

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE- ZIMBABWE**

**REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF THE ART OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE, 1997-2007**

**I GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The Government of Zimbabwe inherited a racially biased education system from the colonial regime. The system created social, economic and political imbalances throughout the black majority. The key indicator to this was the rate of illiteracy among the adult black population, especially women. The 1982 population census revealed that out of a total adult population of 4 million, 63% or 2,5 million were illiterate or semi-literate. Of these 2,5 million illiterates, approximately 64% were women. The massive expansion of educational opportunities that were put in place after the country attained its independence in 1980 saw the Government launching the 1983 literacy campaign. The literacy campaign yielded very positive results as shown by the 2002 census. The census report indicated an adult population of 6 808,844, of whom 3 632 576 were women. It emerged that of this population, a total of 618 902 adults were illiterate and 425 290 of the illiterate adults were women. By 2002, the rate of illiteracy among the adult population stood at only 9.08% from the 63%. The rate of illiteracy among women was also reduced from 64% to a mere 11.75%. Zimbabwe had thus achieved a literacy rate of 97% from 63% at independence. The 1983 literacy campaign had provided some tangible results in this regard.

The 2002 census report also showed that the distribution of illiteracy levels varied between rural and urban settlements as illustrated in the tables below.

Table 1.1 Total number of illiterate people in urban areas by sex

| <b>MALE</b> | <b>FEMALE</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 20 344      | 32 080        | 52 424       |

Table 1:2 Total number of illiterate people in urban areas by sex

| <b>MALE</b> | <b>FEMALE</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 173 268     | 393 210       | 566 478      |

The above tables show that the rate of illiteracy was higher in the rural than urban settlements, with women recording higher illiteracy rates than their male counterparts.

Zimbabwe recorded the highest literacy rate in the SADC region and efforts to reach the 100% mark are on course as the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture has a Lifelong Education section that caters for adults and out of school youths wishing to continue their education using the non-formal mode of learning. The Lifelong Education section is responsible for Adult Literacy and Mass Education as well as Adult Distance Education or Continuing Education. The latter is for those who need to further their education beyond the basic literacy using such structures as Part Time Continuing Education Classes, Independent Colleges and Study groups. The former promotes basic and functional

literacy as well as primary education. The primary education course for adult learners has been named the Zimbabwe Adult Basic Education Course (ZABEC) which is a seven-year course done in a period of three years. Continuing education covers a wide range of courses that include among others, community education courses, development courses and some specialized training. Continuing education categories range from basic primary and secondary school education as alluded earlier on to courses towards specific higher academic qualifications at certificate, diploma, undergraduate and graduate levels. Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Zimbabwe can be viewed as education for those adults who may want to continue their education or who may have been deprived of a chance to education. The education mode may embrace the following:

- Correspondence
- University extension
- Extramural studies
- Adult education
- Informal education
- Lifelong and Continuing education

The Government of Zimbabwe also runs a primary correspondence school that caters for children of school going age in especially difficult circumstances. Such children fall into the following categories:

- i) those in isolated areas including national parks, camps, farms and mines without schools;
- ii) those with health problems keeping them away from regular schooling;
- iii) children of mobile families, and
- iv) those out of school because of other inhibiting circumstances

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture is not the only organization that offers Adult Learning and Education (ALE) as will be seen from the report.

The non-formal mode complements the formal mode of learning as a way of affording equal opportunity to education for every one both old and young. Great strides have also been made in the formal education system. The number of school going children from Grade 1 to 'A' level has continued to grow.

## **II POLICY, LEGISLATION AND FINANCING**

### *1.1 Legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of ALE*

1.1.1 The Ministry derives its mandate from the Constitution of Zimbabwe which states that education is a basic human right. This means that every citizen of Zimbabwe regardless of race, creed, gender or age has a constitutional right to be educated. The Education Act of 1987 as amended in 1996 and 2006 also provides for Adult Learning. Adult Education and Learning is directed and controlled by various Statutory Instruments and Director's Circulars. Chief among these

include the S.I. 371 of 1998 entitled the Education (Correspondence and Independent) Regulations, 1998, the Lifelong Education Policy. These policy instruments only pertain to the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, other Ministries have their own policies on Adult Learning and Education. According to a study carried out by Dr. Mazombwe (2006), the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education administers University Acts for each of the 13 Universities. A Council for Higher Education Act was also promulgated in 1990.

1.1.2 The priority goals of ALE are basically to mobilize and motivate illiterate and semi-literates adults to acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and calculating using the mother tongue and also to foster skills training.

1.1.3 As mentioned earlier on, ALE in Zimbabwe is the responsibility of various Ministries and organizations. The following Ministries and organizations cater for the programme:

- Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture;
- Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education;
- Ministry of Youth Development
- Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development;
- The Public Service Commission;
- Adult Literacy Association of Zimbabwe;
- Church organizations;
- Local Authorities and
- The Corporate World.

1.1.4 The policy and implementation strategies cover educational objectives, developmental objectives, social objectives and economic objectives. In light of these broad objectives, the ALE programme in Zimbabwe caters for various sectors of the economy poverty reduction and the creation of a learning society.

1.1.5 The programme faces a number of challenges. These include the following:

- Inadequate funding;
- Inadequate teaching and learning materials;
- Shortage of adequate and appropriately trained human resources;
- Inadequate and inappropriate infrastructure.

1.1.6 ALE in Zimbabwe is governed by the political will of the Government. The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe personally launched the literacy campaign in 1981.

## **1.2. Financing of ALE**

1.2.1 a) ALE also benefits from the budget within the various Ministries it operates in. The funds allocated are used to pay allowances for :

- Part Time Continuing Education Classes (PTCEC) teachers and
- Adult Literacy tutors

Capacity building, though limited, is also carried out using the funds allocated. The programme is decentralized and each province under the Provincial Education Director sees to its smooth running.

b) Other Ministries that carry out ALE programmes are also allocated their budgets. The various Ministries carry out skills development programmes mainly.

c) Local authorities like Municipalities also provide ALE in their communities. These allocate some funds from their budgets.

d) ) In addition to Government funding, ALE also gets its funding from UNESCO to carry out capacity building, for production of teaching and learning materials and for bringing awareness through celebrating the International Literacy Day. Other organizations that also support the programme through the ALOZ include the following:

- United Church of Canada
- Pro Literacy America
- Hilfswerk, Australia

#### *1.2.2 Foreign bilateral/multilateral donor investments in ALE*

These are as listed in 1.2.1 section (d) above.

#### *1.2.3 Support to ALE from private/corporate sector*

Although exact figures for expenditure could not be obtained, the private/corporate sector do support ALE by sending their employees to capacity development programmes at institutions like the Polytechnics and other Industrial Training centres.

#### *1.2.4. Civil Society Support to ALE (e.g. religious institutions, unions, NGOs)*

A study carried out by D.D. Midzi et al (2004) revealed that the donor community was the major provider of ALE followed by church related agencies. The donor community included among others UNESCO, UNICEF, Plan Zimbabwe.

#### *1.2.5. Learners '/individuals' contribution to ALE*

Learners who like to continue their education or improve on their qualifications at say universities, correspondence schools etc contribute in a significant way. However, the Government also makes its own contribution to Adult Literacy learners and those in PTCEC by paying salaries and allowances to the teachers and tutors respectively.

*1.2.6 Are there specific direct or indirect financial incentives in support of ALE e.g. learning vouchers, scholarships, paid educational leave, special funds and funding schemes etc? Are these specific to some programmes or general schemes?*

The Public Service Commission which is the employing body of the civil service offers what is termed Manpower Development Leave (MPDL) to those adults in the service who want to embark on a programme that is beneficial to the organization. Such incumbents are paid part of their salary for the period they are studying and are entitled to come back to their job when they complete their studies.

*1.2.7 Are benchmarks (targets) in relation to financing ALE in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to financing ALE?*

Government and donor agencies are the major financiers of ALE

## **2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement**

*2.1.1 Which institutions are responsible for managing and coordinating ALE at national level?*

The following institutions manage and coordinate ALE:

- Universities
- Polytechniques
- Vocational Training Centres
- Industrial Training Centres
- Correspondence Colleges
- Part Time Continuing Education Centres
- Adult Literacy Centres

## 2.1.2

Table 1

| Programme(name and brief description) | a)Provider |                 |         | b)Area of learning |     |     | c) Target group/s | d) Programme cost | e) Funding source |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------|-----|-----|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                       | State      | CS<br>O/N<br>GO | Private | G/C                | T/S | KGI |                   |                   |                   |
| Universities                          | x          |                 | x       | x                  | x   | x   |                   |                   |                   |
| Polytechniques                        | x          |                 |         |                    | x   | x   |                   |                   |                   |
| Vocational Training Centres           | x          |                 |         |                    | x   |     |                   |                   |                   |
| Industrial Training Centres           | x          |                 |         | x                  | x   |     |                   |                   |                   |
| PTCEC                                 | x          |                 |         | x                  |     | x   |                   |                   |                   |
| Correspondence Colleges               |            |                 | x       | x                  |     | x   |                   |                   |                   |
| Adult Literacy Centres                | x          |                 |         | x                  |     | x   |                   |                   |                   |

### 2.1.3 What linkages exist between formal and non-formal approaches?

Basic education in Zimbabwe is up to the acquisition of 5 ‘O’ level passes including English and Mathematics. The non-formal education approach was created to cater for students in the following categories:

- Those who fail to attain a full ‘O’ or ‘A’ level certificate;
- Those who are bound to drop out of primary and secondary school for one reason or another
- Those who leave school early;
- Those who enjoy life-long learning and those whose work circumstances result in the need for higher level skills.

Non-formal education enables out-of-school learners to have access to education using strategies suitable to the individual’s circumstances.

### 2.1.4 Does ALE lead to certification and national awards?

Polytechnics offer part time courses for adults. Attendance is during weekends or evenings. Learners are awarded certificate of attendance. If the learner is in possession of at least 5 ‘O’ levels, he/she can write the HEXCO examinations which leads to formal certification.

Learners in the PTCE, Correspondence Colleges, Universities, Polytechnics acquire certificates in the same way as those in the formal school system.

Polytechnics also offer part time courses for adults during weekends or evenings and learners are awarded certificates of attendance, as no formal entry qualifications are required. However, those who possess the requisite entry qualifications proceed to write the HEXCO examinations and are awarded formal certificates.

Learners that undergo training in the Vocational Colleges, Industrial Training Centres as well as Polytechnics apply to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education for trade testing and upgraded to a certain class e.g. skilled worker 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Adult Literacy learners are awarded certificates by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. These can then proceed to do an adult primary course done in a period of three years or engage in income generation skills. Those who do the primary course are awarded certificates after writing the ZIMSEC examination and can then join PTCEC or Correspondence Colleges to do their secondary education studies.

Adult literacy learners who excel in their studies receive national awards at literacy day celebrations held annually.

## 2.2 Participation in ALE

### 2.2.1 Statistical data on participation

The statistics given below refer to ALE in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture only for the period 2003 to 2007.

| Programme           | 2004  |       |       | 2005  |       |        | 2006  |       |       | 2007  |       |        |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
|                     | M     | F     | T     | M     | F     | T      | M     | F     | T     | M     | F     | T      |
| Correspondence      | 48649 | 46455 | 95104 | 72880 | 73293 | 146173 | 16147 | 18394 | 34529 | 81894 | 83015 | 164970 |
| PTCEC               | 46591 | 46679 | 93270 | 33898 | 31200 | 65098  | 8155  | 9700  | 18855 | 11162 | 13712 | 24874  |
| Basic Literacy      | 4194  | 21579 | 25773 | 9200  | 16024 | 25224  | 3727  | 13361 | 17088 | 4910  | 13167 | 20554  |
| Functional Literacy | 4385  | 12803 | 17188 | 7040  | 10111 | 17151  | 2955  | 7413  | 10368 | 3203  | 10025 | 13883  |
| ZABEC               | 4025  | 9518  | 13543 | 2930  | 9669  | 12599  | 1972  | 6328  | 8141  | 1824  | 6562  | 14192  |
|                     |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |        |

### 2.2.2 What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on non-participation and groups that are difficult to reach?

Studies undertaken include the Nziramasanga Commission report (1999), a Situational Analysis of Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education in Zimbabwe, (2004) by D.D. Midzi and Towards a Framework for the Review of Continuing Education Policy and Programmes in Zimbabwe (2006) by Dr. O. Mazombwe.

The male folk do not seem to make full participation in the programmes as they are extremely outnumbered by their female counterparts.

### 2.2.3 What existing survey/studies have been undertaken on learner motivation?

ALE programmes are advertised in the media both electronic and print. The District Literacy Coordinators are the custodians of the literacy programme at the grassroots and their major function is to mobilize learners in the community

using various platforms available like political meetings. Motivation is instituted at national occasions like the Literacy Day commemorations where awards are given to those who excel in different categories.

*2.2.4 Which measures have been undertaken to mobilize learners and to increase participation?*

Non-Formal education is tied to development and economic independence through increased productivity. In light of this notion, various strategies have been used to mobilize learners and increase participation in the programmes by both government and the civil society. These include the launch of the literacy campaign by the State President, provision of resources to start income-generating programmes etc.

*2.2.5 Are specific groups targeted by ALE provision? Which ones?*

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture endeavours to provide education for both adults and out-of school youths by establishing lifelong learning centres at several institutions.

*2.2.6 Are there benchmarks in relation to participation in place? If yes, which ones? If not, what would be realistic benchmarks for participation in your context?*

Achievement of 100% literacy rate. The creation of a learning society in which quality education and poverty reduction are promoted.

### **2.3 Monitoring and evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes**

*2.3.1 Do you assess the learning outcomes of ALE programmes (national, regional and community perspective/programme perspective) and learners' achievements (learner perspective)? If so, what methods do you use?*

The following methods are used for different programmes:

- Literacy evaluation tests for those literacy learners doing the Basic literacy programme,
- ZIMSEC examinations for the ZABEC, 'O' and 'A' level learners;
- Trade testing and HEXCO examinations for those in the Vocational programmes

*2.3.2 What tools and mechanisms are used to monitor and evaluate programmes to ensure good quality?*

To ensure good quality, the following tools are used :

- Supervision and monitoring tools;
- Evaluating and reporting on progress;
- Supervision reports;
- Testing and examinations.

*2.3.4 Are benchmarks in relation to outcomes of ALE in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to outcomes?*

Major benchmarks in ALE would include the reduction of poverty and the creation of a learning society.

## **2.4. Adult educators'/facilitators' status and training**

*2.4.1. What educational qualifications/training are required for adult educators/facilitators? What continuing/in-service training measures are in place?*

For basic literacy, no formal qualifications are required. Other programmes require formal qualifications that equate those in the formal school system and these educators/facilitators are usually drawn from the formal school system.

*2.4.2 Is adult education considered as a specific profession, and are there higher institutions providing such qualifications?*

Yes indeed it is considered as a profession. Presently, the University of Zimbabwe is offering Adult Education at degree level while Masvingo State University offers it at diploma level.

*2.4.3 Please indicate the proportion of adult educators/facilitators in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel in your country.*

The number of adult educators/facilitators is very minimal in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel. These are less than 1/10 of the teaching personnel.

*2.4.4. What are the terms of employment and remuneration in ALE?*

The personnel in ALE are usually employed on part time basis and are paid daily/hourly allowances.

## **3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice**

*3.1.1. Which key studies in adult education have been undertaken in your country recently (within last five years)*

The following studies were undertaken within the last five years:

- A Situational Analysis of Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education in Zimbabwe (2004) D.D. Midzi et al;
- Towards A Framework For The Review Of Continuing Education Policy Framework In Zimbabwe (2006) Dr. Obediah Mazombwe;
- Research Paper on Adult Literacy, Basic and Continuing Education in Zimbabwe (2007) Dr. Kapfunde

*3.1.2. What were the major questions addressed and prompted by these studies*

*The first study was to elicit information on the provision of adult literacy and Non-Formal Education in Zimbabwe;*

*The second study sought to formulate a framework for the review of Continuing Education Policy and Programmes;*

*The last study was on the provision of wider access to education.*

*3.1.3. What are the key findings:*

That:

The major providers of Adult Literacy and Non-Formal in the country were the Government through the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, followed by donor sponsored agencies and local authorities.

Issues and challenges facing continuing education in Zimbabwe were highlighted;

3.1.4. *To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice? How did they influence practice? Please, give examples.*

The findings will inform policy on the importance of ALE to community development and what assistance would be needed to make the programme viable.

### **3.2. Innovations and examples of good practice**

*Which innovations and/or exemplary programmes in ALE have been developed since 1997 (CONFINTEA V) that make a significant difference in your and could be instructive for other countries, with regard to:*

#### *3.2.1. Policy formulation, financing, teaching/learning methods*

Government policies and proclamations govern ALE in Zimbabwe. The programmes follow a centralized curriculum. Organization like the Adult Literacy Organization of Zimbabwe (ALAZ) develop teaching and learning materials and have helped in the training of adult literacy tutors. Transition from non-formal to formal education is possible in the system.

#### *3.2.2. Mobilization of learners, involvement of learners in programme design, emergence of learners as partners?*

The District Literacy Coordinators in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture play a pivotal role in mobilization of learners. Other Government Departments and ALAZ also play a major role in mobilization of learners. Learners are involved in programme design especially in functional literacy programme as they choose projects that are relevant to their environment and situation, they are then helped to develop and acquire the basic skills for that activity.

#### *3.2.3. Why are the above listed examples considered as innovations in your country?*

These are considered to be innovations as they have helped to create learning opportunities outside the formal education system at all levels and also provided skills for poverty reduction in communities.

## **4. Adult Literacy**

*4.1. How is literacy defined in your country? Have there been any changes since 1997(CONFINTEA V) Please explain.*

In Zimbabwe, literacy is defined as the ability to:

- Read simple texts, notices, instructions in the mother tongue;
- Communicate in writing using the mother tongue ( e.g. writing messages and making simple records);
- Count and carry out simple calculations using the four processes of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing and dealing with daily life problems e.g. telling the time, sizes and budgeting;
- Understand, manipulate and control one's environment for the betterment of one's life;
- Raise one's critical awareness;
- Apply literacy skills to promote income generating activities.

*4.2. Which new policies have been adopted and implemented?*

The Government of Zimbabwe, in line with its declared policy of social justice and egalitarianism, resolved to do all it can to provide education for all its people, young or old. The Non-Formal Education section which is now known as the Lifelong Education section was created to deal with all organized educational activities outside the formal school system.

*4.3. Please give examples of effective practice and innovative literacy programmes.*

The Lifelong Education section has a section which deals with adult literacy called Adult Literacy and Mass Education (ALME). ALME promotes basic and functional literacy as well as primary education. The adult learners do their primary education in a period of three years in a programme called Zimbabwe Adult Basic Education Course (ZABEC). Learners in ALME programme are anybody over the age of 15 years who did not have a chance of going to school or who did not complete four years of primary education. Women constitute the majority of learners. Basic literacy aims at teaching the 3R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). Functional literacy is for those learners who will have acquired the basic literacy skills and includes the study of various projects linked to income generating.

*4.4. Please illustrate how policies and programmes focus on gender. Describe the importance given to women and other target groups.*

The Government of Zimbabwe after realizing that women were a disadvantaged group, created a Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development. The Ministry is concerned with the uplifting of women educationally, socially, economically and politically.

*4.5. To what extent do policies and programmes aim at building literate environments? What progress could be achieved.*

The ALME programme has three objectives which when fulfilled will help in the building of a literate environment. These are as illustrated below:

a) Educational objectives

- To mobilize and motivate illiterate and semi-literate adults to acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and calculating using the mother tongue;
- To motivate young adults to acquire a general basic education by attending ZABEC classes;
- To foster the development of confidence in manipulating the environment based on a scientific analysis of cause and effect in an effort to improve the quality of life through functional literacy.

b) Development Objectives

- To mobilize and motivate adults for economic, social, cultural and political development;
- To facilitate meaningful and effective participation of individuals, groups of individuals and communities in local as well as national development programmes;
- To promote economic independence through increased productivity.

c) Social Objectives

- To encourage and strengthen the participation of Zimbabweans in organizations such as co-operatives, women's groups, youth groups and other mutually beneficial groups in society;
- To promote consciousness, unity and patriotism on the part of all Zimbabweans;
- To encourage awareness of the exploitation of women and foster the creation of equal opportunities for all members of our society with special emphasis on gender equality;
- To promote the preservation and development of the positive aspects of our culture.

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and future perspectives for ALE

5.1. *What outcomes do you expect from CONFINTEA VI?*

- Provision of funding from the international community for production of teaching and learning materials and capacity development; and
- Financing of exchange programmes are some of the major outcomes expected.
- Strengthening of structures that manage non-formal education.

5.2. Please list the main issue that adult education will have to address and describe future perspectives for the development of policies and practices in adult education and learning.

A research paper produced by Dr. Mazombwe (2006) suggested a policy framework for Adult and Continuing Education. In his paper, Dr. Mazombwe observed that:

- The ALE programme is the responsibility of several sectors and Ministries, there was therefore a need to create a committee of experts in quality and standards. This committee would constitute the Education and Training Quality Control Authority (ETQCA). The ETQCA will among other issues develop an Education and Training National Quality Framework, will be responsible for encouraging and facilitating research and the generation of theory clearly explicating the education/development nexus and to capacity develop all institutions under it.

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