant workers reached 221 million, among them 160 million are migrants from rural areas to urban areas (NATIONAL STATISTICS 2011). In large cities like Beijing and Shanghai, migrant workers constitute a third of the cities' workforce. To better equip rural migrants to work in urban areas, since 2004, China has implemented a rural migrant workers training programme and the costs of the programme are shared by the central government and provincial governments (SHI 2008).

### 3.4 Nurturing a learning culture through lifelong learning weeks and other activities

The goal of establishing lifelong learning systems cannot be achieved only by the efforts of learning opportunity providers, but to incentivize and motivate learners has a crucial role to play. In 2005, with the support of the MOE, the Chinese Adult Education Association and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO initiated a nationwide Lifelong Learning for All Activity Week. Since

then, China has organized the lifelong learning for all activity week every year. Nationwide, the number of cities, districts and counties organising lifelong learning activities week has grown from 10 in 2005 to 215 in 2011. Through seminar, exhibition of learning opportunities, performance and cultural activities, showcase of effective learning programmes and media coverage, the annual lifelong learning activity week has offered residents better understanding of and motivation for lifelong learning.

Based on rich learning and cultural resources, at community and street levels, a series of participatory residents' learning activities – such as a reading festival, a community culture and art exhibition, network learning and communication, and a handiwork competition – have been organized in many cities. As a result, these activities have attracted and encouraged residents to take part in lifelong learning, cultivated a rich learning atmosphere. Residents in Beijing, Shanghai and many other cities now believe that 'everyone can be a teacher', the 'classroom is everywhere', 'learning is development' and 'learning is life' (LI 2011).

#### 4. The way forward

China has now entered a new epoch of social and economic development. Rapid economic development and international competition will place new demands on the types of human resources supply and employability of the workforce. The speed of advancement of science and technology has accelerated and there is now greater demand for highly skilled human resources. Moreover, China faces new demographic challenges. For example, in 2010, nearly half of all Chinese lived in cities and people over the age of 60 accounted for 13.3% of the population, up nearly 3% since 2000. Furthermore, the acceleration of urbanization will lead

to further increases in the migrant population from rural to urban areas. In order to integrate themselves into urban life, migrant workers require urgent improvements to their life and occupational skills. As the ageing trend is accelerating, the population over 60 years old have diverse and individualized learning needs in healthcare, daily life skills, law and culture.

While rapid progress has been made in building a lifelong learning system in China, there are still some aspects which are far from meeting the citizens' learning needs. It is very encouraging to note that China's National Plan Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010 - 2020) adopted the concept of lifelong education as an important guiding principle, and put the building of a learning society in a more prominent position. In particular, the Outline proposes the strategic goal that "up to 2020, the country will basically realize the modernization of education and form a learning society, so as to become one of the countries which have rich human resources" (MOE 2010). To this end, a series of objectives and tasks have been set, spanning early childhood care and education, compulsory education, senior secondary education, vocational education, higher education, continuing education and education for ethnic minorities as well as special education. To put these policy priorities into actions, some effective strategies and approaches are indispensable.

#### 4.1. Clarify the conceptual understanding of lifelong learning

In the International Standard Classification of Education adopted by UNESCO General Conference in 2011, the concept of *learning* is to be understood as: individual acquisition or modification of information, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values, skills, competencies or behaviours through experience, practice, study or



instruction (UIS 2011). For an education system which traditionally paid attention on the dominant role of teachers and result of examinations, the embracement of this broad definition of learning is helpful to clarify the understanding of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning encompasses all learning activity undertaken in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Furthermore, lifelong learning is about the integration of learning and living – horizontally in life-wide contexts across family, cultural settings, communities, study, work and leisure, and vertically over an individual’s lifespan ‘from cradle to grave’. This requires innovations in the pedagogical practices, including paying more attention on facilitation of learning, adoption of the learner-centred approaches, and integration of the convey of knowledge with the development of competence, employability and active citizenship.

#### 4.2. Strengthen legislation and ensure the legal status of promoting lifelong learning for all

To make lifelong learning a reality for all implies not only a holistic and sector-wide educational reform in which all sub-sectors and elements of the education system should be designed to cater to lifelong and life-wide learning, but also the creation of learning opportunities in all settings or modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) for people of all ages (infants, children, adolescents and adults). Therefore, lifelong learning policies need to be first of all supported by broad social consensus, legislative instruments and coordination mechanisms. In China, the Outline proposes to enact legislation on lifelong learning. The legal provisions and associated rules, regulations and procedures derived from the legislation will help develop a systemic approach and strengthen the promotion and governance of lifelong learning in China. Provinces,

autonomous regions and municipalities have also important roles to play in strengthening legislation. In fact, in 2005, with a view to meeting the citizens' needs of lifelong learning, pushing forward the construction of a learning society, and promoting human beings' integrated development, the People's Congress of Fujian Province promulgated the Regulations of Fujian Province on the Promotion of Lifelong Education, which is the first provincial level legislation in China. In 2011, the People's Congress of Shanghai Municipality also promulgated the Regulations of Shanghai Municipality on the Promotion of Lifelong Education. These provincial level regulations have the advantage to clarify relevant rights and obligations of governmental agencies, enterprises and individuals in more concrete local contexts.

#### 4.3. Foreground further the role of adult learning and education, and to meet the learning needs of the 'mass'

Every individual, be he or she a child, youth or adult, should have the right to access and engage in any form of learning suited to his/her needs. Adult learning and education is about providing learning contexts and processes that are attractive and responsive to the needs of adults, and equip them to be active citizens. It is about developing self-reliant, autonomous individuals, building and rebuilding their lives in complex and rapidly-changing cultures, societies and economies – at work, in the family, and in community and social life. However, compared to compulsory education, vocational education and higher education, China has given a lower priority to adult learning and education, and its role as mentioned above has not yet been duly emphasised by the government and the society (CHINESE 2008). The Outline includes a Chapter on “further or continuing education” which focuses on the aim that “a

learning society in which everybody studies and learning opportunities are available anywhere and anytime shall have taken shape by 2020” (MOE, 2010). In this regard, Shanghai Municipality’s effort to construct an inclusive lifelong learning system serves as an inspiring example as it has made a great effort to formulate various training mechanisms and provide learning opportunities for different special social groups (such as laid-off workers, migrant workers, disabled and older citizens) to satisfy their special learning needs. This mechanism is under the unified leadership of districts and counties, is implemented by villages and towns, and is a venture in which various social organisations participate. To meet the learning needs of the increasing population of older people, the city takes advantage of the community learning network.

#### 4.4 Recognise the learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning

The facilitation of lifelong learning and incentivisation of learners calls for a learning outcomes-based qualifications framework / system and a coordinated approach to assess and recognise learning outcomes in non-formal and informal settings. In recent years, in addition to traditional qualifications systems which mostly acknowledge learning in formal education, some countries have developed mechanisms for the recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, and many more are in the process of doing so. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), on behalf of the UNESCO Education Sector, has developed the *UNESCO Guidelines on the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning* (UIL 2012). While the Guidelines are not legally binding, Member States’ authorities

are expected to make efforts to implement the Guidelines as appropriate to their specific national context. This provides a good opportunity for China, based on its degree and diploma awarding system, and the national vocational qualification system, to develop a dynamic and comprehensive national system of recognising the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning.

#### 4.5 Increase financial investment for promoting lifelong learning for all

In the wake of the financial crises, it is all the more important for the international community to stress the public good aspect of lifelong learning for all and to change from a discourse of cost to one of investment and benefits. In recent years, China has significantly increased financial investment in education. However, the ratio of total public expenditure on education to GDP in China remains lower than both the world average (4.7% in 2008) and the average in the developing countries (4.5% in 2008) (UNESCO 2011). The principle of “giving strategic priority to education development” listed in the Outline needs to be reflected first and foremost in governmental investment in education. The current target – i.e. “the portion of fiscal (public) expenditure on education in GDP shall be raised to 4% by 2020” – will not change China’s position at the lower end of the league table of countries with regard to public funding for education. As proposed by DELORS (1996), at least 6% of Member States’ GNP should be earmarked for education, and this practice has met with widespread acceptance in the international community. Clearly, China is on the way to make further efforts to increase its financial investment in lifelong learning.

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### Biographical notes

*Arne Carlsen* is Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. He has been an adult educator from early age in education for the unemployed and general education for adults. Before joining UNESCO, he was first Vice-Rector for education, then International Director at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, and Chair of the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning. He holds honorary doctoral degrees and is honorary professor at universities in Vietnam, Latvia, Russia and India.

*Jin Yang* is a Senior Programme Specialist at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. He conducts research on lifelong learning policies and strategies, facilitates the establishment of the International Platform of Learning Cities, and provides technical assistance and capacity building to establish lifelong learning systems. Before joining UNESCO, he was the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Basic Education in the Ministry of Education of China.

Address: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Feldbrunnenstr. 58, 20148 Hamburg, Germany.

E-Mail: [a.carlsen@unesco.org](mailto:a.carlsen@unesco.org);  
[yj1@moe.edu.cn](mailto:yj1@moe.edu.cn)

## INITIATIVES TOWARDS NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: A REVIEW OF APPROACHES AND PARTICIPATION BY DVV INTERNATIONAL AND PARTNERS

*Summary:* This article looks at some of the major initiatives of DVV International in the countries and the region, and the participation in a diverse range of activities during these past three years. However, as will be seen quite clearly, there are several indications that most of them are not stand alone initiatives, but they are in line, or better in cooperation, with several other major players in the region like UNESCO, and regional or national priorities following global agendas like EFA (Education for All). In this respect a comparative view looking at similarities, communalities, and differences is employed when it comes to policies and practices, structures and mechanisms, financial and technical assistance.

### **ການເລີ່ມຕົ້ນເພື່ອຈະກ້າວໄປຂ້າງໜ້າ ໃນວຽກງານການສຶກສານອກໂຮງຮຽນ ແລະ ການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດໃນອາຊີຕາເວັນອອກສ່ຽງໃຕ້: ທົບທວນຄືນໃນ ການເຂົ້າເຖິງ ແລະ ການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຂອງຫ້ອງການຮ່ວມມືນາໆຊາດ ເພື່ອການ ສຶກສາຜູ້ໃຫຍ່ເຢຍລະມັນ ແລະ ຄູ່ຮ່ວມພັດທະນາ**

*ບົດສັງລວມ:* ບົດຄວາມນີ້ກວມບາງສ່ວນຂອງການລິເລີ່ມທີ່ສໍາຄັນຂອງອົງການ ດີວີວີ ອິນເຕີເນ ຊັນແນວ ໃນຫຼາຍປະເທດ ແລະ ພາກພື້ນ, ແລະ ການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຢູ່ໃນຫຼາຍກິດຈະກຳໃນ ໄລຍະສາມປີຜ່ານມານີ້. ຢ່າງໃດກໍຕາມ, ດັ່ງທີ່ສາມາດເຫັນໄດ້ຢ່າງຈະແຈ້ງແມ່ນ, ມີຫຼາຍຕົວຊີ້ ວັດທີ່ສ່ວນໃຫຍ່ພວກເຂົາມັກຈະບໍ່ຢືນຢູ່ຜູ້ດຽວໄດ້, ແຕ່ພວກເຂົາແມ່ນຢູ່ໃນເສັ້ນຂິດ, ຫຼືຢູ່ໃນ ການຮ່ວມມືກັບຜູ້ສໍາຄັນອື່ນໆ ໃນພາກພື້ນເຊັ່ນ: ອົງການຢູເນສໂກ ແລະ ໃນລະດັບພາກພື້ນ ຫຼື ໃນລະດັບປະເທດທີ່ໃຫ້ບຸລິມະສິດໃນການຕິດຕາມກວດກາຂອງໂລກຄື: ອີເອັບເອ(ການສຶກ





Development (BMZ), led to an orientation to prioritize the newly started work in Cambodia and Lao PDR, to continue with the regional work of ASPBAE, and to develop further some specialized areas of PRIA, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, the gender and peace work of DidiBahini in Nepal.

## 2. Programmes and activities

In principle the projects of DVV International follow funding cycles given via approvals by BMZ. They are usually based on proposals covering three years; this note is written in the midst of the period 2011-2014. Additionally, on a yearly basis programmes and activities are negotiated with partners, who therefore can do their own planning with quite some stability and time for implementation.

### 2.1. Work in Lao PDR

The history of modern education in Lao PDR is quite young, and small in size. At the time of the revolution, only around 5% of the population ever had gone to primary school; few could have made it to secondary schooling, college or had received vocational training, and the majority of the educated elite had left by the year 1975 during the revolution. (NOONAN 2011) This situation has changed and improved a lot, but there is still a long way to go. Latest reports state that all the progress will not be enough to achieve the goals set in the EFA agenda. The situation is better in urban than in rural areas, better for boys than for girls (EFA GMR 2012).

### 2.1.1. Purpose and function of the regional office

DVV International came to Lao PDR to especially support youth and adult education, or non-formal education as it is quite often named in Asian countries. Lao-German development cooperation is quite strong with funding through BMZ. DVV International agreed to strengthen the non-formal education sector in the country. The regional office is the implementing mechanism, whereby it manages all the administrative procedures, and has professional staff also to provide technical assistance in a number of areas.

### 2.1.2. Cooperation with Government

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is sub-divided into around twenty different Departments. The most important partner is the Department for Non-formal Education (DNFE), including its structure on provincial and district level, and the Non-formal Education Development Center which is providing services in training and curriculum development. Major areas for cooperation have been: Capacity building of staff in areas like non-formal education policy; development and revision of teaching and learning materials; information and exchange between national, regional, and international levels.

### 2.1.3. Other partners

The Integrated Vocational Education and Training (IVET) centers provide formal and non-formal vocational courses. They are part of the Department of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) structure under MoES. The IVET centers were built or rehabilitated as part of the Lao German Development cooperation, with GIZ

(Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit) as major implementing agency. GIZ and DVV International are jointly supporting a number of such non-formal training course (electrical installation, construction, engine repair, animal husbandry etc.); they are high in demand, and much more could and should be done (NON-FORMAL 2011).

Together with the Vocational Teacher Education Department (VTED) of the Faculty of Engineering, National University of Laos, several capacity building activities for staff and students, and infrastructural support have been provided; from 2013 onwards a larger GIZ project will support these developments on a large scale.

For the Lao civil society actors, the Non-Profit Associations (NPA) that are working in areas close to education in environment, gender, skills or community development, exchange visits and study tours have been used for strengthening their organisations and capacities.

#### 2.1.4. New EU funded project

In Savannaketh, one of the Southern provinces of Lao PDR, DVV International has been working with several partners in integrated rural development, community services, strengthening organisational capacities of providers; Welthungerhilfe (WHH), a German development NGO has the lead. DVV International is implementing the non-formal education part of the project. That includes the building and management of community learning development centers, literacy classes, training and capacity building of teachers, coordinators and partners from the provincial and district Government (ASSESSMENT 2012).

## 2.2. Work in Cambodia

The education system had to be completely rebuilt after the end of Khmer Rouge Regime in the early 1990s. Infrastructure of schools, policy, curriculum or textbook development as well as facilities for skills training was given priority (HAYDEN/MARTIN 2011). However, it is still a long way to go as the EFA related statistics show (EFA GMR 2012). DVV International followed suggestions of a feasibility study to work with a variety of non-state actors.

### 2.2.1. Improving the NFE-sector: National and local level

NEP is the NGO Education Partnership of Cambodia. They have well above a hundred members, including almost half from areas of non-formal education, skills training, community development and literacy work. NEP provides services through national and regional consultations, study tours to exchange on community learning centers, and has developed advocacy materials like calendars, and planners. Surveys and studies help to understand the sector better. (VUTHA/SYROM/CONOCHIE 2013).

On local level DVV International is involved in non-formal education activities like literacy classes, capacity building of coordinators and teachers, and skills training in the Northeastern province Ratanakiri, facilitated by WHH. The experiences provide an excellent opportunity to understand the sector better on all levels, very important for the consultative role DVV International is playing.

### 2.2.2. Support to youth organisations

Half of the population of Cambodia is below 30 years. Work with youth and younger adults in education and training, beyond the

schools, colleges, and universities is important. The Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP) is a major partner. Programs and activities that are implemented in cooperation are related to reconciliation and remembering for the future as well as climate change training and environmental education. Youth for Peace (YFP) is a second partner, working in the context of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. The aim may be called 'remember for the future'.

### 2.2.3. Other partners

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) is an overarching partner, where Departments for non-formal or higher education are contacted regularly by NEP and DVV International. The vocational skills work is part of the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVET). Both are involved in information exchange processes that are organized by NEP, and they participate through high-level staff in national and regional consultations.

Another major player is the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh which supports the non-formal education through the CapEFA (Capacity building for EFA) programme. Finally, there is the cooperation in the Masters of Education Program of the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) through scholarships, equipment for the training, and teaching.

### 2.3. Work with ASPBAE and PRIA

ASPBAE will celebrate 50 years of work in 2014; it has been a partner of DVV International since 1977. PRIA started in 1982, and is a partner for more than 25 years already. The regional office builds on these long term partnerships, and concentrates on specific areas.

### 2.3.1. ASPBAE: Policy engagements, advocacy, and capacity building

ASPBAE is the leading civil society network in the region, consisting of members, coalitions, and platforms. Policy engagements are around the key global agendas of EFA and CONFINTEA (the Adult Education World Conferences), monitoring achievements and drawbacks for the use in advocacy. The Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) is flagship programmes for capacity building of younger leaders which DVV International is supporting, and was evaluated in 2012 positively. ([www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org))

### 2.3.2. PRIA: Distance education and practice for participation portal

PRIA has a strong impact on many issues in civil society engagements in India, in the region, and globally. DVV International, in consultation with PRIA, has been identifying certain areas where special support was provided for a certain period. Currently these are the distance education and open learning courses which are organised at appreciation, certificate and masters level through PIALL, the PRIA Academy for Lifelong Learning; this work has been evaluated in 2012 successfully. A follow-up on a virtual platform offering information and documents is the newly started portal practice in participation. ([www.pria.org](http://www.pria.org))

### 2.3.3. Work with CLIMATE AP and DidiBahini

The Climate Change Learning Initiative Mobilizing Action for Transforming Environments in Asia Pacific (CLIMATE AP) network shares experiences in different countries of the region, prepares

country case studies, and keeps a digital library on educational materials for environmental adult education and climate change training.

DidiBahini is a NGO in Nepal working on women and gender, youth and peace. During this period of cooperation with DVV International, a project on women political empowerment through development education enhances knowledge and skills for youth and women, and provides capacity building to their leaders.

### 3. Thematic priorities and interventions

In consultations with partners, and in light of the national, regional, and global education and development agendas and priorities, DVV International has been investing technical expertise and financial resources to implement a variety of programmes and activities. Of course, here within the scope of this discussion only a few can be selected. However, they should be able to demonstrate how the interests of the project, partners and office are in line with larger agendas, with an interrelation and influence in both directions.

#### 3.1. Policy, legislation, financing

This triangle can be further deepened by looking at systemic, strategic, and structural issues related to the development of education. The following activities have been implemented:

- New Policy and Strategy on Non-formal Education under Preparation for Lao PDR: A series of workshops and conferences of DNFE have resulted in a policy document which the Minister has agreed to; now work on a related strategy and action plan is underway, which will then be

forwarded to the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) for further consultation.

- National Conferences on Non-formal Education in Lao PDR: Yearly the policy and practice of non-formal education in Lao PDR is discussed between representatives of national, provincial, and district levels. Decisions and recommendations are presented to the MoES leadership, and used for budget planning.
- Provincial and District Non-formal Education Centers Policy: The implementation of the new policy of non-formal education centers on provincial and district level was developed, and in a scaling-up meeting further clarified, especially after the relevant decree of the Minister asked for decisions on finance, organization, and staffing.

### 3.2. Non-formal education and lifelong learning

The concept of non-formal education is quite frequently used in Asia, much more than youth and adult education. Lifelong learning is coming quite strongly as the future frame work. Again, here are some activities DVV International supported, or participated in:

- Shanghai Forum on Lifelong Learning: The Shanghai Forum was the first major event organized by UNESCO after the Belem World Conference on Adult Education. Lifelong learning is the important framework and paradigm within which UNESCO sees the development of all education in the future. DVV International supported the participation of partners from the region, including from Lao PDR, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, India, and Nepal.
- CONFINTEA VI: Monitoring the Belem Framework for Action. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg had sent out questionnaires to ask member states



of UNESCO on the progress towards implementing what had been decided in 2009 during CONFINTEA VI in respect to adult education and literacy in the context of lifelong learning. Reports received included Lao PDR and Cambodia.

- Lifelong Learning Prospects in the Ageing Society: Integrating Lifelong Learning and Work. The National Institute for Lifelong Education of Korea hosted this international conference, organized by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. The participants looked at the global situation, policy trends and regional reviews.

### 3.3. Skills for work and life

Most of the countries in the region have a so-called skills gap, or skills mismatch. Certain qualifications and competencies are needed and required for skills that are in demand. The supply is not an education issues alone but equally important for many other areas.

- UNESCO Third International Congress on TVET: “Building Skills for Work and Life”. The conference in Shanghai brought together more than 700 participants who worked through a rich program on a variety of field for work and life. Delegations from Lao PDR, Cambodia, ASPBAE and DVV International participated.
- The conference “Innovative Approaches to the Development of Vocational Education by Combining Formal and Non-formal Education” took place in Vientiane, with participants from more than ten countries. Case studies had in common that there is a growing importance of vocational training and re-training, be it formal or non-formal, in the

context of income-oriented youth and adult education towards lifelong learning.

- National Launch of EFA GMR 2012 on “Youth and Skills”: Every year a Global Monitoring Report on Education for All is published. The national launch for Lao PDR followed the international and regional launches, but took a special route as the official ceremony was combined with a two-day-seminar for a substantial exchange on current developments, reports from research into the skills issues, and practical examples from the projects currently being undertaken in the country and the region.

### 3.4. The post-2015 education and development agenda

The year 2000 saw two important declarations with a time line of 15 years to reach the targets and indicators: EFA, and MDG, the Millennium Development Goals. A range of studies and statistics show that the achievements are not good enough in many cases. Therefore a debate on post-2015 has started. The latest related meeting was the UN Thematic Consultation on Education in the post-2015 development agenda, Dakar, 18-19 March. A key point in the Summary of Outcomes reads as: “Equitable quality lifelong education and learning for all” is proposed as an overarching education goal to reach the world we want’. On the way DVV International engaged in national and regional processes:

- “UNESCO Regional High-Level Expert Meeting: Towards EFA 2015 and Beyond”. While there are three more years to go it is important to start early to think of what will be left unfinished, what should receive more priority and support, and what should be new elements according to changes in the overall development agenda. In this light the UNESCO

- Bangkok Office invited to inform and exchange on “Towards EFA 2015 and Beyond - Shaping a New Vision of Education.”
- Preparatory consultation on “Education in the post-2015 development agenda”: To follow-up on earlier debates and prepare for the regional thematic consultation of UNESCO and UNICEF, a preparatory meeting was held amongst stakeholders in Lao PDR. Participants came from different Departments of the MoES, Non-profit Associations (NPA) UNESCO Bangkok, and the Regional Office.
  - “Education Post-2015: Asia-Pacific unites for regional consultation”: This was the third event within a ten month period in which UNESCO Bangkok, this time in partnership with UNICEF, invited stakeholders to deepen the discussion on education in the post-2015 development agenda. ASPBAE, DNFE, NEP, and DVV International joined and provided inputs from the national consultations.

### 3.5. Information and exchange: Building capacities

At an early time of the regional office, instruments like website, flyers etc. were developed. From 2012 onwards a Newsletter was started as printed and on-line versions. Additionally, DVV International supported the information work of partners like ASPBAE, PRIA, NEP and DidiBahini to run their websites, portals, and newsletters. The more communicative exchange was arranged via “Sharing for Learning” workshops, some of which are mentioned below for better understanding

- Lifelong Learning: Participants learned about best practice and policy approaches to lifelong learning from Europe, Germany, Laos and the Asia Pacific Region, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa. Staff from different Departments in MoES,

representatives from ASPBAE, and senior officials from DVV International headquarters attended the event.

- Study Tour and Exchange visit for capacity development of MHP, CDEA and DVV International. The three organizations informed each other in areas of gender, environment and education, including field visits to Bokeo and Udomxai provinces, combined with two workshops to share deeper experiences between members, staff, and district officials. Additionally, two of the IVET centers were visited.
- Workshop on Innovations in Adult Literacy in Lao PDR: DVV International and DNFE invited around representatives from a variety of organizations to exchange experiences, discuss policy developments and innovative approaches to adult literacy, the pre-literacy primer and the Reflect approach. In addition, participants were introduced to best practice models from neighboring Cambodia.

### 3.6. Regional cooperation and integration

Partners in Lao PDR and Cambodia feel the need strongly to prepare for the changes in the region, especially on the next steps of ASEAN which will become an economic community with a much easier flow of goods and services by the year 2015. To support this process, regional cooperation and exchange receives high attention. At the same time, this exchange goes much beyond the ASEAN, and includes many of the other Asia Pacific countries.

- Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Women's Literacy: This was part of the European Union (EU) funded project "Innovating Advocacy Approaches in Addressing Women Literacy in the Asia-Pacific", implemented by ASPBAE.

Partners include organizations from India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines as well DVV International.

- East Asia Forum of Adult Educators on Lifelong Learning for the Elderly: Members of EAFAE meet regularly to exchange on important themes for the region, this time the situation of the elderly and their learning needs. Presentations covered experiences from Japan, Korea, Macau, and Singapore.
- Three workshops during AEPF9 in Lao PDR: More than 1000 participants joined the Ninth Asia Europe People's Forum in Vientiane, and prepared a final declaration for the ASEM Summit early November. DVV International and its partners from Laos, Asia and Europe organized workshops on environmental education, skills development, and lifelong learning. The two continental associations, ASPBAE and EAEA, explored potentials for future cooperation.

### 3.7. One example of best practice: Promoting Lifelong for all

A Seminar on National Policy Frameworks for Lifelong Learning in the ASEAN Countries was held in Hanoi in January 2013, co-organised by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, the UIL and UNESCO Hanoi, with the support of the UNESCO Bangkok and DVV International. Participants proposed to the Ministers of Education of the ASEAN Member States recommendations towards a stronger recognition of lifelong learning. As the result is an example of very concise suggestions, and of excellent cooperation, a longer part of the text called "Promoting Lifelong Learning for All. Advocacy Brief" is shared here:

*...”On policy and legislation:*

- (1) Develop national policy or legislation to promote lifelong learning for all as integral to national social and economic development and as a key component in the post-2015 Development Agenda;
- (2) Establish national coordination mechanisms by involving all related government departments, the private sector, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders;
- (3) Design and implement monitoring mechanisms to measure and report on progress, achievements and lesson learned, and to facilitate evidence-based policy developments;

*On finance:*

- (4) Increase financial resources in compliance with legislation and policy to promote lifelong learning for all and allocate an equitable share of investment across sub-sectors of education and training;
- (5) Develop mechanisms to mobilise additional funding and other resources from the public and private sectors, social organisations and individuals;

*...On awareness-raising:*

- (10) Promote common understanding of the concepts of lifelong learning for all and the learning society through open discussion and consultation between all sectors;
- (11) Regenerate public awareness of the values of education and learning as keys to development, prosperity, harmony and happiness;

*On regional collaboration:*

- (12) Develop an ASEAN policy framework on lifelong learning for all;
- (13) Set up an ASEAN lifelong learning fund to support innovative initiatives promoting lifelong learning for all in ASEAN countries;

- (14) Strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building to promote lifelong learning for all;
- (15) Promote the recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of all forms of learning, leading eventually to an ASEAN Lifelong Learning Qualification Framework.”

This declaration was adopted by the SEAMEO Minister’s conference in March 2013 (PROMOTING 2013). It has already been translated in Lao and Khmer languages, and is now widely circulated.

#### 4. Outlook: Options for further engagements

On the sub-regional level DVV International will continue to concentrate on Cambodia and Lao PDR. At the same time there will be the option to find out whether work should be extended into Myanmar also. Especially the transfer of technical capacities of the more advanced and geographically, politically and linguistically closer countries like Thailand and Vietnam, should be further explored. The newly established SEAMEO Center for Lifelong Learning, based in Ho Chi Minh City, seems to be an interesting option.

UIL has succeeded in a process to develop guidelines for the recognition, validation, and accreditation of outcomes from non-formal and informal education and learning. This is a very important step as globally there are qualification frameworks being developed or already in use in many countries. An up-coming ASEAN Qualification Framework will translate into national frameworks for each country also. A first attempt has been made to deepen the understanding of partners to prepare toward this.

The regional office will also want to contribute to the broader discussion on the dimensions of skills for life, livelihoods,

vocational training for poverty reduction in non-formal education and all other sectors of lifelong learning. This may lead to changes for a post-2015 education and development agenda where there still may be global goals, but where national targets are set with respective indicators, and where monitoring becomes a key instrument to prepare for better achievements. Thereby the work of partners and of DVV International will contribute to the necessary educational reforms in line with regional as well international trends. Discussions have already started with ASPBAE on how the 50 year anniversary celebrations could become the focus of combining history with reflections on the future.

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### Biographical note

*Heribert Hinzen* studied at the Universities of Bonn and Heidelberg, Germany, gaining a doctorate in comparative studies with a thesis on adult education in Tanzania. He has been working with DVV International since 1977 in headquarters and offices in Sierra Leone and Hungary. He was Director of the Institute in Bonn from 1999 to 2009, before starting the new Regional Office for South- and Southeast Asia in Vientiane, Lao PDR, as Regional Director. He is an Honorary Professor at the Universities of Pecs and Iasi, and holds an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Pecs, Hungary. He teaches at the Royal University of Phnom Penh comparative studies of education, looking into non-formal education, lifelong learning, skills training for youth and adults, especially in the Asian and European regions. Before he was Vice-President of the International Council for Adult Education as well as European Association for the Education of Adults, Member of the Reference Group of Experts on Higher Education and EFA, and the UN Literacy Expert Group. His service has been recognized by the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame where he is a member since 2006. He serves on the editorial board of *Adult Education and Development*, and as an advisory editor to the *Asia Pacific Education Review*.

Address: Prof.(H) Dr. Heribert Hinzen, DVV International, Regional Office South and Southeast Asia, P.O. Box 1215, Watnak Nyai Road, Thaphalanxay Village, Sisatthanak District, 351/19 Unit, Vientiane, Lao PDR

E-Mail: [hinzen@dvv-international.la](mailto:hinzen@dvv-international.la)



## ປຶ້ມບັນທຶກ 2014

ຄຸນນະພາບການສຶກສາ ແລະ ການຮຽນຮູ້ຕະຫຼອດຊີວິດ  
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## Diary 2014

Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All  
in Lao PDR, Asia and the Pacific

ສະໜັບສະໜູນໂດຍ *Sponsored by*

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## DOCUMENTATION

The year 2013 saw several important conferences taking place in the Asia Pacific Region that are close to the theme of lifelong learning in this collection. In all of these UNESCO took the lead through its Headquarters, Offices, and Institutes, and co-partnered the events with key stakeholders, amongst them ASPBAE and DVV International. For the purpose of information, dissemination, discussion, and especially the decision on how to participate in the implementation of the related action plans, advocacy briefs or declarations on the country level and in the region, it seems appropriate to add a selection for our readership.

### PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL: ADVOCACY BRIEF FROM THE SEMINAR ON NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE ASEAN COUNTRIES

*Hanoi, Vietnam, 10-11 January 2013*

This document was presented to the 47<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO Council Conference (SEAMEC 47) in Hanoi, Vietnam, 19 – 23 March 2013, and is included in the Proceedings of the Policy Forum on “Lifelong Learning – Policy and Vision”. The full documentation is at [www.seameo.org](http://www.seameo.org)

We, the 150 participants from seven countries<sup>1</sup> in the Seminar on National Policy Frameworks for Lifelong Learning in the ASEAN Countries, which was held in Ha Noi on 10 and 11 January 2013, co-

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<sup>1</sup> The seven participating countries are: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Three other ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and Singapore) did not respond to UNESCO’s invitation to participate in this seminar.

organised by the Viet Nam Ministry of Education and Training, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and UNESCO in Viet Nam with the support of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok and DVV International (the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association), wish to propose to the Ministers of Education of the ASEAN Member States the following recommendations.

## Background

The ten ASEAN countries cover a land area of 4.46 million km<sup>2</sup>, three per cent of the world's total land area, and have a population of approximately 600 million people, nine per cent of the world's total. In the last decade, the ASEAN members have made considerable progress in social and economic development. However, they continue to face critical development challenges, such as growing disparities in access to quality education and other basic social services, uneven progress in reducing poverty, and environmental problems. These challenges have created significant barriers to building inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies in the region.

Based on the motto, "One Vision, One Identity, One Community", ASEAN has emphasized regional cooperation through the three pillars of security cooperation, socio-cultural integration, and economic integration. Education and learning lie at the core of ASEAN's development process as it seeks to forge a common identity and build caring and sharing societies where the welfare of the peoples are enhanced. Education and learning can help to create a sense of belonging to a single ASEAN socio-cultural community, with appreciation for the richness of the region's history, languages, cultures and common values.

Stemming from this vision, the education ministers of ASEAN countries have defined four priority educational efforts:

- (1) Promoting awareness of ASEAN among member states' citizens, particularly youth;
- (2) Strengthening ASEAN's identity through education;
- (3) Building human resources in the field of education in ASEAN member states; and
- (4) Strengthening ASEAN's university network.

## Rationale

To realise ASEAN's aspirations, there is an urgent need to promote the concept of lifelong learning for all and to build a learning society in the region. It is critical that in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, priority is given to lifelong learning for all and building a learning society, for the following reasons:

- (1) In this globalised, fast-changing world, continuous learning allows people to be self-sufficient and adaptable to changes in society. Building a harmonious ASEAN Community requires all citizens of ASEAN countries to be lifelong learners, and all agencies to become providers of lifelong learning opportunities.
- (2) By adopting lifelong learning for all as a master concept for education and training, first-class national education systems can be planned, expanded and transformed to cater to people's learning and development needs, and to provide them with learning opportunities in all settings and modalities (formal,

non-formal and informal) at every stage of their lives (infants, children, adolescents and adults).

- (3) Applying the concept of lifelong learning for all can help to build synergies between government policies in different sectors, in particular, education, employment, health, culture and welfare.
- (4) Lifelong learning for all contributes to social cohesion, fosters a more equitable society, harnesses cultural diversity, enhances well-being, and ensures sustainable development and prosperity.

## Recommendations

On policy and legislation:

- (1) To develop national policy or legislation to promote lifelong learning for all as integral to national social and economic development and as a key component in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals;
- (2) To establish national coordination mechanisms by involving all related government departments, the private sector, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders;
- (3) To design and implement monitoring mechanisms to measure and report on progress, achievements and lesson learned, and to facilitate evidence-based policy developments;

On finance:

- (4) To increase financial resources in compliance with legislation and policy to promote lifelong learning for all and allocate an equitable share of investment across sub-sectors of education and training;
- (5) To develop mechanisms to mobilise additional funding and other resources from the public and private sectors, social organisations and individuals;

On provision of learning opportunities and enhancement of quality:

- (6) To expand the provision of rich and diversified learning opportunities;
- (7) To create learner-friendly environments that meet the learning needs of all, giving special attention to disadvantaged and marginalized groups to achieve gender equality and social inclusion;
- (8) To take concrete measures to make education structures, curricula and teaching-learning practices more oriented to lifelong learning;
- (9) To enhance the use of ICTs and the development of multilingual open learning resources;

On awareness-raising:

- (10) To promote common understanding of the concepts of lifelong learning for all and the learning society through open discussion and consultation between all sectors;

- (11) To regenerate public awareness of the values of education and learning as keys to development, prosperity, harmony and happiness;

On regional collaboration:

- (12) To develop an ASEAN policy framework on lifelong learning for all;
- (13) To set up an ASEAN lifelong learning fund to support innovative initiatives promoting lifelong learning for all in ASEAN countries;
- (14) To strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building to promote lifelong learning for all;
- (15) To promote the recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of all forms of learning, leading eventually to an ASEAN Lifelong Learning Qualification Framework.



# LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL: PROMOTING INCLUSION, PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN CITIES

## Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities Adopted at the International Conference on Learning Cities

*Beijing, China, October 21–23, 2013*

### **Preamble**

We, the participants at the International Conference on Learning Cities, co-organised by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education of China and Beijing Municipal Government (Beijing, 21–23 October 2013) declare as follows:

We recognise that we live in a complex, fast-changing world where social, economic and political norms are constantly redefined. Economic growth and employment, urbanization, demographic change, scientific and technological advances, cultural diversity and the need to maintain human security and public safety represent just a few of the challenges to the governance and sustainability of societies.

We affirm that, in order to empower citizens – understood as all residents of cities and communities – we must strive to give them access to and encourage their use of a broad array of learning opportunities throughout their lives.

We believe that learning improves quality of life, equips citizens to anticipate and tackle new challenges, and helps build better and more sustainable societies.

We acknowledge that the concept of learning throughout life is not new; it is an integral feature of human development and is deeply rooted in all cultures and civilisations.

We maintain that lifelong learning confers social, economic and cultural benefits to individual learners and communities and should be a primary focus of cities, regions, nations and the international community.

We acknowledge that the majority of the world's population now resides in cities and urban regions, and that this trend is accelerating. As a result, cities and urban regions play an ever greater role in national and global development.

We recognise that “learning communities”, “learning cities” and “learning regions” are pillars of sustainable development.

We accept that international and regional organisations, as well as national governments, have a vital role to play in developing learning societies. However, we are aware that this development must be rooted in sub-national regions, cities and all types of community.

We know that cities play a significant role in promoting social inclusion, economic growth, public safety and environmental protection. Therefore, cities should be both architects and executors of strategies that foster lifelong learning and sustainable development. We acknowledge that cities differ in their cultural and ethnic composition, heritage and social structures. However, many characteristics of a learning city are common to all. *A learning city mobilises human and other resources to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; it revitalises learning in families and communities; it facilitates learning for and in the workplace; it extends the use of modern learning technologies; it enhances quality in learning; and it nurtures a culture of learning throughout life.*

We envision that a learning city will facilitate individual empowerment, build social cohesion, nurture active citizenship, promote economic and cultural prosperity, and lay the foundation for sustainable development.

## **Commitments**

We commit ourselves to the following actions, which have the power to transform our cities:

### **1. Empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion**

In today's cities, individual empowerment and social cohesion are crucial to the well-being of citizens; fostering participation, trust, connectedness and civic engagement. To equip citizens to anticipate and tackle the challenges of urbanisation, cities should attach great importance to individual empowerment and social cohesion.

In developing learning cities, we support individual empowerment and social cohesion by:

- ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to become literate and obtain basic skills;
- encouraging and enabling individuals to actively participate in the public life of their city;
- guaranteeing gender equality; and
- creating a safe, harmonious and inclusive community.

## 2. Enhancing economic development and cultural prosperity

While economic development plays a fundamental role in increasing standards of living and maintaining the economic health of cities, cultural prosperity is a powerful contributor to quality of life. As a repository of knowledge, meaning and values, culture defines the way people live and interact within communities.

In developing learning cities, we will enhance economic development and cultural prosperity by:

- stimulating inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
- reducing the proportion of citizens living in poverty;
- creating employment opportunities for all citizens;
- actively supporting science, technology and innovation;
- ensuring access to diverse cultural activities; and
- encouraging participation in leisure and physical recreation.

## 3. Promoting sustainable development

To ensure the future viability of communities, natural resources must be used in ways that ensure a good quality of life for future generations. Sustainable development cannot be achieved through technological solutions, political regulations or fiscal incentives alone. It requires fundamental changes in the way people think and act. Lifelong learning is a necessary part of making this change.

In developing learning cities, we will promote sustainable development by:

- reducing the negative impacts of economic and other human activities on the natural environment;
- protecting the natural environment and enhancing the liveability of our cities; and
- promoting sustainable development through active learning in all settings.

#### 4. Promoting inclusive learning in the education system

All citizens, regardless of ability, gender and sexuality, social background, language, ethnicity, religion or culture should have equal access to learning opportunities. If a person is excluded from participating in the education system, their ability to develop as individuals and contribute to their communities may be impaired.

In developing learning cities, we will promote inclusive learning in the education system by:

- expanding access to early childhood care and education;
- expanding access to formal education from primary to tertiary level;
- expanding access to and participation in adult education and technical and vocational education and training;
- improving the flexibility of lifelong learning systems in order to offer diverse learning opportunities and meet a range of proficiencies; and
- providing support for marginalized groups, including migrant families, to ensure access to education.

## 5. Revitalising learning in families and communities

Lifelong learning is not confined to educational or business settings. It infuses the entire life of a city. In most societies, the family is an especially important setting for learning. Learning in families and local communities builds social capital and improves the quality of life.

In developing learning cities, we will revitalise learning in families and local communities by:

- establishing community-based learning spaces and providing resources for learning in families and communities;
- ensuring, through consultation, that community education and learning programmes respond to the needs of all citizens;
- motivating people to participate in family and community learning, giving special attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as families in need, migrants, people with disabilities, minorities and third-age learners; and
- recognising community history and culture, and indigenous ways of knowing and learning as unique and precious resources.

## 6. Facilitating learning for and in the workplace

Due to globalization, technological advancement and the growth of knowledge-based economies, most adults need to regularly enhance their knowledge and skills. In turn, private and public organizations need to embrace a culture of learning.

In developing learning cities, we will facilitate learning for and in the workplace by:

- helping public and private organisations to become learning organisations;
- ensuring that all members of the workforce, including migrant workers, have access to a broad array of learning opportunities;
- encouraging employers and trade unions to support workplace learning; and
- providing appropriate learning opportunities for unemployed youth and adults.

## 7. Extending the use of modern learning technologies

Information and communication technologies (ICT) – particularly the Internet – have opened up new possibilities for learning and education. Modern cities must enable all citizens to use these technologies for learning and self-empowerment.

In developing learning cities, we will extend the use of modern learning technologies by developing policy environments favourable to the use of ICT in learning;

- training administrators, teachers and educators to use technologies that enhance learning;
- expanding citizens' access to ICT tools and learning programmes; and
- developing quality e-learning resources.

## 8. Enhancing quality in learning

It is not sufficient for lifelong learning policies and practices to focus on increasing numbers of participants. In many cities, there is a disparity between the numbers of people participating in education and learning and those who succeed in mastering relevant, portable skills and competences. Quality is, therefore, of utmost importance. In particular, there is an acute need to foster skills, values and attitudes that will enable people to overcome religious, linguistic and cultural differences, to coexist peacefully, and to discover shared human, moral and ethical principles.

In developing learning cities, we attach great importance to enhancing quality in learning by:

- promoting a paradigm shift from teaching to learning, and from the mere acquisition of information to the development of creativity and learning skills;
- raising awareness of shared moral, ethical and cultural values, and promoting tolerance of differences;
- employing appropriately trained administrators, teachers and educators;
- fostering a learner-friendly environment in which learners have, as far as practicable, ownership of their own learning; and
- providing support to learners with special needs, in particular those with learning difficulties.

## 9. Fostering a culture of learning throughout life

Most people today experience a variety of learning environments. When the outcomes of all learning are valued, rewarded and



celebrated by a city, this strengthens the position of learners in society and motivates them to learn further. This motivation should be supported by the provision of comprehensive information and advice to help people make informed learning choices.

In developing learning cities, we will foster a vibrant culture of learning throughout life by:

- recognising the role of communications media, libraries, museums, religious settings, sports and cultural centres, community centres, parks and similar places as learning spaces;
- organising and supporting public events that encourage and celebrate learning;
- providing adequate information, guidance and support to all citizens, and stimulating them to learn through diverse pathways; and
- acknowledging the importance of learning in informal and non-formal settings and developing systems that recognize and reward all forms of learning.

## 10. Strengthening political will and commitment

It takes strong political will and commitment to successfully build a learning city. Politicians and administrators have primary responsibility for committing political resources to realising the vision of a learning city.

In developing learning cities, we will strengthen political will and commitment by:

- demonstrating strong political leadership and making a steadfast commitment to turning our cities into learning cities;
- developing and implementing well grounded and participatory strategies for promoting lifelong learning for all; and
- consistently monitoring progress towards becoming a learning city.

## 11. Improving governance and participation of all stakeholders

All sectors of society have a key role to play in learning and education and should participate in building learning cities. However, stakeholders and citizens are more likely to contribute to building learning cities if decisions are made in a participatory way.

In developing learning cities, we will improve governance and participation of all stakeholders by:

- establishing inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to involve governmental and non-governmental organisations and the private sector in building learning cities;
- developing bilateral or multilateral partnerships between sectors in order to share resources and increase the availability of learning opportunities; and
- encouraging all stakeholders to provide quality learning opportunities and to make their own unique contribution to building a learning city;

## 12. Boosting resource mobilisation and utilisation

Cities and communities that embrace lifelong learning for all have seen significant improvements in terms of public health, economic growth, reduced criminality and increased democratic participation. These wider benefits of lifelong learning present strong arguments for increased investment in the building of learning cities.

In developing learning cities, we will boost resource mobilisation and utilisation by:

- encouraging greater financial investment in lifelong learning by government, civil society, private sector organisations and individuals;
- making effective use of the learning resources of all stakeholders and developing innovative funding mechanisms to support lifelong learning for all;
- removing structural barriers to learning, adopting pro-poor funding policies and providing various types of support to disadvantaged groups;
- encouraging citizens to contribute their talents, skills, knowledge and experience on a voluntary basis; and
- encouraging the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practice between organisations in different cities.

### **Call to Action**

Numerous places already define themselves as learning cities or regions. They are keen to benefit from international policy dialogue, action research, capacity building and peer learning, and

to apply successful approaches to promoting lifelong learning. Therefore,

1. We call upon UNESCO to establish a global network of learning cities to support and accelerate the practice of lifelong learning in the world's communities. This network should promote policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities, forge links, foster partnerships, provide capacity development, and develop instruments to encourage and recognise progress.
2. We call upon cities and regions in every part of the world to join this network, to develop and implement lifelong learning strategies in their cities.
3. We call upon international and regional organizations to become active partners in this network.
4. We call upon national authorities to encourage local jurisdictions to build learning cities, regions and communities, and to participate in international peer learning activities.
5. We call upon foundations, private corporations and civil society organisations to become active partners of the global network of learning cities – drawing on experience gained in private-sector initiatives.

#### Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the generous hospitality and steadfast leadership of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Beijing Municipal Government in co-organising this Conference. We also acknowledge the achievements of the Beijing Municipal Government in transforming the vibrant Chinese capital into a learning city.

We thank the Ministry of Education of China, National Commission of China for UNESCO, FESTO Didactic, DVV International, Kings Group, Organization of Iberoamerican States (OEI), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for financially supporting the participation of delegates from lower-income countries.

## FOUR YEAR AFTER BELÉM: TAKING STOCK OF PROGRESS

### CONFINTEA VI Regional Follow-up Meeting for Asia and the Pacific

*Jecheon, Republic of Korea, 18–19 October 2013*

Here we provide the Action Plan that was prepared, discussed, and agreed upon by participants. Additionally we present the two key notes. The full documentation is available from the website of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning [www.unesco.org/uil](http://www.unesco.org/uil)

Four years after CONFINTEA VI it is time to take stock of the implementation process of the *Belém Framework for Action*. Taking the above into consideration, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), in collaboration with the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE), and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok hosted the **CONFINTEA VI Regional Follow-up Meeting for Asia and the Pacific** in Jecheon City, Republic of Korea from 18 to 19 October 2013. The meeting, entitled **Four years after: Taking stock of progress**, brought together around 50 representatives from 20 Member States and regional stakeholders and provided a forum to share good practices and to build capacities for developing effective policies and high-quality programmes.

The objectives of the meeting were the following:

1. To discuss and debate innovative approaches in implementing the *Belém Framework for Action*.

2. To give feedback on the revision of the 1976 *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education*
3. To develop an action plan for Asia and the Pacific with a view to:
  - developing comprehensive, inclusive and strategic adult education policy approaches from a lifelong learning perspective;
  - expanding the provision of diversified learning opportunities to assure inclusion and participation; and
  - increasing regional coordination of activities and practices through partnerships.

During the two-day meeting, participants including representatives of regional governments, non-governmental organisations as well as representatives from universities and UNESCO offices in the region shared their experiences on progress, challenges and plans in adult learning and education (ALE).

Adult learning and education (ALE) is recognised by most governments as a vital response to the challenges societies are confronting in the twenty-first century. It forms an integral part of a holistic and comprehensive lifelong learning and education system, and is a key element in sustainable development. However, as discussed in the meeting, ALE is the least institutionalised part of education systems. ALE remains invisible in most Member States, with little involvement of all relevant actors and with few effective implementation mechanisms and practices. As a consequence, inclusion and participation remain low.

The meeting resulted in an action plan with the aim of developing policy, governance and funding in order to ensure quality provision and broad participation in ALE. The action plan includes specific projects at regional and sub-regional levels as well as responsible entities and tentative dates for each project.

## Action Plan for Adult Learning and Education (ALE)

| <b>Recommendations</b>   | <b>Projects / Interventions</b>   | <b>Possible responsible entity</b>              | <b>Tentative date</b> |
|--|---|---|-----------------------|
| <i>Developing knowledge management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of both qualitative and quantitative data and good practice reports to inform policy development and practice.</i> | Carry out comparative research in specific topics of ALE (policy, governance, financing participation, quality)   | NILE  | 2014–16               |
|  | Increase promotion of the second <i>Global Report on Adult Learning and Education</i> (GRALE) by way of sub-regional presentations and translation of the summary and recommendations | Member States, UIL                              | 2014–16               |
|  | Enhance CONFINTEA Portal and LitBase  | UIL   | 2014                  |
| <i>Making the case for increased policy, governance and funding for adult education</i>  | Carry out research/a survey on the wider benefits of learning and its effective promotion   | UNESCO Bangkok                                  | 2014                  |
| <i>Ensuring that adult learning and education are included in the lifelong learning policies through</i><br><br><i>1) developing or</i>  | Organise translations of the UNESCO RVA guidelines into local languages   | Member States<br>DVV<br>International<br>ASPBAE | 2014–15               |
|  | Include good practices of the region into the International Observatory of RVA  | Member States, UIL                              | 2014–15               |

|  |   |   |         |
|--|---|---|---------|
| <p><i>improving the structures and mechanisms for recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of non-formal and informal learning;</i></p> <p><i>2) promoting Community Learning Centres as a potential model;</i></p> <p><i>3) using relevant content and incentives to motivate participation; and</i></p> <p><i>4) improving capacity building and the professionalisation of adult educators</i></p> |   |   |         |
|  | Provide technical support on the development of RVA in Member States  | UNESCO<br>Bangkok, UIL                          | 2014-16 |
|  | Organise a high-level workshop on developing capacity for establishing adult education in a lifelong learning perspective | UIL, UNESCO<br>Bangkok                          | 2014-16 |
|  | Carry out cross-country impact research on Community Learning Centres   | Member States,<br>UIL                           | 2015    |
|  | Establish networks with universities, teacher associations and civil society organisations                                | Member States<br>DVV<br>International<br>ASPBAE | 2014-16 |
|  | Carry out research/ a survey on the demand for learning   | Member States                                   | 2015    |
| <p><i>Providing a common understanding of an operative definition and key terms of youth and adult education</i></p>   | Compile a glossary  | DVV<br>International,<br>Member States, UIL     | 2014    |



*Kim Shinil*

Chair Professor, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Republic of Korea

## ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN KOREA

### Struggles toward a Learning Society

Everyone gathered here today as well as myself believe that adult learning and education in a lifelong learning perspective is the most important and urgent issue of the twenty-first century. All of us are fully prepared to devote our wholehearted efforts toward the increase of opportunities to access adult learning and education as well as, if the opportunity presents itself, to increase relevant budgets for this task. However, the majority of political leaders and policymakers of our respective countries do not think this way. Even those Congressmen and high-ranking government officials who do agree that adult lifelong education is important consign lifelong learning-related policies to a lesser position when prioritizing which policies they will devote their efforts to. It is on top of this that other policies are stacked. This is our reality.

There is no political leader who denies the importance of making policy and securing an adequate budget for adult education. It is only that there are few leaders who will give higher priority to policy making and budget securing for adult education than to other issues. According to *The 2nd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (2013), despite commitments by member states of UNESCO to develop policies and programs, increase funding, widen

participation and improve the quality of adult learning and education after the 2009 CONFINTEA VI, results were minimal while the majority of member states showed highly unsatisfactory results. There are probably a number of causes, but one thing that is clear is that the priority level of policy on adult learning and education is not rising. Four years ago at Belem, we declared that we would move “from rhetoric to action.” The Belem Framework for Action was a declaration for our own actions as adult education activists but at the same time a resolution to force political leaders and policy makers of all countries to establish policy for adult education and force them to secure adequate budgets for this task. It was our attempt to prevent declarations about the importance of adult education in a lifelong-learning perspective. We wanted to prevent a mere play of words, making that in public office and show their convictions through actions.

A great deal more effort and systematic strategy is required to make political leaders and policy makers act on adult learning and education. This is simply put, political action. In other words, it is a situation in which adult education activists must plan and carry out political action. Budget allocation is a political process. Budget is not allocated simply by stating “adult learning and education is important and urgent” in a loud voice. Public opinion must be manipulated under elaborately planned strategy, political parties must be lobbied, and efforts must be made to persuade politicians individually. However, this does not guarantee success. If you fail, what is to be done next? Plans must be revised and efforts must be fortified. The success rate of political action increases the more tenacious of political action.

UNESCO's report on the Asia-Pacific region for CONFINTEA VI at Belem, Brazil in 2009 evaluates Korea's efforts to building a learning society as follows:

The Republic of Korea has already crossed the threshold between developing and developed countries, achieving a per capita income of over USD 20,000 in 2007, and already attaining membership of the OECD. The experiences of the Republic of Korea in its development of adult education and lifelong learning may be regarded as the precursor of where other developing countries of the region may expect to be in the future. They may find the premises and approaches underlying the course followed by the Republic of Korea instructive although each country has to adopt the strategies most suited to its unique conditions. (Ahmed, M. 2009. 27)

I am grateful to the UNESCO report for giving a positive critique of Korea's status on adult learning and education, but believe that Korea is not yet ready to be a precursor in this field for other nations to follow. It is true that experts and field workers of Korean lifelong learning are working very hard toward the establishment of a learning society. However, Korea still has a long way to go in order to transform into a learner-oriented learning society. There is much to be learned from the experiences of other countries, and we also need the cooperation of international organizations. Nevertheless, if there is anything worth learning or referencing from Korea's experiences of the past few decades, I would like to take a short while to explain what we have done thus far as a nation.

When Korea gained its independence from its Japanese colonial masters with the conclusion of World War II in 1945, the people lived in the depths of poverty and the adult illiteracy rate was at 78 percent. During the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, what social infrastructure there had been was burned to the ground. Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world in the early 1960s, with GNP per capita at barely 70 USD.

In terms of education, the 1950s and 60s were devoted to

increasing opportunities for as many children as possible to attend primary and middle school. The slim state budget made it impossible to cover the expenses for universal primary and middle school education with only public funds, leaving no choice but to rely on private purse strings to pay for education. One characteristic of Koreans is their intense passion for their children's education. Despite the heavy burden of education fees for families, parents refused to give up education for their children even if it meant increasing the household debt. The "education fever" of Korean parents continues unchanged to this day. In the meantime, the gradual increase in the public education budget made it possible to sequentially reduce the private burden on education in the order of primary, middle and high school education. Today, the majority of the cost of higher education is paid by students' families. Because of this, the stand-off between college students and the government on the problem of tuition stands on a razor-thin edge.

Adult education in the 1950s and 60s was focused on literacy programs and short-term school education. Literacy campaigns were carried out in concentrated numbers through the cooperation of schools and local societies under the direction of the government, which resulted in large accomplishments within a relatively short period of time. I will explain the literacy campaign in further detail later on. Short-term school education was conducted for adults who had never received a formal education mostly in the form of evening classes. One could complete the six-year elementary curriculum in 3-4 years and the middle and high school curricula (three years each) each in two years. Adult education apart from school education was largely ignored by the government, resulting in no policy development in this area. The desire of adults to learn was partially satisfied by commercial institutes paid for with individual means. Therefore, for most

adults, there were no opportunities for adult learning and education.

Amidst such circumstances, it is no wonder that organized movements demanding funding and policy for adult education began to emerge in the 1970s. With scholars and experts on adult education demanding the institution of laws to promote adult education, various legal drafts were proposed to the government and National Assembly. In 1976, adult educators from all over the country gathered to form the Korea Adult Education Association, which molded public opinion and continued urging the government and National Assembly to enact laws and develop policies. These were efforts to reform the education system and policies, which at the time only focused on school education, to broaden and include adult education within its boundaries.

These efforts achieved the passing of a constitutional amendment in 1980 that “the state must promote lifelong education.” A decisive step in this direction was the naming of a senior leader of the Korea Adult Education Association to the Constitutional Amendment Committee as a committee member. The constitution’s “promotion of lifelong education” article later became a major cornerstone in the development of Korea’s adult learning and education toward lifelong learning. On the heels of the constitution’s declaration to promote lifelong education came the Adult Education Law of 1982. With the enactment of this law, social recognition for adult education was secured by systematizing the cultivation and qualifications of adult education teachers, various types of adult-oriented education were legally recognized, and the number of university lifelong education programs was increased. Above all, the law became the legal grounds on which the government could establish policies and allocate budgets for the promotion of lifelong education.

The 1990s is a significant turning point in which Korea

emerged from the shadow of 40 years of military dictatorship and authoritarian rule to establish a civilian government according to democratic processes. During this time, social debate on education reform was vibrant. After concentrated discussion, the Presidential Commission on Education Reform presented a plan for a new education system in 1995. Because I was a member of that committee, the position of the lifelong education sector was able to be reflected to a significant degree. According to this plan, the Lifelong Education Act was enacted, supporting the development of policies toward the building of a lifelong learning society. In particular, the credit bank system is a system that socially recognizes various types of lifelong learning and confers a professional degree or bachelor's degree if, after evaluation of accumulated credits, it is determined that they amount to a college-level degree. Therefore, this system continues to provide motive for educational achievement by acting as a middleman between institutional higher education and adult education.

On the other hand, plans to create a lifelong learning city that began in 2001 are a large-scale citizen-centric activity that aims to build a learning community through the building of learning communities in each local municipality. If a city is recognized as a 'lifelong learning city,' it becomes eligible to receive government funding and professional consultation. Among the currently existing local municipalities across Korea, citizens of over half (approximately 120 cities) are working together with lifelong learning facilitators to create better learning opportunities and environments. I personally hope that this activity can eventually grow into citizens' empowerment.

In addition to these, we are currently working on broadening the role of the university in lifelong learning, establishing vocational education for laborers and the unemployed, broadening and developing programs for the elderly, and of course

the further development of literacy programs in a more learner-oriented direction. Also, despite its difficulty, we are pushing ahead with developing a national license & learning certification system that allows a degree and certificate of graduation to be recognized and converted with proof of graduation from a lifelong learning program and/or vocational training certification. In order to better carry out such activities and build a learner-oriented learning society, the Lifelong Education Act was passed in 2007. However, reality always changes faster than it takes the law to catch up with it. This is why discussions about creating an amendment are beginning again.

In reality, budget is an ever-present problem. As stated before, no matter how wonderful the idea or policy may be, it is nearly impossible to carry out if there is no budget allocated for it. Budget is always limited, and the competition to take as much of what is available grows harsher by the day. Korea is no exception to this rule. This is why lifelong education leaders ceaselessly engage in battles with the government and National Assembly to get a budget. Fortunately, the situation this year has improved slightly compared to last year. With the budget for next year soon to undergo evaluation at the National Assembly, I wonder whether we may not be able to get a bit more funding. Nevertheless, we should not rest assured until the end.

## Literacy Campaign

Considering the fact that in the Asia-Pacific region, literacy is the most serious problem and the core of adult education, I would like to share with you Korea's experiences in its literacy campaign.

Without a doubt, illiteracy is one of humanity's oldest problems as well as one of the most urgent. Illiteracy is not only a

personal problem but a problem of the nation and ultimately the world. Literacy education is an educational issue as well as a cultural, economic and political issue. Therefore, solutions for illiteracy require a multi-dimensional approach that involves not only the individual and the state but also the entire world. What is needed is a comprehensive approach that includes politics, economy and culture all at once.

The section on literacy in the Belem Framework for Action that was proclaimed at CONFINTEA VI at Belem, Brazil in 2009 points out these characteristics of literacy education in detail:

Literacy is an essential basic skill and a key competence for active citizenship in all parts of the world. It evolves and is embedded in everyday life, working life and civic life. Literacy is continuously shaped and reshaped by the evolving complexities of culture, economy and society. Adult education definitively extends beyond adult literacy, but adult literacy is imperative for people to engage in meaningful learning. It is a prerequisite for personal, social and political emancipation.

However, despite the call to action by Belem, the current global situation on illiteracy grows increasingly more depressing. The worldwide reality of illiteracy as noted by the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 is as follows:

- Illiteracy is receiving minimal political attention and remains a global disgrace, keeping one in five adults (one in four women) on the margins of society.
- Worldwide, 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills, as measured by conventional method (self-reporting). Direct measurement of literacy skills would significantly increase the global estimate of the number of adults denied the right to literacy.
- Of the 101 countries still far from achieving 'universal literacy', 72 will not succeed in halving their adult literacy rates by 2015.



- Most countries have made little progress during the past decade in reducing the absolute number of adult illiterates, with the notable exception of China.
- More than three-quarters of the world's illiterates live in only fifteen countries, including eight of the nine high population countries. In most of the fifteen countries, adult literacy rates have improved since 1985-1994, although continuing population growth translates into increase in absolute numbers of illiterates in several countries.
- Overall, illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty, a link observed right down to the household level. More generally, for various social, cultural or political reasons, certain populations - such as migrants, indigenous groups and people with disabilities - suffer reduced access to formal education and literacy programs.

The *Second Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (2013) re-discusses this problem:

Literacy is also vital to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the goals of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) and UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) have stressed the need for accelerated efforts in achieving EFA Goal 4. However, adult literacy has not received appropriate attention and resources. According to the 2011 Global Monitoring Report, the EFA target for reducing illiteracy rates by 2015 will be missed by a wide margin. This reflects a long-standing neglect of literacy in education policy. The latest Global Monitoring Report (2012) confirms that most countries will not achieve Goal 4. (p. 19)

While international bodies are effective in calling attention to problems, they are not as effective in carrying out solutions.

While they lend a loud voice to the importance of literacy programs, their financial and professional support is always limited. While it may seem obvious that wealthier countries support the activities of poorer countries, no wealthy country is unconditionally generous about giving aid. Therefore, the sad reality of the situation is that there is virtually no hope unless each country actively initiates its own literacy programs.

Just like the age-old maxim “Heaven helps those who help themselves,” concrete results are achieved when local societies and each country takes responsibility for its own programs. Assistance from international bodies and aid countries is only part of the picture: the more that is expected, the larger the disappointment at the end. Even with the help of international bodies and developed countries, what has happened thus far shows the limitations of such help. Although aid from international bodies and developed countries may obviously be utilized, the actual “carrying out” of the literacy program must be done by the country’s government, educational institutions and civil societies. Allow me to introduce Korea’s case.

Korea long ago achieved a high literacy rate. According to a survey conducted by a government organization in 2008, simple illiteracy (cannot read or write) among members of the population between the ages of 19 and 79 was 1.7 percent, while functional illiteracy (inability to fill out basic paperwork required to be a functional social being) was 5.3 percent. However, with a recent increase in migrant laborers and marriage immigrants, the Korean illiteracy of these groups has arisen as a new social problem. The number of foreign laborers and marriage immigrants currently residing in Korea adds up to approximately 1 million. While not all of them are illiterate in Korean, a majority requires literacy education.

Korea's current literacy program is provided for the domestic illiterate population that largely consists of elderly women, foreign laborers and marriage immigrants. Literacy programs are usually run by civilian groups while receiving financial support from the government. In the case that a government organization is directly in charge of the program, it sometimes engages in competition with civilian-run programs. The majority of literacy programs does not stop at eliminating simple literacy and continue to offer adult basic education that encompasses primary and middle school education. Mandatory education in Korea is up to the first year of high school.

While Korea's current literacy rate is very high, at the end of World War II, just after breaking free from Japanese colonial rule, Korean adult literacy was barely 22 percent. As such, all efforts were focused on literacy programs from the first days of liberation. The programs were stopped by the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 but were restarted with the ceasefire as a nationwide campaign. In a large-scale literacy movement conducted over a decade from the mid-1950s until the mid-1960s; all organizations participated, including the government, local communities, schools and even the military. All organizations that participated in the literacy movement reported the number of illiterate people they had taught throughout the year to a supervisory organization. The government would compile these statistics and present the accomplishments of the year along with the year's literacy rate. Regions with a low accomplishment rate were chastised by the central government, which gave them plenty of incentive to do better the following year.

The military screened out those among each year's new recruits who were illiterate. They were included in military training only after being taught to read and write, making all young men literate. Schools held night classes for illiterate adults while during

vacations, students had to teach the illiterate members of the village as part of their 'vacation homework.' They even had to receive written confirmation from the village head that they indeed had taught the illiterate. I also did this "homework" when I was in fourth grade. The first illiterate adults I taught to read and write were three women. They were my mother and her two friends.

It is important to remember that the written culture of a country's citizens is closely interconnected to that country's linguistic culture and linguistic policies. For example, in the case that the existence of different languages based on region or race prevents the use of a single unified language or a nation uses as its official language not their own language but that and the writing system of their past colonizers, it is more difficult to raise literacy levels than in a country that uses one common folk language. In the case that language use varies widely by social class, the limited opportunities that someone from a lower social class has to learn and use the standard dialect creates obvious obstacles in reducing illiteracy. There are also differences in degree of motivation to overcome illiteracy between societies in which the use of letters is universalized and societies in which this is not the case.

Therefore, a literacy program only reaps actual results when it is carried out in conjunction with the respective country's linguistic culture and linguistic policies. In other words, rather than simply teaching people how to read and write with the existing linguistic culture and linguistic policies in place, the results of a literacy program are made more fruitful when factors that prevent written culture from being generalized are removed at the same time. Also, from a long-term perspective, policies for the development of linguistic culture can make ground-breaking advances in raising a country's literacy levels. One example of this is China, which by drastically simplifying the highly complicated structure of its traditional characters greatly accelerated the speed

at which its citizens acquired character literacy.

Within this context, the invention of the Korean alphabet Hangeul in 1446 by King Sejong the Great is a phenomenal accomplishment. Until that time, Korea had used Chinese characters. The traditional Chinese writing system is not a phonetic alphabet but a hieroglyphic format in which each character has its own shape, of which there are hundreds of thousands. Although some characters have simple shapes that are easy to learn, the majority of Chinese characters are highly complex and thus difficult to learn and use. Because almost all characters were simplified after World War II, learning how to read has become much easier compared to the past.

During the rule of King Sejong, there was the issue of Chinese characters being complex, but there was also the problem that it was difficult for ordinary citizens to learn because it was the writing system of the Chinese language and not Korean. In order to solve this problem, King Sejong decided to create a Korean alphabet. In the preface to the explanatory book on Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, he explained as follows: "Because Korean and Chinese are different from one another, it is highly difficult for ordinary people to express their thoughts in the Chinese writing system. Therefore, I have made a Korean writing system that is fit for the Korean language so that the people can be relieved of this difficulty. I hope that from now on, all the people can easily learn to write in and enjoy the use of their own language."

It is rare for someone to even think about inventing an entire writing system for a particular language. The task itself of creating a new alphabet is, in fact, extremely difficult. However, King Sejong succeeded nevertheless, giving his people a priceless gift that can be passed down through generations upon generations of Koreans. This is the reason why of all their past kings, Koreans call him "the Great." In order to commemorate King Sejong the

Great, who made it easier for his people to learn and to write in a revolutionary new way, and share his unique and revolutionary literacy program with literacy educators, the Korean government proposed to UNESCO the creation of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize, which is given each year.

I would like to recommend to many countries to reconsider their national writing culture in fundamental and revolutionary new way. This is, of course, not an easy task. However, once successful, there is no greater accomplishment possible for a country's future. Even if it does not necessarily mean creating a new writing system, it is crucial to have the goal of making the social environment conducive to a written culture. This is why a literacy campaign should succeed; there must be both: an instructional approach as well as a socio-political approach. Not only governments but international bodies must also devote more energy and attention to this problem. It is clear that learning a writing system is of course an individual's personal responsibility but an even greater social responsibility. More generally, for various social, cultural or political reasons, certain populations - such as migrants, indigenous groups and people with disabilities - suffer reduced access to formal education and literacy programs.

#### Bibliographical Note

Prof. *Kim Shinil* studied at the Seoul National University (SNU) and the University of Pittsburg. He is one of the leading advocates and architects of education in Korea. Since the 1970s he has been involved in the Korean Association of Education. He served on the Executive Council of ASPBAE. Since the mid nineties he has taken part in national policy making as member of the Presidential Commission on Education Reform. In 2006 he was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education. In this position he enhanced the visibility of adult education and lifelong learning in his country and internationally. He taught for most of his professional career at SNUE, where he is now Professor Emeritus;

he is also Chair Professor at the Graduate School of Baekseok University. His service has been recognized by the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame where he is a member since 2008. He was Minister of Education when the CONFINTEA VI Pre-Conference for Asia and the Pacific was held in Korea in 2008.

Address: 981-56 Bangbae-dong, Seocho-gu, Seoul 137-848, Korea

Email: kshinil@snu.ac.kr





*Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan*

Secretary General of the Asia Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)

## EMBEDDING QUALITY EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL IN THE POST 2015 AGENDA

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Thank you so much for the kind hospitality and the invitation to address this distinguished assembly.

This meeting is being held at an interesting moment. Global international processes are underway to read the current development context – which, in many ways, presents vastly different opportunities and challenges from those humanity faced a decade ago - and to chart a new global development consensus that seeks to finally end poverty and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth.

In these discussions on the new Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) post 2015, the ‘education’ agenda after 2015 is also being debated. We can only surmise from the experience in the last decade or so that the decisions made in these processes will have a profound impact on national education policies as they signal the priority for international support and attention. This understanding has inspired participation and involvement of many

of us from civil society and as well, several in this assembly, in the ongoing review and agenda setting process.

I take this occasion to share some of our reflections on these processes – as they unfold – and their implications for the adult education community as we review progress in advancing the Belem Framework of Action vision and commitments.

Members of the International Council for Adult Education and its regional civil society partners such as ASPBAE have been persevering in advancing a vision of what the education agenda post 2015 should involve - consistent with and drawing from the analysis and agreements codified in the Belem Framework of Action. Indeed, we have seen it our task to ensure that the post 2015 processes are strongly informed by earlier international commitments which were already made in support of priority to adult education and learning such as CONFINTEA and Education for All and to prevent a retreat from these commitments and the obligations, herein.

- We have been asserting that life-long learning should be an overarching principle in the new education agenda and this should be fully expressed in concrete goals and targets that cover each of the phases of the education life-cycle from early childhood education, primary, secondary and tertiary, as well as adult and young people's education. It should recognize the importance of non-formal and informal as well as institutionally based learning. And as the Belem Framework of Action affirms, the new education goal should stand on the fundamental assertion that education is a human right, clearly defined and protected by human rights conventions that most governments have signed on to.

- The post 2015 agenda should explicitly recognize the value of adult education and learning not only on its own but as a catalyst to the achievement of all other development and social goals and indeed of sustainable development. Education systems can play a powerful role in promoting values and shaping attitudes that shift unsustainable consumption patterns. They can cultivate and nurture the scholarship and the intellectual resource base required to develop alternative and greener technologies. Much less recognized however is the imperative for a strong education and adult learning response to arm people and communities - especially the poorest - with the knowledge and skills to reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, lessen their disaster risks, make informed decisions to adapt their lives and livelihoods, and participate in defining and actively advancing alternative development systems that are sustainable, equitable and just. Education should be firmly embedded in the agenda of sustainable development as a core enabler.
  
- We also assert that while defining new goals and targets, we cannot forget unfinished business - in particular, the unfinished Education for All (EFA) agenda. It is clear that despite many gains, the EFA goals will not be met by 2015 - with Goals 3 and 4 faring especially poorly. As it frames the new education agenda, the international community cannot go back on its commitment to universal literacy and ignore 775 million women and men denied this right - 65% of whom are in the Asia Pacific. Having said this, it also has to be recognized that gaps in literacy proficiency are not exclusively in developing, poorer countries. The latest findings from the OECD Survey on Adult Competencies (PIAAC) shows that on average, 20 % of the EU adult population have low literacy and numeracy skills.

Additionally, it indicates that the skills of a person tend to decline over the years if they are not used frequently - underlining the value of literacy as a continuum - critical for citizens' active participation in rapidly changing societies. There is an urgent need to focus on the substantial continuation of adult literacy - not only for the importance holding a functional skill, but as the Belem Framework of Action argues, as an enabler of other human rights with positive impact on health, inter-generational learning, democratic participation and economic development. The World Literacy Foundation estimated that "illiteracy" did cost the global economy more than \$1 trillion a year through lost job opportunities and the costs of unemployment and ill health<sup>1</sup>. This does not even account for what has been lost in opportunities for greater, informed engagement of millions of citizens in democratic polity for good governance.

- We affirm that attention to life skills and vocational training, the focus of EFA Goal 3, remains relevant especially given the huge challenge of unemployment and underemployment among young people. The Asia-Pacific alone is home to 45% of the world's unemployed youth, with female youth labor force participation lower than men. While education and skills development alone will not guarantee employment and work, they substantially increase prospects for employment and livelihoods. Major reforms will however have to be instituted for education and skills to better facilitate young people's access to decent work. Education and skills systems should recognize that a narrow focus on technical or vocational skills oriented to specific jobs limits access to only a few job opportunities and substantially reduces young people's chances to participate in knowledge-based societies. Systems for skills

training and TVET also need to be reorganized to far better respond to the reality of a huge scale of work occurring outside the wage economy. In South Asia for example, 80-90% of the labor force are in the subsistence and informal, non wage sector of work – with very limited opportunities for skills training. The labor markets are also increasingly characterized by vulnerable employment strongly related to low-paying jobs, difficult working conditions and where workers’ rights are not respected. Education for work should be oriented to developing stronger pathways for decent work – which is productive and delivers a fair income, offers security in the workplace, freedom for people to organize and express their concerns, and guarantee equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men (ILO). And of course, it also has to be recognized that young people do not only require skills for work but also skills for life as responsible citizens and active players in shaping the course of their lives, their communities and societies.

- We assert that the post 2015 education agenda should account for the fact that huge numbers of marginalized and vulnerable groups are denied access to formal education - and non-formal education plays a critical role in responding to this challenge. UNESCO’s current estimates indicate that there are 57 million out of school children and almost one-half (49%) of these will probably never enter school. For many of the vulnerable, poor and excluded, non-formal education programs offer their only chance to access education. Youth, adult literacy, and skills development programs build the foundations for their basic and continuous learning. Unless these programs are sufficiently recognized and adequately financed, those excluded will continue to be denied their right to education.<sup>2</sup> Multiple-pathway education systems should be set in place to better

secure marginalized children and adults access to relevant education programs throughout their lives. These systems should integrate non formal and informal learning in national qualification frameworks, recognising prior learning.

- We have always asserted that adult education should never be about poor quality education for the poor. We believe that public provisioning for literacy, adult non-formal education, vocational and other skills trainings should be of high quality and enjoy the recognition accorded other education streams. We should strive towards a significant departure away from the marginalization of adult education and learning - where as GRALE observes - "...non-formal and informal learning modalities and pathways remain at the margins of recognition and reward." Qualified, professional, adequately resourced, justly paid trainers - with opportunities for initial and continuing training - are essential for quality adult education and learning. Adequate infrastructure and learning material oriented to learning needs of adults in their varied contexts must be available. Quality adult education involves not only developing specific technical and cognitive skills - it involves developing the competencies that better secure equality of voice, representation, recognition and empowerment of citizens especially those excluded from full participation by layers of disadvantage and discrimination on account of gender, location, socio-economic position, language, ethnicity, among others.
- Quality adult education - especially one that is attentive to the specific learning needs of those usually excluded - comes with a price. And it is not a matter of speculation that public financial investment in adult education - unfortunately - remains

abysmally low. Consistent with the agreements in the Belem Framework of Action, CSOs have asserted that in the post 2015 arrangements, governments and donors should scale up budgets to adult education and the Global Partnership for Education should do far more for adult literacy. In the current discussions on innovative resource mobilization options to increase public funds - such as tax reforms, Financial Transaction Taxes, better resource management - education and adult learning have to be considered worthy recipients of additional public funds generated.

- Finally, learner's perspectives and voices should inform the shaping of adult education policies and programs. Following the Belem Framework of Action, the post 2015 education agenda should provide for the creation of mechanisms for the involvement of civil society, community and learners organizations in the development, implementation and evaluation of adult learning and education policies and programs. Capacity-building measures to support the constructive and informed involvement of these sectors should be resourced and set in place.

How are we faring so far in advancing these advocacies?

Not too badly - but there is far more ground to cover and much more to secure.

The good news is, in the emerging consensus, as indicated by the UN Secretary General's Report on the post 2015 MDG agenda, education is fairly prominent and is quite likely to be one of the stand-alone goals. The different MDG-related processes undertaken that fed into this UN Secretary General's report, all mentioned education as a priority goal.

The articulation of the proposed post 2015 education agenda in this Report is also welcome, given its reference to lifelong learning. It proposes **“Providing quality education and lifelong learning”** as the education priority. It is good to see in this articulation, a much wider acceptability of the framework for lifelong learning that our community has been advancing for many years.

When elaborated however, the proposed education goal reveals a rather limited scope and a narrow interpretation of ‘lifelong learning’. It proposes in the main, attention to early childhood, primary and secondary education, and additionally, life skills and vocational training for young people. It is silent on non-formal education for children and adults, adult and women’s literacy and all other education and learning opportunities needed especially by marginalized and vulnerable communities to meet their basic learning needs as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - and to address the 21st century challenges to development, poverty, inclusion, sustainability and peace. The dominant discourses on education quality privileges ‘learning outcomes’ - a cause for concern as it lends to a narrow conception of quality focused on measurements and testing. While learning is inarguably one of the most important outputs in all education systems, it cannot be understood and tracked in a vacuum. Education quality should be understood in a more holistic way - appreciating that education quality should also be attentive to learning ‘processes’ - involving relevant curricula; well-trained, justly compensated teachers and trainers, safe and conducive learning environments in schools, learning centers and communities; and recognizes the strong interconnection between equity and quality.



There is certainly much more work that needs to be done in shaping the post 2015 education agenda in ways that capture the fuller meaning of lifelong learning as an overarching framework and education as a human right and a core enabler of other rights and development.

It has to be however said that the MDG process is one space to articulate a post 2015 education vision, and EFA is another. Unfortunately the EFA processes have not taken off fully as yet and at our end, we hope this will change soon. UNESCO is being urged by many of its member states to accelerate efforts in defining and setting in motion, the plans to shape the post 2015 EFA agenda, building on the rich, close to 25 years EFA experience, the national EFA reviews currently in place, and to actively seek coherence of these with the MDG processes where the MDG education goal is being debated. For many of us in civil society, we believe that the Education for All platform still offers the broadest space to advance a global education agenda that can more fully address the range of challenges needed to have the right to education effectively implemented in all its dimensions and throughout all its stages: from early childhood to adult literacy and adult education.<sup>3</sup>

In the coming period through to 2014 and 2015, the adult education community should actively participate in all the different spaces defining the more substantive aspects and content of the post 2015 education agenda to fully articulate a bold and meaningful education vision and ambition within the framework of lifelong learning.

We should participate in catalyzing broader public debate on the new education agenda especially at the national level where consultations and discussions have so far been rather limited. These debates should carry on in our countries, communities, parliaments, in the media, and in other spaces of national dialogue

to meaningfully engage a wider set of stakeholders in defining this ambition.

We should actively participate in better articulating what lifelong learning and lifelong learning policies truly mean. The GRALE findings indicate that lifelong learning “definitions remain confused and cloudy” and the importance of youth and adult learning “continues to be unevenly recognized in policy-making” across the world. Greater capacity-building to help education policy makers concretize lifelong learning policies, systems need to be set in place: the efforts of UIL and DVV International especially in the Asia Pacific in this direction are very timely and valuable.

We should actively contribute in defining goals and targets for lifelong learning that capture the depth and range of learning that is lifelong and life-wide; those which find universal relevance but are also differentiated to recognize the huge variation in current conditions and capacity across all countries. These goals on lifelong learning should support and advance a fundamental notion in the post 2015 development agenda: “to create a world where no one is left behind”. As such, these goals should be defined attendant to the needs and peculiar contexts especially of marginalized and hard to reach groups and communities.

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) proposed an initial set of goals and targets: 1) On adult literacy, they proposed that the number of adults without literacy skills should be halved in every country by 2020, and halved again 5 years later with immediate priority to removing the gender gap in access to literacy. 2) They also proposed access to fit for purpose education to people in the formal and informal sectors of work with the gap between participation of the most affluent populations in a country and the lowest 20% narrowing each 5 year that progress is measured. 3) They also proposed setting a target for participation

of adults in learning programs, tracking the participation specifically of marginalized groups.

These are only some initial suggestions. The point is that these should be debated, challenged, further elaborated and discussed. The adult education community should lend far more of its wisdom, experience and scholarship in shaping the post 2015 education agenda globally in the framework of lifelong learning. We have to be more engaged, more present and pro-active in the spaces where these agendas are defined.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/apr/03/literacy-price-tag-economic-investing>

<sup>2</sup> Education Network SDC statement, "Quality Learning and Education At the core of Sustainable Development", Morges, September 2013

<sup>3</sup> Global Campaign for Education, Letter to UNESCO, October 2013

#### Biographical Note

*Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan* is the Secretary General of the Asia Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), the largest membership organization of civil society, professional associations, and coalitions in the region; at the same time she is a Co-Chair of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). She has contributed years of service to the field of adult and continuing education, and has an extensive record of working in different capacities for a variety of Asian NGOs. As Secretary General, she has led ASPBAE since 1995 as a regional association which works through more than 200 member organizations, active in around 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific. Her service has been recognized by the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame where she a member since 2008.

Address: ASPBAE Secretariat, C/o. MAAPL, 9th Floor, Eucharistic Congress Building No. 3, 5, Convent Street, Colaba, Mumbai - 400 039, India

Email: maria.aspbae@gmail.com

