



# Strengthening the Training of Adult Educators

Learning from an Inter-regional Exchange  
of Experience

Report on the Workshop Held at the  
CONFINTEA Mid-term Review Conference,  
Bangkok, Thailand, September 2003

*Edited by  
Frank Youngman and Madhu Singh*



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# Introduction

*Frank Youngman and Madhu Singh*

The successful implementation of the adult learning policies and programmes envisioned in the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) depends in large measure on the availability of knowledgeable, skilful, sensitive and socially committed adult educators. The quality of adult learning programmes is influenced by the availability of competent personnel to develop, organise, promote, teach and evaluate modes of learning of adults. The initial and continuing training for adult educators is therefore of considerable importance.

CONFINTEA V established that adult learning is of vital importance to adults as they seek to transform their life circumstances and exercise greater control over their lives. Adult educators are key agents in the implementation of adult learning, but their concerns and training needs are often neglected. The issue of training therefore deserves greater emphasis and attention, and the voices of adult educators need to be given greater prominence in national and international discourses on adult education and learning.

Adult educators work in a wide variety of organisational and social contexts as they organise, teach and support adults in their learning activities. While this diversity of roles and situations reflects the reality of adult learning settings, it also presents those who educate adults with significant conceptual and practical problems of training. One such problem is that not everybody who works with adults in

learning activities identifies him- or herself as an adult educator. For instance, health promoters or trade union activists may not identify themselves as adult educators. There is no standard nomenclature that includes all those engaged in facilitating adult learning. Even the term “adult educator” is not universally accepted.

It is nevertheless clear that those who educate adults require a particular range of competencies to be effective. These competencies are based on a defined body of knowledge, skills and values, which include such elements as adult psychology, teaching strategies, programme planning, research methods, social and political analysis, sensitivity, empathy and tolerance. It also forms the basis for the training of adult educators. Training needs can be met by offering instruction in these elements in appropriate contexts.

It is necessary to ensure that training meets a variety of needs, ranging from university-level academic preparation to workshops that strengthen the skills of social activists. The needs of those working in the non-formal education sector with youths and adults require particular attention, and it is important that issues of equality, for example of gender and ethnicity, are addressed. Open and distance learning approaches also have great promise of reaching large numbers of practitioners. Regional and international co-operation can help to develop the diverse range of training opportunities required to meet the broad spectrum of needs.

Differences in local contexts relating to culture, political economics, adult education policies and traditions, etc., require that training be relevant to the local situation. Training activities developed in one context may not be relevant in other contexts. Consequently, it is essential that capacity for research, knowledge production and materials development is enhanced in the training of adult educators. Regional and international co-operation can help to overcome local constraints in the provision of local training, while also helping to generate the broad perspectives necessitated by globalisation. There is a need for stronger networks to connect those engaged in the training of adult educators.

These issues formed the subject of a thematic workshop at the CONFINTEA V Mid-term Review Meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2003. The workshop was based on the contributions included in this booklet and involved an important exchange of experience between different regions. It also provided an opportunity to appraise developments in the training of adult educators since CONFINTEA V in 1997 and to propose an agenda for action in the period leading up to CONFINTEA VI in 2009.

### **Background on the CONFINTEA V Mid-term Review Meeting**

The CONFINTEA V conference was a landmark event that provided important guidelines for the future development of adult education. One of the documents that emerged from the conference was Agenda for the Future. It is a comprehensive document that makes detailed proposals for implementing the commitment to a more significant global role for adult education and learning made in *The Ham-*

*burg Declaration on Adult Learning*. It contains a short section entitled, "Improving the Conditions for the Professional Development of Adult Educators and Facilitators" (UNESCO 1997: 14), which some maintain (e.g., Youngman 2000) did not provide adequate recognition of the importance of adult educators for the realisation of CONFINTEA's expanded vision of adult education. Well-prepared adult educators are essential for programme development, implementation and evaluation. Therefore, the quality of their initial and continuing training is essential for achieving the goals of CONFINTEA V. Yet this was not sufficiently recognised by the conference, a circumstance reflected in the record of follow-up activities undertaken in the subsequent two years. In 1999 the CONFINTEA Follow-up Report (UIE 1999) noted that the training of adult educators had been discussed at an African regional seminar in Zimbabwe, and was also identified as a core issue in adult education for political and social democratisation in the Latin American region. However, the report concluded that the status of adult educators and their training was one of a number of "neglected key areas" that needed to be more fully addressed in the CONFINTEA V follow-up process (UIE 1999: 67).

A number of initiatives undertaken immediately after 2000 suggested that this "neglected key area" was still not receiving the attention it deserved. The sixth World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), which was held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, in 2001, included a workshop on "Training the Post-CONFINTEA Adult Educator" (*Convergence* 2001: 62–64). In this workshop it was proposed that the ICAE should establish a network to focus on the training

of adult educators and should support the initiatives of bodies that promote training, such as the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE). Indeed, the UIE has taken a leading role in this area. The following three examples illustrate the range of activities it has developed with different partners.

First, in 2001 the UIE entered into a partnership with the Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association and the Department of Adult Education of the University of Botswana to develop a series of textbooks entitled *African Perspectives on Adult Learning*. This project was initiated in response to a lack of appropriate and accessible textbooks for use in the professional training of adult educators in tertiary education institutions in Africa. It seeks to develop relevant and affordable textbooks that reflect African social realities, theoretical and cultural perspectives, policies and modes of practise. Second, in 2002, in collaboration with the Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training of the University of South Africa, the UIE also initiated a five-country study into the use of distance and open learning as a vehicle for the professional development of adult educators. The resulting book (Singh and McKay 2004) contains detailed case studies from Africa and Asia and comprehensive proposals for using distance and open learning in the training of adult educators and field workers involved in literacy and non-formal adult education. The third example of the UIE's activities in adult education training was a study of the training of adult educators in Latin America, which it commissioned in 2003 from the Regional Centre for Co-operation for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CREFAL). This led to a proposal for a regional training project (CREFAL 2003).

In addition to the work of the UIE, there is increasing evidence that national policies and institutional programmes are giving greater prominence to the issue of training adult educators. For instance, Brazil's National Plan for Education (2002) and Namibia's National Policy on Adult Learning (2003) both emphasise training for adult educators. Examples of institutional programmes include the work of the Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training at the University of South Africa, which has trained large numbers of literacy workers through distance and open learning (Singh and McKay 2004), and the Learning 4 Sharing project of the Nordic Folk Academy, which has developed new training programmes in three Baltic countries (see Antra Carlsen's chapter below).

### **The CONFINTEA V Mid-term Review Meeting**

The workshop on adult educator training provided an opportunity to review the developments that had taken place since 1997 and to identify future strategies for follow-up action. The workshop focused on current policy and practise, the various roles and competencies of adult educators, social recognition and accreditation, personal and professional development, and international co-operation and networking.

These themes are addressed in the following chapters within different regional contexts. The presentation of different situations in Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia, Africa and Northern Europe provides an inter-regional overview of the trends, achievements and problems in this field since 1997. It also provides an initial agenda for future action.

### *Strengths and weaknesses of current training programmes*

The chapters that follow show that a wide variety of training activities are being undertaken. For example, the chapter by Graciela Messina and Gabriela Enriquez shows that, in response to increasing demands in the Latin America region, many new programmes and modes of training are being developed. Attention is drawn to programmes that concentrate on specific themes, such as citizenship, indigenous and peasant populations, work, gender, local development and literacy. Five different kinds of organisation are identified as active in providing programmes for the training of adult educators: a) government institutions (at central and local levels); b) universities and other tertiary education institutions; c) civil society organisations, such as NGOs and churches; d) private organisations; and e) regional and international bodies, such as CREFAL and UNESCO. Three types of training are offered, namely initial training for those with no experience, continuing training for those already employed, and courses for those responsible for training adult educators. These different types of training are discussed in detail in Carmen Campero's chapter on the programmes offered by the Academy of Adult Education at the National University of Education in Mexico.

However, while many programmes exist, they clearly do not provide opportunities for all those who need them and there is often a lack of co-ordination between them. In particular, most of the training offered is in-service training, that is, for those already employed. By contrast, initial training is relatively neglected. Furthermore, there are weaknesses with regard to the quality of training. Most in-service training is narrowly conceived and

basic, focussed, for example, on the implementation of a particular curriculum. Such training is often hurried and constructed as a series of "events" (see the chapter by Magaly Robalino Campos) or as a "ritual" (see the chapter by Anita Dighe), rather than as an integrated programme of personal and professional development. Perhaps the greatest weakness is that initial training, particularly in universities, takes place separately from the in-service training by institutions implementing adult learning programmes.

A common approach to training adult educators on a large scale is the cascade approach used in literacy campaigns in India and Bangladesh (see Dighe below). This involves providing initial training for selected resource persons who then become responsible for training others. In this way, training is provided all the way down to grassroots level. The problem with this approach is that it relies entirely on a top-down process in which considerable information is lost in transmission.

The chapters in this booklet also identify the accepted basic concept of adult learning as a problem in the training of adult educators. Graciela Messina and Gabriela Enriquez ask whether adult education should not combine different areas of work-related training and continuing education in a single field. With this idea in mind, they call for a more systematic collation of information on adult educators.

Based on identified weaknesses, the chapters conclude that there is a need for more innovative training programmes that integrate theory and practise, enable collaborative and participatory learning, encourage critical reflection, address the personal values of the adult educator, and show greater concern for adult education's social and political role. The pro-

grammes run by the Mexican Academy of Adult Education emphasise the necessity of reflecting socio-cultural realities and the experiences of adult educators within educational practise (see the chapter by Carmen Campero). The Learning 4 Sharing project in Northern Europe, discussed in the chapter by Antra Carlsen, provides an example of new training programmes that are innovative and learn from international best practise. A key point of this project is that training should reflect and support the roles adult educators play. This involves building competencies educators require in order to work with learners at different levels (see Campos).

### *Training programmes and the multiple roles of the adult educator*

Although there is a popular perception that equates adult education with literacy and basic education, the chapters in this booklet make clear that there are many different types of adult educators, who play many different roles. For example, in his chapter Stanley Mpofo provides a list of adult educators in the African context that ranges from training officers in the business sector to extension workers in the public sector. However, not everybody who works with adults in learning activities identifies him- or herself as an adult educator. In fact, Mpofo shows that there is reluctance among many such workers to identify themselves with the field of adult education. In Latin America, adult education is generally situated within the broader field of popular education (see Messina and Enriquez below). The term “adult educator” therefore encompasses full-time professionals, part-timers workers and volunteers at the grassroots level, as well as community leaders and social activists. Their educational background

varies from degree-level university education to basic primary schooling.

Adult educators play extremely varied roles. Their tasks include teaching, organising, counselling, evaluating, facilitating, coaching and mobilising students, as well as researching and developing materials. But, as Dighe points out, those who work in areas such as health and agriculture usually receive training only in their area of specialisation, training which seldom takes account of the fact that their work involves facilitating adult learning. Indeed, there is a common misconception that “It’s easy to teach adults” and that hence there is no need to be trained in this area. However, the various contributions to this booklet reflect an increasing recognition that adult education is a complex and demanding task that requires exposure to adult education as a field of study (see Mpofo below). The chapters provide a guide to the range of personal and professional skills required by those working with adult learners. They also show that training programmes are finally becoming more flexible and able to accommodate a greater range of target groups in terms of curricula and modes of delivery. This trend is illustrated by the Learning 4 Sharing project described by Carlsen, a project that has mapped the various roles of adult educators, identified the required skills, and then developed curricula with relevant contents and methods. It has provided different curricula for the three countries in the project, curricula which reflects the different priorities of each country.

### *Recognition and professionalisation of adult educators*

A number of chapters make the point that adult educators often have low self-esteem as a result of low salaries, job insecurity,

limited training opportunities and lack of professionalism. Campos and Carlsen therefore insist that professional and personal development are inextricably inter-linked. In surveying Latin America and the Caribbean, Campos suggests that low esteem impacts not only on the effectiveness of educators' work but also on their physical and mental health. In Latin America the issue of training is situated in the wider context of social recognition for the work of adult educators. It is also linked to broader issues of educators' working conditions and shaping projects and curricular reforms that affect their work. Within this context, the accreditation of training is important, because it provides a basis for professional recognition and improved remuneration. Accredited training includes initial training in universities, in-service training and continuing education conducted by autonomous agencies set up in the context of national programmes (see Campero; Messina and Enriquez).

An important development in the Latin American context is the trend towards integrating training programmes for adult and youth educators into professional development systems that apply both to school teachers and out-of-school teachers of youths and adults. From this altered perspective all the members of the teaching community are viewed as educators whose role is not only in the classroom and the education sector, but also in the community and in political and social contexts (see Campos).

The long debate in the USA over professionalising the field of adult education is also worth considering (Imel et al. 2000). This debate has centred on whether professionalisation is actually desirable, or is in fact a process that is elitist, exclusionary and likely to separate adult education

from communities and social movements. For those who see professionalisation as inevitable, the key issue is why and how to professionalise. The question of the nature of professionalisation is dealt with in detail in several of the chapters in this booklet. Messina and Enriquez suggest that there may be different conceptions of professionalism in the Latin American context, and Mporu refers to "narrow professionalisation" and the dangers it entails for the concept of adult education as a vector of social justice, as advocated by CONFINTEA V. While there is no doubt that the working conditions of adult educators need to be improved, it may well be that trade unionism is a more appropriate approach than conventional "professionalisation". It is clear that there has been a trend since CONFINTEA V towards establishing a stronger link between training and the wider issue of the status and working conditions of adult educators.

### *National and institutional policies*

The evidence of this booklet indicates a lack of progress in national policies on the training of adult educators. Dighe refers to a shortage of national-level educational policies in South Asia that provide direction for training content, methods and implementation. Messina and Enriquez paint a bleak picture of Latin America, noting "the non-existence of a public political recommendation on the training of the educators of adults. . . . Consequently there is no political support by the state for the training of adult educators." One exception to this overall trend is the National Policy on Adult Learning in Namibia, mentioned by Mporu. Adopted in 2003, this policy was a direct outcome of CONFINTEA V. It contains an explicit commit-

ment by the government to initiate “a comprehensive review of professional training needs and the adequacy of existing training programmes in order to produce a human resources development strategy for adult learning personnel” (Republic of Namibia 2002: 36).

It is difficult to provide a complete overview of trends at the institutional level because the data is simply not available. Nevertheless, two case studies included here do illustrate positive institutional environments: Campero shows that the programme development undertaken by the Academy for Adult Education has had the support of the leadership of the National University of Education in Mexico, while Carlsen reveals that the Learning 4 Sharing project had the full support of the Nordic Folk Academy. Without considerable further research it is not possible to say whether developments at the institutional level are primarily the result of initiatives by groups of committed adult educators, as Messina and Enriquez suggest, or a reflection of policies formed at the institutional level.

### *International co-operation and networking*

This booklet cannot provide a complete overview of international co-operation and networking in the area of adult educator training; rather, it aims to give a sense of the whole by focusing on a several regions. It is clear that Latin America and the Caribbean have a well-developed exchange mechanism for adult education, which is promoted by organisations such as the Regional Office for UNESCO, the Regional Centre for Co-operation for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Latin America Council for Adult Education. These organisations

convened preparatory meetings for CONFINTEA V and have promoted follow-up meetings on issues of training. Although there is no network of institutions dedicated exclusively to the training of adult educators, Messina and Enriquez point out in their chapter that the training of adult educators is a cross-cutting theme that is given importance within existing regional networks. The INNOVEMOS regional network, for example, deals with the professional development and training of teachers in schools as well as educators of adults. Similarly, Carlsen’s chapter describes the regional training project Learning 4 Sharing, which has been made possible by the growing trend in Europe of supporting partnerships, international co-operation and sharing experience as part of a wider project of European integration. Her description of the project reveals lessons to be learned for successful international co-operation and provides a sharp contrast to large-scale educational reform programmes that have focused primarily on infrastructure, textbooks and equipment (see Campos). All in all, it would appear that international co-operation and networking with respect to the training of adult educators—unevenly developed between regions of the world—will depend to a large extent on the opportunities for creating spaces for professional training exchanges within existing regional and international networks.

### **Future measures**

This booklet describes the policies, programmes and projects devoted to adult education training that have been put in place in various parts of the world, and mentions several regional and international meetings that have been held on this topic in recent years. However, it also sug-

gests that not enough attention is being given to the training of adult educators in many national and regional agendas and that where policies do exist they are not always implemented. There is a clear deficiency of available training opportunities. Of equal concern is that there are serious problems related to the conception and quality of many of the programmes that are being offered. The nature of training is often conceived in narrow, instrumental terms for a limited clientele. A broader concept of the adult educator is required, accompanied by an approach to training that is concerned not only with the skills but also with the personal characteristics and socio-political role of the adult educator. In this context, the French word *formation* is perhaps more fitting than the English word "training". The thematic workshop on training of adult educators at the CONFINTEA V Mid-term Review Meeting proposed a number of future measures that should be undertaken prior to CONFINTEA VI in 2009. This will involve a process of monitoring and evaluation in the period up to 2009 based on indicators of performance in each of these action areas. The main emphasis is on both enhancing the quality of training for adult educators and strengthening the inter-regional exchange of experience.

First, it is clear that adult educator training (or *formation*) should be diverse in nature in order to address the variety of training needs that exists. But it should also be systematic, providing opportunities for qualification and certification, access to continuing training, and initial training. Given the typical background of many adult educators, it is important that prior experience and learning should be recognised for qualification purposes.

In each national context there is a

need to define clearly the respective responsibilities of the government, NGOs, training institutions and other stakeholders. Higher-education institutions have a special responsibility to develop adult education as a field of study and practise at all levels, through teaching, research, consultancy and community service. To provide the necessary direction and concentration of effort, a national statement on the training of adult educators should be produced by all the stakeholders. This is a task that might be undertaken under the auspices of a body such as the National Commission for UNESCO. The existence of national statements will constitute one indicator of progress in this area of action. Moreover, training of adult educators needs to be embedded in national education reforms in which formal, non-formal and informal learning are linked. This would involve embracing a broader range of educators and training modalities, and linking the training of teachers in the formal system with the training of other adult educators. This point emerges most clearly in the Latin American context, where in fact the majority of those who teach youths and adults are school teachers who receive only rushed and poor-quality additional training to prepare them for working with adults (see Campos).

Secondly, evidence indicates that there is a need to transform training programmes for adult educators so that they are participatory and holistic and promote critically reflective practise and a common identity. They should also prepare adult educators to work with adult learners who have special needs. This transformation would be aided if organisations responsible for adult educator training programmes shared their experiences of good practise and their expert-

ise in the development of new and revised training programmes. In particular, the potential of open and distance learning, as well as of information and communication technologies, should be developed. The relevant indicator here will be evidence of new and revised curricula in training programmes.

Thirdly, in many contexts the status of adult educators is a problem, as they lack recognition for the complex and demanding work they undertake. For the achievement of the CONFINTEA goals, adult educators should have the same status as other educators, including appropriate salaries, working and living conditions, and opportunities for continuing training. While it is important that governments and institutions adopt appropriate policies, adult educators themselves should be proactive in shaping national and institutional policies and in promoting their interests. This requires involvement with trade unions and the development of strong national associations of adult educators. The promotion of national associations is a task that can be appropriately undertaken by the seven regional member organisations of the International Council for Adult Education. Relevant indicators here will be the existence and level of activity of national associations, as well as the existence of government and institutional policies that adequately recognise adult educators.

Fourthly, there is a lack of comprehensive information on the situation of adult educators in most countries. Information is needed on the different types of adult educators, their identity and profiles, their numbers, their working and living conditions, their training needs, the kinds of training available, and other basic data. A major inter-regional research proj-

ect is needed to provide a situational analysis for each region.

Fifthly, the central assumption behind the push for improved training for adult educators is that it will lead to better performance on their part, which will lead in turn to improvements in the quality of adult learning programmes. Is there empirical evidence to support this assumption? Yes, but to strengthen the case for greater investment in the training of adult educators, research and evaluation studies are still needed that a) define critical indicators measuring the effectiveness of training programmes in improving the performance of adult educators, and b) examine the role of adult educators in enhancing the quality of adult learning programmes. Clear indicators would contribute to the "Call for Action and Accountability" made at the CONFINTEA V Mid-term Review Meeting (UIE 2003).

Finally, the proposed measures listed above provide a rationale for increased inter-regional co-operation and networking. Various forms of regional and international co-operation make up important activities of the regional offices of UNESCO and of the UIE. In addition, many other organisations, such as the International Institute for Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association and the International Council of Adult Education, are active within this field regionally and internationally.

### **Conclusion**

The chapters in this booklet show that the hitherto neglected domain of adult educator training has achieved greater visibility worldwide as a result of CONFINTEA V and the follow-up process. But it also points to the challenges involved in turn-

ing that new recognition into concrete policies and programmes of action at regional, national and institutional levels. This booklet proposes an agenda of future action to be undertaken prior to CONFINTEA VI, and suggests how to monitor and evaluate progress. What is now required is decisive action by all concerned to move this agenda forward.

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# Professional and Personal Development of Adult and Youth Educators in Latin America and the Caribbean

Magaly Robalino Campo

Teacher training is one of the most urgent and pressing issues facing the Latin American and Caribbean region. Teachers are of vital importance in education reform efforts, yet their role continues to be defined traditionally. For this reason, in this chapter we shall highlight the strengths and areas of progress in teacher training, the tensions in professional and personal development, the training processes, and the pending challenges in teacher training in the region.

## Strengths and areas of progress in teacher training

In this section we consider the role teachers play in educational reform and emphasise the importance of professional development in reform efforts. The acknowledgement that teachers play a vital role in such efforts is one of the key advances in recent educational history. There has long been a tendency for curricular and educational reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean to focus primarily on providing infrastructure, textbooks, equipment and laboratories. While these and other inputs are fundamental, they are incapable of impacting on student learning without the direct involvement of teachers.

This fact is recognised in the international declarations made at Jomtiem (1990) and Dakar (2000). In Latin America it was

also recognised in the calls for action adopted in Santo Domingo (2003) through the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC, Havana, 2002), as well as in the many national and international forums that have identified teachers as a vital component of large-scale community and social educational reform efforts.

PRELAC, which was established as part of a commitment by various Latin American and Caribbean governments to reaching the Millennium Goals of *Education for All*, has identified the need to place teachers and their role at the forefront of educational reform (*Education for All in the Americas 2000*). It also recognises, without explicitly addressing the issue of teacher training, that it will be impossible to create educational reforms capable of generating substantive improvements in the quality of life of individuals, families and communities.

The majority of reform programmes undertaken so far have included initial and continuing teacher training as vital components. Although the content and process of professional development is still in deliberation, its inclusion in reform programmes is significant of itself, given that the role of teachers and teacher training had been largely ignored up to now. Current literature on teacher training shows interesting, although incipient, progress.

Although initial and continuing training are essential elements, research indicates that there are several other factors that play just as important a role (Havana Declaration 2002). Among these are technical and professional support, fair salaries, administrative support, environments that encourage continuous learning, teachers' self-esteem, interaction with students' families and communities, autonomy and freedom to create, incentives, professional collaboration, attention to personal needs and health, and participation in decision-making bodies in schools. Many of these factors are currently part of the discussion surrounding the teaching profession. In fact, regional projects, such as those implemented in Asia by UNESCO together with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), recognise that, as a whole, teachers have little involvement in the definition of projects and curricular reforms that affect their work.

### **Challenges for the training of youth and adult educators**

The difficulties involved in the professional development of teachers of youth and adults differ little from those involved in professional development in the formal educational system. The following section presents some of the main challenges in the professional and personal development of teachers of youth and adults.

#### *Lack of national education policies*

A challenge common to both the formal and non-formal education sectors is the lack of national education policies that prioritise lifelong teacher training as a key factor in national and community development. In general, reform efforts are reactive in nature and easily are influenced

by political trends. The lack of long-term perspective conflicts with the recent recognition of the primary role that teachers play in educational change. On one hand, it is held that teachers are essential to successful education reform, yet on the other hand their active participation in policies and reform efforts is still pending.

#### *Absence of adult education in national curricular and education reform*

The majority of proposals for educational reform are almost exclusively focused on the formal education sector. The education of youth and adults has yet to be considered a priority. A large part of the efforts in this field are undertaken by non-governmental organisations or are designed as compensatory policies. Often these efforts are unilateral and lack a cohesive approach. In some countries, such efforts are actually completely outside official Ministry of Education agendas or are only tangentially incorporated (Campero 2003).

Regardless of the ensuing results, when a country adopts a certain reform initiative, it makes clear its intention to improve an area it believes is not functioning or not functioning as well as is necessary. Additionally, reform initiatives reflect the government and education ministry's priorities. Although the education of youth and adults has its own specificities, it should be included under the auspices of national education reforms to improve opportunities for the population in general. As long as the education of youth and adults remains on the fringes of education policy, it will continue to be considered as "second class" education, or as a "poor education for the poor", and will be given secondary priority.

*Professional development in the formal vs. non-formal education sectors*

Professional development efforts and reforms in a majority of countries are focused almost exclusively on the formal system. Moreover, when the issue of providing teachers with professional development opportunities is broached, it is generally assumed that the teachers in question work in traditional schools and colleges.

Only a few countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region—among them Mexico, Colombia, Brazil and Argentina—offer degrees in youth and adult education. The majority of those who teach youth and adults are schoolteachers or people from other backgrounds who receive hurried compensatory training to work in this field. Their training is administered directly by those in charge of the programmes in education ministries, NGOs, churches or relevant organisations. National education agendas in most of these countries do not address initial or continuing training for teachers of youth and adults (UNESCO 2000).

Although each education sector has particularities that should guide the professional development of its teachers, the general needs of students and the demands of families and communities are similar to those that teachers at any level encounter. All teachers should possess a knowledge of the curriculum, use methodologies for constructivist learning, demonstrate creativity and an ability to adapt curriculum to students needs, should have an ability to discern useful information and a positive attitude towards teamwork, have a sense of social responsibility, show ownership over educational results and be able to create stimulating learning environments. A basic analysis quickly leads to the conclusion that there are basic common skills

that any teacher needs in working with students at any level.

Creating programmes that respect the particularities of each group of teachers does not require a fragmentation within the profession, but rather should involve a more holistic view of teachers' professional development—as an integral component in generating substantive improvements in educational quality and equity.

*Continuing professional development as a substitute for initial training*

The education of youth and adults has not been a priority for policy makers. Similarly, the training of teachers in this field has not received significant consideration. The majority of these teachers, as mentioned earlier, lack specialised initial training and have varying degrees of academic preparation. They range from those who moved from other areas of education to those who received only basic schooling and are willing to work for minimal salaries in remote locations.

Studies show that the impact of initial training far outweighs that of continuing training (Tedesco and Fanfani 2002). A teacher's practise and pedagogical approach is greatly influenced by the training he or she receives at a training institution. Continuing professional development, accompanied by supervision and support is useful only as long as there are basic skills present that allow teachers to continue learning and revising their knowledge base (LLECE 2002). If there are major gaps in their initial training, as is common in the training of teachers of youth and adults, continuing development must be of a very high standard if it is to successfully help teachers improve their performance.

Continuing training programmes have had to suffice where initial training pro-

grammes are lacking. However, the quality of these programmes varies greatly depending on the source. Overall, these efforts tend to be rather hurried, basic, at times overstretched, and lack follow-up and technical assistance. Often there is no process to evaluate their impact and there are no efforts to continue the process after the initial phase of completion. With the exception of a few programmes developed by organisations explicitly committed to improving the education of youth and adults, most teacher training systems show grave deficiencies.

### *Training as a succession of events*

Training has been interpreted as a succession of events whose focus varies with the existing pedagogical or political current. Topics are often unrelated and do not directly address the specific needs of teachers. There is a lack of pedagogical and technical support to help teachers contextualise what they are learning and make permanent changes to their practise. These limitations are compounded by the weak use of alternative and efficient teaching practises such as study groups, teacher networks, and exchanges between training centres and teacher trainers.

### *Training individuals vs. training groups*

The use of groups, group planning, joint decision-making and protocols for teamwork is not common practise in most training institutions. Consequently, training initiatives have limited impact on student learning because they are only directed at individuals, who are often isolated by circumstances at their workplace and lack the support to incorporate new elements into their practise.

### *Poor working and living conditions of teachers of youth and adults*

The working conditions for many teachers are difficult. Even in the formal system, teachers have low salaries, lack professional recognition, have limited opportunities for professional development, and can advance in the wage scale only through seniority. There is no systematic structure governing wages, promotion, performance and evaluation.

The situation is even more difficult for teachers of youth and adults. In many countries, they are not considered part of the formal education sector. Despite the fact that these teachers are actually in a position of great social responsibility, they usually hold short-term contracts with inadequate stipends taking the place of a substantive salary. These conditions have a negative impact on the entire educational process. Youth and adult educators are placed in the position of balancing personal, family and professional needs, as well as often having to shoulder the burden of often being the only link between their communities and the education system. These conditions generate insecurities, instability and constant mobility within the teaching profession, with significant negative effects on student achievement.

### *Training processes for teachers of youth and adults*

While there has been some progress in re-defining the role of teachers and their professional development, it is important to look further and ensure that the changing image of the work of teachers is grounded in concrete research findings.

Studies by UNESCO (IIFE 2002), the German Agency for International Co-operation (Cuenca and Portocarrero 2001)

and education ministries (Rivero 2003) on education systems in Latin America all call for a more comprehensive definition of the role of teachers. According to these studies, teachers should be considered as more than curriculum enforcers. Further, it has to be acknowledged that teachers' needs go beyond training, materials and infrastructure, and that these needs must be met if they are to be more effective.

Until recently Latin American countries have undertaken many educational reform initiatives that rely on domestic resources, as well as on loans from international organisations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). Reforms, however, have traditionally focused on providing more infrastructure, textbooks, equipment, laboratories and training, and the results have not been commensurate with the resources utilised. Furthermore, research indicates that there are no significant differences between schools that participated in the said reforms and those that did not. These findings illustrate the need to conduct further research and prioritise those factors that have direct influence on teacher performance.

There are several factors that influence student achievement, among them family, community, economics and culture. Likewise, there are several factors that influence teacher performance. Policies for teachers require integrated, holistic efforts with long-term goals involving ongoing development and recognising the importance of factors such as personal development, self-esteem, the way teachers value their own work, the recognition of their work by families and communities, physical and mental health, standard of living, cultural capital, and the ability to understand and utilise information and communication technologies.

Professional health is an area that beginning to be researched only now. The few studies that have been conducted in countries such as Argentina, Mexico, Ecuador and Chile show an alarming incidence of stress, depression, psychosomatic diseases and other mental ailments among teachers. Chile is even considering a proposal to treat these as "professional illnesses". This highlights the importance of engaging in further research on this topic and considering the teaching profession in its entirety. We are faced with the need to modify our traditional understanding, which equates teachers with training, and instead develop a perspective that recognises the importance of professional and personal development. This is particularly important in the area of adult and youth education, where these themes are only beginning to be discussed.

### *Challenges for the professional development of teachers of youths and adults*

The challenges facing youth and adult education are complex and require a variety of responses. The following are the recommended responses that emerged from this workshop.

#### *1. Recognise adult and youth education as a factor in promoting social equality*

Students must be given the necessary tools to participate effectively in society, in the labour market, in the decision-making process and in creating solutions to the challenges facing their communities. Adult education cannot be defined solely as literacy education, given that the students in question are often either youths who have been forced to abandon their studies before completion or adults who require learning that combines basic skills with work skills. A re-evaluation of the

role of adult and youth education would require a commitment of government resources as a signal that education of youth and adults is an education priority.

### *2. Recognise the value of teachers' work*

There needs to be a change in the way society assesses the value of teachers' work. There must be both recognition of the fundamental role they play in providing quality education and a general call for substantive policies regarding their professional and personal development. This validation must be reflected in teachers' salaries, professional career opportunities, quality training and policies that address the needs of teachers at all professional levels.

### *3. Integrate systems for professional and personal development*

Systems must be set up to co-ordinate the efforts of the various organisations and public and private institutions that provide continuing professional training for teachers. These should also incorporate distance and face-to-face teaching modalities. It might seem that the use of technology in a sector endowed with such limited resources is unattainable. However, the greater the need, the greater is the urgency in overcoming barriers and generating knowledge.

### *4. Design new methodologies for active learning*

There is much to be learned from educational experiences in the area of popular education and adult literacy. The progress made in these areas needs to be studied and systematically recorded in order to generate new modules for youth and adult teacher training. However, this will require a break with traditional modes of transmitting knowledge in teacher training institutions. These approaches must be

replaced with co-operative learning strategies. The definitions and methodologies involved in training teachers must be revised and reflect the same level of responsibility found in other areas of education.

### *5. Incorporate training of adult and youth educators into formal training systems*

Training of teachers of youths and adults must be considered part of the larger discussion on teacher training initiatives. It is important to recognise and address the particular needs of this sector of the teaching profession when designing policies and to incorporate their needs into the larger model of personal and professional development.

### *6. Restore hope among sectors on the fringes of society*

Adult and youth education faces the enormous challenge of imparting new perspectives to a sector of the population that is at a disadvantage in the labour market, has limited political participation and limited power to influence decisions that affect their lives. It also has the chance to give people an opportunity to find new meaning in their lives and become active participants, both in their communities and in society as a whole.

### *7. Transform the role of teachers of youth and adults*

Until now, teachers of youths and adults have been regarded essentially as knowledge distributors who utilise pre-designed curricula handed down from above, rather than as actors with initiative, capable of active participation. They must be given the opportunity to take responsibility and participate in the decision-making process and be held partly responsible for the educational process and its results.

## Conclusion

We live in an era of great contradictions, where astounding scientific and technological advances have not translated into improvements in the quality of life of the majority of the world's population. Substantial inequalities persist. Education is undoubtedly a key element in generating development that is just and equitable.

In this context, the role of teachers is twofold. Their work is not only in the classroom and school, but also in the community. It involves providing their students with the best learning opportunities while also contributing to local and national social movements that work to make education a political priority. Likewise, teacher training initiatives must acquire a second, social dimension. They must produce teachers who have the necessary technical skills and are also committed to the results of their work and the larger educational purpose. This challenge encompasses all of the other challenges mentioned here.

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# The Training of Adult Educators in Latin America

Graciela Messina and Gabriela Enriquez

This chapter is based on the final report of a study undertaken by the Centro de Cooperación Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y El Caribe (CREFAL) between May and July 2003 at the request of the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE). The team in charge of the research was composed of Graciela Messina (coordinator), Gabriela Enriquez (researcher) and Héctor Aarón Ríos (researcher). The team was jointly set up by the Office of Research and Evaluation (Ermilio Marroquin, Director) and the Office of Teaching and Lifelong Learning (Tomás Carreón, Director). The study was produced within the framework of the mid-term review of CONFINTEA V.

The chapter begins with a synthesis of the recommendations of CONFINTEA V related to the training of adult educators. Next, the practise of adult educator training in Latin America is described, and its strengths and weaknesses identified. Analysis is given of the role of adult educators, the processes of accreditation and professionalisation, the training policies, and the role of international co-operation and networking. Then the developments in training that have occurred in the region between 1997 and 2003 are considered in the light of the CONFINTEA V recommendations. And, finally, the changing trends and emergent priorities are described; they form the basis for recommendations for the future.

## **CONFINTEA V recommendations on the training of adult educators**

At CONFINTEA V in 1997 specific recommendations were made about the training of adult educators. Adult education and the training of adult educators had been a marginal issue in Latin America during the international educational reforms of the 1990s because the reforms emphasised basic education for the school population. This marginalisation affected regional education projects undertaken by international and non-governmental organisations, such as PPE (El Proyecto Principal de Educación para América Latina y El Caribe), CEPAL, UNESCO and the World Education Forum. The issue of training adult educators was rarely broached during this time.

At the CONFINTEA V preparatory regional meeting, held in Brasilia in January 1997, the issue of quality in adult education was linked to the training of adult educators. It was assumed that it is necessary to design and implement permanent, diversified systems of educational training and research as a shared responsibility between governmental and non-governmental organisations. The *Declaration of Brasilia* (Part B, Recommendations, Subject II) highlights the need to involve different kind of educators (including graduates, sub-professionals, popular and voluntary educators, and administrative education personnel) and to integrate initial and

continuing training. It also asserts that research is central to training, and calls for more frequent use of reflective workshops to analyse practise.

The CONFINTEA V document, *Agenda for the Future*, included the training of adult educators in the strategy for improving the conditions and quality of adult education. It made general reference to the adoption of instruments to improve recruitment, working conditions, as well as initial and in-service training. It also emphasised the need to develop innovative training methods that would involve close co-ordination between working experience and training, and also the need to promote information and documentation services. Additionally, it proposed that all formal education institutions should provide systematic continuing education for adult educators. The central recommendation of CONFINTEA V was that schools, colleges and universities should open their doors to the field of adult education.

The post-CONFINTEA V thematic workshop on the role of the universities was more specific in its recommendations. It has suggested that universities offer continuing education for adults through the following strategies: a) flexibility in programme provision in order to satisfy the specific needs of adults (time, norms of admission, etc.); b) complementary college work; c) continuing professional education; d) university-level distance education through a wide variety of access modes; e) instruction and certification of all adult educators (i.e., at undergraduate degree or masters degree level); f) research on adult education that covers all of its complex dimensions; and g) the creation of new links between the education sector and civil society.

The theme of training adult educators

in Latin America was considered specifically in three CONFINTEA V sub-regional meetings between November 1998 and March 1999. Attention was given to the design of training programmes on the following subjects: literacy and assessment; education for citizenship; education for indigenous and peasant populations; education and work; gender; and local development and youth. Emphasis was also given to the need for reflection on practise. A major outcome of these meetings was the proposal for a regional project on the training of adult educators, as a joint effort between the convening organisations—namely, UNESCO, CEAAL (Consejo de Educación de Adultos para América Latina), INEA Mexico (Instituto Nacional de Educación para los Adultos), and CREFAL.

The last regional meeting, held in Santiago, Chile, in 2000, reviewed the outcomes of the sub-regional meetings. Its recommendations on the training of adult educators are very specific. It reaffirms the responsibility of the state and stresses the need for new modes of co-operation between different institutions, such as training centres, research centres, universities and NGOs. The importance of creating training programmes in specific areas of adult education (such as work-related adult education) is mentioned, as is the importance of bringing together different kinds of adult educators. It also recommends that initial training be based on specialised common programmes of educator training that unite adult educators with teachers in the formal educational system. By the same logic, it is recommended that community educators and schoolteachers take part in the same in-service training programmes. In addition, it is proposed that general awareness of this issue be raised among other profes-

sionals, and that training in adult education be provided to other professionals working in the field of adult development, such as vocational trainers and health promoters, who do not necessarily see themselves as adult educators. Additionally, it is stressed that the training approach should include reflection on practise and a systematic exchange of experience. It emphasises that there is a need to include methodologies and contents that concur with the high-priority action points of CONFINTEA V.

Finally, the meeting proposed conducting research to aid in the design of strategies that focus on the diversity and egalitarian distribution of education. Other high-priority subjects for research are the ways in which youths and adults learn and the changes in the practises of education and work (UNESCO 2002).

One of the most important outcomes of CONFINTEA V and the Latin American meetings has been to give greater social visibility to the subject of adult educator training. Particularly important are the proposals to improve training and working conditions and to link the training of different types of adult educators, formal educators and other professions without sacrificing the specificity of training. The recommendations of the CONFINTEA V regional preparatory process and of the Latin American follow-up meetings are much more specific than those that emerged from *The Hamburg Declaration and Agenda for the Future*.

The CONFINTEA V recommendations treat the training of adult educators primarily as a means of improving the conditions and the quality of adult education. Much less attention was paid to other significant issues, such as identifying the types and numbers of educators

needed, improving access for youths, and the contribution of adult educator training to the political and social democratisation of Latin America.

### **The strengths and weaknesses of adult educator training**

Adult education in Latin America is generally synonymous with education for the marginal social sectors. In most countries in the region, adult education—both formal and non-formal programmes—is intended as an adjunct of basic education, middle school or vocational training, and comes under the auspices of the ministries of education. In practise, however, other programmes for adults have arisen. An intense, and still unresolved, debate has been underway about the importance of integrating the different areas of adult education into a single field or of extending its boundaries to include all programmes in which adults participate. These include workplace education programmes, continuing education organised by universities and popular education organised by NGOs on topics such as human rights and gender. Should adult education embrace these diverse fields or should it preserve its specificity and continue to work with the most vulnerable social groups?

From the national perspective in Latin America, the training of educators has generally been seen as a strategy for the improvement of the quality of education, a mechanism for the professional development of educators, or a means of institutional development. In the latter case, training has been subordinated to the requirements of the curriculum and the administration rather than being designed in keeping with the express needs of educators. Instead of being oriented towards the

creation of a specific educational project, training has been seen as a way to prepare educators to implement changes that were already conceived prior to the involvement of the educators. Thus, training is being regarded as a means for preparing, conforming, updating or re-centralising, rather than creating a space of autonomy for educators and a means of consolidating collective professionalism.

There is continues to be a lack of space for the training of adult educators at both regional and local levels, despite the fact that a great diversity of institutions exists, running different programmes in an independent and relatively isolated way without central coordination. These programmes differ depending on whether they provide initial training or continuing training, and on what institutions conduct them (universities, the state through the ministries or secretaries of education, the private sector and NGOs). Finally, training is differentiated according to the type of educator that participates (e.g., teachers, volunteers or popular educators) and the educational sector they represent (e.g., vocational training, literacy, basic education for adults or health promotion).

In the actual practise of training a number of strengths can be observed:

- a) Initial training programmes for adult educators are consolidated in some universities, where integrated centres of training, research and extension have been created. In addition, some universities run various programmes of continuing training.
- b) Some institutions that provide adult education have established agreements with universities with the aim of delegating the task of training their personnel. Such courses last approximately two years. This arrangement shows that the gap between initial training programmes located in the universities and in-service training programmes run by adult education institutions is being bridged.
- c) At the end of the 1990s, new programmes of initial training for adult educators were initiated in some universities with more flexible modalities centred on the regulation of practise and continued studies. Specialised initial training programmes have also been started which offer separate degree-level qualification in the education of adults, and not just as a specialisation within a degree in education.
- d) In several countries in the region, new modes of initial training for adult educators are opening as a response to the increasing demand from institutions in charge of the training of educators. These are mostly located in specialised teacher training institutes or in universities.
- e) The institutions that have developed programmes of adult education have well-developed training programmes for their own personnel, and some universities have begun to explore the continuing training of educators in the field.
- f) Both universities and other training institutions have begun to regard adult educator training as a participatory and reflective process.
- g) Many NGOs have been developing training programmes based on the study of educators' practises.
- h) New information and communication technologies have been incorporated in training programmes. These technologies are applied at the methodological and didactic levels (e.g., through video and internet-based training courses) as a way of promoting open and distance learning.

- i) There is an organisation in the region that specialises in adult educator training: Centro de Cooperación Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y el Caribe (CREFAL). CREFAL operates with financial support from the Mexican Ministry of Education and has been developing activities in this field since its founding in 1951. Prior to 1991, it also received financial support from UNESCO. Its funding from the Organisation of American States has been reduced. Nevertheless, CREFAL offers a great variety of courses, seminars and workshops, both on-campus and through distance education. These training programmes can be attended at the main centre in Pátzcuaro, México, in other cities in Mexico and even in other countries. It has long experience in training educators in the field of educational research.
- j) New modalities of continuing training are being developed in order to move beyond top-down strategies. These have been developed through regional meetings of adult educators as part of a participatory process that begins at the local level, with groups that identify their problems and co-ordinate their practises, and culminates in large national encounters. These meetings provide open forums in which adult educators share their experiences, make presentations, discuss speeches and participate in training workshops.
- However, there are also weaknesses in the training of adult educators. The main ones are:
- a) There is a lack of consistent and systematic information about training programmes, the characteristics and living conditions of educators, pedagogical practises and other issues. This information is necessary for decision-making and planning for the future.
- b) Training for adult educators has not adopted all of the changes that have occurred in the training of educators in the formal system. In addition, training programmes occupy a marginal place in the institutions providing adult education.
- c) The initial training of adult educators in universities is separated from in-service training, which was generally developed by other institutions running adult education programmes.
- d) The initial training of adult educators is conceived for people who have completed formal education and can satisfy administrative requirements of a certain qualification (at least a high school diploma). On the other hand, voluntary adult educators who do not have educational credentials do not have access to any kind of training programmes offered by universities. They have the opportunity to receive only in-service training developed by the organisations where they work.
- e) Most training is in-service; there are few programmes of initial training.
- f) In-service training is oriented towards preparing educators to administer the authorised curricula. It is mostly a short-term process with a narrow focus.
- g) Within the in-service training programmes, the modality of top-down training still predominates.
- h) Educators of adults, except for those working in formal school programmes, are in permanent rotation. The intermittent nature of many adult education programmes makes training difficult and inefficient.
- i) At government-run adult education institutions, training is conceived mainly

within the logic of the school, taking place at a set time with set content. In these programmes, a research process does not accompany training.

- j) Some initial training programmes for adult educators have been discontinued. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, there is a common view that it is preferable to provide general training in education, accompanied by a specialisation in the education of adults (such as a degree in education with a component of adult education), rather than early and specialised training in adult education (i.e., a separate degree in the education of adults). Secondly, the decentralisation that has taken place in some countries has reduced adult education provision, and consequently training programmes have suffered.

### **The role of the adult educator**

In Latin America adult educators form a heterogeneous group. They may be differentiated according to their schooling, initial training, specialisation in the education of adults, or institutional and social base. They are differentiated in the following ways according to their level of schooling: a) people with educational degrees; b) those with college education; c) professionals in non-education; and d) people with basic or middle schooling. From an institutional point of view, they are differentiated as administrators, volunteers, students working in social services, and popular educators. If vocational training and health promotion are counted as adult education, other groups of educators are also involved, including community instructors and health promoters. These are not always recognised as adult educators, either by themselves or by the

institutions they work in. If the boundaries of adult education are extended still further to include continuing education in universities, another group of educators can be identified, namely the professors in different disciplines.

In general, government-employed adult educators have education degrees, while voluntary educators mostly have basic education or middle school qualifications. In some countries (such as Argentina and Chile) most of the educators from basic or middle education have no degree. In other countries (such as Mexico) educators with a diploma work in formal basic education programmes, while voluntary educators work in open mass programmes of basic education.

Teachers in the formal system have a degree in education, generally in basic education without a specialisation in adult education. They are employed on a permanent basis and receive a fixed salary. They also can participate in unions. Only a minority of these teachers have specialised initial training in adult education. Voluntary educators generally do not have a degree in education. In general, they have merely basic education or middle school education (basic schooling is the requirement set by most institutions in this field). The volunteer personnel do not receive a regular wage, but only small allowances or incentives. In some countries they are subject to payment by productivity, according to the number of adults who graduate. In Mexico the principle of social solidarity has been established in law since 1975. This legitimises the volunteer and the role of the community in the task of educating adults.

Popular educators have different levels of schooling. As a group, they define their activity as a deliberate political prac-

tise to raise awareness and organise the most marginal social groups. Popular educators work in community education programmes that focus on issues such as citizenship, human rights, health, gender, indigenous education, literacy, local development and education for work. Educators in the area of social services are often students who have to fulfil a college requirement; they work without pay and receive recognition or scholarship support to continue their studies. One of the main weaknesses of the voluntary educators is their lack of pedagogical training and understanding of how to establish an atmosphere conducive to adult learning. Their strength, however, is their commitment to the community and their closeness to the problems of the adults. The voluntary educators require permanent support in terms of training and conditions of work so that they can better apply the curricula and learning materials.

The “professional” educators have the advantage of being familiar with pedagogy and didactics and of having a general training in education. Nevertheless, they generally do not have a specialisation or degree in the education of adults, and the school tradition makes it difficult for them to adapt to open learning programmes and interactive materials. Indeed, most educators of adults, whatever their schooling level and institutional base, lack specialised initial training in adult education. Consequently, they train on the job and depend on in-service training programmes. The absence of specialised initial training is a major weakness. On one hand, this omission leaves the educators lacking in skill and responsible for their own development. On the other hand, it creates an atmosphere of dependence on in-service training, in which the educators

are considered an object of policies instead of subjects who autonomously acquire knowledge and actively participate in their own professional development.

Another important aspect to consider is how educators of adults manage learning and teaching. Although the educator is officially seen as a facilitator of learning, the predominant traditional practise places the educator at the centre of the learning process. It is noteworthy that this happens in both the open programmes and in the formal school programmes, both governmental and non-governmental. A further problem in this process is that reflective practise is not a generalised activity among adult educators. However, there are differences according to the context. Reflective practise is much more frequent among popular educators, while, among other kinds of educators, it either does not exist at all or is reduced to an administrative routine. This undermines the concept of reflection as a means of transforming practise.

### **Social recognition, accreditation and the professionalisation of adult educators**

Without doubt, the work of the adult educator has less social recognition than that of the teacher in the formal educational system. In addition, from the world of education a stereotype of the adult educator has arisen: he or she is thought to be a person who is not professional, is not committed to his or her teaching and who teaches in a way that reproduces the way he or she learned. Most adult educators reject this stereotype and do not accept that their degree of professionalism is less than those who teach in the formal system.

A system of accreditation for adult educators that recognises prior learning

does not exist in the region as a whole. Nevertheless, in some countries there are organisations, such as the Consejo de Normalización y Certificación de Competencia Laboral (CONOCER) in Mexico, which certifies the knowledge and competencies of adults in relation to work.

In governmental adult education programmes, professionalisation is understood as a process of training and accreditation, from initial training to in-service training. The policies here are oriented towards the development of in-service training that will satisfy the institutional requirements for the administration of curricula. In most cases, professionalisation is not seen as an integrated process that, beyond training, includes working conditions, wages and continued learning. This concept of professionalisation does not include learning that emerges from communities, the unions or social organisations.

Among NGOs new methods of knowledge recognition for adult educators are being developed through learning groups and networks. In this field, professionalisation is conceived as “professionalism”, a process that begins with the educators and facilitates reflective practice and group learning in social and political terms.

If professionalisation is seen as equivalent to accredited training, different opportunities exist. Initial training is provided at the universities, which educators enter by their own choice. In-service training is usually provided by the institution in which the educator works. The universities and CREFAL offer programmes that support continuing professional development, including graduate programmes and courses of continuing training, which the adult educator joins on an individual basis

by means of agreements between institutions (in both cases, it is possible to obtain a scholarship). CREFAL’s academic programmes are certified by the Mexican Ministry of Education. The ministries of education of other countries in the region recognise its certificates.

### **Policies on training adult educators**

The first point to emphasise in relation to the training of adult educators is the non-existence of a public political recommendation. Hence there are no policies on the training of adult educators specified in the national plans or programmes of education in the different countries of the region. Consequently, there is also little political support by the state for the training of adult educators. The state has not guaranteed training opportunities, nor promoted opportunities for the professional development of adult educators. Thus in governmental organisations, training occupies a marginal place in terms of implementation and financing.

Another important point is that university initiatives in continuing and initial training have been developed in most cases by groups of adult educators and researchers rather than as a result of institutional policies. It is important to differentiate in-service training from the continuing training offered by the universities or CREFAL. Continuing training implies greater opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, while in-service training is associated with the implementation of a specific programme. Among NGOs there is generally greater clarity about the strategic nature of adult educator training. It is considered essential for the development of community leaders and autonomous community groups. Thus the organisational policies of

most NGOs operating in the field of adult education actively promote training.

The last point to consider is that training programmes for adult educators have been developed independently of teacher training for the formal system. In teacher training, major efforts have been made to promote innovations in initial training and to improve quality by different means, such as institutional accreditation and support for projects. More precise ways have also been found to evaluate the performance of teachers. Similar processes have not taken place in the training of adult educators. Nevertheless, government programmes for the training of adult educators have been based on a logic similar to that of traditional methods of teacher training, such as short, large-scale in-service training for all types of educators, usually based on specific curricular changes. In several countries, new media technologies have been adopted, but the common tendency has been to apply the traditional learning model of teacher training without substantial changes. In summary, the innovations that have taken place in teacher training have not been transferred to the training of adult educators.

### **International networks and co-operation**

In Latin America there exists a set of regional networks related to adult education which have developed out of the field of popular education. This includes the network of the Latin American Council for Adult Education (CEAAL), which provides a focus for NGOs and includes its own thematic networks, such as REPEM, a network of women's NGOs, and ALER, the network associated with the Faith and Joy radio schools. It is important to emphasise that these networks operate in the field of

adult education but not specifically in the area of adult educator training.

Since 2000 a regional multi-thematic network called INNOVEMOS has existed. It was organised by UNESCO/OREALC to promote educational innovation in areas such as education and work, institutional development and professional development. Within the INNOVEMOS network, the education of adults is not a thematic area in itself but a crosscutting theme related to many other domains. The area of professional development and training involves teachers from the formal system, as well as educators of adults. In this way, the possibility of a space for the training of adult educators at the regional level has been opened up. The INNOVEMOS network has been working to systematise and spread innovations, and it organises dissemination workshops. It is expected that, in the medium term, INNOVEMOS will provide a training space for educators from different modalities and levels.

CREFAL, on the other hand, develops co-operative activities with other adult education and training institutions as an essential part of its institutional objectives. Although a network has not been created formally, CREFAL provides opportunities for exchange at several levels (local, national and regional). This could be consolidated and developed as a network.

For the preparatory meetings for CONFINTEA V in 1997, a partnership between key institutions (i.e., CEAAL, CREFAL, INEA and UNESCO) was established. These institutions promoted a debate about adult education in Latin America, elaborated a regional plan of action and circulated all of the agreements. Emanating from this group which promoted the outcomes of CONFINTEA V, a meeting on adult educator training was held at

CREFAL in April 2003. The meeting reaffirmed the links between the participant institutions and initiated a debate about a regional project for Latin America and the Caribbean.

While a specific network of institutions dedicated to the training of adult educators does not exist, it would be possible to create one from existing institutional exchanges and linkages. The reduction in international and regional funding for CREFAL means that the development of a special regional project is now urgently needed.

### **Advances after CONFINTEA V**

Based on the commitments and recommendations of CONFINTEA V, a number of changes have been made in the development of adult educator training. These include the following:

- a) Universities have initiated some programmes of initial training.
- b) New, interactive pedagogies have been incorporated into the training process. These approaches include reflective practise, the use of new technologies, the combination of on-campus and distance education modalities, and the development of written and audio-visual training materials.
- c) Programmes have been developed which integrate training, research and experimentation in the community.
- d) Some institutions have developed information systems about their own work, thus contributing to the knowledge-base about training.

Despite these improvements, some aspects of training remain unchanged, namely:

- a) There is relatively little participation by the universities in initial training.

- b) Training is not adequately related to research.
- c) Reflective practise is only at an incipient stage, especially in governmental training programmes.
- d) Low priority is given to adult education, thus making it difficult to train a sufficient number of adult educators.
- e) Working conditions and wages remain unattractive.
- f) There is no system of accreditation for the prior learning and experience of adult educators.

There is sharp disparity between the recommendations of CONFINTEA V and the current reality. Three key issues emerge from this contrast. First, it is necessary to guarantee the initial training of all educators of adults, irrespective of their level of schooling and institutional base. Secondly it is necessary to promote the continuous and reflective training of all voluntary personnel, as well as the creation of institutional space for dialogue between the different kinds of adult educators. Finally, it is essential to make significant improvements in the wages and working conditions of all adult educators.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of our research, we recommend the following:

1. Training should be seen as an independent space in which it is possible to transform the formal and adult educational systems rather than as a strategy subordinated to the implementation of programmes. Conceiving training in these terms implies giving the educators a key role in the process of educational change rather than regarding innovation purely in terms of curriculum or management. Training could make a

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- number of contributions to a new way of thinking about and organising formal and non-formal educational systems—for example, by extending the boundaries of adult education to embrace more educators and training modalities; by transferring lessons learned in training programmes for adult educators to the training of teachers in the formal system; and by aiding the political and pedagogical development of educators, thus helping them to contribute to social and political democratisation.
2. The state should guarantee the initial training of all adult educators and should promote shared learning among educators, regardless of differences in terms of levels of schooling and institutional base.
  3. Regional Training Projects should be set up as a first step towards a permanent regional training system.
  4. National and regional mechanisms for the accreditation of prior learning and experience should be established.
  5. The state should formulate precise policies on training adult educator and should harmonise them with policies on formal teacher training.
  6. The state should create positions for trained adult educators.
  7. The state should generate collective contracts that benefit both trainers and educators of adults.
  8. The state should adopt and promote a new style of training which is led by the educators themselves and allows an increase in educators' capacity to reflect and to transform educational practise, and it should establish learning groups and networks.

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# Training Adult and Youth Educators: The Experience of the Academy of Adult Education, National University of Education, Mexico

Carmen Campero

The training of youth and adult educators is a fundamental part of the progress towards lifelong learning aimed at building societies based on principles of social justice. During the past decade, this issue has received much attention in Mexico. Both the Programme for Educational Development (1995–2000) and the National Education Programme (2001–2006) make mention of the importance of such training. Training programmes, research projects and public forums have been initiated as a result of this interest and of the work of several institutions and groups in this field (Pieck 2002). Nevertheless, Mexico lacks a policy that converts these intentions into concrete courses of action articulated in a comprehensive programme with clear institutional commitments and an adequate budget and that also considers the employment conditions of adult educators.

This chapter discusses the training programmes for adult educators developed by the Academy of Adult Education at the National University of Education (UPN–Ajusco) in Mexico City, particularly the work carried out since 1997. It will address the focus, strategies, results and challenges of those programmes and will provide some reflections on this experience in the hope that they will be of use

to other institutions and groups interested and active in this field.

## **The Academy of Adult Education and its training mission**

The National University of Education (UPN) is a public higher education institution that has 76 campuses throughout Mexico. It was established at the Ajusco campus in 1982 in order to address issues of youth and adult education. The Ajusco campus is located in Mexico City and houses the national deanship of the UPN.

From the time of its establishment, the Academy has focused on improving the visibility and social value of youth and adult education in Mexico, achieving greater recognition for its educators, and improving their employment conditions. It has developed extension, research and teaching activities, all of which are closely interconnected. Teaching activities are the main priority, given the small size of the faculty (ten full-time professors).

The training activities for youth and adult educators follow a humanist approach with a focus on professional development, self-evaluation of one's practise and popular education. The activities also take into account the criteria of relevance, comprehensiveness and flexibility. To-

gether these elements determine the characteristics of the youth and adult educator training programmes. Educational practise is both the starting point and the final goal. The programmes encourage the discovery and integration of knowledge and practises, as well as reflection on one's own knowledge and practise in the light of theoretical-methodological approaches.

The programmes promote the development of socio-educational approaches for improving the practises of educators based on their own knowledge and experience. With an expanded vision of the field of youth and adult education, they combine responses to concrete needs. They seek to foster a culture of collaboration by encouraging group work, dialogue, the exchange of experiences, and tolerance and respect for diversity. The training programmes promote the internalisation of the training process as part of an educator's personal development, as well as the construction of the educators' identity and professional status as youth and adult educators, emphasising the role of social commitment in both their identity and status. The teaching teams facilitating the programmes help educators to analyse their employment conditions with a view to change through collective action, and the teams follow up on the group learning process by means of collective activities.

The Academy has launched two initiatives for training youth and adult educators. The first involves initial and continuing training of educators from public, private and non-profit institutions at the Ajusco campus. Most of the participants are already active educators, though a few are recent high school-level graduates. With the growth in the Academy's experience and opportunities over time, the programmes have been enriched and

expanded and have featured different educational approaches.

Over the years, a specialised course in Adult Educator Training has been offered on ten different occasions to a total of 210 students. A master's programme in adult education has been offered twice to a total of 34 students (Campero 1994: 37; Academia de Educación de Adultos 1999: 2). In addition, 337 educators have been trained through five different thematic *diplomados*,\* each with a duration of 210 hours (see Table 1). At the same time, other in-service training activities were offered.

From 1999 to the present, the Academy has offered the second version of a partially classroom-based university undergraduate degree in adult education with a flexible curriculum. The first six semesters are equivalent to *diplomados* and are open to educators who are interested in a particular subject. The optional coursework is open to the public as in-service training modules. A total of 83 students have participated to date, 45% of whom are men and 55% women. In addition, an average of 36 students per year take the courses as *diplomados* and 50 as in-service training. A total of 90% of the students are active educators.

The newest programme at the Academy, which is offered at 32 UPN campuses in 21 of Mexico's 32 states, is the undergraduate degree in educational intervention (LIE), a polyvalent programme that began in September 2002, following the professional competencies approach.

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\* A *diplomado* is a university-level course on a specialised topic, normally offered by or in conjunction with an institution of higher education, often within the context of an extension programme. Usually a person's previous experience in the particular field, rather than a high-school diploma or university degree, is the prerequisite for entry.

This programme is currently a classroom-based model, but it is expected that within two years the UPN will be able to provide this programme as a partially classroom-based model, designing and offering specific subjects and corresponding materials. Youth and adult education is one of the specialisations within the degree (LIE-EPJA). Most of the students taking this degree are high school graduates. They are involved directly in educational practise from their fifth semester through professional fieldwork or their social service requirement.

The second initiative for training youth and adult educators involves the formation of teaching teams at several different UPN campuses. The Academy has followed two strategies in promoting this initiative. The first involves the creation of teaching teams whose members work together to analyse the programme development of UPN *diplomados* and other educational programmes. The Academy provides follow-up support for these teams through meetings and site visits, helping them to incorporate their recommendations and adapt the programmes to the particular conditions in each of their locations. The Academy has worked with eight UPN campuses in this way. The second strategy began in 2002 when the Academy decided to launch a broader training programme targeting—particularly during its initial stages—UPN professors who teach in the LIE-EPJA degree programme. The specialised *diplomado* in “youth and adult education dynamics and areas of intervention” has been offered as a distance-learning opportunity since October 2002. Participants receive special ICT support through e-mail and telephone contact, as well as a weekly television programme to enrich the educational process.

Students in this programme form learning groups at their campuses and hold weekly meetings to carry out the group activities scheduled in their syllabus for each of the seminars making up each *diplomado*. By the end of 2004, once it has been evaluated, this programme will also be available to individuals working in adult and youth education who have only a high school diploma or its equivalent.

A further initiative is the Academy of Adult Education is the Youth and Adult Education Network, which was founded in 2001. This is a network of people interested in youth and adult education who develop and implement programmes and initiatives for courses, research projects and extension opportunities. Their aim is to strengthen and enhance the social recognition of this field of education through different modalities. These include classroom tuition, and written, audiovisual and electronic media. Thus far, UPN educators from different campuses have been the participants in the network. In the future, this forum will be open to all educators interested in this field.

### **Results and impact in the field of youth and adult education**

Among the results obtained through the educational interventions at the Academy of Adult Education, the following may be highlighted:

- a) The formation of teaching teams on UPN campuses to promote the training of youth and adult educators. These professors have begun a training process that is linked to the realities in each locality or state. This allows for the training of a large number of individuals who operate educational pro-

- grammes and projects in different areas and on different topics targeting youth and adults.
- b) An increase in the number of educators with specialised training in this field of education and have developed socio-educational, research or teaching projects with a more comprehensive focus on improving their educational practise.
  - c) The improvement of both students' self-esteem and the value of their learning groups. The relations they forge with educators from their own and other institutions augment these benefits.
  - d) The development of flexible training programmes that are offered through a variety of modalities, particularly a communications media/ICT strategy that has allowed the Academy to broaden the scope of its programmes.
  - e) The formation of the Youth and Adult Education Network (RED-EPJA), which has supported training opportunities and the exchange of experience between UPN professors in this field. It has also helped youth and adult educators to build a professional identity. This effort has been reinforced by a web site ([www.redepja.upn.mx](http://www.redepja.upn.mx)) that helps in the exchange of documents, views and information.
  - f) The initiation of projects carried out with other institutions that support collective work and mutual development, and promote a greater understanding of the field as a whole and the Academy's impact within it.
- tions dedicated to youth and adult education.
  - b) The need to increase the flexibility of its training programmes with regard to curriculum development, work methodologies and timeframes, without affecting the fulfilment of training objectives.
  - c) The development of more comprehensive training processes that include, among other components, the development of a professional culture among adult educators.
  - d) The need to broaden the scope of educational research projects and interventions in collaboration with other higher education institutions and other actors interested in this field.
  - e) The formation of new teaching teams on UPN campuses and the consolidation of existing teams so that they adopt youth and adult education as their field of work and develop projects that address the needs and special characteristics of their areas of influence.
  - f) Raising awareness among educational authorities of the importance of youth and adult education so that UPN professors who participate in programmes in this field can allocate additional time to study and practise.
  - g) The development and implementation of monitoring processes on UPN campuses.
  - h) The dissemination of the academic contributions of the Academy's faculty and students through university extension programmes in order to give greater visibility and social recognition to the field of youth and adult education.

### **The main challenges for the Academy**

The Academy faces a number of challenges, including:

- a) The traditional concepts and practises of training prevailing in various institu-

### **Final considerations**

The programmes developed by the UPN Academy of Adult Education are the work

of a group of academics who share an interest in promoting youth and adult education in Mexico so as to contribute to the creation of a more just and equitable society.

Over the past five years, the Academy's work has grown, helping to give visibility and greater social value to the role of youth and adult educators and their training needs, both in our university and in other regions in Mexico. This progress has been possible thanks to the support of the UPN's current leadership, which has recognised the Academy's work and the importance of promoting this field of education.

The advances made by the UPN Academy of Adult Education have also been aided by the recognition that this field of education has gained both nationally and internationally. This has been the result of the work of many public institutions and civil society organisations from different countries, as well as international bodies such as UNESCO. Their work has contributed to further educational policies for strengthening youth and adult education, though there is still much to do in order to develop and sustain clear institutional commitments and budgets in this field.

The experience of the UPN Academy shows how important it is that higher edu-

cation institutions include youth and adult educator training in their agendas. As the conclusions from the Latin American Conference on Training Youth and Adult Educators (April 2003) state: "Governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities and international entities are the key and are at the core of the problems and dynamics for furthering educator training in Latin America."

The members of the Academy of Adult Education at the UPN will continue their work to achieve the dream of equality, democracy, justice, liberty and peace—an ideal that unites them with many other adult educators throughout the world.

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Table 1. *Diplomados* developed by the Academy of Adult Education

No.	<i>Diplomado</i>	Students enrolled	Graduates
1	Educational Practise with Adults (5 cohorts)	130	101
2	Adult Learning (3 cohorts)	65	53
3	Adult Basic Education (1 cohort)	32	30
4	Public Policy and Adult Education (1 cohort)	15	14
5	Systematisation of Adult Education Practises (2 cohorts)	95	82
	TOTAL	337	280

Source: Academy of Adult Education Archives.

# Improving the Quality of Training of Adult Education Practitioners in the South Asian Region: Some Considerations

Anita Dighe

Our aim in this chapter is to provide an overview of adult education programmes in South Asian countries based on available review documents, findings of research studies and experiences in the field. We then review attempts that have been and continue to be made in India and other countries in the region to provide training to adult educators. Finally, we point to several issues that need to be addressed by policymakers, planners and implementers if they are to improve the quality of training of adult educators.

## Understanding the context

The literacy statistics for the South Asian region are alarming. Except for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, all other countries in the region have a very large non-literate adult population. According to UNESCO statistics, the South Asian region alone had 429 million adult non-literates and 50 million school-age children who have had no schooling. Of these, females constitute the majority.

*The Jomtien Declaration of 1990 on Education for All* was a landmark because it stated that complementary policies were needed to take into account both adult learning and basic education for children. However, this still has not been reflected in policies and programmes of most governments in the region. Instead, the key

focus of official policy has remained the provision of universal primary education. In many highly populated South Asian countries today, basic literacy is the only major activity within the field of non-formal education. This is evident from the adult education programmes that are presently offered in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

In recent years the concept of lifelong learning has been gaining acceptance across the world. Recognising the importance of building a “knowledge society” and a “learning society” in the new millennium, countries of the North have already embraced the concept of lifelong learning and are taking steps to make this a reality for the citizens of their countries. By contrast, the countries of the South are still struggling to provide basic education to all. Clearly, a divide exists in educational discourse, policy and practise between countries in the North and the South. To bridge this gap it is now necessary that lifelong learning—both as a concept and as an active principle—must shape education and learning policies and programmes in all countries (UIE 2001; Torres 2001). However, a review of policies, programmes and delivery mechanisms for adult education in South Asia shows that there are no comprehensive policies for lifelong learning. According to Mansoor Ahmed (2002), South Asian countries are

still at the stage of building the prerequisites or necessary conditions for lifelong learning by putting in place literacy, basic education and post-literacy programmes. Institutional structures and mechanisms for managing, supporting and developing the major components of lifelong learning are weak or even non-existent. Considerable attention needs to be paid to providing effective professional and technical support for capacity building at various levels.

While countries in the region have been grappling with the problems of massive illiteracy among adults and children, various economic, political, socio-cultural and technological changes have been taking place, to which people all over the world are trying to respond. The forces of globalisation have engulfed most countries in the world, leading to the marginalisation and pauperisation of vast populations. While information and communications technologies (ICTs) have provided exciting opportunities for networking, they have also introduced the problem of the digital divide. Conflicts arising from social, economic and ethnic-religious differences, as well as poverty, political instability, social exclusion and environmental degradation, have significantly changed the parameters for policymaking in adult education since the mid-1990s. While education cannot be the answer to all unsolved global problems, it still has an important role to play in empowering people to understand their realities and transform them (Singh 2002).

It is within this context that we shall examine the adult education programmes offered, identify the functionaries running them, the nature of the training, and efficacy of such training programmes in the different countries in the South Asian region.

### **Current status of adult educator training in South Asia**

A variety of terms are used to describe the different forms of adult learning in the different countries of the region. These include “basic literacy”, “adult literacy”, “basic education”, “adult basic education and training”, “non-formal education”, “continuing education” and “community education”. Likewise, terms such as “adult educator”, “facilitator”, “literacy instructor”, “grassroots worker”, “extension worker” and “volunteer instructor” are used to describe the adult education functionary.

In India the adult education functionary at the grassroots level has generally been either an ill-paid local worker or else a volunteer with some degree of social commitment. In the case of the Rural Functional Literacy Programme or the National Adult Education Programme, the adult education functionary was often an unemployed village youth who was given a paltry stipend, which he or she received irregularly, and whose work was regarded as part-time. The educational background of such functionaries varied. While many of them have had low levels of education (often no more than an eighth grade pass), others have had a graduate or even a post-graduate background. With the launching of the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) towards the end of 1980s, the focus changed. It was strongly recommended that only a volunteer with some degree of social and political commitment could undertake literacy work. As a result, the TLCs mobilised hundreds of thousands of young men and women as literacy volunteers. Such volunteers were often social activists and were committed to bringing about social change in the communities in which they lived. A large number of

them belonged either to NGOs or to political-social movements.

Yusef Shah's (2004) review of the training programmes for adult educators provides a good overview of training provision in India. Working out a typology of the key training institutions at national, state and district levels, Shah lists the various training institutions, including government institutions, NGOs, universities and private organisations, as well as the international organisations that have been providing training. The major provider of training programmes for the adult educators are the 27 State Resource Centres that were set up by the central government in various states of the country. The other institutions include 85 *Jan Shikshan Sans-thans* (Institutes of People's Education), which provide vocational training at the district level, the District Resource Unit (DRU) of the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), as well as university departments of adult education. Many development ministries and other government departments, such as those for health, agriculture, animal husbandry, labour and the environment, also have a vast number of training institutions under them. Unfortunately, despite the fact that those who are trained in these institutions/organisations work with adults, they are not identified as educators of adults. As a result, little effort is made to ensure that the training content and the training methodology are adequate to enable them to work effectively with adult learners.

While these grassroots-level functionaries operate at district, state and national levels of any government programme, there are additional officials, often from the Indian Administrative Service, who have responsibility for the implementation of adult education, as well

as the various development programmes. In the initial years of the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs), concerted efforts were made to organise training programmes for the myriad functionaries at various levels. Over the years, these training programmes have become scarce. Presently, training programmes for adult educators at district, state and national levels are almost non-existent.

The training methodology followed in most government training institutions has been lecture-based and top-down, and it has often been reduced to mere knowledge transmission. To ensure training of large numbers of adult educators, the cascade approach was extensively used in the TLCs, and continues to be used in the continuing education programmes which began in 1999. The training materials were developed centrally. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) developed a training kit for the continuing education programme comprised of four publications: a manual for training of *Preraks* (continuing education workers, from a Sanskrit word meaning "one who inspires"), a handbook for *Preraks*, a manual for the training of key resource persons and a handbook on training methods. However, it was the *Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti* (BGVS), a national-level NGO, that developed detailed training guidelines and curricula for the TLCs in two comprehensive volumes. Due to the efforts of BGVS, participatory approaches to training were introduced in the TLCs. The State Resource Centres then adapted the guidelines received from the NLM to suit their own needs.

The cascade approach of the TLCs envisaged a three-tier system of training comprising Key Resource Persons (KRPs), Resource Persons (RPs), Master Trainers (MTs) and Voluntary Instructors (VIs). The

District Literacy Committees (*Zilla Saksharta Samiti*) responsible for organising the training programmes identified a limited number of key resource persons (five to ten), as well as resource persons with rich experience and expertise in adult education, and entrusted them with the responsibility of designing the training curricula and training MTs. The MTs were then responsible for training VIs. The training guidelines stipulated that the initial round of four to five days (24 hours) of training for VIs was to be followed by three “booster rounds” of training for MTs and VIs.

According to Shah (2004), while the training curriculum gave 50% weightage to the literacy primer and to primer-based training, there was very little emphasis on adult psychology and adult teaching strategies and learning styles, which are crucial for the effective mediation of the curriculum.

After the conclusion of the TLCs, the Government of India launched a Continuing Education (CE) Programme which introduced new categories of grassroots-level functionaries known as *Preraks* (facilitators) and assistant *Preraks*. Their job is to set up and manage Continuing Education Centres and organise a series of CE programmes for local communities. Unlike the TLC volunteers, who worked on a purely voluntary basis, the *Preraks* are paid workers with twelve specific job responsibilities, ranging from surveying the needs of the local community to organising various CE activities. The training of the *Preraks* also follows the cascade approach, but has been reduced to a two-tier programme. The main organiser of the training programme—either the *Zilla Saksharta Samiti* or the State Resource Centre—identifies and trains key resource

persons who in turn train the *Preraks*. The basic purpose of the training is to equip the *Preraks* with the knowledge and skills needed for setting up and managing Continuing Education Centres and organising CE courses for local communities.

Shah (2004) has quoted several evaluation studies on training that have identified a number of weaknesses in this approach. For example, one study observed that the pedagogy of training was not geared to meet the needs of adolescent and women learners, who constituted the bulk of the learners. Due to the perfunctory nature of training, follow-up training was rarely organised. Another study indicated that there was considerable training loss due to the time gap between the training of the RPs and MTs, and a lack of motivation among MTs and VIs who had neither genuine interest nor any aptitude for teaching adults. Yet another study concluded that one of the basic reasons for the poor quality of training of instructors lay in the “superficial training” given by the MTs, who perceived training merely as an “official duty”. It was concluded that while the cascade approach was useful for training a large number of functionaries, the availability of resources—in terms of training content, materials, duration, funds and technical inputs—gradually diminished and reached its lowest point at the level of the VIs, whose training was therefore poor. While maximum resources were available for MTs, only minimal resources were available for the VIs.

The training methodology has differed in the case of the NGOs that have been involved in adult education work. A large number of NGOs have tended to use participatory methodology in their training programmes. The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), a promi-

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ment NGO, has played a key role in promoting this methodology by organising training programmes for social activists working in various NGOs in the country. It has also disseminated a series of publications which have been widely acclaimed within the country as well as in the region. There are a large number of NGOs in the country that use participatory approaches in training social activists for their programmes. Unfortunately, except for *Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti* (BGVS), NGOs that have developed innovative training programmes have not been involved in the government-funded programme.

As in India, the level of illiteracy is also very high in Bangladesh. Despite the fact that many literacy and adult education programmes have been launched over the past 50 years, Bangladesh still has a literacy rate of only 50%. The Jomtien Conference stimulated greater official concern about the massive problem of illiteracy. By 1995 the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) within the Ministry of Education had been given the responsibility of delivering all non-formal education programmes, including literacy, post-literacy and continuing education for adults and adolescents. The DNFE works closely with NGOs around the country. Presently, there are about 500 NGOs involved in the delivery of adult literacy and basic education programmes, with about one million grassroots-level facilitators delivering these programmes.

Previously, the DNFE funded the NGOs to run a centre-based literacy programme. This has now been abandoned and a new programme, the Total Literacy Movement (TLM), is now being run directly through the district administration. In their case study, Harun-ur Rashid and

Habibur Rehman (2004) describe the training content and methodology that is used for training adult educators at various levels. Training programmes are organised for the facilitators, supervisors and management personnel. The training methodology used is mainly participatory; a variety of methods are used in order to reflect learners' life situations, which makes the training programmes lively and relevant. The cascade approach is used for conducting top-down training from TOT (training of trainers) to the grassroots level. This approach results in a dilution of training content as well as training efficacy (Rashid and Rehman 2004).

In Nepal a number of social and economic indicators indicate low levels of development. More than 80% of the population depends completely on agriculture. The literacy rate in Nepal is 58%, where the female literacy rate for the 6+ age group is 44% as compared to a male literacy rate of 70.1%.

Nepal is another country where NGOs play a major role in the non-formal sector. While the Ministry of Education and Sports has the main responsibility for non-formal education programmes, in recent years this responsibility has been shifting, and implementation of the government's non-formal education programmes has now mainly become the responsibility of NGOs and CBOs. Beginning in 1995, the District Education Offices have been authorised to implement government-supported non-formal education programmes by mobilising local NGOs/CBOs. This policy was adopted in the spirit of decentralisation, partnership and the Local Self-government Act (Shrestha 2002).

The advantage of involving NGOs in adult education programmes becomes evident when we look at the experience

of a large number of NGOs in the region. Besides building on experience from the field, there is a constant endeavour to ask critical questions and to search for new models and approaches in the work they are engaged in. Chij Shrestha (2002) avers that while adult educators would agree that learning should promote individual and collective change through community-based learning activities, in reality this is not happening. He says that over the past 20 years in the South Asian region generally, and specifically in Nepal, there has been a growing use of training programmes in experiential learning which are tailored to respond to sector-specific needs. Yet these training programmes have fallen short of achieving a change in attitudes and practises that are critical to the application of new knowledge and skills. He therefore proposes that a learning model that pays attention to an “enabling environment” in which learning and action take place is critical to the development of sustainable and transferable learning abilities. According to Shrestha, the first step in the learning process is the building of foundation skills. These are the most fundamental elements of the learning model and constitute the tools a learner needs to gather and process information, build basic knowledge, solve simple problems and deal effectively with new and changing situations. Foundation skills are linked with a number of generic competencies or enabling factors that help learners consolidate their foundation skills and enhance learning opportunities. In the training programmes that have been conducted by World Education (an international NGO) in South and Southeast Asia, experiments have been conducted on different ways to link foundation skills and

generic competencies with sector-specific content or occupation-specific competencies.

In Pakistan *Bunyard*, an NGO, acts as an umbrella organisation to support local NGOs and CBOs that wish to work in the areas of education, health, income generation and physical disabilities in rural areas and urban slums. *Bunyard* has made significant and sustained efforts in female education by helping local communities to open and manage non-formal schools for girls, as well as adult literacy and awareness programmes for women. According to Iffat Farah (2002), since Jomtien there has been considerable investment by the Pakistani government, international agencies and national NGOs to improve access to basic education for women. While most of these efforts have targeted primary level education for young girls through formal and non-formal systems, a less consistent investment has been made in adult literacy programmes for women. *Bunyard* developed an innovative programme for women which combined basic literacy skills and information that raised women’s awareness of rights and their capacity to engage in economic activities. To implement the programme, *Bunyard* encouraged a group of young local activists to form a Basic Education Resource Training Initiative at the level of the district centre. Local women with secondary school education (ten years of schooling) were selected as teachers and were given a short (four-day) initial training course.

This overview of the current status of adult educator training in the South Asian region identifies trends that can also be seen elsewhere in the developing world. In the international review of training of adult educators undertaken by Madhu

Singh and Veronica McKay (2004), the training of adult educators is identified as a neglected area in deliberations on education in general and, more specifically, in educational policy. They note that governments and policies have tended to marginalise adult learning and the training of adult educators. In most developing countries, there is a massive number of literacy and basic education workers who need training. Due to the paucity of resources and limited expertise at the local level, only a small percentage of field practitioners receive training, which is sometimes reduced to knowledge transmission guided by the instructor and is not multidimensional, interactive, participative or learner-centred. Since some of the countries adopt a top-down approach, considerable transmission loss occurs. Often, training programmes are conducted in an ad hoc and superficial manner, and hence literacy workers and educators of adults remain ill-equipped to meet their professional commitments and the challenges of their work situations.

Singh and McKay are therefore contend that there is a real need for policymakers to think of new approaches and alternatives for the training of adult educators and literacy workers. Considering the enormity of the task, it is also necessary to look beyond the present institutional settings and consider how distance and open learning can be provided as part of an array of strategic educational solutions.

### **Improving the quality of training for adult educators: Some considerations**

To conclude we raise nine issues for consideration by policymakers, planners and administrators in order to improve the quality of training of adult educators in the South Asian region.

#### a) *Re-visiting and re-formulating existing educational policies and programmes*

Presently, there is a disparity between educational discourse at international level and the manner in which it is translated into educational policies in different countries in South Asia. Even the “expanded vision of basic education” for adults, youths and children has only focused on primary education. The concept of lifelong learning has not found its way into the policies of a large number of countries in the region. Due to the crippling problem of illiteracy, the region’s highly populated countries have confined themselves to reducing illiteracy, and they continue to offer adult education programmes that are often static and limited in time and scope. To move beyond this narrow perception of adult education, concerted efforts would have to be made to examine the shortcomings of existing educational policies and to reshape them in the light of the rapid changes that are taking place within each country and internationally. Even the concept of literacy has undergone a change. Conceived now in the plural as “literacies” and embedded in a range of life and livelihood situations, literacy differs according to purpose, content, use and institutional framework (UNESCO 2002:17). Also, new challenges of social and economic development, such as globalisation, human rights, HIV/AIDS, sustainable development and Millennium Development Goals, will have to be addressed. Commitment must be made to meet the educational needs of marginalised groups, such as poor rural and urban women, out-of-school children and youths, physically challenged people, migrant workers, ethnic minority groups and refugees. A well-defined educational policy is necessary for the development of suitable training content and methodology,

as well as for identifying partner institutions/organisations.

b) *The importance of training adult educators at various levels*

Presently, the training of adult educators is a neglected aspect of adult basic education programmes; often it is not even included in the planning process of adult education. Many of the training programmes for adult educators are conducted as a mere ritual or formality, so that they contribute only minimally to the professional growth of the personnel involved. This situation has arisen because there is lack of understanding of the importance of training adult educators at various levels. As a result, adult education programmes are often started with inadequate or no training at all.

The importance of training not just the grassroots educators but also functionaries at various levels has to be fathomed. Training plans have to be made, institutions for providing such training identified, and budget allocations made on a sustained basis. Training has to be seen not as a one-shot affair but as an on-going process. In-service and continuing education opportunities should be created by offering courses that can lead to career development, offer certification and therefore provide increased motivation to learn.

c) *The importance of involving a more diverse range of stakeholders and organisations*

Today the design and implementation of many adult basic education and literacy programmes is a complex task. It must involve a more diverse range of stakeholders and organisations, including local community organisations, central government ministries, universities, the private sector, international funding agencies, internation-

al and indigenous NGOs, and capacity building organisations that have specialist knowledge and experience of basic education provision and training. Capacity-building organisations use participatory, local forms of analysis for programme design and learning, such as participatory rural/rapid appraisal, participatory needs analysis and participatory learning appraisal. Building networks, coalitions and strategic alliances would go a long way in strengthening the training programmes of adult educators.

d) *The importance of putting the learner at centre stage*

For an adult education programme to be meaningful, the learner has to be at centre stage, and the facilitator has to be seen to be supportive of the process of learning chosen by the learner. Since learning styles and needs differ among adults, it is useful to review some principles of adult learning since understanding them will decide the training content as well as the training methodology. So adults decide for themselves what needs to be learned. They never approach additional learning with a "clean slate"; thus learning that lacks a concrete link to the life of the learner has little value. Rather, learners draw upon past experience as a benchmark by which they measure any new information. Adults have learning needs closely related to their lives and their work. They tend to define a useful learning experience as one in which they can link the new knowledge to their experience and thus solve problems. They expect information given to them to be immediately useful and that the process of learning to be convenient and interesting. Above all, adults have a significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the facilitator and to fellow learners.

What is evident from the foregoing is that, since adult needs are varied, the entire spectrum of adult learning in relation to intention has to be considered. While formal institutions of various kinds make up one range of institutional support for such programmes, the challenge is to identify all learning spaces that are available for non-formal and informal learning. These might include community centres, libraries, mass media, youth clubs, women's gatherings and the wide range of institutions, organisations and settings that make up a learning environment. Furthermore, rather than education being the concern of departments/ministries of education alone, the various related departments and ministries, such as those of health, agriculture and rural development, labour, and the environment, should be charged with training and implementation of the programmes.

e) *The importance of using participatory approaches*

Experience is now showing that adult education programmes deriving from needs assessments that directly involve learners in analysing their interests and identifying needs are more successful than mass campaigns implemented by a government ministry and focused on eradication. According to Chris Yates (2004), the more successful programmes have tended to use context-sensitive, localised and participatory models of action and learning. Participatory approaches inform the whole curriculum development and implementation experience so that learners are themselves directly involved in the design, development, critical assessment and improvement of their basic education programme. With more and more research and field experiences validating the importance of participatory approaches, it is

necessary for training programmes to build the requisite skills among adult educators.

f) *The importance of integrating gender concerns into adult educator training*

The education of girls and women is proving to be a major educational challenge in South Asia. Yet issues relating to gender are rarely included in training programmes for adult educators. There are several issues pertaining to gender that require attention, including issues of socialisation and acculturation of boys and girls, as well as societal attitudes towards women and the internalisation of their subordination. Gender-related training programmes need to be organised at all levels in order to question patriarchal values that affect the lives of both men and women. Inadequate attention has been paid so far to understanding how women learn and what the barriers are to their learning. The feminist literature on education suggests that women's learning styles differ from those of men. They are more interested than men in interactive learning. Given their preference for "social learning", it is important to provide them with opportunities to meet and interact with one another. Research has also shown that women do best in learning environments that value affective forms, as well as knowledge that comes from their life experiences as women. It is therefore necessary to understand more about their experiences, their learning needs and the differences and diversity among them, if a woman-friendly and woman-sensitive approach is to be planned for and implemented (Dighe 2002). Critical media literacy would be required to ensure that women can analyse the stereotypical and retrograde images of women that are conveyed by the mass media.

g) *The importance of developing new models to promote adult learning*

Training programmes organised by government-run organisations/institutions normally do not pay much attention to efficacy. As a result, the quality of the training programmes is often poor and their usefulness questionable. Training programmes focus largely on knowledge transmission and the acquisition of skills. Rarely is an attempt made to examine personal values and the extent to which they affect the adult educator's attitudes, beliefs and ideas. Poonam Bhushan (2002) refers to the importance of critical, reflective learning in training adult educators. Building on Jack Mezirow's work, critical reflection on practice is suggested as a central element of learning for personal and professional growth. Such reflection is particularly important when dealing with people who hold patriarchal values, or are intolerant of people from other communities, castes, religions or ethnic groups. The advantage of involving NGOs is that they tend to try to improve the quality of their training programmes by developing models that promote adult learning and bring about sustained change in individuals and communities.

h) *The importance of research and evaluation of training programmes*

Research and evaluation of adult educator training programmes is a neglected area. As a result, very little is known about the effectiveness of training programmes or the impact they have had. It is necessary to understand not only the outcome but also the processes involved in training so that corrective action can be taken when needed. Research and evaluation of training programmes, using participatory and action research methodologies, would help to improve the quality of training programmes.

i) *Use of open/distance learning methodologies for training adult educators*

While there is extensive international experience of open and distance learning approaches for formal teacher training, the situation regarding the use of technologies in the training of adult educators and literacy workers has been perfunctory, with little effort having been made to learn from such experiences and to build on them. Tony Dodd (2004) examines the under-utilisation of open and distance learning in training adult literacy and non-formal educators and proposes its expansion for various reasons. Its greatest advantage is that it can reach large numbers of learners at the same time, and to do so it requires a minimum of institutional infrastructure. In the process, it can reach out to trainees in remote and scattered areas over a wide terrain.

The second advantage is that it can train facilitators without taking them away from their work. As a result, it is possible to provide long-term and in-depth training as compared to the traditionally short, intensive training. If correctly planned, such training can lead to professional qualifications that can in turn be a means of career development and thereby become an important form of motivation.

Finally, training by open and distance learning can be highly economical. If the numbers to be trained are large, economies of scale come into play. But while open and distance learning methodologies appear to be attractive, they are not a panacea for all the problems relating to the provision of quality training. Singh and McKay (2004) suggest that, unless the importance of quality issues—such as understanding cultural diversity and using context-sensitive approaches, sensitivity to local knowledge, use of participatory

approaches, understanding pedagogical issues, and the creation of a conducive learning environment—are integrated into adult educator training, the role and the use of open and distance learning will remain problematic and will not automatically transform educational practise.

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# Issues in the Training of Adult Educators: An African Perspective

*Stanley Mpofo*

Today, more than ever before, greater numbers of adults are engaged in learning and educational activities. Adult learning is no longer confined to purely educational settings. It occurs in commercial, industrial, governmental, non-governmental and private institutions, and in many other settings without an obvious educational dimension. Adult education includes virtually all activities in which the capabilities of adults are developed for specific purposes. Often such activities are classified as human resources development or by another designation that obscures their educational dimension.

The proliferation of adult education has inevitably led to an increase in the number of adult educators. Various terms are used to describe them, terms that reflect the fact that many who engage in adult education and development do not perceive themselves explicitly as adult educators. Terms like “training manager”, “training officer” and “human resources development officer” are common descriptions of adult educators in the corporate world. “Community development officer”, “community educator”, “community trainer”, “extension officer”, “health educator”, “family planning officer”, “sanitation officer”, “home economist”, “village health worker” and “mobilisation officer” are common terms in the public and the non-governmental sectors. As these terms suggest, each of these people

is an expert in a particular area. For example, the agricultural extension officer is well versed in agricultural matters, while the health worker is an expert on health issues.

Although adult educators are well versed in their areas of specialisation, they often lack expertise in the processes of adult education. Exposure to the theory of adult education has proved very effective in enabling the adult educators to combine practise and theory and thus become more effective in their work with adult learners. Several programmes exist in Africa that offer adult educators opportunities to learn more about the processes of adult education.

This chapter contains a brief outline of a few such efforts. Using insights derived from these efforts, the chapter attempts to offer general recommendations for the professional training of adult educators in Africa. In addition, it critically examines the issue of the professionalisation of adult education, and the problems associated with the recognition and accreditation of adult education in Africa. This chapter also offers some general thoughts on policies that are conducive to the promotion of professional training of adult educators. Finally, it presents some recommendations on how the professional training of adult educators in Africa can benefit from international co-operation and networking.

### **The professional training of adult educators in Africa: An overview**

Three principal models of training adult educators can be found in Africa. First, there is the traditional semi-distance education model typical of the adult education programmes offered by the Universities of Zimbabwe (Harare, Zimbabwe) and Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, South Africa). The former offers professional training programmes in adult education from the level of diploma to Ph.D., while the latter offers programmes from the degree level upwards. Founded under more or less similar circumstances by the same person, Professor Denzil Russell, these two programmes have, to this day, focussed on the two traditional roles of adult education: as an agent of socio-political change and as a means of empowerment for the disenfranchised. Accordingly, the professional training offered at these institutions continues to lean towards community-based education programmes, such as adult literacy and basic education, community development, health education, and workers' and trade union education and training. However, the arrival of independence in Zimbabwe and democracy in South Africa has necessitated a shift towards a more inclusive curriculum that reflects the expanding role of adult education in society.

The programmes offered at these two institutions are designed for the practising adult educator. Hence, the programmes are semi-distance in nature. The students study independently most of the time. They attend only short residential sessions or study blocks on campus at designated intervals throughout the academic year. Altogether, they are not expected to be away from their workplaces for longer than eight weeks per academic year. And,

in accordance with the philosophy of adult education, the programmes offered at these institutions are experiential and learner-directed in format. Thus the programmes seek to demonstrate the link between theory and practise and thereby to enable participants to apply what they learn in the programme immediately to their work settings.

The second model of training adult educators is distance education, exemplified by the University of South Africa's (UNISA) Adult Basic Education and Training Programme (ABET), the University of Namibia's (UNAM) Diploma in Adult Education and Community Development and the Namibia College of Open Learning's (NAMCOL) Certificate in Education and Development. Like the semi-distance model, this model seeks to develop the adult education skills of practitioners and thus to formalise their roles as adult educators. However, unlike the semi-distance model, this one relies on the availability of relevant study guides for each course. The NAMCOL and the UNAM programmes have had their share of problems related to materials. The former mitigated some of these problems by using UNISA's ABET study materials, while the latter has, to date, run the programme as a semi-distance education programme along the lines of those offered by the Universities of Zimbabwe and Witwatersrand.

In the third model of adult educator training, there are full-time programmes, ranging from one to four years in duration. Full-time professional adult education programmes take several forms. For example, there are full-time programmes that cater to the practitioner, such as the degree programme at the University of Botswana and the advanced diploma offered by the Centre for Adult and Contin-

uing Education (CACE) at the University of the Western Cape. Although consistent with the traditional purpose of adult education to improve the skills of the practitioner, this model takes the practitioner away from the field of practise for very long periods. The practitioners do not get to apply immediately what they learn in the programme. Clearly, this model is more concerned with helping practitioners acquire professional qualifications rather than with allowing them to apply immediately what they learn. It works very well when a practitioner is able to get study leave for the duration of the training programme.

An adjunct to these full-time programmes is provided by the pre-employment full-time model that caters to the school leaver. Examples of this model are the University of Namibia's full-time undergraduate programmes. Unlike those already mentioned, these programmes do not avoid creating unemployment. By training an annual average of 40 diploma-level and 20 degree-level graduates in adult education, this model risks flooding the job market. If this happens, it may create despondency among unemployed professionally trained adult educators and therefore reduce enrolment in other adult educator training programmes.

### **Recognition, accreditation and professionalisation of adult education**

Although adult education has been a field of study for more than 50 years, it continues to suffer from a serious problem of perception, which, though not confined to a particular part of the world, is acute in Africa. Commenting on the state of adult education in Africa, Michael Omolewa (1995) lamented the general marginality

of adult education in most countries in the region. He contends that there is a general lack of comprehension of adult education in Africa and that this has led to indecisive policies on the structure and management of adult education. He goes on to point out that there is no consensus on the purpose of adult education and consequently very little commitment to the promotion of adult education activities. In most parts of Africa, the perception of adult education remains very narrow, particularly in the eyes of the layperson. Adult education continues to be viewed as little more than literacy and remedial education.

A recent survey conducted among individual and institutional providers of adult learning in Namibia (Mpofu and Amin 2003) found that a significant proportion of institutions (29 out of 68) and the majority of individuals (51 out of 88) equated adult education with either literacy education or night school for adults who missed out on formal schooling.

The lack of social recognition for adult education has serious implications for accreditation and the professionalisation of adult education. With regard to accreditation, it is very difficult for the relevant authorities properly to evaluate a qualification in a field that is not only unclear but on which there no consensus in respect of meaning and scope.

In Namibia the two providers of professional adult education programmes (NAMCOL and UNAM) are still battling the relevant authorities with regard to the accreditation and articulation of the Certificate in Education and Development (CED) and the Diploma in Adult Education. A case in point is the requirement by the Public Service Commission (PSC) that the two-year CED programme be "upgraded to a three-year teaching qual-

ification". It would appear that the PSC does not at present have a job category for adult educators. Upgrading the CED to a three-year teaching certificate would therefore enable the PSC to place the CED holders on a par with the holders of the three-year teaching certificate from teachers' colleges. This is not an isolated case. Many such cases exist all over the continent. Existing job categories based on the professional requirements of the formal education system have been so entrenched in society that many authorities and other social agencies do not see beyond them. Hence, the tendency is to view anything unfamiliar in terms of existing categories instead of creating a new category. The CED does not fit into the framework of teaching qualifications because it was never intended to be a teaching qualification. In this respect, it seems that duration rather than programme content was the key factor with regard to articulation and accreditation. In most cases, duration and content are considered together for the purposes of accreditation and articulation.

The issue of duration is equally one of cost. The longer the programme, the more expensive it is likely to be. Professional programmes in Africa vary greatly with respect to duration. Namibia seems to offer the longest route. A person who begins at the CED level can easily spend nine years before obtaining a degree from UNAM. A person who begins the professional journey in adult education from the diploma or the certificate level will spend at least five years before graduating with a degree from UNAM. Although relatively shorter (two years to diploma level and two more to degree level), the Botswana route is particularly time-intensive due to its full-time nature. Similarly, the diploma

course offered at CACE (University of the Western Cape) appears short (one year), but is also time-intensive due to its full-time format. With a duration of four to five years part-time, the Universities of Witwatersrand and Zimbabwe offer the shortest available route to the attainment of a degree in adult education. However, in practise this route also involves considerable difficulties. The quality of the qualification can easily be compromised if the learner has to juggle work and studies. On the other hand, full-time programmes deny learners the opportunity to apply on Monday what they learned on Friday, something considered almost a requirement of adult education worldwide.

Issues of social recognition, accreditation and articulation have serious implications for the professionalisation of adult education. People are generally reluctant to embark on a professional journey that lacks recognition. This is particularly important for pre-employment adult education programmes. A qualification that lacks social recognition may jeopardise one's chances for employment. Once again, UNAM provides a case in point. Of the more than 400 students who have enrolled in the full-time diploma programme at UNAM, 90% did not include adult education among their three preferred choices for programmes of study. Only when they did not qualify for any of their other choices did they opt to study adult education. Due to its lower entry requirements, the Diploma in Adult Education and Community Development gave students a convenient entry point into university education. Not surprisingly, many of these students later tended to jump ship and join other programmes, until the University put an end to the practise in January 2002. The few that included adult ed-

ucation among their initial choices were practicing adult educators who needed a professional qualification in the field of their practise.

Another case in point is provided by the survey on the perceptions of adult learning in Namibia (Mpofu and Amin 2003). An insignificant number (five) of the 31 individual respondents whose job descriptions designated them as adult educators were enrolled or planning to enrol in a professional adult education programme. The rest were enrolled or were planning to enrol in programmes that furthered their areas of specialisation. In other words, they sought to enhance their professionalism in their areas of specialisation. This highlights one of the greatest challenges for the professionalisation of adult education, namely the reluctance of many practising adult educators to identify themselves with the field.

Many adult education practitioners are not schooled in the theory of adult learning. Consequently, they do not identify themselves with the field of adult learning. Instead, they view themselves as health educators, nutritionists, home economists or in terms of other job titles that obscure the educational nature of their activities. Accordingly, when forced to choose between developing the content or the practise of their work, they choose the former.

Although the odds are clearly stacked against professionalisation, adult educators must also heed the advice of Michael Welton (cited in: Scott et al. 2002) and vigorously support the professionalisation of the field. As members of an educational meritocracy, professional adult educators have a clear stake in the field. It is in their professional interest to promote the professionalisation of the field.

To this end, it is necessary to cease to see adult education as a crusade (Okech 2001) to begin to see it as a form of knowledge (Rockhill cited in: Welton 1994). In the words of Tom Heaney (1993), we must therefore develop the best and the brightest in adult education and validate the privileges of this educated elite.

In this age of lifelong learning, education in general has shifted from being a common good to a consumer product. According to Richard Edwards (1995), education is now part of a "learning market" that supports economic needs for skills, competence and mobility. Adult education must take advantage of the learning society and shift from being an element in a crusade for social justice to a commercial commodity with a price tag on it. As Glen Hass (1992: 33) pointed out, "We must treat adult education as a commodity that can be purchased. We should not be embarrassed to put a price on it. In today's society, value is usually measured by price. Adult education will become increasingly valuable."

According to Matthias Finger (1995), the perception of adult education as a form of empowerment shared by Paulo Freire, Myles Horton and Julius Nyerere may have lost the political context that gave it meaning. There is therefore a need for a new collective orientation in adult education, not only in Africa but worldwide. The success of this new vision will, to a very large extent, depend on our ability to professionalise the field.

As is evident from the preceding discussion, the professionalisation of adult education is likely to come with a large price attached—the abandonment of the social justice model that has served adult education well over the years. Just as the professionalisation of formal education

has served to uphold and perpetuate that system of education, the professionalisation of adult education will serve to establish and preserve adult education as a field of study. This may very well have the undesired effect of turning adult education into a conservative educational system bent on preserving the status quo, something that is anathema to the philosophy of adult education.

### **The professional characteristics of adult educators**

A critical analysis of the field reveals core areas of study that befit a professional adult educator. First, such educators need to be familiar with the philosophical foundations of adult education. This is an important step in the professionalisation of the field. For one to identify with a field, one must be schooled in the theory of that field. There is an element of emotional attachment that develops from being associated with a particular field through schooling, which is different from being associated through practise only. Secondly, professional adult educators must possess a critical perspective of policies and practises of adult education. Knowledge of policy and policy alternatives enables adult educators to appreciate the suitability of various adult education programmes to the needs of a constantly changing society. Similarly, knowledge of the general practise of adult education enables adult educators to appreciate the scope of adult education as well as its limitations. Thirdly, professional adult educators need to be schooled in the development of adult education programmes. Given the context-specific nature of adult learning needs, this is an essential component of the professional training of adult

educators. They need to know the crucial steps involved in the development of programmes which will address the learning needs of their clientele. Fourthly, adult educators must be schooled in the organisation and management of adult education programmes. This essentially involves an analysis of the suitability of various organisational and management strategies for the administration of adult education programmes. Finally, adult educators must be conversant with methods of investigation in education. Adult educators are often required to conduct research (e.g., needs assessments) as part of the adult education process. In addition, adult educators can benefit from the research of others (e.g., research on ways to increase participation in adult education programmes) and use it to improve their practise. Consequently, adult education professionals need to acquire skills in producing and analysing research.

In addition to these core areas of study, adult educators need to be given an opportunity to enhance their proficiency in specialised areas of adult education, such as literacy education or workers' education. Training in these specialised areas must be available to the professional adult educator on demand.

With regard to models of instruction, a superficial analysis of current practise seems to suggest that semi-distance education is the most suitable model for training professional adult educators. Given the time limitations of the adult learner, it seems best to allow adult educators to apply immediately what they learn. Full-time programmes deny them this opportunity. Also, current trends in employment indicate that it will be increasingly difficult for adults to obtain fully-paid study leave. Since all adults are breadwinners in

one way or another, they are more likely to participate in a semi-distance education programme than a full-time programme requiring daily classroom attendance.

Modularising the semi-distance education programme can provide additional flexibility in the training of professional adult educators. Learners should be given maximum possible flexibility in participating in a programme. For example, learners who complete two modules out of five should be at liberty to drop out for a year without losing the credits for the modules that they have completed.

The existence of multi-media facilities capable of producing printed materials, providing telecommunications, broadcasting and audio recording, makes the part-time semi-distance education model easily applicable across Africa. The advent of video conferencing (though limited to specific areas) provides additional flexibility for tutorials. The semi-distance education mode of training professional adult educators would benefit tremendously from computer conferencing and networking. Lamentably, this technology is still several generations away in most parts of Africa.

Also, the availability and accessibility of locally produced reading materials with African examples would go a long way towards grounding adult education in the context of African society. Regrettably, professional adult education programmes in Africa continue to rely almost entirely on reading materials from other continents, particularly Western Europe and North America. Unfortunately, this has served to portray adult education as a Western luxury that African societies (most of which are struggling with formal education) can ill afford. It is hoped that the current initiative to produce adult education textbooks from an African per-

spective, which is being undertaken at the University of Botswana under the auspices of UNESCO and the Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV), will go a long way towards alleviating this problem. Apart from increasing the perceived relevance to Africa, the books in the series African Perspectives on Adult Learning will be more affordable to the average student, thus making them easily accessible to semi-distance learners.

A flexible mode of instruction also calls for a flexible mode of assessment. A combination of assignments, practical projects and theoretical examinations should suffice. It must be borne in mind that the term "professionalisation" is widely understood in connection with examinations. Therefore, examinations must be an important feature of professional training of adult educators.

### **National and institutional policies**

A clearly defined policy on adult learning provides proper guidelines on coverage and planning parameters. It highlights the variety of adult learning activities and thus fosters co-ordination and collaboration between the many players in the field, and at the same time draws the attention of the public to available adult learning opportunities. In addition, a properly constituted policy offers guidance on cost-effective delivery modes. This is particularly important in Africa where very few resources are available for the promotion of adult learning.

Since UNESCO's Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) in 1997, there is evidence of an increasing acceptance of and a renewed commitment to lifelong learning

and the promotion of learning societies in certain parts of Africa. Two cases are worth noting in this connection. First, the Government of Namibia approved a National Policy on Adult Learning in 2003. Second, the *Pietermaritzburg Declaration* (2002), which was signed by 19 African countries, is clear testimony to a renewed commitment to lifelong learning by numerous countries in Africa. Hopefully, this renewed commitment will be followed by an increased allocation of resources to the promotion of adult education, which in turn will create greater pressure for the professionalisation of the field.

Finally, to uphold the traditional image of adult education as a provider of educational opportunities to marginalised sectors of the community, institutions must incorporate the recognition of prior learning into the admission procedures of professional adult education programmes. Learners must be credited for prior learning that is relevant to the training programme at hand.

### **International co-operation and networking**

There is not a single international gathering of adult education scholars that does not recommend international co-operation and networking of some sort. Yet there is very little co-operation and networking among providers of professional adult education programmes. There is an urgent need to examine which conditions are conducive to co-operation and networking between the key adult education institutions within particular regions and beyond. There is also a need to determine the areas in which co-operation is both most needed and most feasible. Most obviously these include co-operation in the

development of programmes, in the development of study materials, in the sharing of relevant materials and in staff exchanges and staff development programmes. Co-operation and networking are crucial for the global articulation of professional programmes.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the following may be stated with certainty: adult education can grow as a field of study (and thus as a profession) if those who practise it identify themselves with the field and are therefore committed to improvement of practise in the field. The onus is on professional adult educators to embrace adult education as both a field of practise and a field of study. A properly articulated field with wide recognition is also more likely to attract adherents than the amorphous field that adult education has been perceived to be for so long.

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# The Professional and Personal Development of Adult Education Practitioners in Northern Europe

Antra Carlsen

Our intention in this chapter is to examine the role of the Nordic Folk Academy (NFA) in the professional and personal development of adult education practitioners. The NFA has developed courses in continuing education and further training for adult educators in Nordic countries of the Baltic Sea area. The NFA is a meeting place for adult educators and functions as a development centre for popular and adult education in the Nordic region and beyond. The aim of the NFA is to foster and develop co-operation among adult educators in the Nordic countries, as well as between the Nordic countries and other European countries.

In this chapter we present examples from a recent project entitled “Learning 4 Sharing” (see [www.learning4sharing.nu](http://www.learning4sharing.nu)), which began in 2000 and which aims to develop new courses for adult education practitioners in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, based on the experience and needs in these three countries. It uses models of best practise that have been developed in Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark) and the rest of Europe (primarily within the EU).

## Current practise in the education and training of adult educators in the region

Recent training programmes have examined the existing practise in the Nordic

and Baltic countries, and have modified and applied the most interesting and relevant elements. The following factors were identified as having contributed to the success of existing adult educator training programmes:

1. *Flexibility regarding time and place:* The Folk High School (FHS; [www.gbg.fhsk.se](http://www.gbg.fhsk.se)) in Göteborg, Sweden, offers a Diploma of Folk High School Teacher Education (see Appendix 1). The diploma can be acquired after either one year of full-time study or two years of part-time study. The University College of Århus in Denmark ([www.jcvu.dk](http://www.jcvu.dk)) offers a similar time-frame for adult educator training. Being able to study at a distance and have a few face-to-face meetings increases the motivation of adult educators and the likelihood that they will take up professional studies.

2. *Valuing professional experience:* For applicants to the course at Göteborg’s FHS, the level of previous academic study is not the decisive issue. One can enrol in the course after either three years (120 credits) of academic study or with five years full-time work experience in *folk-bildning* (non-formal adult education). The Estonian programme for adult education practitioners requires three years of professional experience as an adult educator for entry. The Latvian programme has no stipulated entry requirements with regard to formal education level. The de-

cisive factor is whether the applicant is actively involved in the field of adult learning—for example, as a teacher, mentor, coach, leader or consultant.

3. *Diversity of target groups for adult education courses:* The adult educator's training course at the University College of Århus aims to provide professional adult education skills to a broad range of professionals (including school teachers, nurses and trades people) who become involved in teaching adults. The adult education profession is not the domain of teachers alone. Today there is a need for educational leadership and guidance counselling in many other professions. Therefore, adult education training courses need to be organised for a broad range of professional groups. The training for adult educators (five credits) organised by VOX Norway (National Institute for Adult Education, [www.vox.no](http://www.vox.no)) in co-operation with Telemark College, Norway, is aimed at adult education teachers, union leaders (shop stewards) and organisers of learning in companies.

4. *The concept of the "reflective practitioner":* The courses at Göteborg's FHS and Linköping University ([www.liu.se/ffk/eng/Education](http://www.liu.se/ffk/eng/Education)) seek to understand and develop practise more than to implement theories. At Göteborg's FHS, students are required to read a total of 1,500–2,000 pages, but there are also practise periods which are followed by reflection. The key concept is that of the "reflective practitioner". A tutor leads group work after every practise period, with the aim of reflecting on experience and comparing this with theory. At the University College of Århus, the second half of the programme is linked more to research and project work, and the goal is to produce a report on one's own practise. Practise is under-

stood not only as an educational experience but also as a research opportunity.

5. *Four areas of competence:* All adult educator training programmes focus on four areas of competence. The first of these involves pedagogical and didactic competence. Here emphasis is placed on building skills in initiating, rationalising and explaining. The second area of competence is communication skills, where emphasis is placed on the skills needed to guide adults through the learning process. The third area is reflection competence, which should be developed throughout the programme. There is no learning without reflection, and therefore this competence is very important in training adult education practitioners. The final area is study competence. This means developing study skills so that, after graduating, the adult educators will be able to continue with further studies on their own.

6. *Multi-dimensional testing:* The final assessment is based on reflection upon one's own experience during the practical and theoretical studies. This is a written examination. During their studies, students must reflect upon theory and practise in a "diary", and this constitutes part of the assessment.

The three new courses for adult education practitioners that have been developed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania within the Learning 4 Sharing project have been influenced by these important factors identified in existing training programmes in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

### **The personal and professional characteristics of adult educators**

The most important and relevant roles of the adult educator are as guide, facilitator, teacher and coach. Based on these roles,

the Learning 4 Sharing project has listed four competence fields. For each field a set of criteria has been developed to guide an adult educator towards improved performance. (For the list of the minimum set of criteria, see Appendix 3.)

The development of these criteria is part of an attempt to validate qualifications and gain recognition for adult educator training courses. A system of evaluation has been developed and consists of four parts: self-evaluation, student evaluation, employer's evaluation and colleagues' evaluation. The four-part evaluation system provides proof of quality in the training programme and gives the adult educators the necessary tools to understand their own personal development.

**The issue of professionalisation and professional development**

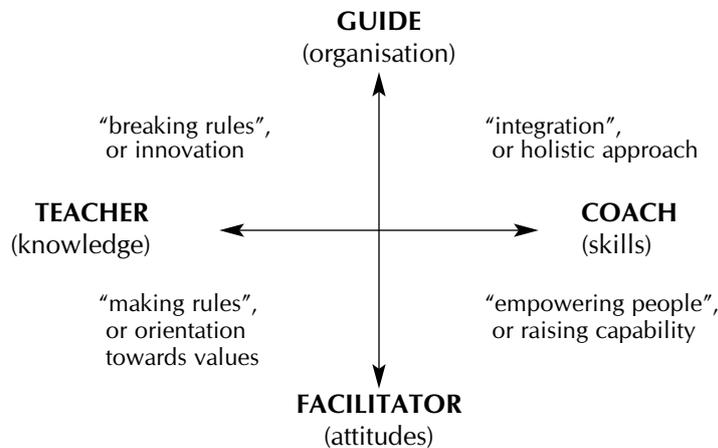
Today the professional and personal development of adult educators go hand in hand. The adult educator must be able to fulfil a number of different roles these days. This requires not only professionalisation but also reflection.

Every adult educator has a unique style, although he or she may use methods

similar to those of other adult educators. This original style is based on personal abilities and enables the adult educator to behave effectively in a particular role. However, relying on one's teaching style entails a danger that one may rely excessively on one's strong attributes and neglect to develop the weaker ones. Therefore, training programmes for adult educators must offer the opportunity for self-development in the "opposite role" (teacher/coach, guide/facilitator). Analysing one's own style as an adult educator is of great help for one's further professional development. Also, the adult learners of today have changing needs and therefore the adult educator should be very flexible in his or her role. Adult educator training programmes are thus required to follow a holistic approach that ensures both professional and personal development.

The roles of the adult educator are principally those of guide, teacher, facilitator and coach. To be a guide means that an adult educator acquaints others with new opportunities for development. This role presupposes the ability to orient learners to work not only towards goals but also towards processes. The main task of a guide is to encourage self-motivation

Diagram 1. Map of the relations between adult educators' roles



among learners. To be a teacher means that an adult educator is a mediator of knowledge. The main task of this role is to create a positive learning environment, supporting the development of self-directed learners. To be a facilitator means that an adult educator manages group dynamics and helps learners to find their role in a network of relationships with both efficiency and care. To be a coach means that an adult educator is able to influence the shaping of a learner's personality, empowering the learner with the skills needed for self-actualisation.

### **Training curricula, materials and media, and modes of instruction and assessment**

The three new training programmes that have been developed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania within the Learning 4 Sharing project have been designed on the basis of the minimum set of criteria for a good adult educator and the four roles of an adult educator. However, to develop the national curriculum for adult education practitioners, each country has chosen its own path and priorities towards the common goal.

Latvia has carried out market research for the new programme and found out that there are two major target groups. It has therefore shaped the training programme according to whether the main mission is either civil society development in the context of municipalities, or the preparation of training experts for private companies.

Lithuania has placed more emphasis on enlarging the trainers' network in the country. The idea of the "learner's diary" has been central to curriculum development in Lithuania as a tool for self-reflection and development.

Estonia has taken a model of society as its point of departure. The training curriculum has been designed to develop the adult educators who could assist to develop an ideal model of society. The Estonian perspective on curriculum development is very interesting from the point of view of civil society. It shows how adult education can become a tool in societal development. The Estonian curriculum defines the learning activities which will enable educators of adults who have at least three years of teaching experience to improve their knowledge, skills and competence in accordance with their own needs, the needs of society (social cohesion) and the labour market.

Two principles have been taken into account while developing the Estonian curriculum. First, there is the integration of different sectors of adult education through adult educator training. Second, there is the adaptation of Estonian adult education with regard to its content and organisation according to internationally recognised theoretical and methodological standards.

The curriculum is based on an educational paradigm according to which education can develop only in the context of the existing global, national and local culture. The relationship between the teacher and learner is based on the mutual respect for personalities, and the teacher and learner are partners performing different roles in this process. In this model, adult learning, including literacy learning, is about learning to cope in a rapidly changing world and participating consciously in shaping one's environment. The development and needs of people at different life stages, as well as the relationship of learning to practical life situations, is taken into account in this. Important factors in the success of these programmes include mo-

tivation of teachers, a humanistic orientation, intuition, erudition, co-operative abilities and health. The curriculum is open for continuous development and adjustment in accordance with changes in society and science.

### **The national and institutional policies required to enhance the training of adult educators**

The project's title, "Learning 4 Sharing", itself gives an idea of the nature of this project. "It has been a pleasure, both from an intellectual and an institutional perspective, to support and follow the life of the project," says Carina Abréu, Director of the Nordic Folk Academy. For the participating institutions, the project has given staff the opportunity to educate themselves further, according to their needs at the time. That might involve studying for a diploma that gives a formal qualification, or it might involve development work in the project group. The flexibility of the leader will help staff to search for more diverse competencies in the continuing education "market". From the experience of the Learning 4 Sharing project two messages emerge. One concerns the need for support structures for continuing education. These include paid leave and flexible working hours. The other concerns the adaptation of the mode of training provision to the adult educators' demands. A variety of continuing education courses are available, both formal and non-formal. The emphasis is on the qualifications the course entails and on giving the practitioners an opportunity to become partners in designing the course.

The methods of Learning 4 Sharing teach us a lot about how to operate in a global market of learning and education,

how to create avenues for exchange and co-operation, and how to remove barriers. For its participants, Learning 4 Sharing offers the opportunity to learn more about oneself and one's institution. An organisation or country develops a strong awareness of the need for both personal development and institutional change. Both require much effort and investment of time and other resources. However, a single institution, to say nothing of an individual adult educator, cannot pursue this innovative path alone.

### **International co-operation and networking**

Learning 4 Sharing supports partnerships, international co-operation and the sharing of common experience. The Nordic Council of Ministers has contributed to this process by supporting the three-year project. With respect to international co-operation, this project shows how to take into account different contexts, systems and cultures. It also demonstrates how to motivate adult educators to get involved in designing continuing education programmes through an analysis of their own practise and how to overcome psychological barriers and learn from other people's experiences.

For international co-operation it is a challenge to achieve results that are equally relevant for all partners. The three factors on which the success of international co-operation depend are communication, co-operation and quality assurance.

Three new training programmes were adapted to the needs and situation of each country. The fact that each country has the opportunity to implement the project in its own way has made for highly relevant and differentiated project results. The

experience of sharing has also made for a highly creative working process and a project that attracts great international interest. Communication and co-ordination of work has been of vital importance for reaching the project goal because it has allowed all of the countries involved and the different working group members to be involved and to make a major contribution. Finally, having a set of criteria to analyse one's own teaching and learning experiences has provided the basis for the necessary assessment system and quality

assurance procedures for the new programmes.

The existence of an international network in this project has had an enlivening and energising effect. In the future, the contents of the Learning 4 Sharing project will also be distributed through the flexible, internet-based learning platform at Adult Study Net ([www.adultstudy.net](http://www.adultstudy.net)), a project of the European Union's Socrates programme. For co-operation and networking, however, face-to-face meetings among people are still necessary.

### **Appendix 1:**

#### **Curriculum of the Diploma Course in Education at the Folk High School, Göteborg, Sweden**

The programme is divided into four blocks:

##### *1. Adult education as social and local phenomena*

- History of the idea, roots and meaning
- Foundation of the idea, forms and institutions
- Actual social tasks and conditions
- Meaning in local society
- Interpretation of local tasks

##### *2. Knowledge, education, learning*

- Concepts
- Research activities: how different adult education institutions follow these concepts
- Adult education in different contexts: practice and theory
- Planning, organization and evaluation of study processes
- Didactics

##### *3. Adult learners*

- Social conditions that influence the learning of adults
- Cultural, social, economical and labour market factors that influence adult learning
- Motivation as a personal starting point of learning
- Specialist pedagogy
- Different arenas for adult education—formal and non-formal
- Andragogy, lifelong learning, the knowledge society, case studies, experiential learning

##### *4. Professional skills and responsibilities of the adult educator*

- Pedagogical and social-pedagogical tasks of the adult educator
- Different methods in working with adults
- Supporting the idea of *folkbildning* through the everyday work of the adult teacher
- Planning outdoor activities
- Group processes in the adult study group
- Contextual didactic questions

**Appendix 2:**  
**The M. A. programme at**  
**The Danish University of**  
**Education, Copenhagen**

The Masters programme (part-time) for adult educators awards 60 credits according to the European Credit Transfer System. The programme lasts for two years (students take two modules per year). Studies are intensive in small groups of five to six students. There is also a lot of communication via the internet.

The programme is divided into four conceptual levels. The first level is linked to individual approaches, the second deals with organizational issues, the third level analyses the social dimension, while the fourth level involves project work. There is a lot of emphasis on developing one's individual skills and on studying according to one's own learning style.

There are two modules in the syllabus. The first deals mainly with the issue of the individual. Individual change affects many different aspects of personality; that is, changes relating to cognition, emotion, attitudes, values and action. The theoretical spectrum is broad with a focus on adult psychology. The study of learning theory covers individual life history, values, identity, motivation, personality development, social relations and networks. The second module involves competence development in the workplace; in other words, organizational learning. The development of qualifications required in the workplace is intimately connected with organizational development in the light of new technologies and the globalisation of production and trade. Thus, the content of this module is based on organizational theory.

### Appendix 3:

### Personal development measurement criteria

Criterion	Criteria description	Measures	Level of achievement (for all criteria)	List of possible tools
Self-esteem	Appreciating one's worth and importance, being responsible for oneself and acting responsibly towards others	1. Courage 2. Openness for feedback 3. Willingness to share	1. At present you are not meeting this criterion, although the opportunity is available. This needs to be considered as a priority area for your development.	Observation by a colleague
Tolerance	Ability to demonstrate fairness and understanding of people whose way of thinking and opinions differ from one's own	1. Respect for differences 2. Patience	2. This has been demonstrated. You need to consider how you will develop this further.	Group work
Responsibility	Being responsible for one's actions; considering the result and effects in advance	1. Self-discipline 2. Commitment 3. Ability to take on duties and fulfil them.	3. You have met this criterion to a degree that is appropriate.	Tests for participants; teacher's self-assessment
Communication skills	1. To foster dialogue in the learning process by developing the ability to listen actively, and to transmit information in written or oral form. 2. The ability to make oneself understood and to understand others	1. Presentation, active listening and questioning skills 2. Constructive feedback is given to learners 3. Interested in feedback about oneself	4. Excellent	Interview; collecting feedback from the target group (questionnaire)
Empathy	Responsiveness	1. Responsiveness towards learners' needs 2. Understanding learners' feelings 3. Ability to sense atmosphere.		
Flexibility	Ability and willingness to change and achieve the best result in a permanently changing situation	1. Ability to adapt course to learners' needs 2. Ability to reorganise course structure according to learners' needs		video taping; self-analysis

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