

About the GCE

The Global Campaign for Education is a coalition of NGOs and trade unions working in over 100 countries for the right to free, good quality education for all. GCE is a member of the UN Girls' Education Initiative, the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS. This paper benefited from the invaluable input of Elaine Unterhalter (Beyond Access Project and University of London).

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100 years of German-Ethiopian diplomatic relations, 30 years of adult education cooperation, and 10 years of cooperation with the IIZ/DVV provided cause for celebration and an occasion for the IIZ/DVV to hold a symposium on "Adult Education and Development" from 10 to 13 October 2005 with the Goethe Institute Gebrekristos Desta Centre and the University of Addis Ababa. This was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Education, academic staff from Addis Ababa University and other higher education institutions, and representatives of UNESCO and the African Development Bank (ADB). The following paper was given by Pierre Thizier Seya, Resident Representative of the African Development Bank in Addis Ababa. His presentation focused on connections between adult education, development and globalization. He stressed the multidimensional role of adult education as a powerful instrument of democracy and social and economic development.

Pierre Thizier Seya

Adult Education and African Development in the Context of Globalization

I have been asked to discuss the relationships between adult education and development in Africa within the context of globalization. This is an important topic to examine if one is to understand the ways and extent to which human resources have been solicited, promoted, managed and used in the transformation process of African societies. The exercise may also help explain the conditions under which African human capital, literate at about 50% at present, can be further developed so as to prepare mature African men and women to face the challenges of an increasingly unequal world system and contribute to the emergence of what is now referred to as an *"enlightened globalization"*. It is this idealist vision that is at the heart of the revival

of adult education, which is being repositioned as a tool for sustained and broad-based development in all poor regions of the world, and in Africa in particular.

This symposium, therefore, is an opportune occasion for all development players to engage in advancing the cause of adult education in the development agenda. As the representative of the African premier development finance institution, I could not but accept the invitation to actively participate in this symposium, and make this presentation. I would, therefore, like to sincerely thank the organizers of the event, and in particular my good friend Dr. Bernd Sandhaas

(Director of the East Africa Regional Office of the IIZ/DVV) for kindly associating the African Development Bank to this historic gathering. The paper starts with the definition of the conceptual framework within which the discussion takes place. It goes on with the analysis of key develop-

Literacy typically receives a mere 1 % of national education budgets, a share that must rise if the Dakar literacy goal is to be achieved

Source: UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006. *Literacy for life. Summary*, p. 36

ment challenges in Africa before examining the role of adult education in development. Then the paper draws the lessons learned from practical experiences of adult education policies in Africa, followed by the contribution of the ADB in promoting the sub-sector in its Regional Member Countries and ends with a couple of proposals for the mainstreaming of adult education in development processes to achieve socio-economic progress in national settings as well as in the global system.

Conceptual Framework

The definition of the conceptual framework of the presentation is required from the outset in order to set the proper theoretical context for our discussion and clearly identify the fundamental issues to be examined. As it appears from the title of my presentation, the key concepts to define and agree upon before moving any further are: adult education, development, and globalization.

Adult Education

Adult education usually refers to any form of learning undertaken by or provided for mature men and women outside the formal schooling system. The main targets are specifically defined as youth (girls and boys over 15 years of age, but sometime younger) as well as women and men, generally poor or socially disadvantaged. Although literacy continues to be at its heart, adult education also includes "*numeracy*", problem-solving and life skills, and other knowledge. The notion of adult education is often used interchangeably with other notions such as literacy, adult basic education, lifelong learning, continuing education, adult non formal education, etc. For the purpose of this presentation, adult education is understood as a transmission process of general, technical or vocational knowledge, as well skills, values and attitudes, which takes place out of the formal education system with a view to remedying early education inadequacies of mature people or equipping them with the knowledge and cultural elements required for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies.

Development

The concept of development is complex as it has several connotations. However, Allen (2000) has identified three main meanings in which development is generally used, namely: (i) as a vision, description or measure of the state of being of a desirable society; (ii) as an historical process of social change in which societies are transformed over long periods; and (iii) as consisting of deliberate efforts aimed at improvement on the part of various agencies, including governments, all kinds of organizations and social movements. For the purpose of this presentation, development will be referred to as a process of economic, social, political and cultural change engineered in a given society by the efforts of all stakeholders, both internal and external - including the local communities, the Government, the private sector, the civil society organizations, the NGOs and the technical and financial development partners - with a view to improving the conditions of life of the population in a sustainable way. Implicit in this definition

is the assumption that development requires, *inter alia*, the formation of human capital and social capital, some of the main factors of production required for a broad-based economic growth that provides the ground for sustainable poverty reduction.

Globalization

Globalization is an elusive and multidimensional concept widely used to encapsulate various trends that are shaping contemporary economic, social, cultural and political life world-wide. I will adopt here McGrew's definition of globalization that has the advantage of comprehending the phenomenon in all its dimensions. For McGrew,

"globalization refers to the growing sense of interconnectedness between all parts of the world and the associated feelings of powerlessness and insecurity in the face of the spread and scale of global change. It is driven by a combination of economic forces (the tendency of capitalism to expand), technological change (the informatics revolution), political shifts (away from state intervention towards economic liberalization) and increasing global awareness among national elites and social movements."

(McGrew, 2000, p. 363)

The ambivalent impact that globalization has on development explains the opposing views that it has aroused among its supporters and opponents. What is undeniable, however, is that globalization imposes itself as a determinant variable in understanding and resolving development issues because of the new opportunities as well as the daunting challenges that the blending together of local, national and global economic dynamics creates. This is why Bekemans advises that

"far more fruitful than polarizing the debate for or against globalization, is the need to come to grips with its multiple aspects and consequences and to formulate novel ways of orienting globalization to a culture of peace and socially inclusive development and to a sustainable community of peoples and cultures worldwide."

(Bekemans, 2002, p. 153)