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MOJA

ADULT EDUCATION AFRICA

JOURNAL OF ADULT EDUCATION

ISSUE 1, December 2022



MOJA was established by a network of African partners and supporters.

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

In May 2022, we came together for the first meeting as the Editorial Board of the newly established MOJA Journal of Adult Education. Most of us travelled from our home countries to Cape Town, South Africa for the first workshop - Rebecca Lekoko (Botswana), Chiraz Kilani (Tunisia), Carole Houndjo (Benin), Philipo Sanga (Tanzania), David Harrington (Malawi), Donia Benmiloud (Tunisia) and our hosts, Farrell Hunter and Lindia Trout (South Africa). Ivor Baatjes (South Africa) and Salome Awidi (Uganda) could not join us in person. Fortunately, we could make use of new technology to bring the Board together.¹

Our workshop was a highly productive event and a great learning experience. We have learned from the wisdom of several colleagues, including those with vast experience in editorial work related to journals and related publications. We also spent time with colleagues working in different adult education formations in the surrounding areas of Cape Town. It was an experience that reminded us of the diverse nature of adult education practices prevalent in our respective countries. All the visits and exchanges were meaningful and reinforced our understanding about the ways in which context shapes adult education and how adult education attempts to change context.

A key point for discussion was the naming of the Journal. We decided on the name MOJA Journal of Adult Education, in keeping with the philosophy of MOJA – to offer a learning space for exchanging and sharing of knowledge and experience about the diverse practices of scholars, activists, educators and organisations working in adult education on the African continent. Since May 2022, we have managed to compile a range of contributions from authors from four regions on the continent. The contributions to the first Issue of the Journal provide a glimpse into the diversity of adult education practices in Africa.

This is our first Issue and we would like to thank our colleagues who have contributed to the Journal. We hope that this Issue will be widely distributed and read and serve as inspiration and motivation to our adult education community and to use the Journal as a vehicle for sharing and knowledge exchange. We value the richness of adult educational knowledge and experiences on the continent and this Journal serves a useful place for discussions and debates about the role of adult education in the development and transformation of our societies and the continent.

We hope you enjoy reading this Issue.

The Editorial Board
MOJA Journal of Adult Education
Cape Town

1. Housseem Bel Hadj (Tunisia), joined the Editorial Board in October 2022.

EDITORIAL BOARD



CAROLE HOUNDJO

Carole Avande Houndjo is a linguist of African languages and an advocate and activist for the right to education for youth and adults. She has coordinated the literacy and translation programme of the NGO Wycliffe in Benin for more than ten years. Since 2014, Carole has been the coordinator of the Pamoja West Africa Network. The Pamoja West Africa Network has members from 15 countries in Africa that promote the Reflect approach. Pamoja works to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations to improve the quality of education in Africa. In addition to this, Pamoja promotes and advocates for the right to education of youth and adults in Africa.



SALOME AWIDI

Salome Joy Awidi (PhD) is a Programme Development Associate and adult education professional currently working in refugee response in Uganda. Over the last 15 years, Salome has been working in Education in Emergency in Uganda, in teacher/educator professional development, education and civic material development and humanitarian-development and management. She also contributed to local government education sector assessment programmes. Salome is the President of the Association of Professional Adult Educators in Uganda and a Compare Fellow 2022-2023. Salome holds a BA (Makerere University), MA (University of KwaZulu-Natal) and PhD (University of South Africa) in Adult Education.



REBECCA LEKOKO

Prof Rebecca Nthogo Lekoko has been educated in Botswana, Canada and USA, first as a teacher trainer then adult educator. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a Doctor of Education in Adult Education, specialising in community development/empowerment and lifelong learning. She is the current Chief Editor of Ba Isago Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies and has reviewed articles for a number of local and international journals such as Mosenodi, Adult Education Quarterly, Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, International Journal of Adult and Lifelong Learning and Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Science. In her position as a Professor of Adult Education, her practices weave together diverse and pertinent issues pertaining to adult education such as education for empowerment, social mobilisation strategies and participatory approaches. She is also prominent in addressing issues of minority languages, education for marginalised ethnic groups, inclusive policies, especially for people with disabilities and older adults. She has published extensively locally and internationally and has attended many conferences serving as a presenter, a keynote speaker, chair of sessions and a discussant to the keynote speaker.



HOUSSEM BEL HADJ

Housseem Bel Hadj is a Regional Expert of DVV International North Africa. He has 14 years of experience in the fields of adult education, the labour market, entrepreneurship and local development, working with several technical and financial partners. He is the Assistant Editor (French) of the MOJA Journal of Adult Education.



DAVID HARRINGTON

David Harrington has worked in the field of education and adult education for the past 30 years, most recently as Regional Director for DVV International in Southern Africa. He also manages the team that established and is running the MOJA Adult Education Africa Platform.



DONIA BENMILOUD

Donia Benmiloud is the Regional Director of DVV International, North Africa. She has 20 years of experience in managing international cooperation projects across Asia, Africa and Europe - focusing on economic and social inclusion; entrepreneurship; employment; training and education. She is a lifelong learner with a keen interest in strategic thinking, gender issues, working with people at grassroots level, as well as research planning, design and implementation.



CHIRAZ KILANI

Chiraz Kilani is a lecturer in didactics of science and research at the Higher Institute of Education and Continuing Education of Tunis. She holds a doctorate from Claude Bernard University Lyon 1.

Chiraz is also director of the Supramolecular Chemistry and Science Didactics research unit. She serves as the national coordinator and trainer of the international foundation "Main à la Pâte" (teaching science at school using the investigative approach).



PHILIPO LONATI SANGA

Philipo Lonati Sanga is a trained teacher educator whose academic qualifications include a Diploma in Education (Science Teacher) from Dar es Salaam Teachers' College, Bachelor of Education in Adult Education (BEd. ADE Hons.) and Master of Arts in Education (MAED) both from the University of Dar es Salaam, and a doctoral degree in Educational Technology from Hanyang University (South Korea). His professional interests revolve around adult education, open and distance education, and lifelong learning. Sanga was the Secretary General of the international conference to celebrate 50 years of adult education in Tanzania. He is currently a member of the editorial boards of: MOJA Journal of Adult Education; Papers in Education and Development (PED) of the School of Education of the University of Dar es Salaam; the Rural Planning Journal (RPJ) of the Institute of Rural Development Planning (Tanzania); and International Diplomatic Review Journal (IDRJ) of the Centre for Foreign Relations (Tanzania). Sanga is currently serving as an Associate Chief Editor of Papers in Education and Development (PED).



IVOR BAATJES

Ivor Baatjes is Director of the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University and a member of the *National Research Foundation's SARCHI Chair: Community, Adult and Workers Education (CAWE)* awarded to the University of Johannesburg and co-hosted by Mandela University. His research interests include adult and community education; higher education; workers education; and learning in social movements.



FARRELL HUNTER

Farrell Hunter holds the position of Country Director of DVV International, South Africa since 2010, prior to which he was the project officer in the DVV International Southern Africa Regional Office. Before his time with DVVI, Farrell held the position of national manager of the country's leading adult education Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) and served on the national NGO Coalition as its adult education sector representative. He also represented the coalition on the Education Training and Development, Sector Education Training Authority (ETDP SETA).

EDITORIAL

Adult learning and education in Africa take place in interesting times. Scholars, activists, governments and civil society have highlighted several developments globally, regionally and nationally that present challenges to adult education and development. Amongst these developments are the ecological crisis and climate change; the impact of COVID-19; the advancement of the fourth industrial revolution; and more recently, the rippling effect of the Russia-Ukrainian war on global, regional and national economies. These developments, in combination with internal national issues, constitute determinants of adult education policy and practice in African societies.

The Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA), a key outcome of CONFINTEA VII, creates new energy and possibilities for adult learning and education in Africa. Given the external and internal determinants of adult education, and considering the possibilities provided by the MFA, the MOJA Journal of Adult Education highlights the significance of *Inclusion* as a fundamental and recurring thematic area in the theory and practice of adult education on the continent.

For the purposes of the first Issue of the MOJA Journal of Adult Education, we use the concept *Inclusion* in two ways, and as complementary to its dominant and common use in discourses related to inclusive education. Firstly, we use the term as part of an ongoing process of integrating and mainstreaming adult education -- *as a human right* -- more firmly into the overall education and training architectural policy frameworks of governments. Adult education on the African continent remains a critical vehicle in addressing the socio-economic needs and interests of adult learners and communities, building community livelihoods and economies, as well as contributing to national economic and development systems. Most of the adult education systems on the continent are oriented towards adult learning of marginalised and vulnerable groups. Our first emphasis, therefore, is on accentuating the role of adult education in government policy and national adult education

systems building. Secondly, our emphasis is in recognising the diverse and transdisciplinary nature of adult learning and educational practices.

The African continent is rich in transdisciplinary adult education characterised by a pluriverse of adult education programmes, projects and practices that reflect different traditions, orientations, approaches and methodologies. Adult educators work in and across several societal themes offering formal and non-formal educational responses related to issues such as food and hunger; health and wellbeing of communities; gender-based and related education; access to energy and water; working with vulnerable groups including migrants, refugees and adults with special needs; building technical vocational education and many more. The second emphasis is therefore on the importance of recognising the diversity of 'issue-based' practices to which adult education responds, and the urgency for such practices to be amplified. The twin-focus on *Inclusion*, therefore, looks at the inclusion of adult education as integral to national education systems and a perspective that recognises and values the contributions of the pluriversity of adult educational practices to local, national and regional developments.

Africa has a wealth of adult educational experiences and practices. This Issue brings together the voices of adult educators working in different areas, disciplines and sectors across the continent. In the first article, **Britt Baatjes**, together with co-learners, writes about the work and learning experiences of workers in the informal economies of several African countries. This article highlights the important work (often invisible and marginal) of citizens in our societies, the determination of informal workers to secure a livelihood, and the struggles of movements to bring greater recognition to the life-making work of workers in the informal economy.

Monia Manai takes us into the world of women of Tekrouna - a village in rural Tunisia. Manai provides insight into the development and application of participatory and interactive

techniques with impoverished women learning about the distillation of aromatic and medicinal plants. Manai and colleagues developed co-constructed signs and symbols - a semio-didactic approach - to support the acquisition of literacy.

Conflict and insecurities are still prevalent across the continent. Adult education has a long history in conflict resolution, management and peace building in Africa. **Laya Boni** writes about his vocation as an adult educator involved in conflict resolution and peace building in Benin. Boni's article is a reminder of the significant role that adult education should play in conflict resolution and peace building in communities.

Nebie Modeste draws attention to the impact of conflict and instability on the education of children, youth and adults in Burkino Faso. Modeste calls for an end to the security crisis and the restoration of peaceful learning and teaching environments. He also highlights the importance of literacy campaigns as a vehicle toward peace, stability and socio-economic development in Burkino Faso.

Food and hunger is a prominent theme and issue in South Africa. Many coastal communities in South Africa rely on the ocean for food and livelihoods. **Anna Majavu** shares the story of how communities organise and mobilise to secure food and livelihoods and to build resistance to threats that pose environmental risks to community food and economic systems. Her article reminds us of the importance of learning through protest and using community organising as an educational process.

The COVID pandemic has been a catalyst to the growth and use of digital technologies in education. It is therefore not surprising that scholars in adult education have also engaged with this global development. **Linda Daniels** reports on a survey she conducted which attempted to gauge how adult educators in South Africa use digital technologies. Online learning in South Africa has grown significantly and it is important to understand how adult education,

which is still poorly supported, is affected by digital technologies.

Matthew Atinyo also shares his ideas on the importance of digitalisation in Africa. The Ghanaian scholar argues that the use of digital technologies could play a significant role in addressing the great need for teacher preparation on the continent. Atinyo's contribution also evokes several other thoughts. Amongst these are the schooling-adult education interface and the relationship between education and labour markets. He draws attention to the urgency of the education of youth for the labour market.

Merina Phiri shares with us the pioneering work in adult education at the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA). Phiri shares the work of CUNIMA which has recently introduced its first academic programme for adult educators. Two striking features of the programme are, firstly, the way in which the programme involves staff from different faculties, i.e. education and development studies, and

secondly, an orientation towards the implementation of socially-engaged programmes. Phiri's article provides a glimpse of the participatory research approach that is encouraged.

Salome Awidi reports on her research conducted on the importance of educational support to mothers, especially of disabled refugee children, in Uganda. This article highlights the vital work and expanded role of mothers in raising children, especially in a context of the migration-disability discourse. Awidi calls for much greater focus on and support for inclusive education.

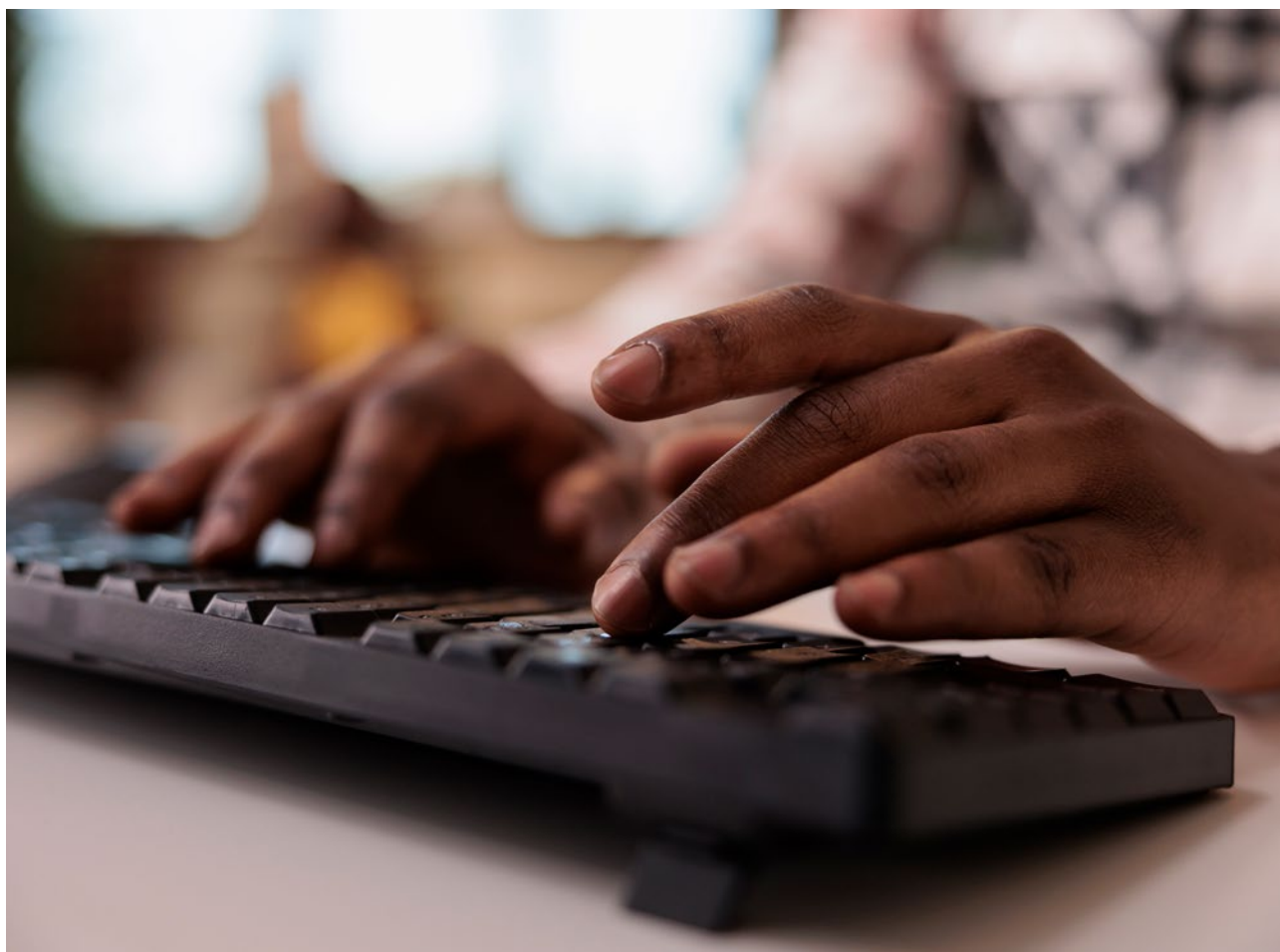
We have also included in this Journal an article on CONFINTEA VII and adult education in Africa. **Ivor Baatjes**, who participated in discussions of the civil society forum, shares some thoughts for considerations. Baatjes argues that the Marrakech Framework for Action offers a new moment to advance adult education systems based on human rights and social justice. He offers several suggestions that adult educators should consider in using the MFA moment to enable

greater traction for adult education on the continent.

We have also included a summary of a policy brief on digitalisation and adult education in Africa. In this summary, **Mondli Hlatshwayo** responds to the policy guidelines of the African Union on digitising learning and teaching in Africa. Hlatshwayo exposes the limitations of the policy guidelines and argues, amongst others, for urgency to include adult education in its policy declarations.

One critical focus area in adult education is the issue of gender and the empowerment of women. **Donia Benmiloud** promotes the role of adult education in the empowerment of women in Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine and Jordan. She provides a brief summary of a special toolkit on gender in adult learning and education.

Collectively, these pieces provide meaningful insights about the nature, scope and focus of the work of adult educators on the continent.





Sajda
allah swen
→ Tafajja
-addu lan

WORKERS IN INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT AND INCLUSIVITY

This article is dedicated to Asakhe Nonzwakazi Sisilana, a home-based worker (HBW) who fought tirelessly for the rights of HBWs. Asakhe passed away 4th September 2022



Britt Baatjes is a freelance educator and researcher with a background in adult and community education, including teaching, curriculum development and writing of materials in 'plain language' versions. Her research interests include the theory and practice of 'work', non-formal education, informal learning and eco-pedagogy. Britt was the Africa Coordinator for the Inaugural WIEGO School.

This article explains informal workers' exclusion from the mainstream, indeed from being recognised and valued as 'workers.'

This exclusion includes being harassed and ill-treated in numerous ways. The article exposes some misperceptions and myths about the informal economy and about workers in informal employment. In addition, it looks at the importance of organising and the role of education in the lives of workers in informal employment. It draws specifically from my experience working with a group of workers from 10 African countries from May to July 2022 as part of the Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)¹ Inaugural School. Twelve participants contributed to this article, through interviews and images, sharing their years of experience – the barriers, exclusion, struggles and pain. They also shared their strengths, successes and hopes.

Unseen and undervalued

For many people, workers in the informal economy are 'invisible.'

Many, such as street vendors or waste pickers are 'seen,' and seen often, but perhaps no interest is taken in them. There are many others who are never seen, such as home-based workers (mostly female), whose homes double up as a place to live and a space to work. There are many people who feel negatively towards informal workers - maybe a street vendor has 'blocked' their way; maybe a waste picker has gone through their trash; maybe a domestic worker has arrived late for work. Maybe they think workers in the informal economy operate 'outside of the law' avoiding regulations and not paying taxes; maybe they believe that what informal workers do is illegal. The informal economy, just like workers who work in it, is often overlooked, undervalued and not seen as part of the 'economy,' locally, nationally or globally.

Following is a poem written by Bamidele Frances Onokpe (of the Federation of Informal Workers' Organisations of Nigeria). In it she describes a day in the life of a street vendor.

A STREET VENDOR'S DIARY

Sun up with unbearable heat...it's hot today

Heavy rains pouring down
with the air, damp and cold
Another day

My little umbrella shade wasn't much help!
It's a miserable day
Few customers coming out because of the rains....
Little Sam, my 9 year old, also came back from school shivering...

We haven't changed his worn out school uniform yet...

Today there's stampede
I need to pack fast before they come
The government Task Force...some call them Loot Force

They seize our wares
And still have to pay
To get back to work!

It's a disaster when they get you.

Mama Chidi,
my neighbor that had her goods seized last month
is yet to get back,
Looking for funds to get started again

And yesterday
I had to settle the Market Leader
She has been there since the current government came in...

But she can't help us stop the Task Force, and the Police from
taking their toll...

So I ran with my big bowl of wares
on my head
I must escape the Task Force...

Then the okada man driving with his fat passenger
from the opposite side
ran into me...

I opened my eyes
in the dark of my room
Little Sam was there
His hands on my pounding head

Sorry Mama

But all that raced in my mind
What happened to my wares!



While perceptions, assumptions and myths abound, today the informal economy accounts for 61 percent of all employment globally. 93 percent of the world's informal employment is in 'emerging'² and 'developing'³ countries. In Africa, 85.8 percent of employment is informal. Women are more exposed to informal employment in most low- and lower-middle income countries and are more often found in the most vulnerable situations (ILO, 2018). The informal economy is vast and should not be understood as something in the margins or on the periphery. It is where you will find 90 percent of the working population in developing countries (Bonnet, et al., 2019). And they are hard at work.

'Access to justice'

While workers in informal employment make up a very large percentage of the working population, they do not have the same rights and protections as workers who are formally employed⁴. Dr Sally Roever (International Coordinator: WIEGO) states: "Informal employment refers to the very large labor force that

falls outside of protective labor laws, outside of different forms of social protection and really outside of access to justice. The majority of workers in the informal economy are trying to make a living against great odds" (Ford Foundation, 2021). The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated an already precarious situation of low earnings and high costs and risks for workers in informal employment, and made it even harder for the poor to work their way out of poverty.

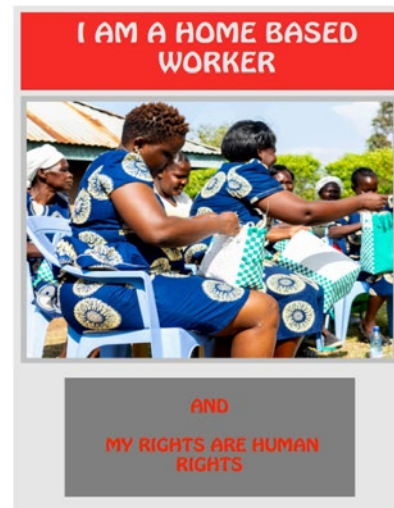
"Informal workers are always excluded and our work is not recognised."
Sophia Bweya Karingo, Zimbabwe Domestic and Allied Workers Union

"We are excluded from decision-making with regard to waste management policies that affect us."

Mohammed Rekiyatu Racheal, National Association of Scraps and Wastepickers of Nigeria

"Since we are 'invisible' to our home governments, we are not registered with the available social services providers for: loans, healthcare, etc. We therefore lose out when we need such services."
Kabuye Agnes, Envirojewels, Uganda

Jemimah Nyakongo, a home-based worker from Rachuonyo Moyie Women Group (Kenya) designed this poster, highlighting the urgent need for recognition and to be treated with decency and dignity as workers and human beings:



Participants attending the WIEGO Inaugural School put together lists of demands per sector. From a much longer list, following is a selection of their demands:

List of demands to authorities

DOMESTIC WORKERS	HOME-BASED WORKERS	STREET VENDORS	WASTE PICKERS
<p>We demand recognition of domestic workers like any other workers. We demand decent work and working conditions. We demand the ratification of Conventions 189 and 190.</p> <p>We need a fair living wage. The minimum wage must be revised, increased and implemented for domestic workers.</p>	<p>We need spacious and ample working space that takes into account the number of personnel and machines being used; child safety (homes are work spaces too); safe storage and sanitation.</p> <p>There needs to be infrastructural development, like roads - to ease transportation of raw materials and finished products to and from HBWs.</p>	<p>In public spaces, authorities should put up decent structures and shelters for street and market vendors. The health and safety of the workers should be protected (e.g. being included in social protection services). Our commodities should also be protected.</p> <p>Authorities should refrain from the use of force when engaging with vendors (e.g. confiscating merchandise), and rather use dialogue and consultation.</p>	<p>We need protective gear and affordable health insurance as we are at high risk of getting sick.</p> <p>Waste pickers should be involved in environmental policy discussions from local to national level.</p>



The Domestic Workers Union of Zambia demands social protection



Green Waste Pickers Cooperative Society Limited. Photos courtesy Johnson Doe, Kpone Landfill Waste Pickers Association

Stronger together

“We do not have a common voice; the togetherness that is required to amplify our labour rights.”

Joan Cherop Gloria, Kenya
Union of Domestic, Hotels,
Educational Institutions,
Hospitals and Allied Workers

Workers in informal employment, like all workers, are stronger together. Workers in the informal economy are at a disadvantage when it comes to forming unions and/or negotiating collective bargaining agreements. Many do not have an employer (for example, street vendors and waste pickers) or do not know their employer (some home-based workers) or are one person working for an employer (domestic workers). Workers in the informal economy do engage in forms of collective bargaining through their membership-based organisations (MBOs)⁵. However, the ‘counterparts’ they negotiate with are often not employers. They might be local authorities or different municipal departments.

Despite the many difficulties and obstacles, workers in informal employment have organised, and continue to do so, in a variety of ways and at multiple levels. Here is one such example. This is the first waste pickers group to register a cooperative in Ghana (2 September 2022).

Gladys Mponda (Malawi Union for the Informal Sector), states that “growing membership is important for an organisation so that it will have a strong voice when lobbying and negotiating with authorities and government.”

Through organization, informal workers can pool their own considerable knowledge and skills. They can broaden this by building contacts with other organizations and by gaining access to new information sources and support. This helps them to bridge the knowledge and resource gaps between informal workers and those with power over them, who come from more privileged backgrounds and/or have greater resources to draw on. It helps build confidence to speak out, to develop strategies and strong arguments (Bonnet & Spooner, 2012).

Workers in informal employment do not all have exactly the same issues and demands as the sectors they work in are different. However, there are many similarities in their struggles. Reflecting on the WIEGO Inaugural

School, Batte Charles Sseruyidde (Uganda Markets and Allied Employees Union) said: “At the end of the training, it was evidently clear that informal workers have common needs regardless of boundaries or location.”

The role of worker education

“Paper qualifications as a means of getting employed - currently is for the privileged few. What is now important is acquiring skills through which one may earn a living sustainably.”

Kabuye Agnes, Envirojewels, Uganda

The Inaugural WIEGO School brought together informal workers from different sectors in a virtual space – domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers. Participants came from Brazil and various countries in Africa and Asia. The first non-formal course took place over a few months. Participants learned about organising, particularly in

the current context; the right to social protection; inclusive urban planning and access to public space; collective negotiations; and collective action by workers in the informal economy.

Following are some inputs by participants on what they think the role of education is for workers in informal employment, drawing on their experience of participating in the School:

“Education supports informal workers by empowering them on their rights at the workplace, the importance of being organised and joining a union for the purposes of representation, and the strength of togetherness to have a common voice to be heard.”

Joan Cherop Gloria, Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers

“It helps them to get to know their rights.”

Nabirye Loy Tubirabire, AfriYouth Support Organisation, Uganda

“Learning and discussing together offered many insights to each sector to learn from each other.”

Kabuye Agnes, Envirojewels, Uganda

“I learned how to be with different people.”

Abdulai Rukaya, Kayayei Youth Association, Ghana

The School served as a space for people to ‘meet’ and share similar and different experiences with one another. It served to deepen participants’ existing knowledge of issues which affect their lives

and those with whom they work. It also reinforced the idea of working collectively to make sure that the struggles of workers in informal employment are heard and action is taken in order to improve their lives and livelihoods. Coming together across sectors, countries and continents strengthened and supported the common struggle and rightful demand for inclusivity.

Written by :

Britt Baatjes

(Freelance educator & researcher, South Africa) with

Abdulai Rukaya

(Kayayei Youth Association, Ghana)

Sophia Bweya Karingo

(Zimbabwe Domestic and Allied Workers Union)

Joan Cherop Gloria

(Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers)

Kabuye Agnes

(Envirojewels, Uganda)

Mohammed Rekiyatu Racheal

(National Association of Scraps and Wastepickers of Nigeria)

Gladys Mponda

(Malawi Union for the Informal Sector)

Bamidele Frances Onokpe

(Federation of Informal Workers’ Organisations of Nigeria)

Ruth Sakala

(Domestic Workers Union of Zambia)

Batte Charles Sseruyidde

(Uganda Markets and Allied Employees Union)

Nabirye Loy Tubirabire

(AfriYouth Support Organisation, Uganda)

Endnotes:

- 1 Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing.
- 2 Though there is no single definition, emerging economies are (mostly) middle-income countries that have been or are growing and developing rapidly (ILO).
- 3 According to the United Nations, a developing country is a country with a relatively low standard of living, undeveloped industrial base, and moderate to low Human Development Index (HDI). This index is a comparative measure of poverty, literacy, education, life expectancy, and other factors for countries worldwide.
- 4 NOTE: This is a context of increasing precarity for many formally employed workers.
- 5 For example, the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) (India) - the largest trade union of informal workers in the world with over 1.6 million participating women.

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A SIGN LANGUAGE FOR DECENT WORK IN FORGOTTEN TERRITORIES: AN ADULT EDUCATION APPROACH



Monia Manai is a researcher in educational science and adult education with a focus on learning in non-formal settings. She is currently a doctoral student at the Institut Supérieur de l'Education et de la Formation Continue (ISEFC). She is a founding member and Vice-president of DVV International in Tunisia, President of the Association of Sustainable and Equitable Development (ADDE), consultant in adult education and facilitator in the valorisation of aromatic and medicinal plants.

The forgotten territories: Tekrouna

The Tunisian forest areas on the Algerian border are rich in plant species and aromatic and medicinal plants (AMP) that can provide original and varied substances, essential oils and aromas that are very useful for the agri-food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.

Despite the richness of these rural forest areas, the inhabitants, especially women, suffer from marginalisation, poverty and poor education, rendering these areas forgotten territories.

Investment in human capital and the development of natural resources is an unavoidable necessity to encourage the local population to participate in development and to act as active economic players for the improvement of their socio-economic living conditions.

According to a study carried out by the Agency for Promotion of Investment in Agriculture (APIA), several public organisations wanted to train these communities in practices related to Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (AMP). However, this requires a certain level of education equivalent to a minimum of six years of compulsory schooling. Even if activities are occasionally scheduled in their training structures, communities living in enclosed forest clearings cannot access them for reasons of distance, lack of resources and, above all, a level of education that is not adapted to the prerequisites of such training.

The majority of rural women living in this border area are either completely non-literate or have not completed



Takrouna Sakiet Sidi Youssef Delegation, Governorate of Kef, Tunisia



Training session in open fields

their primary education. In both cases, they are unable to attend the training provided by NGOs which requires a specific background, and instead require training adapted to their needs which takes into account age, feelings of social exclusion, levels of impoverishment and other factors. The study carried out by Manai and Kilani (2019) focused on showing how, through the mobilisation of semiotic tools, Pierce (1978) was able to support a population of non-literate women living in a forgotten territory to build an appropriate language that facilitated the acquisition of professional skills relating to the distillation of aromatic and medicinal plants.

A new visual language for decent work

Outside their homes, in the fields, in direct contact with the plants, women were accompanied to the heights of the mountain where they learnt the techniques of gathering plants.

The training taught participants the correct way to cut branches without uprooting plants, and to work the soil around the plant to allow it to regenerate quickly and develop better for the next season. This method preserves the beauty of the landscape and prevents erosion and biodiversity, while ensuring a sustainable income for the women.

The trainer adopted participatory and interactive training methods aimed at supporting rural women with little schooling to acquire the techniques to distill aromatic plants in a way that adheres to commercial quality standards in the market. The aim was also to assist this community of women see the possibility of decent work in a forgotten territory.

Methodology

The participant group were women between the ages of 20 and 65 years. It was necessary to devise a means of communication that did not require writing or reading skills. To maintain motivation and avoid participants dropping out, the women needed to feel safe and able to learn and so the trainer created a common language based mainly on signs and symbols.

The most important aspect of this construction process was that the signs or symbols came from the learners/participants. No pre-established scheme was imposed because this would have no meaning for the participant group. After having constructed the signs and symbols related to all the steps of distillation, the trainer moved on to the validation of this language, which was co-validated in order to allow the anchoring of the learning.

The different steps of distillation were modelled by a system of signs and symbols that facilitated

understanding and exchange in order to achieve the following competencies (Figures 1 and 2):



Figure 1: Mapping of the work process by a participant

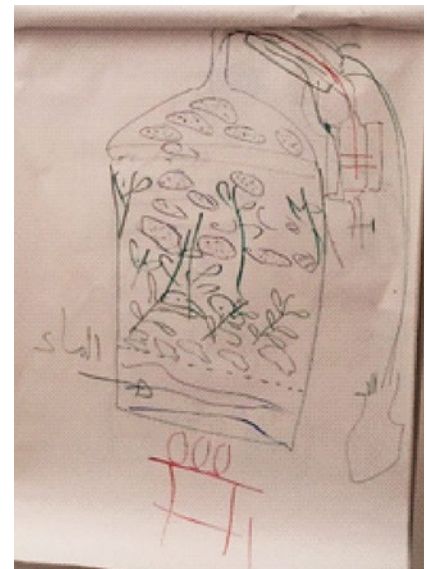
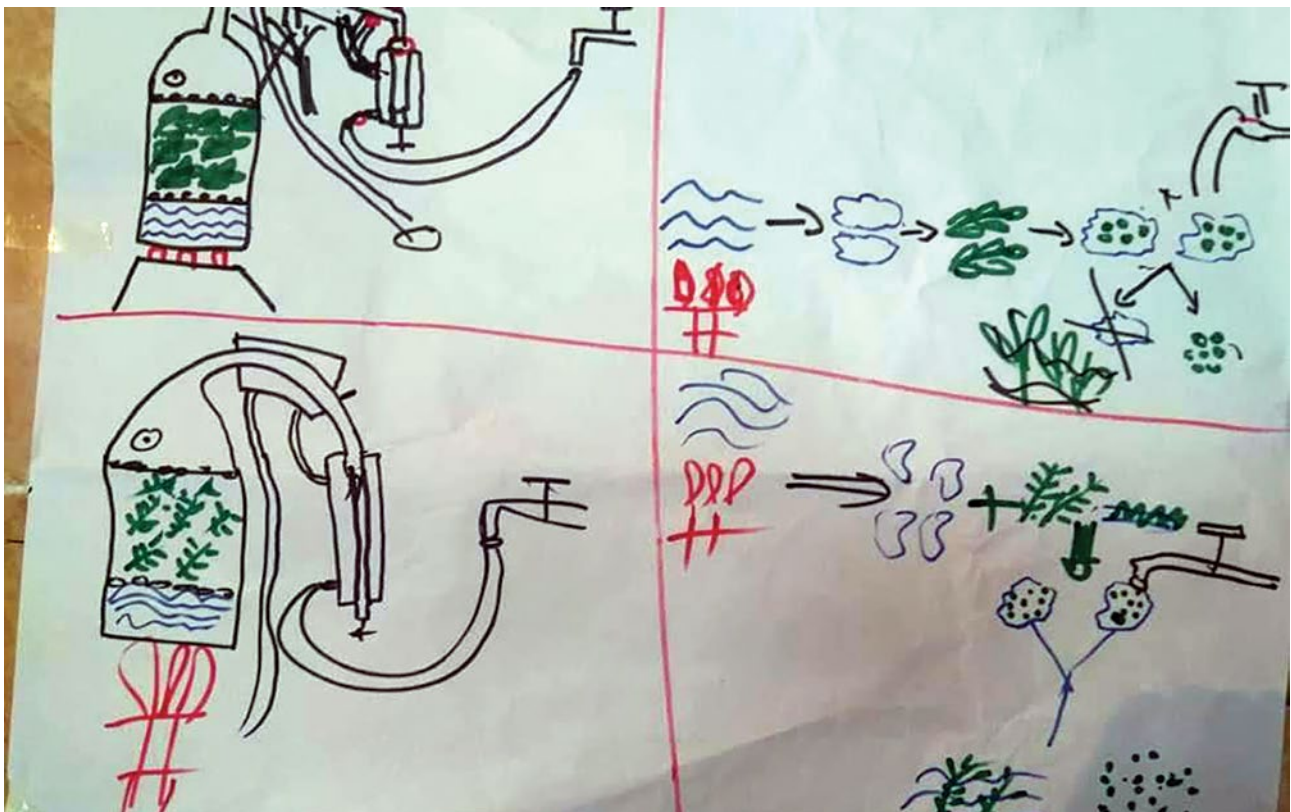


Figure 2: Mapping of the work process by a participant

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The common language co-constructed by these women during the learning phase enabled them to overcome the obstacle of non-literacy.



Modelling and conceptualisation of the distillation process

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After six months of training, the women of this ‘forgotten’ territory were able to give birth to their own produce: rosemary water and essential oil - a first step on the road to financial autonomy.

Following the training sessions, the women were able to better manage all the steps of the AMP distillation technique, as illustrated in the drawing. The common language co-constructed by these women during the learning phase enabled them to overcome the obstacle of non-literacy. Moreover, the co-constructed signs and symbols were the first steps the rural women took towards literacy.



Conclusion

Following the work done in terms of modelling, the learners were able to acquire technical skills related to the distillation of aromatic plants. They also developed theoretical knowledge about the phenomenon of distillation. After six months of training, the women of this ‘forgotten’ territory were able to give birth to their own produce: rosemary water and essential oil - a first step on the road to financial autonomy.

This experience has allowed the Tunisian research community in the

field of adult education, and with the support of DVV International Tunisia, to develop a new approach in non-formal adult education, based on activity and sign language: the semio-didactic approach.

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ADULT EDUCATION AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT



Laya Boni was born in 1973 in Perma, Commune of Natitingou to a family of modest agro-breeders with eight children. He studied at the University of Abomey-Calavi and holds Master's degrees in Risk and Disaster Management, and Geography and Environmental Management.

Laya Boni, like the children of his pastoral background, has learned to lead the herds to pasture while reconciling this with his studies. With the difficulties of schooling in a pastoral environment, he was housed by the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Augustine. This allowed him to progress in his studies.

Since 2004, employed at the NGO POTAL MEN, he works in conflict prevention, social cohesion and peace building.

Conflicts between farmers and herders in Benin have escalated over the past decade. But now, literacy and adult education are being used effectively to reduce conflicts between people who share natural resources and to establish a sustainable peace within communities.

Since 2011, POTAL MEN has been working in the field of conflict prevention and management in relation to pastoral mobility. The organisation has undertaken several actions to revitalise existing mechanisms, including setting up committees to regulate transhumance (the action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically to lowlands in winter and highlands in summer). To this end, frameworks for dialogue, sensitisation at village level, and capacity building on pastoralism have been carried out using several tools such as posters and practical advice guides.

Since 2014, POTAL MEN (with the technical support of PAMOJA following the REFLECT literacy approach) has opened 12 literacy circles with approximately 360 learners in the border areas of northern Benin. The programme was carried out within the framework of the implementation of the Regional Program of Education/Training of Pastoral Populations (PREPP) and the Support Program to Pastoral Organizations and Populations (PAO2P), with co-financing from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (DDC), the operators and the communities. These literacy circles

have been used to popularise legal texts on pastoralism and non-violent conflict management. The results today show that literacy is an effective tool that contributes to social cohesion and peace between communities.

How do these literacy circles contribute to social cohesion and peace?

In the process, the facilitators who supervise the learners are first trained in the different themes related to the prevention and non-violent management of conflicts using the tools developed for this purpose. Once trained, they in turn train the learners in facilitating dialogue with other communities in conflict situations. The circles constitute the melting pots for the wide dissemination of the content of the pastoral code, allowing pastoral populations to know their rights and duties in the field of pastoralism and mechanisms for conflict prevention and management. This considerably reduces the occurrence of conflicts in these areas.



These literacy circles have been used to popularise legal texts on pastoralism and non-violent conflict management.



Training of facilitators on conflict prevention and management image boxes

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The contents of these image boxes on conflict prevention and management are used by the facilitators to produce teaching/learning units on legislation, social cohesion, peace, and conflict prevention and management. These units are then taught in basic education circles and vocational training areas. The ownership of these conflict prevention and management mechanisms by the learners makes them ambassadors of peace and social cohesion in their environment. Thus, the learners participate in consultations with other communities and peacefully make their point of view heard in conflict situations. Benin's defense and security forces

(FDS) are also involved in the attempt to encourage peaceful collaboration in the resolution of conflicts.

Today, we can say that these learners have mastered conflict-sensitive communication, which has strengthened peaceful collaboration.

In conclusion, the training given on mechanisms of conflict prevention and management in these circles have equipped learners with essential knowledge, skills and attitudes enabling them to understand and interact with their environment and to participate more effectively in conflict prevention and management.



THE IMPACT OF THE SECURITY CRISIS ON EDUCATION IN BURKINA FASO



Nebie Bagnomo Modeste holds a Master's degree in Science Information and Communication from the University of Ouagadougou. Since 2010, he is responsible for communication and advocacy for the National Coalition for Education for All in Burkina Faso and communication advisor for several structures including the Cadre de Concertation des Associations and NGOs active in Basic Education in Burkina Faso (CCEB).

He is a member of several journalist groups including the Association of Journalists of Burkina (AJB), the Network of Journalists and Communicators for Education/ Gender and Development (REJCED) and the Journalists' Initiatives Network (RIJ).

Since 2015, Burkina Faso has faced an unprecedented situation of insecurity. Terrorist attacks are regularly perpetrated throughout the country with some severity in eight of the 13 regions which are: the East, the Center-East, the Sahel, the North, the Center-North, the Boucle du Mouhoun, the South-West and the Cascades.

These attacks cause all kinds of damage and massive population displacement. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), nearly 700 security incidents involving armed groups were recorded between January and September 2022, resulting in more than 600 deaths. This security crisis has also led to a catastrophic humanitarian situation and plunged Burkinabe schools into a disastrous situation in terms of access and quality. In this article we will discuss the effects of the security crisis on the education of children, youth and adults.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burkina Faso, as of 20 September 2022, was 1,520,012 of whom 59.13 percent were children. Also, according to figures from the National Secretariat for Education in Emergencies, 708,341 students, including 339,260 girls, were affected by the closure of 4,258 schools as of 31 May 2022.

This unprecedented crisis has manifested itself in the education sector through aggressions, physical violence and threats against educational actors, assassinations, burning of educational facilities, and destruction of teaching and learning materials. When a school infrastructure closes, there is naturally a break in schooling and children no longer have access to education. Their right to education is thus violated. As of today, more than 20,763 teachers are affected by the crisis and 11 have lost their lives in the course of their duties, according to figures from the Ministry of Education. Others have been brutalised, injured, traumatised, and had their property looted or destroyed. They are also traumatised like the children and have been redeployed to more secure areas. This is the case of Igor Soulga, a schoolteacher who used to work in Pissila and has now been redeployed to Kaya, a hundred kilometres from the capital Ouagadougou.

He says that the teachers lived in perfect harmony with their host communities and taught their children peacefully despite the perceptible terrorist threat. This was the case "until the terrorists came and threatened us to leave the place. At first, they wanted the knowledge transmitters to leave. They threatened us with weapons. There were victims". He would have liked to continue to teach his students until the Certificate of Primary Studies (CEP), but he had no choice. "Personally, it really affected me. I took them [the students] to CP1, I fought to reach a goal and since I didn't reach it, it makes me unhappy. I am bruised inside. Often when I meet my students, I want to shed tears because I see their future interrupted. As a teacher, this makes me unhappy and also I have not been able to help some parents to reintegrate them in centres or in school".



Learners in a literacy room in Banfora

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Thus, thanks to the commitment and dedication of literacy operators and other actors at the central and decentralised levels, literacy campaigns continue to contribute to addressing illiteracy and undereducation in the country, despite the difficult context characterised by the persistent security crisis which has led some learners to abandon learning and education centres.

What impact on children and the education system?

Of the 1,520,012 internally displaced persons currently in the country, nearly 60 percent are children and nearly 43 percent are of school age. Given the vulnerability of the education system and the massive displacement of populations, the impact on these children is enormous. These internally displaced children find themselves with their parents in host areas where the capacity of classrooms is not sufficient to accommodate them. They are then obliged to wait sometimes one to two years before getting a place in a school to continue their studies. This naturally impacts their academic level.

In addition to this impact, there are difficulties related to access to health, food, shelter and child protection.

Despite the precariousness of internally displaced students, their situation is still enviable compared to others who have not had the chance to flee with their parents because they are still trapped in conflict zones. They lack absolutely everything and no longer have the right to go to school, so they are easy prey for terrorists. It should also be noted that, with the numerous cases of attacks against education and the fact that most of these attacks are perpetrated in schools in front of children, this constitutes a serious violation of their

right. Threats, burning of infrastructure, and killings in front of children cause enormous harm to them, especially emotionally and psychologically.

The Education Cluster: A framework for better coordination of education efforts in emergency situations

Faced with this unprecedented situation and in order to find structural solutions and give a chance to the thousands of children who, with the insecurity, are no longer able to access the education system or who have dropped out of school, the Burkinabe government and its partners have set up the Education Cluster, which brings together all the actors involved in education in crisis situations. The aim of this approach is to ensure inclusive access to formal, non-formal and informal education that is healthy and protective for children and to improve the learning environment to make it healthy and protective.

This system needs the support of all actors because, in an emergency situation, education remains the safest



A training session for literacy centre facilitators

vehicle to enable children to learn and not be enrolled into the ranks of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG).

What about literacy and adult education?

Adult learning and education are key to active citizenship, political participation, social cohesion and gender equality. They are also the basis for important overall socio-economic benefits for individuals, communities and human society in general.

Aware of this fact, the state and development partners are making numerous efforts to boost literacy. Thus, thanks to the commitment and dedication of literacy operators and other actors at the central and decentralised levels, literacy campaigns continue to contribute to addressing illiteracy and undereducation in the country of people, despite the difficult context characterised by the persistent security crisis which has led some learners to abandon learning and education centres.

This is reflected in the results of the 2021-2022 campaign which, according to the Minister of National Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages on the occasion of International Literacy Day 2022, recorded the registration of 66,053 learners in 2,263 centres opened

by 480 operators. Also, in terms of professional capacity building, 6,422 internally displaced learners, including 4,852 girls/women, were trained thanks to the determination of the educational authorities and civil society actors.

However, the progress made in literacy is hampered by, among other things, the impact of terrorist attacks, including the massive displacement of people who flee their villages to take refuge in more secure areas. We must therefore redouble our efforts. Thus, in line with the theme of International Literacy Day 2022: “Transforming learning and literacy spaces”, it is imperative to rethink the fundamental importance of learning and literacy spaces to strengthen resilience and ensure quality, equitable and inclusive education for all.

In the same vein, it seems crucial for the promoters, producers and beneficiaries of literacy and non-formal education services to imagine diversified educational and training offers adapted to the crisis context that Burkina Faso is going through.

In conclusion, the literacy rate in Burkina Faso was 29.7 percent in 2019. All stakeholders in education have been working together to raise these rates for several years. Unfortunately, the security crisis that Burkina Faso is experiencing will cause enormous damage to the education sector in general and to adult education in particular, since all the children who have been forced

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Thus, in line with the theme of International Literacy Day 2022: “Transforming learning and literacy spaces”, it is imperative to rethink the fundamental importance of learning and literacy spaces to strengthen resilience and ensure quality, equitable and inclusive education for all.

to interrupt their schooling will swell the number of illiterate young people and adults in the coming years. It is therefore urgent to find formal, non-formal or informal mechanisms to ensure that learning and education are not interrupted even during emergency situations.

PROTECTING COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS - COMMUNITY STRUGGLES ON THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA



Anna Majavu is an activist, journalist and part-time lecturer with a background in the trade union movement, media and Palestine solidarity movement. Her research interests include media representations, critical race discourse analysis of mainstream media articles and digital self-representation.

A growing movement against beach mining on the West Coast has vowed to stop corporate mining giants from destroying the food security of the residents of dozens of tiny fishing villages.

“My father is 50 years on the sea. He doesn’t know another life. He has fished from the age of 16 and he raised us from this income. We are a very poor community but we look out over the ocean. The sea is our livelihood and our heartbeat. It is part of us. If we are not going to stop them, they are going to kill us. We will starve” says Deborah de Wee, a leader in the Doringbaai Fisherfolk Women, which protests against the mining companies who have applied for prospecting rights to drill just offshore.

The villages and towns, including Doringbaai, Lamberts Bay, Elandsbaai, Strandfontein and towns like Kleinsee on the Namaqualand Diamond Coast are currently threatened by more than 15 different mining companies who want to mine the entire stretch of coastline for everything from diamonds to gold ore.

Deborah was born in Doringbaai to an indigenous Doringbaai family who has lived there for centuries. She has lived in the tiny village with a population of less than 2000 people all her life.

Her movement is currently opposing an application by TransAtlantic Diamonds (a Johannesburg-based company) to prospect over 1240 hectares of sea bed just off the coast for gold, silver, platinum, alluvial diamonds, sapphires and garnets, ferrous, monasite mineral, titanium minerals like ilmenite and rutile, zircon

and iron ore. The prospecting will take up to five years, during which fisherfolk will not be able to fish in the bay.

Mining causes fish to flee the bays

De Wee says the presence of two other companies, TransHex and Moonstone Diamond Marketing, has already caused marine life to leave the bay, disrupting the community’s food security. The community survives from catching snoek and harvesting mussels – and the West Coast is one of the few places in South Africa where impoverished residents can easily gather healthy, protein rich fish to sustain themselves.

“We are already in crisis as we already have small diamond boats with big pumps mining the grey sand just offshore so they can sift it for diamonds. They do it in our bay which disturbs the fish. So therefore we do not have fish in our bay anymore. Our fishermen have to go into the deep sea which they don’t have petrol to do” said de Wee.

“We as the indigenous people of Doringbaai know that these companies are going to mine, not only diamonds but lots of things because we are rich in resources,” de Wee added.

Wendy Pekteur, co-ordinator of the rural and informal settlement advocacy group Ubuntu Rural Women based near Stellenbosch about 300 kilometres away, says local communities have realised that life as they know it will be over if mining goes ahead. Ubuntu Rural joined forces with the Doringbaai Fisherfolk Women to hold a Fisherfolk Women’s Festival in Doringbaai on 23 and 24 September, ending it with a protest march along the coastline.



Saying "Los ons Oseaan" (Hands off our Ocean), the children of Doringbaai fisherfolk joined the march in September 2022 against mining in their bay
Image courtesy of Wendy Pekeur

Carrying placards reading "Hands Off Our Sea and Land" and "Protect our Ocean Life! Keep the mines out!", the women said their families are sure to starve if the mines are granted the right to search for minerals. These protests in communities, involving children and youth, are becoming important sites of learning about life-making ecosystems and the struggle to protect indigenous food systems.

Indigenous rights trampled by government

De Wee filmed a video of herself delivering a message to Mineral Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe and asking him to stop approving so many prospecting applications by mines.

"I am an original indigenous fisherwoman in Doringbaai. We eat out of the sea, we go and fetch mussels, shellfish, and our children play in that sea. This is our culture, it is our heritage. Don't take away that spark of our heart. This is a plea to you to think of our children, grandchildren and great great grandchildren to come, so that they can explore and live the life and take the heritage of the Doringbaai fisherfolk forward. This is our heartbeat, we are one with this ocean and if we cannot live off this ocean then we no longer have a life. Because this is all the life that the people of Doringbaai know,

ever since we were born until today" the video says.

There are already far too many local and international mining companies carving up the West Coast beaches. Australian mining company Mineral Commodities Ltd has extracted millions of tons of sand from the Tormin beaches, 70 kilometres to the north of Doringbaai, since 2013. This is the same company which is attempting to mine titanium and other minerals at Xolobeni on the Wild Coast.

In Tormin, Mineral Commodities Ltd occupies a huge 12 kilometre stretch of the beach. In 2020 it successfully had its licence amended to allow it to start mining zircon, rutile, ilmenite, garnet, leucoxene and magnetite at the nearby Northern Beaches too (ten beaches of 23.5km in length).

It appears rather easy for a mining company to put together an acceptable [application for prospecting rights](#). The company hires a firm of 'environmental consultants' who hold one consultation meeting with communities (where they are mainly rejected) and then write a report saying that there will be no or very little negative impact on the local community if mining starts. A vague assertion that the minerals and precious stones they are prospecting for are vital for industrial development completes the report.

Yet this is untrue and the impact on the people of the small fishing villages is huge. The mining at Tormin uses very

heavy trucks and excavators to dig out between 2.5 and 2.7 million tons of ore annually. The mining company has now been given permission to build a giant processing plant in the area next year.

3D seismic surveys = powerful soundwave blasts

3D seismic surveys are another major problem for food systems and livelihoods. These surveys use an array of air guns up to six kilometres long to shoot out pressurised air under the sea. This generates powerful sound waves along the sea bed, used to map the location of mineral deposits that may exist in the rock layers under the seabed. Marine life is greatly disturbed by this.

In September 2022, the Makhanda High Court prohibited oil giant Shell from conducting a seismic survey in the Wild Coast to locate oil and gas. The court revoked the exploration rights that the government had granted to Shell after dozens of community-based organisations, Wild Coast fishers and residents of Wild Coast and Umgungundlovu villages argued successfully that the seismic surveys would cause harm to marine and bird life and infringe on the communities' spiritual and cultural rights.

Cape Town non-profit organisation Green Connection, which also took



September 2022: The fisherfolk of Doringbaai say "We are fighting for our livelihoods and our marine creatures", Image courtesy of Wendy Pekeur

part in the Doringbaai Fisherfolk Women's Festival, campaigns against seismic surveys on the West Coast. "Of particular concern for small scale fishers is the impact these surveys will have on the snoek fishery which forms the basis of many communities' livelihood. The seismic surveys will be conducted directly within the snoek migration routes and breeding habitat", Green Connection says.

Maia Nangle, project officer at the Masifundise Development Trust, points out that from April until about July every year, the West Coast is the site of the snoek run. "When it is running, fishing villages such as Lambert's Bay in the Western Cape come to life, with fishing boats teeming along the coast on a daily basis if the oceans allow".

"The snoek fishery on the West Coast feeds a substantial informal and local market and the fish is an important source of protein in poorer communities. The snoek that is caught off the West Coast is usually sold to the Cape Town market through langanas (fish traders) who chill and transport the catches and sell the fish from the back of their bakkies" Nangle says.

Fisherfolk along the West Coast were already hit hard by the COVID-19 government regulations during the hard lockdowns in 2020, which prevented them from fishing

completely, and then allowed the fisherfolk to fish but only within the curfew which prevented them from arriving at fishing sites in good time to set out to sea.

Fisherfolk women's rights trampled upon by mines and aquaculture

The Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape says that "coastal communities are becoming increasingly poor and more vulnerable and women are often overlooked, ignored and excluded from the blue economy development agenda. The promises of jobs, capacity development and skills, and development funding all seem to elude coastal women as the focus is on large-scale aquaculture, adventure and elite tourism, energy, oil, gas and mining".

The community of Doringbaai has decided that enough is enough. They are standing strong against Trans-Atlantic Diamonds and formally rejected the company at a public participation meeting in November 2021. According to Masifundise,

Trans-Atlantic Diamonds would carry out seismic mining on the shore while drilling with a specialised tool. The community was also told there would be no jobs available for them during the entire two to five year prospecting period.

"For the local fishers of the surrounding areas, this area is important for their fishing activities. During the snoek run (March to July) the fishers do not have to travel far, as the snoek will be laying in the area north of Doringbaai. This also means that the fish is sold at cheaper prices to community members thus contributing hugely to the food security and nutrition of the area".

"During difficult times, when there are no fish, women and children collect mussels to be able to provide the family with a nutrient filled meal. This would not be possible should this be declared a mining area" said Masifundise.

Environmental and social movements and organisations that support farm workers such as Ubuntu Rural look set to continue to support the remote communities of the West Coast, who are quite isolated, being situated hundreds of kilometres from Cape Town, all the way up to the Northern Cape.

Drawing on the damage left behind by mines during colonisation and apartheid, and their devastating impact on communities and their environment and food security, Wendy Pekeur of Ubuntu Rural says: "we have never seen mining benefiting any community. History showed us how brutal mining companies were. They took everything and left the communities in tatters. Mining-affected communities are confronted today with serious health issues, among other ills. Minister Gwede Mantashe needs to be removed as the Minister. His interest in mining makes him blind to the pleas of communities. He has a clear conflict of interest in granting these mining applications" Pekeur said.

This story is indicative of the importance of non-formal learning that takes place in community struggles and social movements. This story also highlights ways in which communities construct knowledge and deepen eco-consciousness through participation in local struggles.

ADULT EDUCATORS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY



Linda Daniels is a writer. She has worked as a journalist, media trainer, podcast producer and editor. Her career in journalism includes broadcast and print media. As a media trainer, she has supported women and activists working in popular education movements to become community reporters. She is also involved in training young people from low-income communities in using radio production tools to tell their own stories. Linda has covered a long-running advocacy campaign concerning copyright reform in South Africa.

Learning environments are constantly changing. Over the last decade, digitalisation has been advanced in education, including adult education. Digitalisation is commonly understood as a transformative mode of thinking and doing that utilises digital technologies as a result of modernisation.

In addition, digitalisation is a catalyst for innovation. Today, digitalisation is sewn into the fabric of our lives and there is an inevitability about its continued evolution into our collective future. However, its true impact for productive change – within an African context – is yet to be fully realised since many educators face structural barriers in accessing digital technologies and utilising it fully within the context of their work as adult educators.

In 2021, MOJA conducted a survey of adult educators and their use of technology. This article provides a unique insight into the survey's findings on the potential for adult educators in South Africa to make full use of the digital tools available to them.

Background: The effect of COVID-19 on education in Africa

Governments across Africa hastily forced the shutdown of educational

institutions at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 protocols were implemented, it was apparent that the entire approach to education based on classroom instruction became unworkable. However, there had been little preparation for a replacement of face-to-face learning in a classroom. This problem confronted governments worldwide, but it was particularly severe in many African nations such as South Africa, given entrenched levels of inequality. Despite the prompt launch of educational television and radio programmes, only those with access to a television or radio were able to view or listen to them. Similarly, only those with reliable internet access could participate in online learning. Most students and teachers, however, had no prior experience with teaching and learning outside of the classroom.

Bridging the digital divide

The digital divide in South Africa was exacerbated during COVID-19, as internet access became essential to everyday tasks such as education, work, community organisation and communication. But internet access is unequally distributed – poorer communities in South Africa do not have access to affordable and quality internet connection, while wealthier neighbourhoods benefit from copper infrastructure or fibre. As a result, many South Africans rely primarily on mobile data to access the internet.

The African Union (AU) published its policy guidelines on digitising teaching and learning in Africa in 2021. The DOTSS (Digital Connectivity; Online and Offline Learning; Teachers as Facilitators and Motivators of Learning; Safety Online and in Schools, and Skills-Focused Learning) framework discussed in this journal is a key innovation for addressing

COVID-19's challenges (See policy brief by Hlatshwayo in this Issue). The framework aims to strengthen coordinated actions between African nations in order to mitigate future shocks to the education ecosystem.

Essential elements of DOTSS

The DOTSS framework (African Union, 2020) lists the following essential elements:

Digital connectivity: This is a call to action for member states to strengthen the infrastructure required for digital connectivity. From accessible and affordable internet access to waiving or subsidising data use costs for accessing educational materials.

Online learning: This is a call to adopt online education as a strategy for bridging the COVID-19 - induced access gap. Investing in high-quality eLearning solutions will facilitate continuous learning at all levels, including TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training).

Teachers as facilitators and motivators of learning: Teachers should acquire the skills necessary to adapt to the new reality of virtual and distance education. They must be proficient in the utilisation of eLearning platforms, scheduling, virtual and remote student engagement, and assessment. This is done to ensure positive learning outcomes.

Safety online and in schools: To ensure that, while digitised learning is a means of mitigating the effects of COVID-19 on education systems, strategies related to online bullying and sexual harassment of teachers and students must be developed.

Skills-focused learning: To ensure that our youth are equipped with the relevant skills required to function in any industry or discipline, we must provide them with skills that are both foundational and job-focused.

Adult educators and digitalisation

Although the AU framework is a positive step toward promoting, among other things, online education, one of the limitations is the exclusion of adult education. MOJA (which translates to "one" in Swahili), a network of

adult educators in Africa, and the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV International), a partner in adult education, suggested developing a policy brief to submit to the AU to advocate for the inclusion of digitised learning and teaching in adult education.

Uncovering how adult educators use digital tools in South Africa

The survey was designed to appraise the current status of the use of, and access to, digital technologies by adult educators, and aimed to understand more about the potential of digitalisation as a pedagogical tool that could be used to support the work of adult educators. Adult education is part of the post-school education and training (PSET) sector and encompasses both formal and non-formal education and training; and has been conceptualised mostly through the institutional form represented by the Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs).

The survey objectives were:

- To understand the nature of access to digital technologies in South Africa;
- To establish baseline data about the technologies accessible to adult educators;
- To understand the kinds of technologies used by adult educators;
- To gain insight about the barriers to digital technologies; and
- To suggest ways in which a digital platform could serve the needs and interests of adult educators at the chalkface.

Geographical spread of survey respondents

Adult educators located across the country were surveyed. Responding to the survey was voluntary. Given that a ready database of adult educators was not at the researchers' disposal,

respondents were drawn from several WhatsApp provincial groups that adult educators have formed and actively participate in, and one national WhatsApp group. Access to all the WhatsApp groups was not possible but to circumvent this limitation, members of the groups were requested to share the instrument widely among adult educators. In addition, there is one Facebook group with adult educators as members. This group is specifically focused on better conditions of service and was not approached because of the invitation being shared with a WhatsApp group involved in grievances related to conditions of service. Thus, it was decided that existing networks among adult educators on the WhatsApp platform would be used to support the data collection process. The survey was also intended to initiate a process of understanding access to technology and to use the survey as a basis for further work.

The number of employed adult educators

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2018) data, there are 2,643 Community Learning Centres spread across the nine provinces; and 14,259 staff employed (of which 12,975 are lecturers and the rest management and support staff) at Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Following a few reminders on the WhatsApp groups, 48 adult educators responded to the survey.

Professional experience of adult educators

The survey did not delve into the skills base of educators as part of the professionalisation of adult educators' discourse. Instead, it focused on adult educators' tenure in the sector. Half of all respondents had over a decade of experience in their roles as adult educators. This information has not been further teased out in follow up questions in the instrument to determine what factors motivate adult educators to remain in their job for

more than a decade. 50 percent of adult educators had worked for 11-15 years; 37.5 percent worked for 16-20 years; and 12.5 percent worked for 6-10 years. 22.9 percent of adult educators are employed on a part-time basis and 77.1 percent are employed on a full-time basis. Of the respondents, 75 percent are female while 25 percent are male. 35.4 percent are between 50 and 60 years of age while 14.6 percent are between 30 and 39 years of age and 50 percent are between the ages of 50 to 60 years of age.

Professionalisation of the adult education sector

The professionalisation of adult educators in South Africa does not have a long and established history because the sector itself emerged only in the mid-1990s. The term “lecturers” was introduced to elevate adult educators working in the sector to a higher status equivalent with their counterparts in the TVET College sector. Similarly, the use of “Community College” is regarded as a way to uplift the institutional status of the old Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs). Together with TVET, these two sectors now constitute the “College” sector. The TVET College sector has a budget five times that of adult education.

Adult educators access to and competency in the use of digital technology

Digital technologies used for education purposes include the use of digital readers and tablets, cloud technology and online learning games, among many others. Digital competencies of adult educators are an increasingly significant skill because it enables the educators to fully harness technology in their efforts to educate youth and adults who are themselves in need of or are already proficient in digital

technologies. The line of enquiry involved a series of questions that followed on from each other about the respondents access to several common devices, digital tool preference as well as the length of time that they have been using digital technologies.

64.6 percent of respondents confirmed that they had access to a computer or laptop while 35.4 percent did not. However, 97.9 percent of respondents owned a mobile phone. A high percentage, 89.6 percent owned a smartphone while 8.3 percent owned a basic phone and the rest a feature phone. Many had experience in the use of digital technologies, with 37.5 percent having 6 to 10 years’ experience while 27.1 percent said that they had 16-20 years of experience. 100 percent of respondents answered that the cellphone was their go-to technological device, followed by laptops or computers. 85.4 percent of respondents use technologies for educational purposes such as accessing learning materials, articles and teaching aids, and networking with other educators while 14.6 percent of respondents said that they did not.

Competency in the use of digital tools

Digital competence refers to the overall understanding and comprehension, as well as the skills and attitudes which facilitate the creative use of digital tools in the educational setting. Technology has evolved at a rapid pace and its impact continues to reverberate in all spheres of our lives. Thus, digital competency is an important skill and it can be argued vital to full and active participation in society. Respondents were asked about their digital skills level and where they lacked knowledge in the digital realm. Close to 100 percent of respondents rated their digital competency between 3 and 5 score with 5 being highly competent. 81.3 percent of respondents said that they wanted to learn more about online learning and collaboration.

Digital divide experienced by adult educators

In South Africa, the digital divide is deeply felt by the majority of citizens who struggle to access affordable and reliable internet. In addition, digital tools are expensive. Efforts to bridge the digital divide include calls for cheaper data costs. Adult educators are not immune to this reality and are also caught up in the digital divide. 81.3 percent of respondents said that cost was a barrier to accessing technologies. The same percentage confirmed that they connect to the internet via their mobile phones. 50 percent of respondents use more than 1GB of data per month and 66.7 percent of respondents pay R200 or more for data each month.

The replies we received and the statistics we have compiled are fascinating given the respondents willingness to use technologies as an aid in their teaching methodology. The significance of communications technology and education to Africa’s future economic development is widely acknowledged because they show the nature of adult educators’ experience with technologies and their appetite to know more in this regard so that they may incorporate online learning into their teaching. There appears to be a tacit understanding among adult educators surveyed that technology will inevitably play a much greater role in the successful education systems of the future, particularly if South Africa is to ensure that the youth are equipped with the skills they need for the dynamic labour markets of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

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USING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES TO PROVIDE TRAINERS TO MODERATE THE CRISES IN EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICA



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The world is in a crisis with regards to education. According to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, this crisis is having a devastating impact on the futures of children and youth worldwide. The response to this global crisis in education must focus on mobilising all stakeholders to support the transformation of education across the world (UNESCO, 2021).

A good quality education is one that provides all learners with the capabilities they require to become economically productive citizens, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well being - a well being of equity and inclusion, quality and relevance.

By the middle of this century, there will be one billion children and adolescents under 18 years of age in Africa. This is almost 40 percent of all children and adolescents in the 0-18 age group worldwide. In 2020, three out of five Africans were under the age of 25. By 2050, one in every two under 25s globally will be African. As education is a critical means for the development of human capital, this large young population can become a powerful source of growth and progress in Africa and the world if children and adolescents receive the right opportunities to thrive and develop their full potential. Indeed, the right investments in education

can help to break intergenerational cycles of poverty and aid socio-economic development in Africa. Investments in education can turn the unemployed youth into a qualified and employable workforce that meets the demands of the labour market.

105 million children not in school in Africa

Since the early 2000s, African countries have made significant efforts to improve access to education. The results of these activities have been astonishing. For example, the proportion of primary school-age children who are not in school has halved – from 35 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2019. Similarly, the proportion of children of lower secondary school age who are not in school dropped from 43 percent to 33 percent in the past two decades; for children of upper secondary school age, it dropped from 63 percent to 53 percent (UN DESA, 2020).

In spite of these achievements however, approximately 105 million children of primary and secondary school age were out of school in Africa in 2019. This represents 41 percent of the global number. In addition, many children leave school without completing their education. One of three children in a cohort does not complete primary school. Only 41 percent of a cohort completes lower secondary education and only 23 percent complete upper secondary education. Poor learning outcomes remain a key challenge in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 87 percent of children lack adequate literacy skills. This means that they are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10. This stems from the combined effects of large numbers of children crammed into one classroom and the

poor quality of teaching. Other critical factors that contribute to the crisis in education include the quality of the educational facilities, the availability of teaching and learning materials and more importantly, the quality and availability of teachers.

The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sub-sector requires more focus and investment. Regrettably, stigmatisation and discrimination of society against this sub-sector contributes to low patronage of the overall system. The perception of those learners who choose the TVET path is that they are less intelligent or are inferior to those who attend traditional universities - this attitude compounds the challenge.

121 million sub-Saharan students lack technology to learn online

Another shortcoming is that African education systems are not sufficiently prepared to ensure non-formal education. Few individuals adopt continuity of learning outside of educational facilities. For instance, an estimated 121 million students, i.e. about half of the students, in sub-Saharan Africa are excluded from distance learning due either to a lack of policies supporting distance learning, or because they lack the household equipment needed to participate in distance education. The incorporation of new technologies into education constitutes a new barrier for exclusion to many. Indeed, ICT is a major constraint to integration of technology in education in Africa. The data indicates that only 64 percent of primary school teachers and 50 percent of their counterparts in secondary schools have received the minimum training in basic digital literacy in sub-Saharan African countries. Surprisingly, even in countries with considerable connectivity and infrastructure, most educators did not have prerequisite ICT skills, implying that they would have difficulties in their own ICT skills development (UNESCO, 2020).

Africa needs to overhaul and transform its development agenda if

it is ever going to be able to generate sufficient jobs on the continent to stem the tide of unemployment, and the growing number of migrant youth that perish in their quest for jobs overseas. In the African context, therefore, the crisis of education is really a challenge of transforming the large population of youth into citizens with high productive capacity. Large numbers of highly skilled teachers are the key determinant of success in the attainment of this herculean task.

17 million additional teachers needed by 2030

Emerging research reveals that currently there is a yawning gap in the provision of qualified teachers. The data shows that the continent will need 17 million additional teachers to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030. This deficit is so huge that African governments need to undertake a complete restructuring of the structure and content of our education systems. Hitherto, many countries have simply been engaging untrained teachers to fill the growing shortfall of teachers in schools. Conservative estimates show that in 2019 the average proportion of qualified teachers per country in Africa was 78 percent - 89 percent at the primary level, and 80 percent at the secondary level.

African leaders are fully aware of the enormity of the task of providing quality education for the youth. The multiplicity of policies and slogans about large numbers of unemployed youth being a ticking time bomb attests to this awareness. Education for All by the year 2000, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) Africa Union Agenda 2063, and Plan 2016-2025 for Education in Africa are just three of the programmes that have been devised by policy makers over the years to provide sustainable and inclusive human development. For instance, the Strategic Plan 2016-2025 for Education in Africa is said to be driven by the desire to set up a qualitative system of education and training in Africa. It is to provide

the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union.

Over the years, educators have realised that unless teacher training becomes a key priority, the future of the African youth will continue to be bleak. Yet, over the period, educationalists and stakeholders continue to challenge politicians and policy makers to transform education systems in service of society. Educators can only accomplish the goal of providing 17 million additional teachers required to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030 if they deploy the latest technology and allocate dedicated funding for the training of teachers on the continent.

Teachers in desperate need of additional training

Available models or tools for mass training of teachers already exist. However, the political commitment to deploy these tools is weak. For instance, audio or video technology could be deployed to record class lessons that could be disseminated by podcasts, live or on-demand television, DVD, public access television, or online. Public broadcast television stations and radio or mobile telephony could be deployed to transmit standardised lessons. For pupils without the internet, digital audio recordings could be burned onto CDs or DVDs. Digital copies of textbooks, reference materials, assignments, and audio-visual learning supports could be made available on special websites. Learning Management Systems including Zoom could be more widely used. The use of these tools would allow teachers to share and store much more in the way of instructional materials including assignments, worksheets, calendars, and assessments. Digital tools are necessary to improve tracking of student progress and grade work, to send messages and notifications to students, to facilitate discussions with students using blogs and/or discussion boards, to conduct online class meetings and much more.

Some countries have successfully piloted models of these mass training techniques including in Africa. For example, the Ministry of Education of Senegal, UNESCO, Microsoft, Huawei and Orange joined forces to support tens of thousands of teachers and students in an effort to continue learning during the COVID-19 crisis. The Ministry's Distance Learning Platform has enrolled 82,000 teachers and 500,000 learners. With support from Microsoft, 1.5 million learners and teachers benefited from this action. UNESCO is supporting training for 200 teachers to become 'master trainers.' The project will soon adopt a 'train the trainers' approach in which teachers train other teachers. Huawei distributed devices to improve connectivity of the 200 master trainers in June 2020. Orange offered zero rating for access to education data (<https://globaleducationcoalition.unesco.org/>).

Orange has also created the Orange Campus Africa, providing hundreds of thousands of free educational and cultural items in French, English and Arabic. One terabyte of content has been installed on the Orange Africa data centre in order that it is accessible via free or very cheap mobile access in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

UNESCO is also providing financial and technical support to Egypt, Ethiopia, and Ghana on planning and building technology-enabled crisis resilient learning systems, including improving national distance or online learning platforms, developing new distance learning courses and digital resources, and training teachers and students in digital skills as well as on the effective use of distance learning (<https://globaleducationcoalition.unesco.org/>).

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funded the West African Anglophone learning platform project to improve the quality of distance education in five West African Anglophone countries. The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone plan to develop a sub-regional learning platform. Its specific focus is on offline and printed learning materials, as well as teacher training. It will also monitor distance

education by using radio and TV in cooperation with Ecowas and media partners in the coalition (<https://globaleducationcoalition.unesco.org/>).

The challenge of providing 17 million additional teachers by 2030 is enormous. The fire-fighting approach that policy makers have adopted so far will not help Africa convert the large number of youth into a powerful source of growth and progress that is required to liberate the continent from the cycle of poverty. It is regrettable that in spite of the enormity and importance of the task, the process has largely been left to the leadership. Indeed a careful look at the education budget shows that, despite the Abuja Declaration, education financing in Africa is still largely dependent on donor funding. That is why the United Nations, international donors and civil society organisations should continue to play their role in supporting the development of education systems on the continent.

Pan-African approach only way to train 17 million additional teachers by 2030

What is critical now is for Africa to come together as a united entity to develop a comprehensive strategy for achieving the goal of training 17 million new teachers by 2030. This is the time for action. The time is now for establishing multi-sectoral partnerships with telecommunications companies and internet providers to provide stable and reliable internet services and to reduce the cost of airtime, mobile data and broadband services. No resource is too big or too insignificant. It is critical now to enhance the implementation of innovative teaching and learning approaches that expand access to online learning resources for all who want to learn, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. More schools must be included in digital connectivity to enable groups that fall behind to receive special attention, thus leaving no one behind.

There is an urgent need to address the challenges faced by humanity including climate change, wars and ethnic conflicts, and the growing impoverishment of marginalised groups. Consequently, policy-makers must recognise the holistic character of lifelong learning as a common good that promotes the collective dimension of learning. It is critical to transform schools and universities into lifelong learning institutions and to strengthen technical and vocational education training through increased investments. Additionally, there is the need to foster greater links with industry and align education to labour markets so as to improve the skills profile, employability, and entrepreneurship of especially youth and women, and to close the skills gap across the continent ([African Union, 2013](#)).

Educators need to impress upon the politicians the need to ensure greater and equitable access to learning technologies and the need to encourage local lifelong learning initiatives. The role of MOJA in promoting lifelong learning as a human right is critical at this point.

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THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI'S CONTRIBUTION TO ADULT EDUCATION



Merina Phiri has a background in Public Administration and Development Studies and is passionate about adult education. She has a keen interest in skills development and training for personal development and the scholarship and practice of community engagement toward social change. She is currently the Programme Coordinator and Convenor of adult education at the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA). She also lectures in adult education and development studies.

Introduction

Adult Education is generally understood to include a range of activities designed for the purposes of supporting learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception defines them as adults (Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga: 2005).

Adult educators often look at adults as agents of change and as architects of development of their communities. Thus adults are perceived as continuous learners, constructors of knowledge and actors in pursuit of building and sustaining livelihoods and the well-being of their communities. Educational and learning activities associated with these include formal sector learning in schools, colleges and other agencies providing various courses; non-formal learning which provides education and training outside the formal education system; and informal learning provided by informal groups and agencies.

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Malawi has been in existence for a long time and has largely focused on the informal sector, where skills and training were provided to members of communities as part of socialisation processes. These learnings were linked to the indigenous education systems which involved, amongst others, older members of the community teaching youth and children how to be good members of the community and equipping them with other skills for sustainability and survival. In Malawi, informal adult education, also known

as extra-mural adult learning, included activities that can be traced back to 1947 when the British Government, in cooperation with UNESCO, launched literacy classes in the Dowa district. Since then, the main role-player and stakeholder in literacy activities has been the government, supported by other stakeholders including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and religious organisations. These classes, spread out across various districts in Malawi, were oriented towards providing 'illiterate' adults and youths with 'second-chance' learning opportunities because they had missed out on formal education (NALEP, 2020). These classes are spread out in various districts across the country.

Narrow ALE focus on 3 Rs deters adult learners

Today, adult literacy remains an important educational matter. The 5th Integrated Household Survey (2020) shows that Malawi has a literacy rate of 75.5 percent among people aged 15 years and above. This rate is higher for males, at 83 percent, than for females at 68.8 percent. Analysis by place of residence shows that 98.1 percent of individuals in urban areas are literate compared to 72.1 percent in rural areas. Preliminary results for Malawi's 2018 Population and Housing Census revealed that 84 percent of the population lives in rural areas. This calls for more adult learning and education initiatives to be channelled to these parts of the country.

One of the main challenges that ALE programmes face is the need to re-conceptualise ALE, especially in the context of climate change, economic crises and ongoing local struggles. The understanding of ALE has historically been narrowly focused on literacy –



CUNIMA students and members of Chivu Cooperative discuss macadamia nut farming

the 3Rs. This narrow view of literacy has resulted in a lack of interest amongst those who may already have acquired the basic skills associated with reading and writing. In other cases, people who may have missed out on education do not want to be seen as 'illiterate' members of society because of the negative connotations associated with it.

More importantly, many community members prefer ALE activities that have a more immediate and direct impact on their lives – learning linked to their daily-lived experiences and realities or training that contributes to their knowledge and skills. There is therefore a need for awareness programmes to change people's mindset about ALE – an orientation that shows that ALE is much broader, transdisciplinary and multi-sectoral. Such an orientation is also in line with UNESCO's 2015 Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (UNESCO, 2016) which advocates for ALE to include literacy, skills and training, and citizenship. In this regard, learning to read and write is only the starting point - foundational to skills acquisition and citizenship initiatives where members of the

community would be responsible for various developments by participating and holding their governing authorities accountable.

In 2020, Malawi enacted its first ever National Adult Literacy and Education Policy with the aim of providing a comprehensive guiding framework in planning and implementation of ALE programmes and activities. The policy outlines that the priority areas for ALE are coordination and collaboration among stakeholders; access, relevance and quality of ALE services; visibility and awareness of ALE programmes; and resource mobilisation for funding of ALE activities. These were developed against a background of challenges that the ALE sector faces in the country. In operationalising the policy for its effective implementation, the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare developed a strategic plan for the period 2022 to 2027. This strategic plan aims at providing direction for the implementation of the priority areas specified in the National Adult Literacy and Education Policy. The development of the policy and strategy had consultations from various stakeholders of ALE. It is therefore

believed that, in the process the stakeholders would know what is expected of them and act accordingly in promoting ALE programmes and services in contributing to sustainable development of the country.

The Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA) and adult education in Malawi

One of the stakeholders in the ALE sector is CUNIMA, a private university which was established in 2005. In recognising the important role of adult education in the economy and society, CUNIMA introduced a Diploma in Adult Education and Development in 2021 and developed a research agenda in adult education and development as its contribution to the operationalisation of the National Adult Literacy and Education Policy.



CUNIMA students in a focus group discussion with community members of Masikini village

Diploma in Adult Education and Development

CUNIMA views adult education and development (AED) as an interdisciplinary field of study and practice, and therefore its approach to AED is multi-disciplinary, intersectional and multisectoral. CUNIMA recognises adult education as comprising multiple established academic domains including community education; technical and vocational education and training (TVET); adult basic education (that subsumes literacy); worker education and studies in higher education. In this regard, the diploma programme in Adult Education and Development (DAE) has several core courses from Adult Education, Political Economy, Sociology, Development Studies, Political Science to Psychology. Whilst located in the Faculty of Social Sciences, the conceptualisation and design of the programme was done collaboratively with staff from the Faculty of Education and the courses are taught by staff members from both faculties. The DAE programme has two cohorts that comprise students working with various institutions, for example, the government and civil society organisations. It is believed that this programme could assist in building capacity for longer term planning and implementation of ALE activities. CUNIMA plans to build on this work which potentially

lays the foundation for community-based research and post-graduate studies in a transdisciplinary adult education programme.

Programme encourages ALE students in community engagement

Of great importance in the development of the Adult Education programme is the introduction of a research element. The programme encourages students to participate in research and community engagement activities, including interaction with communities and their members. This design feature is significant in a context where communities face a range of socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment and the need for community development. The interface between CUNIMA and its adjacent communities encourages the urgency to bring into existence adult education programmes that are more responsive to the needs and interests of these communities. In October 2022, students were involved in a community mapping exercise of villages surrounding CUNIMA. Using transect walks, the exercise provided insight about community needs and the kinds of issues that community education programmes could respond to.

The programme seems to have had a positive impact on students. In a recent evaluation, one student described how the courses have contributed to advancing his knowledge and skills related to community engagement and community work. Another student expressed her excitement about how the programme is enhancing her skills in community organising and its direct impact on the nature of her work as an activist.

Poverty, unemployment, and gender inequality mean ALE needs to be community responsive

CUNIMA's interest in adult education is driven by a range of socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, gender inequality and the need to respond to community development. Rigorous research that brings into existence an adult education system that is responsive to the needs and interests of communities is of the utmost importance. It is for this reason that through its mission of contributing to the integral development of the nation, CUNIMA is embarking on building a comprehensive approach



Students enrolled in the diploma programme at CUNIMA

to research in the multidisciplinary field of adult education. At present, there is little systemic and analytical research in adult education and related fields. Research in this field is often fragmented or linked to adjacent fields such as community development. Furthermore, research in adult education has little or limited orientation to the wider social-political economy in which issues of the labour market, education and training possibilities are considered.

Research that is responsive to community needs

CUNIMA's approach, therefore, is based on the concept of research that requires and contributes to a comprehensive response to the challenge posed by education and training in the context of national, regional and global developments. The effect of this approach will be to provide insights for longer term

policy and practice and for a set of strategies commensurate to such policies. Our approach also highlights the interconnectedness between these policies and a wider remit of state policies (in other domains of the state) and institutional interventions to build an enduring platform both for the genuine transformation of the present system and for its sustainability. At present, CUNIMA is pursuing financial support to implement its research agenda using a variety of ways in mobilising the necessary resources. CUNIMA has the capability and mechanisms to accommodate the establishment of the research portfolio as a transdisciplinary focus that cuts across its faculties. Like with the establishment of its Diploma in Adult Education, CUNIMA encourages faculty collaboration in the establishment of the research focus. CUNIMA will further build support through its growing networks of relationships and explore possibilities through local, regional and international organisations and institutions that have direct interests in advancing adult education systems.

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THE INTERSECTION OF MIGRATION, MOTHERHOOD AND DISABILITY: REVISITING THE ROLE OF A MOTHER IN THE LEARNING CONTINUATION OF DISABLED REFUGEE CHILDREN IN UGANDA



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Introduction

Inclusive Education is a human right, and is recognised as a means to achieving an inclusive society (UN, 2016). Several international and national legal frameworks (Walton et al., 2020, Steigmann, 2020, UN, 2016) exist in support of legislation, policy and advocacy for educational access for persons with disabilities.

But there are gaps in implementation. Although cognisant of the gaps in attaining inclusive education for disabled children, particularly refugee children in rural settlements, and the inconsistencies between theory and practice, our point of departure is that parents/caregivers are a decisive aspect on whom prospects of inclusive education could depend (Steigmann, 2020). This article centres on the role of mothers as inclusive educators and views structural gaps in inclusive educational access as an opportunity for meaningful participation in the education of children, especially those children with special needs.

Parents play a huge role in the care and development of their children, providing overall physical care, the development of healthy habits, physical development, and the “development of their intellectual affinities, as well as creation for a better moral values and convictions and attitudes” (Ceka & Murati, 2016:

61). Parents are “direct leaders as well as supporters” (Ceka & Murati, 2016: 61) in the implementation of the education of children, partly owing to the fact that parents potentially maintain awareness and are familiar with the rules for the child’s physical and psychological development. These are “fundamental factors of influence in a child’s ability to learn” (Ceka & Murati, 2016).

Essentially, parents enable the child’s protection and the development of a total personality for the child. They are the “other educators” in the child’s education journey, alongside school teachers (Good, 1998 in Ceka & Murati, 2016: 62), Referencing the proverb, “mother is the first and best teacher”, Ceka & Murati (2016: 62) argue that the child-mother relationship is often intense and crucial to the development of a child’s identity and the “feeling of being a mother to the woman is more powerful than being a father of given child for the husband”.

This article argues that this special connectedness of mothers to their children plays a pivotal role in the possibility for learning continuation and educational access for children with disabilities.

Role of caregivers in advancing education for children with special needs

The article also explores the support role of social networks and caregivers in enabling educational inclusion of children with special needs. Bešić and Hochgatterer (2020) highlight evidence of ‘good practice’ with caregiver organisations at the



It is vital to understand the ways in which social networks, caregivers and parents are key to the support of education for refugee children with disabilities because of the barriers these children face in accessing inclusive education, especially in the Global South.

intersection of migration and disability. Social networks and caregivers are conceived as key to inclusive education, with social networks being key partner organisations and important staff working directly with families and children with disabilities. In the Ugandan refugee context, it is largely education non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who serve the educational needs of refugee children on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Caregiving is defined as the “responsibility of providing care” (Cooper, 2020: 77). An online caregiver identity construction study identified various caregiver identities including companionate caregiver which focuses on the “relational aspects of providing care” (Cooper, 2020: 77). Through this article, we reflect on the contribution of NGO workers involved in the identification of families and children with disabilities within the refugee and host community settlements in the research sites, as well as those foster families and guardians providing care to children with disabilities who participated in the study.

How do parents support education for refugee children with disabilities?

It is vital to understand the ways in which social networks, caregivers and parents are key to the support of education for refugee children with disabilities because of the barriers these children face in accessing inclusive education, especially in the Global South. Despite the existence of both international and national frameworks (the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; the World Declaration on Education for All, 1990; the United Nations Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993; and the Salamanca Declaration and Framework for Action, 1994 and national policies including the Special Needs and Inclusive Education policy of Uganda; the 1995 Uganda Constitution; the National Council for Disability Act, 2003; the Education Act, 2008; and Persons’ with Disability Act, 2006), children with disabilities still struggle to access the rights contained in these laws and policies, owing to systems constraints, resource limitations, policy implementation gaps and negative attitudes of communities and families of children with disabilities (Steigmaan, 2020). Against this background, we envision a positive contribution by mothers, caregivers and social networks in changing the stories of these children.

The study adopted a social ecosystem model (Hodgson & Spours, 2016). It explores the dynamics of the social world and the interconnectivity and inter-dependence of human relations. The social ecosystem emphasises the potentiality in social collaboration and process adaptation that could result in a more resilient and sustainable humankind. Social ecosystem thinking “gives back to us the ideal of a future that we can shape and develop” (Hodgson & Spours, 2016:2).

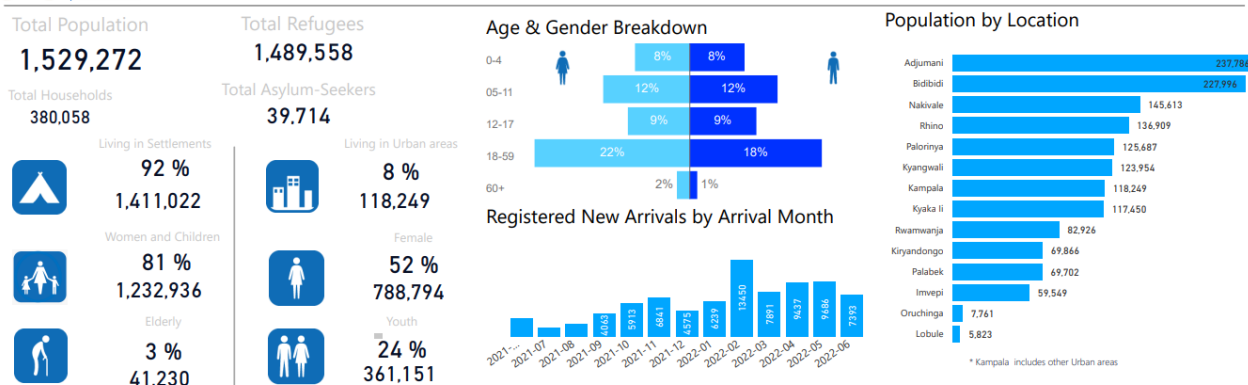
We use this theoretical lens to envision a more inclusive society where children with disabilities are supported by a social network of parents and caregivers in ways that change their stories. Within this thinking, we conceive the role of mothers, guardians and caregivers as potentially decisive for improved access to inclusive learning for refugee children with disabilities. The study explores the inclusive educational practices in a conceptual space that is impacted by vertical facilitatory mechanisms such as international, national and local policy regulations, resource allocation, etc. against the horizontal connectivity’s such as interactions and relationships between local actors/social networks and how these influence practices of inclusion and/or exclusion.

Study context

The UNHCR’s Global Trends Report 2021 indicates that up to 89.3 million persons were forcibly displaced around the world. Of these, 83 percent are hosted in low and middle-income countries like Uganda (UNHCR, 2021). Uganda is the third largest refugee-hosting country in the world (after Turkey with 3.8 million refugees and Columbia with 1.8 million refugees). Uganda hosts more than 1.5 million refugees, mainly from neighbouring South Sudan (60 percent), the Democratic Republic of Congo (30.2 percent) and other countries including Somalia, Eritrea, Rwanda, and Burundi (UNHCR, 2021). The Ugandan refugee statistics indicate that 81 percent of refugees are women and children and 92 percent of the refugee population live in rural settlements with very limited access to inclusive education and or special schools for children with disabilities. Of the Ugandan refugee community, 72,523 are persons with disabilities; 85,120 are women at risk and 48,138 are children at risk (UNHCR, 2022). Around the world, children account for 30 percent of the world’s population; and 41 percent of the forcibly displaced (UNHCR, 2021).

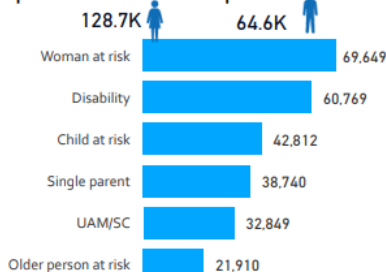


Uganda - Refugee Statistics June 2022



Source: UNHCR Uganda Portal 2022

Specific Needs - Top 6



Source: UNHCR Uganda Portal 2022

Education offers significant protection for vulnerable children, including refugee children and children with disability (Crea et al., 2022). It offers protection from military conscription, sexual exploitation and child marriages. Many refugee children face challenges in accessing education, but refugee children with disabilities are especially vulnerable to educational exclusion (Crea et al, 2022).

Children with special needs in Uganda's refugee settlements

A zoom into the Special Needs Education (SNE) assessment reports from two refugee settlements in West Nile in Uganda show that over 50 percent of the children had special learning needs; 44 percent of teachers got some training on SNE and 75 percent of schools did not have Braille (ECHO/FCA, 2018). Essentially, even

though the children with disabilities access school, there was no guarantee that they would stay in school, and actually learn. Most of the accessible schools in the settlements did not have specialist teachers and appropriate facilities. There is still a mismatch between the policies on SNE and its implementation, as the infrastructure for an inclusive education and learning environment remains elusive. Additionally, the focus, advocacy and campaigns appear to be more towards primary level education, with very little, if any, for the post primary education, as if to suggest that disabled students are not expected to go beyond primary education. The policy and practice environments have validated these assumptions. It is also worth noting that the 2011 policy on Special Needs and Inclusive Education of Uganda is still in draft form 11 years later. Emong and Eron (2016) report discrimination and exclusion of students with disability in higher education institutions owing to a lack of disability support services. They recommend the institutionalisation of policies and guidelines on support services in higher education in Uganda.

The overall objective of the research was to understand the dynamics of educational inclusion and exclusion of disabled refugee children in three refugee hosting countries (Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa) where their historical and ongoing experience of crises impacts learning, and to use this understanding to advocate for change in policy and practice. The three cross-country study was guided by the following research questions:

- What data about the education of disabled refugee students is available and needed in the three contexts and what local and international policies are relevant?
- What are the experiences of disabled refugee students (disaggregated by gender), and their families with educational access and success in the host country?
- How do education officials (at institutional, district and department level) and NGO workers perceive the educational challenges and opportunities of disabled refugee students, with a particular focus on girls?

The findings we share in the next section are only for the Uganda Case Study.

Methodology

The Uganda Case Study was carried out in three refugee hosting districts in northern Uganda in 2021-2022. The study sites were Lamwo (Palabek settlement); Adjumani (Ayilo 1& II; Nyumanzi and Maji) and Obongi (Palorinya settlement). The study was carried out with children from both refugee and nearby host communities, with children who are in and out of school, boys and girls with disabilities and their families, and with education officers and stakeholders at district and national levels.

Qualitative data was collected from 95 research participants. Fourteen (14) were children with disabilities



Mothers stayed and took care of the child when the father absconded, they rejected the negative comments and advice of teachers against the child's potential to learn, and in some cases, the mother sat in class to encourage her child to complete promotional assessment tests.

from families of the host community; 25 were refugee children with disabilities; 17 education officials; and 39 parents/caregivers of the children who participated in the study. The education officials were local district education officers and staff from the ministry of education. NGO workers in the settlements were also involved. As part of this case study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants. Case study methods allow the researcher in-depth investigation of a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2003). Participants and their families were anticipated to be potentially traumatised by previous and current crises, and therefore interactive and collaborative methods were used. These included art (drawing by children), photography, life grids and narration by the children and their parents/guardians. To understand how education officials and NGO workers perceive the educational challenges and opportunities of disabled refugee students, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Data analysis was done thematically by identifying and matching patterns to create meaning.

Ethical approval was sought from Nottingham University and from Gulu University Research Ethics committee (GUREC). The committee reviewed and approved informed consent and



accent requests for children, parents/guardians and other categories of research participants. Locally, the research team, comprised of the advisory board, sought permission to access the refugee settlement and families to conduct the interviews. Data reliability and validity was ensured through pre-test and refining of the data collection tools. The use of sign language interpreters and language translators improved data accuracy. However, the travel limitations owing to the COVID-19 country wide lockdown narrowed the participant sample scope - only those settlements and villages that were accessible were reached. This could have had an impact on the overall data narrative and its representativeness. Additionally, being a qualitative study, the sample size was limited, thus the level of representativeness of the opinion of study participants is equally limited.

Findings and discussions

Biographic data of study participants

From the primary data, 18 of the children with disability were girls, 10 were in schools outside the settlement; eight were boys - six in schools outside the settlement and two who were out of school. As noted earlier, the schools at and around

the settlement lack special needs teachers and facilities. As a result, parents had to look for alternative schools outside the settlement which could accommodate their children's learning needs. Some of the families, especially refugee families, received support from education NGOs working in the settlements, but host community families who participated in the study did not receive any external support. More girls than boys with disabilities were out of school. These findings are consistent with the Special Needs Education assessment report (ECHO/FCA, 2018) from two refugee settlements in West Nile, where this study was partly conducted. The report showed that over 50 percent of the children had special learning needs and would need support to access education from outside the settlements, as there are no special needs schools within the settlements. Parents appeared more reluctant to send girls with disabilities to special needs schools far from home. This perhaps explains why more girls than boys with special needs were not in school.

Nine out of 14 interviews with families were done with mothers of children with disabilities. In all the cases, fathers were absent (not present) in the life of the children. In two of the cases where fathers were present, their role in the care and support of the children with disabilities to access education was not very apparent and/or remained unaccounted for.

Educational inclusion for refugee children with disabilities: Challenges and opportunities

From the UNHCR refugee portal report, up to 81 percent of the 1.5 million refugees are women and children and more than 90 percent of all refugees live in rural settlements of Uganda (UNHCR, 2022). By implication, the majority of the refugee population category who live in remote settlements, with limited access to social amenities, are women and children. Access to social amenities like special needs schools, assistive devices and disability sensitive infrastructure enhance educational inclusion. This information is consistent with the observation of Crea et al (2020) that refugee children with disabilities who live in remote areas are doubly constrained. Empirical evidence from our primary data shows that there are no special needs schools within the research settlements for 'severe' disability types such as blind, deaf and cognitive disabilities. The disability report for West Nile (ECHO/FCA, 2018) reported that 50 percent of learners had special learning needs. Learners with such disabilities are often supported by the education non-governmental organisation to access special schools, several kilometres outside the settlement. We view this social-educational collaboration between children with disabilities, their families and the education NGOs, amidst infrastructure and resource gaps, as an opportunity supportive of educational inclusion for children with disabilities.

Migration and disability intersection

The UNHCR report identifies six major special needs including persons with disabilities, single parents and women and children at risk and

unaccompanied minors and children. Nine out of 10 of the refugee families that participated in the study were women-led households. From the participants, the men had either "remained in South Sudan", "moved on to another wife", or were only "partially present" leaving the women to support the family. As a result, the protection risks for women and children with disabilities in refugee settlements is heightened. Women and girls with disabilities suffer double discrimination and vulnerabilities in displacement, and are more predisposed to dependency on others (Rohwerder, 2017). This notwithstanding, we found evidence of hope and strength against all odds among predominantly female caregivers in both refugee and host communities. In more than three families that participated in the study, mothers were more positive and hopeful than they believed fathers were:

[...] Maybe if she was a boy, the father would have loved him [...]

[...] The father said he will not waste his money to pay fees for [...]

At the intersection of migration and disability, we see a 'new' hidden population category - women, who are hardly reported on. Several studies (Burns 2017; Walton, 2020; Rohwerder, 2017 & Crea, 2020) underscore the lack of data on disability in migration. The lack of data is even more worrisome for women migrants caring for children with disabilities. UNHCR, the official refugee agency which oversees the reception and resettlement of refugees in Uganda, lacks disaggregated data on children and families with disability. Burns (2017: 7) also reports the "invisibility of disabled migrants in policy, research and practice". Our research highlights that migrant women with children with disabilities in Uganda are invisible in the data and calls for more rigorous research into the contribution of women at the intersection of migration and disability.

According to Trotter (2012: np), "being a migrant affects the experience of being disabled but being disabled also alters the experience of migration". The intersection of these experiences from a mother's perspective is the focus of this

article, but most especially how they externalise these experiences and still find the strength and hope to support their children and enhance their access to education. Within the social ecosystem model, we perceive these experiences and roles as facilitatory to practices that improve educational inclusion for children with disabilities.

Deconstructing motherhood

The English dictionary defines motherhood as the 'state of being a mother', literally referring to the female gender's reproductive roles and responsibilities. In 'Mandate of Motherhood', Ruso (1976) notes the centrality of the definition to the "adult female mandate to have children and raise them well". This motherhood identity focuses on the particularity and specificity of women as child bearers, and downplays the expanded roles that women have always taken on in the absence of fathers in most family situations. There is therefore an urgent need through research to disrupt these "sex-role stereotypes, mythologies, and sex-typed" (Ruso, 1976) views of motherhood. We seek to expand the motherhood mandate beyond just 'having children and taking care of them well'.

From the empirical primary data we collected, we noted mothers as 'experts' taking care of the physical, health and psychological needs of their children with disabilities. They were always there, full time, to take care of the children whom fathers and society have written off; to find suitable schools for them and support them to stay in school and continue learning, while absorbing all the negative attitudes and connotations that a child with learning challenges suffers. Mothers stayed and took care of the child when the father absconded, they rejected the negative comments and advice of teachers against the child's potential to learn, and in some cases, the mother sat in class to encourage her child to complete promotional assessment tests.

This is the story of a mother with three children, one of whom has a disability:

[...] They told me she has to repeat for two times. I took her to a private school because in public



schools they refused to take her... Private (school) is expensive [...]

Running around, trying to find a school. She can mention words, but she cannot write. Her (younger sister and brother) also in P6 (caught up with her in the same class). When she was in P4, when I brought her to this private school, she was deteriorating, the brain was deteriorating...I failed to get the true sickness disturbing her [...]

[...] When they are doing examination, they could call me to go and sit with her (child) [...]

Story of another mother:

[...] I was every time in the hospital [...]

[...] I started doing their homework every time [...]

In this article we argue, from evidence, that mothers double as inclusive educators, disability assessors and the critical source of support for children with disabilities. This finding is consistent with Ceka's observation that parents are "direct leaders and supporters" of children in their development and learning (Ceka et al., 2016) and yet are not fully recognised as such.

Conclusion and recommendation

From the above discussion, we conclude that exploring the social interconnectivity and interdependency between families, caregivers and

existing social structures through awareness raising and capacity building might be a more sustainable and cost-effective measure for promoting inclusive education, amidst policy implementation gaps and limited resources, among other challenges.

The expanded role of mothers in care and support of children with disabilities remains a huge opportunity. However, more rigorous research into the contribution of women at the intersection of migration and disability is recommended. Additionally, the popularisation and acceptance of the 'new' hidden population category - women - in the migration-disability discourse needs to happen soon.

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THE MARRAKECH FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION: POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN AFRICA



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Introduction

The release of the CONFINTEA VII Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) (UNESCO, 2022a) creates a moment for critical reflection on adult learning and education (ALE) on the African continent, and for the conceptualisation of adult educational praxes towards the kinds of societies and continent we want.

The MFA offers African activists, scholars, policymakers and civil society organisations a new moment to advance human rights-oriented and social justice adult education systems in a time of great transition. Moreover, the MFA moment calls for much greater solidarity, collaboration and collective action amongst the actors in this transdisciplinary field - a moment of re-imagining and reinventing transdisciplinary adult education as a vehicle for social change.

The world is changing. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the socio-economic conditions of millions of Africans, especially the circumstances of the poor and marginalised. COVID accentuated the vital contributions of adults working in life-making community activities (health, food systems, caring, etc.) while climate change and the ecological crisis further exacerbated the conditions on the continent where 'food and hunger' remains a prominent theme. The ecological crisis has resulted in an increase in climate refugees and

migrants. Workers in the informal economy continue to bear the brunt of the COVID crisis, and conflict and an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) remain concerns in Africa.

Inequality between and within the continent has not diminished and poverty remains a recurring theme. The embrace of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), in which digitalisation is a key component, presents further challenges in several areas of life on the African continent. It is within this context that adult educators need to reflect on and frame possibilities as part of the MFA-moment.

The current realities of adult education in Africa suggest that the sector continues to face many constraints in building responsive, effective and transformative ALE systems. The data from the Africa Regional Report (UNESCO, 2022b) shows the ongoing struggles around adult education. Africa is home to 155 million 'illiterates' (66 percent of whom are women). Funding and resourcing of adult education systems remain poor (less than 2 percent of national budgets where they exist) and the declaration of adult education policies and legislation is irregular and slow. The focus of adult education remains limited to functional adult literacy, and post-literacy programmes seem to focus increasingly on human capital approaches to adult education with technical vocational education and training (TVET) as priority.

The role and work of civil society in adult education has not gained the necessary traction that it deserves. The regional report offers various systems-building recommendations in areas such as policy, governance, financing, stakeholder participation and quality. These systems-related issues are all important and should be addressed. I want to raise five important points in the hope of generating a broader discussion amongst adult educators



Moreover, the MFA moment calls for much greater solidarity, collaboration and collective action amongst the actors in this transdisciplinary field - a moment of re-imagining and reinventing transdisciplinary adult education as a vehicle for social change.

working in this transdisciplinary field, and in and across a pluriverse of community-based adult education programmes and projects on the continent and elsewhere.

The Just Transition

The first and most urgent point is the growing debate around a just transition, which is about the role of communities in visioning alternatives to a relentless adherence to the political and economic systems that are geared towards an unsustainable future and the resultant threat to all forms of life. The just transition represents a variety of strategies that aim to transition communities to building thriving economies that provide dignified, productive and ecologically sustainable livelihoods, and value socially useful and life-making work, democratic governance and ecological resilience. The current systems are concerned with endless growth, extractivism, consumerism and technical innovation that propel us into deepening ecological crises and a hastening of the annihilation of the world's interlocking ecosystems (CIPSET, 2019; Kahn, 2010). Adult educators and activists working in several social movements, including labour, environmental justice, solidarity economy, food sovereignty

and ecofeminism have emphasised the disproportionate impact of climate change on African communities, particularly impoverished, low-income and rural communities. Ecoliteracy and ecopedagogy are vital within the overall framework of a just transition. Adult educators on the continent should explore a variety of ways to centre life-affirming ecological pedagogical praxis that inculcates a deeper ecological consciousness that inspires actions toward the protection of all life forms. Developing planetary consciousness and a life-affirming ecological praxis could be foundational in dealing with the widespread forms of inequality and central to the humanising project. Transition is inevitable.

Community food and related systems

The second point forms part of the praxes of just transition movements - food security and food sovereignty. Africa has a rich history of food production and community food systems. Afroecology, for example - a philosophical, methodological and ethical tradition - involves the sacred relationships of indigenous people on the continent with land, seeds, water, air and food. It also treasures indigenous knowledges, experiences, cultures and ways of being within planetary life support systems. More recently, several scholars working across disciplines of social, human and natural sciences have pointed to the increase of climate change on food systems in Africa. Many African countries have experienced droughts and flooding which have had devastating effects on food production and resulted in humanitarian disasters and the loss of lives. Very recently, Madagascar's famine was described as the first in modern history to be caused by climate change. Once again, activists and social movements have raised the disproportionate impacts of drought - a climate shock - on the unemployed, the working class and the urban and rural poor. Consequently, scholars and activists continue to call for the development of community food systems as a longer-term solution to hunger and health and within the context of climate change. Within a food sovereignty framework,

community food systems would return food production to communities as part of a commons. Community food gardens have emerged, laying the foundation for the development of community food systems as integral to community life. Community food systems are intertwined with the right to clean water, quality public health and clean energy. Adult educators could play an important role in supporting communities to engage with these issues and to strengthen interventions that advance water, food, energy and health systems necessary to sustain life.

Adult education as community development

The third important point for adult education is about the role of adult education within the national planning frameworks of governments on the continent. Many governments are incorporating adult education as a vehicle of skills formation to support formal labour markets. (Vally & Motala, 2014). Such policy changes should be understood in relation to the dominant global discourse of neoliberalism, human capital, supply and demand, the skills mismatch, and their association with employability and productivity. Steven Klees highlights how, as part of this dominant discourse, governments persist in asserting that "education leads to skills, skills lead to employment, employment leads to economic growth, economic growth creates jobs and is the way out of poverty and inequality" (Klees, 2017). This, Klees argues, is a neoliberal reform analysis that is false. It is therefore not surprising to see how vocational education has become the focus of governments as critical to economic development. Technical vocational education and training (TVET), a subsector of adult education, is gaining increasing attention -- much more than adult literacy. I want to suggest that adult educators in Africa engage more deeply with **vocational education as community development** and reclaim it as a vehicle to address community needs and interests. The development of vocational education in building community systems in the thematic areas of food, energy, water, health and shelter could be the focus.

Adult education and the fourth industrial revolution (4IR)

The fourth issue relates to the growth in the global and national focus on the 'fourth industrial revolution' as the 'new phase' of development that will address a wide variety of social and economic issues in societies. The 4IR is promoted as the new era that offers opportunities to improve human lives and lead the world out of crises, towards a better future for all of us. The 4IR is associated with several disruptive technologies, including artificial intelligence, that will combine as a transformative force to address a wide range of socio-economic problems (CIPSET, 2020). The 4IR is also shaping educational frameworks from schooling to higher education. Some of these technologies include learning management systems (LMS), technology enhanced learning (TEL), tactile training systems (TTS), massive open online courses (MOOCs) and many more. These tools are also associated with educational reforms geared towards job-preparation, upskilling and reskilling of workers. Digitalisation and digital learning are integral components of these new technologies, and it is evident that most adult learners and educators on the continent have limited access to these technologies (MOJA, 2022). Although these tools could aid learning, the question is what role the 4IR and its regime of technologies can or should play in addressing inequality, poverty and the ecological crisis.

Pluriverse of hope and possibilities

The last issue is the vast number of innovative and transformative practices prevalent in communities across the continent. Africa is rich with the kind of adult education innovation that reflects the many ways in which adult education contributes to socio-economic transformation. In fact, one of the great limitations in the scholarship of adult education is the lack of documentation/research on the 'pluriverse of possibilities' or 'profiles of hope and possibilities' that show the

advancement African communities are making in using adult education theory and practice as a vehicle to address the needs and interests of communities. Today this 'pluriverse' includes many orientations and methodological approaches in which governments, civil society organisations, as well as community-based formations or grassroots organisations use adult education towards the socio-economic development of communities. In some cases, governments partner with civil society organisations - both local and international - to conceptualise and implement new projects and programmes. In other cases, civil society organisations combine their efforts with communities to use adult education as a vehicle to address a wide variety of community related issues. However, more and more we witness agency in communities as instrumental to addressing community needs. The growth in a vast array of autonomous formations is encouraging - all inspired by community agency and resilience, as people co-construct knowledge. It is in these activities that I find the 'pluriverse of possibilities' a useful way to capture the myriad of initiatives through which African communities address immediate needs and interests. Whilst much of this work involves adult learning and education, it is not referred to as such.

The innovative practices are vast when one looks at the work of several social movements, multi/transdisciplinary formations and autonomous groupings across the continent. Some of the formations include organisations such as The Climate Justice Project; La Via Campesina Southern and Eastern Africa; South Africa Food Sovereignty Campaign, Eco-village Permaculture (South Africa, Uganda, Kenya); The Global Ecovillage Network-Africa; WoMin; and several other formations that integrate the themes of a just transition. In many local communities, people are turning towards building community systems of food, care and other life-making activities. All these spaces provide forms of literacy, learning and education related to the themes directly related to community needs and interests. These innovative practices begin to shift the focus of adult education away from traditional functional adult literacy approaches. What is required is to understand these innovations better, to know how we can learn from them, and to know how to use them to build better adult

education systems as vehicles for genuine social change.

In conclusion, the MFA offers adult educators working across the broad field of adult education an opportunity to build solidarity, collaboration and shared practices. With the advance in technologies, we have at our disposal the use of digital platforms and other social media tools. Whilst transformative adult education emerges from practices on the ground, digital platforms and social media tools such as MOJA (mojaafrica.net) are useful mechanisms for us to create regular dialogues about local, regional and national struggles in building adult education systems in the context of a great transition.

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DIGITALISATION IN EDUCATION: BRINGING ADULT EDUCATION INTO THE DEBATE



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In 2021, the African Union (AU) published its policy guidelines on digitising teaching and learning in Africa. The policy document endorses a DOTSS (Digital connectivity, Online and offline learning, Teachers as facilitators and motivators of learning, Safety online and in schools, and Skills focused learning) framework as a key innovation in mitigating the challenges of COVID-19. This framework would be entrenched through coordinated actions amongst African countries.

Although the AU framework is a positive step to promote online education, among others, one of the limitations in the proposed coordinated action relates to the omission of adult education. Given the omission, MOJA (which means 'one' in Swahili), a network of adult educators in Africa, and the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV International), a partner in adult education, suggested the need to develop a policy brief for submission to the AU as a mechanism for the inclusion of digitised learning and teaching in adult education.

To this end, a policy brief entitled, 'Digitalisation in Education: Bringing Adult Education into the Debate' was produced by DVV International and MOJA in January 2022. This article summarises key issues raised in the brief so that adult educators can quickly read and identify issues elaborated on in the longer version of the policy brief. Concerning the referencing in this summary, the in-text references and the reference list linked to the literature cited herein can be found in the original policy brief mentioned above.

The summarised version of the policy brief has the following elements, namely: the significance of adult education from a global perspective; the role of MOJA in advancing adult education in Africa; why adult education matters; the importance of digitalisation; digitalisation and the developing world; the need for African Union policy directives for digitalisation in education; and the embedding of technology in adult education practice.

Adult education as a global imperative

Adult education has been on the global education agenda since the 1970s. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) 1976 General Conference emphasised that "adult education as an integral part of life-long education can contribute decisively to economic and cultural development, social progress and world peace as well as to the development of educational systems" (UNESCO, 1976: n.p.).

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, based on reports from 40 African countries, indicates that interest in adult education has



To democratise education technology and guard against the dehumanisation of education, it is important that the experiences and views of educators are included in national digitalisation strategies and plans.

increased in African countries - almost 60 percent of the respondents indicated that there was progress in stakeholder participation by adult education professionals, educators, adult learners, governments, and businesses - but much more needs to be done to develop the field on the continent.

There are currently many organisations and individuals involved in various adult education initiatives in Africa, including DVV International, which supports various adult education initiatives across the continent. The institute has promoted flexible non-formal youth and adult education in South Africa since 1998. Moreover, DVV International represents approximately 900 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, making it the biggest adult education and learning provider in Germany.

MOJA: Advancing adult education in Africa

To effectively advance adult education on the African continent, DVV International has created a pan-African platform for adult education professionals to share information and ideas. In 2021, DVV International and adult education professionals from different countries adopted

MOJA Adult Education Africa, an online platform for adult education practitioners in the public and private sectors, civil society, and academia in Africa, and for anyone else who is interested in lifelong learning. The MOJA online platform shares adult education resources, including books, articles, news, music, artworks, and events. MOJA does not belong to an individual, nor to a single organisation. The platform is owned and controlled by all those who are interested in advancing adult education on the African continent. MOJA seeks to facilitate network building across African borders and strongly believes that exchange and collaboration are the engine of learning, teaching, and collective action. The platform delivers dialogical and interactive educational platforms, namely blogs, chat rooms, and other interactive platforms for members to debate and dialogue with one another.

Why adult education matters

Adult education is very important for the following reasons:

1. Many people participate in adult education programmes for self-development and to be able to read, write, and count. Adult education practices have equipped individuals with the necessary skills and capabilities to participate in the economy and politics.
2. Members of working-class and impoverished communities who have participated in adult education programmes have played an important role in the development of community projects and campaigns that seek to socially and economically uplift marginalised communities and hold politicians, public administrators, and big businesses accountable.
3. For the Brazilian radical educator, Paulo Freire, education and literacy are not merely a technical exercise to enable adults to read and write, but they are also a tool to help adult learners analyse and change the context in which they live for the better.
4. Workers - precarious or not - are aided by adult education in the process of struggling for their

5. economic rights in the workplace.
5. International examples abound of marginalised groups, particularly women, who have used the knowledge and skills that they acquired in adult education to contribute towards community development. For example, the Barefoot College in India educates and trains women to produce and service solar system components aimed at providing energy and reducing carbon emission which damages the environment. The women then return to their communities to install solar systems in each house in the village.
6. According to UNESCO and the AU, adult education is a critical ingredient of social development, especially for women. It is generally accepted that economic growth on its own cannot eradicate poverty. Those who experience social and economic exclusion, especially Black poor and working women, need to actively influence social and economic outcomes through collective action. **Adult education stimulates participation in socio-economic change processes.** It increases adult Africans' prospects of accessing and benefiting from social and economic development programmes in public health, HIV treatment, and community development. Adults who access adult education are more likely to look after their families and communities.
7. Sweden has shown that the development of an adult education system is possible, and that it can contribute to skills development for young adult job-seekers. For example, the '*Study motivating folk high course*' supported young job-seekers to further their studies. After completing the course, approximately 40% of the learners either continued to participate in the programme or they found work. More than two-thirds of the participants of the course were inspired to continue and strongly felt that education was central to finding work in Sweden.

Digitalisation and its significance

It is important to differentiate between 'digitisation' and 'digitalisation'. *Digitisation* is the transformation of physical documents and information into digital formats. Digitisation entails transforming analogue information into a digital form. *Digitalisation*, on the other hand, entails transforming organisational processes and the functioning of organisations and structures into digital spaces using digital technologies. An example is the use of digital technologies and online learning to deliver educational programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The literature on digitalisation in education has increased prodigiously over the past 30 years. This is a function of the growing interest in online education around the world.

The pandemic has led to a significant increase in the use of digital pedagogies, especially in higher education. Many private adult education programmes have also moved online during the pandemic. In Africa, the pandemic has accelerated digitalisation on the continent. However, African countries are faced with many social and information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure-related challenges, which are a major barrier to digitalisation processes.

Digitalisation in the education in the developing world

As has been alluded to above, digitalisation has a growing footprint in the education systems of developing countries, including in those of African countries. Many developing countries have developed policy and legislative frameworks to guide the use of education technology long before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in most countries, especially on the African continent, as is indicated above, digitalisation within education has been hindered by the digital divide as a result of enduring socioeconomic challenges; a lack of digital infrastructure, especially

in rural areas; a lack of digital skills among teachers and learners; a lack of or unstable internet connectivity; and high electricity and mobile data costs.

The pandemic has highlighted the underlying structural and institutional barriers to digitalisation in education in South Africa. The digital divide, which mirrors enduring racial, class, and gender inequities in the education system, and the lack of teacher training in ICT and digital pedagogies, has undermined educational access and the quality of learning during the pandemic-related school closures. According to the Mail and Guardian (2021), only 30 percent of the country's learners in the basic education sector were able to access platforms used for online teaching and learning during school closures. Between 650 000 and 750 000 children aged 7 to 17 years did not attend school in May 2021. Moreover, the high cost of mobile data has made it difficult for university students to participate in online education. According to Cable.co.uk's 2021 report of worldwide mobile data pricing, the average price of 1GB in South Africa was \$2.67 (R39) in 2021. Gilbert (2021) observes: "Sub-Saharan Africa still has the most expensive data prices in the world".

Many African countries have developed policies and strategies to support and facilitate the use of technology in their education systems. We offer two more examples of digitalisation practices in education in African countries. The Ministry of Education and Sport in Uganda developed the Education Digital Agenda Strategy 2021-2025 to integrate technology into education and sports in the country. Some of the achievements so far include the installation of ICT laboratories in more than 1 000 rural schools, and approximately 3 896 teachers from mainly rural schools have received ICT skills training. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the uptake of open distance e-learning programmes in the country. The United Republic of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014) seeks to increase the use of technology in teaching and learning and to ensure that educational institutions in the country are equipped with ICT infrastructure. Twenty-three higher education and research institutions were equipped

with network infrastructure in 2018, and online libraries have been set up at several universities. Moreover, the government announced last year that it intends to install computer laboratories in 1 500 new public secondary schools in 2022.

It is clear from several studies on digitalisation in education on the continent that African countries are faced with similar challenges. The lack of ICT infrastructure, inadequate training of teachers on the use of technology, especially for pedagogical purposes, the digital divide within and across countries, the non-availability of electricity in rural areas and urban informal settlements, and power outages are common barriers that inhibit online teaching and learning on the continent. The lack of access to electricity is "a major roadblock to the widespread deployment of digital education initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa specifically" (van Manen, et al., 2021:26).

Different authors point out that, as elsewhere in the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation process in education in India, and that digital skills levels have increased among teachers and learners. A possible reason for this is the reliance on technology for continued teaching and learning during the pandemic. Some of the digital educational tools used by the government for online teaching and learning are *eGyanKosh*, which is a national digital repository used by open and distance learning institutions to, *inter alia*, distribute digitalised learning materials, and *Gyandhara* which is an online platform used for synchronous online educational discussions.

Poor rural learners and students in Africa have been negatively affected by online teaching and learning due to the lack of access to digital devices. Additionally, many learners have dropped out of school because of socioeconomic hardship during the pandemic, with girls being more likely to drop out because of a lack of access to digital devices. The Right to Education Forum predicts that approximately 10 million girls may drop out of school in India because of infrastructure-related challenges; caste-related discrimination; and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or questioning (LGBTIQ) learners. The pandemic has also forced some of



Member states should also develop comprehensive national policies for online education, including policies on the social well-being of educators and students, mobile data, skills development, access to and ownership of technological infrastructure, digitised content, etc.

India's youth into child labour to financially support their struggling parents. Finally, adult education has not been considered for online teaching and learning.

African Union policy directives for digitalisation in education

The AU's specialised technical committee on education, science, and technology endorsed a set of guidelines that encourage member states to use the *Digital connectivity, Online and offline learning, Teachers as facilitators and motivators of learning* – the DOTSS framework – for developing context-specific digitalisation strategies that are appropriate for different education sectors.

The DOTSS framework highlights some of the key issues that member states need to address to ensure maximum access to online education, including investing in ICT infrastructure, strengthening and expanding internet connectivity, reducing or subsidising the cost of

mobile data, and providing digital training to educators. As important as these issues are, the guidelines seem overly focused on the technical aspects of online teaching and learning and less on social relations in education. **As a starting point, equity, empathy, and compassion should be the underpinning values of digitalisation in education. It means that the human aspect of education should not get lost in the technical details of digitalisation.**

The guidelines are largely silent on the issue of pedagogy. **It is important to adopt a holistic approach to digitalisation that goes beyond the use of technology in the delivery of content.** Decisions regarding technologies for online education should not be based solely on their accessibility to educators and students, but also on their appropriateness for supporting pedagogy and learning. Educators should work with technology and curriculum experts to develop digital pedagogies for lesson design, ensuring the inclusion of learners in online content delivery, and for learner feedback and assessments, among other things.

The guidelines acknowledge that online education is uncharted territory for many educators and students. To democratise education technology and guard against the dehumanisation of education, it is important that the experiences and views of educators are included in national digitalisation strategies and plans. It is necessary to develop targeted strategies for the digital inclusion of girls, women, and students with disabilities. The 2020 Afrobarometer survey shows that ownership of digital devices is gendered in most countries, with women more likely to own only a mobile phone. Member states should also develop comprehensive national policies for online education, including policies on the social well-being of educators and students, mobile data, skills development, access to and ownership of technological infrastructure, digitised content, etc.

The AU's guidelines encourage member states to avoid dependence on a particular technology company. Discussions about digitalisation should include conversations about the dangers of corporate capture of education and digital colonialism. Countries in the Global South

generally rely on the technologies of technology corporations in the United States of America. Their control of the digital ecosystem, and the lack of information protection laws in many African countries, render online educational activities vulnerable to data mining by northern technology corporations for commercial purposes.

Finally, the guidelines are silent on adult education. African representatives from 46 African countries at the CONFINTEA VI preparatory conference stated:

Youth and adult learning and education are an effective tool to develop Africa's people, impart appropriate skills (including vocational and technical skills), knowledge and attitudes among youth and adults in order to enable them to participate actively in the true integral development of their countries and the attainment of the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO, 2009:1).

Government has a responsibility to protect the right of adults to education. While African governments have made significant progress in the area of technical and vocational education and training since CONFINTEA VI, adult education, as the MOJA team points out, remains neglected in most African countries. Adult education is not being recognised, validated, and accredited in the education systems of most African countries, and it is being grossly underfunded. In addition, many countries lack policies on adult education. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is encouraging that a considerable number of countries, especially in Southern Africa, are implementing policies and legislation on adult education, and many have improved the quality of their curricula, content, and pedagogical approaches.

Many African adults with low levels of education have lost their jobs or sources of income during the COVID-19 pandemic. Low skilled women workers and self-employed women informal workers have been the worst affected. Workplace closures and COVID-19 restrictions have halted or reduced non-formal and informal learning opportunities for low skilled and self-employed informal workers.

Adult education programmes have also been disrupted in most countries. And, considering the enduring digital divide of African countries, which, as we indicate above, is racialised, classed, and gendered, it is inconceivable that adult learners from marginalised communities will be able to participate in private online adult education courses. This situation will inevitably exacerbate educational inequality in African countries. Impoverished Black women and people with disabilities are likely to be most affected by changes in educational inequality.

Adult education has never been more important. For example, it can stimulate the collective imagination of youth and adults in poor communities, and enhance their capabilities and knowledge to develop community-based interventions for addressing hunger, food insecurity, and a lack of income, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Adult education can also contribute towards improving health literacy on COVID-19, especially in rural areas.

Embedding technology in adult education practice

We believe that if technology is to provide effective support to adult education in Africa, these key issues need to be considered:

1. Country-specific strategies and plans for online teaching and learning in adult education in line with the DOTSS framework.
2. Easily accessible technologies that could be used in online adult education, especially considering the lack of access to digital devices in rural areas (Kronke, 2020), and the digital skills required by adult learners.
3. Policies for online adult education.
4. Digital pedagogical approaches that will not undermine access, inclusion, and the quality of learning.
5. Collaborative partnerships to help finance online adult education.

Note: This document is a summary of the policy brief on adult education and digitalisation prepared for MOJA. The full policy brief is available on the MOJA digital platform at mojaeducation.net

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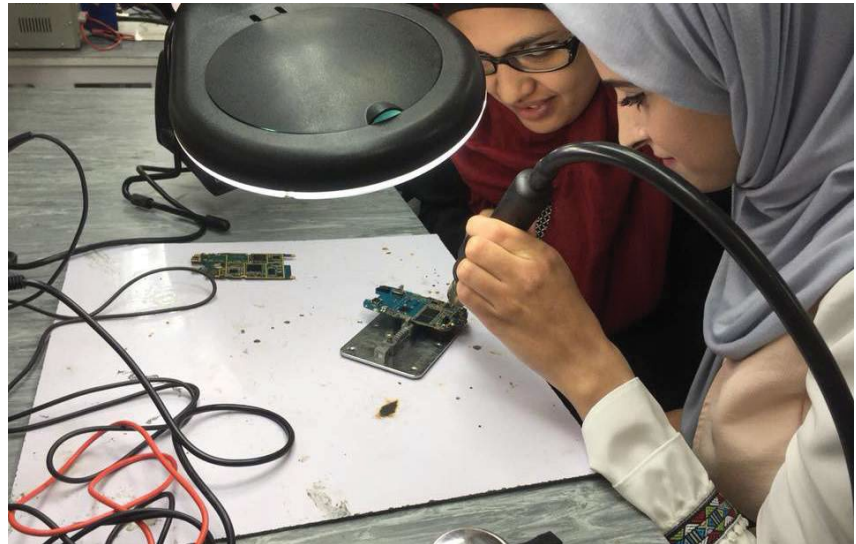


TOOLKIT ON GENDER IN ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (NORTH AFRICA - MIDDLE EAST)

The MOJA Journal of Adult Education would like to draw attention to useful publications and materials related to the work of adult educators. One critical focus area in adult education is the issue of gender and the empowerment of women. Donia Benmiloud draws attention to the role of adult education in the empowerment of women in Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine and Jordan. She provides a brief summary of a special toolkit on gender in adult learning and education.



Donia Benmiloud is the Regional Director of DVV International, North Africa. She has 20 years of experience in managing international cooperation projects across Asia, Africa and Europe - focusing on economic and social inclusion; entrepreneurship; employment; training and education. She is a lifelong learner with a keen interest in strategic thinking, gender issues, working with people at grassroots level, as well as research planning, design and implementation.



DVV International helps its public and associative partners in fostering the exchange of information and contacts between scientists, managers, supervisors, mediators and local groups on the ground, in favour of the implementation of gender equality. Whether at the macro level (policies, strategies, rules, standards and their financing), the meso level (assisting with institutional capacities and trainers) or at the micro level (responding to the needs of the population), DVV International ensures that its interventions always integrate the principles of gender equality as defined in its strategy into the work of adult educators, which is particularly targeted at women. In fact, 80 percent of the people who benefit from our interventions at all levels are women, and most of the time, they are women who take responsibility for learning in addition to meeting basic family and social needs.

It is not enough to proclaim that we are providing a service to women. We need to understand the environment (the public and private sphere) in which women learn, their relationship

to men, and the barriers they face, by providing them with a platform to express themselves, so that learning becomes an easy and rewarding experience for them. Since these issues are based on social relationships and differences between men and women in specific contexts, addressing gender issues implies questioning the social interrelationships between men and women. We have therefore designed a toolkit that incorporates the best practices in the field of gender that are applied to ALE in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East (MENA) region: addressing the issue of gender roles, encouraging women in decision-making and participation in learning actions (taking into account work-life balance), and ensuring a safe learning environment, among others.

We also aimed to provide practical solutions and tools for the development of a gender-sensitive learning environment. This work will help to redesign DVV International's gender strategy by providing some recommendations. This redesign will result in strengthening gender equality from an organisational perspective

(DVV International and all ALE stakeholders), as well as from a service provider perspective (mobilisation and retention of participants through the creation of safe and favourable environments for women and men, and creating post-training opportunities that are appropriate for their professional lives).

What do I need to know before applying the Gender in Adult Learning and Education Toolkit?

Women are often underrepresented in the labour market and in politics. Adult learning and education (ALE) has the potential to empower women, who make up the majority of participants in ALE programmes in Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine and Jordan. Therefore, women must be at the heart of adult learning and education strategies and practices in order to maximise the positive contribution of adult learning and education to gender equality. This does not diminish the importance of adult learning and education for men, nor the need for strategies to encourage men's access to adult learning and education.

To ensure that the gender toolkit included useful and meaningful methods for stakeholders, a participatory approach was adopted. 46 stakeholders were interviewed in the four countries and were then involved in the design of the toolkit, taking an active part in a co-construction

process. This close collaboration has led to a better understanding of their needs and expectations.

The different contexts in the four countries created some limitations to the application of the toolkit in different countries, regions and fields. However, all tools can be used individually, combined, and adapted to different contexts.

Finally, the challenges identified in this toolkit do not claim to be an exhaustive representation of all the challenges faced by stakeholders. Rather, they should be seen as a partial overview of the day-to-day challenges faced by stakeholders in the field of women, gender and ALE in four countries (Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine and Jordan).

The Gender in Adult Learning and Education Toolkit: Step by step

The toolkit on gender in adult learning and education is structured around five modules: creating awareness in women of ALE, sustainability, advocacy, to make women's learning and education known, and to reach men. The themes of the modules respond to key challenges at the macro, meso and micro levels concerning women, gender and adult learning and education. Each module describes the challenge addressed and presents between three and five tools around this question.

Each tool can be used separately and is presented in a one-page format, making it easy to print. It includes a

brief introduction that indicates when and with whom the tool can be used, as well as an easy-to-follow step-by-step description, including materials needed and ideas on how to develop or adapt the respective tools. It is up to the users to determine which tool(s) best fit their needs and context, and adapt them to their objectives if necessary. Users of this toolkit may also find that not all tools are applicable in all contexts. Nevertheless, the authors of this toolkit hope that these tools can serve as ideas and openings, sparks and incentives to support adult learning and education stakeholders in Jordan, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia - and beyond.



The toolkit can be downloaded in English, French and Arabic at: <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/ale-toolbox/teaching-and-training/gender-in-ale-toolkit/download-center-gender-in-ale-toolkit>



PROFILING ADULT EDUCATION NETWORKS

Adult education networks are important formations in shaping adult education policy and practices in countries. As part of this publication, we share brief profiles of networks from countries in the Northern, Western, Eastern and Southern regions of Africa. MOJA promotes the establishment of vibrant networks in Africa and encourages knowledge exchange between networks.

THE MOROCCAN FORUM FOR LIFELONG LEARNING



The Moroccan Forum for Lifelong Learning aims at becoming an open space for networks, organisations, associations, adult learning and education experts, as well as institutions and policy makers to exchange, dialogue and develop thinking and approaches of adult education and lifelong learning. The forum bases its work on general principles that include renewing visions, building capacities and competencies of workers in the field, preparing research, supporting the development of all adult education programmes, contributing to elaborating and developing policies, encouraging best practices, as well as building partnerships and networking at the national, regional, continental and international levels. Furthermore, the forum endorses State policies that respond to the needs of various social groups (people with disabilities, immigrants, people in special situations, and young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs)). The forum also endorses the opportunities provided by adult education and lifelong learning programmes that are in line with the objectives of the sustainable development goals in Morocco, and which promote knowledge production and lifelong learning in the service of

our fellow humans and their constant aspiration for freedom, dignity, citizenship and active participation.

The Moroccan Forum for Lifelong Learning is an open space of exchanging, dialoguing and sharing experiences, and an institution that envisages ways of contributing to the enhancement and promotion of public policies related to adult education and lifelong learning in Morocco. The forum builds on its rich experiences, fieldwork, and continuous partnerships with the German Adult Education Association (DVV International) in Morocco and North Africa, connecting many networks, associations, unions and other actors in the field of adult education and lifelong learning.

The forum bases its vision on the following premises:

- The right of all citizens to lifelong learning without discrimination in line with the provisions of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG);
- The right of civil society to actively participate in creating public policies in the field of adult education and lifelong learning;
- The commitment of civil society to contribute to the enhancement of adult education and lifelong learning;
- Considering education, and learning in general, as a right for all citizens alike, the State has an obligation to provide education at all levels and for all age stages based on public policy that supports programmes across the adult education sectors.

General context

Morocco's preparations and participation in the 7th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII), hosted and facilitated by the German Adult Education Association (DVV), were marked by several activities and events aimed at mobilising support to highlight the importance of adult education and lifelong learning in societies.

The members of the forum constantly exchange ideas, through social media, on matters of public policy, networking, fieldwork, and the challenges involved in implementing this project.

The commitment and dedication of the network emanate from a firm conviction that civil society organisations have a pivotal role to play in guaranteeing the universal right to lifelong learning. In fact, the continuous development of adults' capabilities, knowledge and skills is another important strategic investment that should be implemented by all countries. These investments will surely have positive economic, social, political and cultural outcomes, raising individual and collective income in opposition to poverty and vulnerability. An investment in adult education should contribute to building solidarity and social cohesion, cultural diversity and facilitates peace in an ever changing world.

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PAMOJA WEST AFRICA NETWORK



PAMOJA West Africa is a non-partisan, secular and non-profit sub-regional network. Pamoja West Africa was officially registered in Mali on February 18, 2009 and in Benin on July 25, 2019. The legal headquarters of the network is currently in Cotonou, the Republic of Benin.

Pamoja West Africa aims to carry out advocacy actions for the promotion of youth and adult education using the Reflect Approach as an effective tool for community empowerment.

The authorities and bodies of Pamoja include:

- the General Assembly, which is the body for deliberation and decision-making;
- the Board of Directors, the body that oversees the execution of the decisions of the General Assembly; and
- the sub-regional coordinating structures which execute the action plans in accordance with the orientations of the General Assembly and the Board of Directors.

To be a member of the Pamoja West Africa Network, it is necessary to be a national network approving the Statutes and Internal Regulations of the network. Membership is subject to:

- the payment of membership fees set at 240 dollars; and
- the payment of the annual membership fee (This amount may be revised by the General Assembly).

Pamoja West Africa has fifteen participating countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria,

Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Tunisia and Niger.

The areas of intervention of Pamoja include:

- strengthening the capacities of its members with a view to ensuring the quality of adult education,
- advocacy for government funding of youth and adult education,
- networking between members and other organisations pursuing the same objectives as Pamoja to achieve greater impact and achieve the indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

The vision of Pamoja West Africa is as follows: ***A world where everyone can influence the decisions that affect them by actively participating in the social, economic, political, environmental and cultural life of their community.***

The mission of Pamoja West Africa is to promote and facilitate access to quality inclusive education throughout the life of young people and adults, with a view to contributing to sustainable and equitable development in Africa.

The values of Pamoja West Africa are:

- accountability (the duty to report to the grassroots);
- empowerment of marginalised groups;
- transparency and good governance;
- an inclusive approach to collaboration and networking;
- advocate for the voiceless to be heard;
- the application and respect of the principles of good governance at all levels; and
- the application and respect of gender principles.

Pamoja West Africa's 2020-2023 strategic plan entitled "*Inclusive education for all, leaving no one behind*" focuses on three strategic axes which are:

- improving quality in the implementation of alternatives educational (Reflect and other participatory approaches),

- advocacy and networking for education, and
- the development of professional skills for young people and adults and the implementation of the principles of good governance.

The work of Pamoja West Africa is supported by membership fees and technical and financial support from partners such as the German Institute for Adult Education (DVV International), the Swiss Cooperation, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), the International Organization of Francophonie (OIF), the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL).

It should be noted that Pamoja West Africa periodically brings together its members for the holding of the statutory General Assembly and for capacity building training on specific themes expressed by the members.

Currently Pamoja West Africa is involved in several projects or programmes with its partners. These include, for example, the project to promote integrated adult education systems in Africa promoted by DVV International West Africa and the Regional Support Program for the Quality of Education (PRAQUE) supported by Swiss Cooperation. In addition, Pamoja West Africa offers its expertise for training and research on the Reflect approach and other relevant topics in the field of adult education.

The Pamoja West Africa network regularly produces documentation to equip its members and adult education practitioners to improve their educational practices. These include Pamoja's advocacy strategy, the document on the quality standards of the Reflect Approach, good practices in adult education, etc. These documents can be downloaded under the link <https://www.pamoja-west-africa.org/documents-reflect/>.

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THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN UGANDA (APAEU)



APAEU is a network of professional adult educators in Uganda. The network consists of academia, practitioners, researchers and students with core membership from universities (Makerere Kyambogo and Gulu); and local and national government actors. We work in

collaboration with NGOs providing adult education, Ministry of Gender, DVV, Uganda Literacy and Adult Learners Association (ULALA) and Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNUTCOM), the UNESCO national office in Uganda, among other partners. APAEU is a member of the UNESCO Chair on Life Long Learning, Youth and Work, hosted by Gulu University.

The network aims to

- promote research and publication in adult education in Uganda,
- strengthen the network of professional adult educators; and
- mainstream adult education in national development by influencing policy processes and practice.

We do these through

- our community outreach activities;
- support to young scholars to develop skills in academic writing; and
- through skills training and advocacy work.

APAEU has liaison offices at Kyambogo and Makerere Universities.

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https://mobile.twitter.com/apaeu_uganda

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THE ADULT LEARNING FORUM (ALF)



Adult Learning Forum Western Cape

Established 2001

The Adult Learning Forum (ALF) was established in 2001 with a vision to build a strong adult and youth learning organisation that promotes lifelong learning in all spheres of life.

The overall aim of ALF is to promote adult and youth learning through working with individuals and organisations to foster a culture of learning in the province. The Adult Learning Forum (ALF) works in the arena of adult education and plays a critical role in how the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) exercises its role as the custodian of policy in the higher education landscape. As an organisation that is connected with various structures in the adult education sector, it holds the DHET accountable for its role in supporting the Community Learning Centres or CLCs as an institution that still requires both conceptual and material support.

It comprises members who work both in the formal and non-formal sector and offer practical skills such as: sewing, gardening, beading, safety and mental wellness. These

programmes are offered outside of the prescribed curriculum of the Department of Higher Education and Training. ALF promotes non-formal education in the hope that DHET will support its institutionalisation in CLCs. Although the members also offer formal education, many of them use a Reflect approach in their classes. They use banners, posters, relevant icebreakers, and activities and they work in conjunction with community organisations to offer leadership skills. One of their centre managers at a CLC instituted a market day for students where they buy and sell items to save money for educational trips (e.g. Robben Island trip).

Activities of ALF

To fulfil the vision of concentrating on adult and youth learning, the ALF focuses on the following:

- **Lobbying:** Government & Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), for strong representation of civil society
- **Sharing:** experiences, skills & practices
- **Encouraging:** adult and youth learning practices that contribute to a democratic society
- **Providing:** relevant mechanisms for meaningful networking
- **Agitating:** for adult and youth learning as a vehicle for development
- **Fostering:** reflection for informed research on policies and practices

ALF, like its counterpart organisations, is an advocate for the voice of people in communities and helps bring this voice into formal public spaces, such as policy formulation processes.

Adult education and democracy

Democracy cannot exist without a strong and vocal civil society. ALF engages with a range of debates at local, provincial and national level. The Forum also raises issues of concern in the adult education sector and society in general. In particular ALF works with marginalised communities, via the various bodies on which it has representation and through the media whenever possible. The media is also used to promote and advocate adult learning. ALF works with different network partners in terms of safety, mental wellness, DVVI partners, women groups, youth groups, rural communities and city-based groups.

At a national level ALF engages with non-formal learning that draws on participatory approaches to learning. It is predicated on the idea that learning takes place outside of formal places and such knowledge needs to be integrated in learning encounters. To advance this approach, particular modalities are applied such as: workshops, awareness programmes, advocacy drives to critique policy and celebrate lifelong and non-formal education.

Contact details:

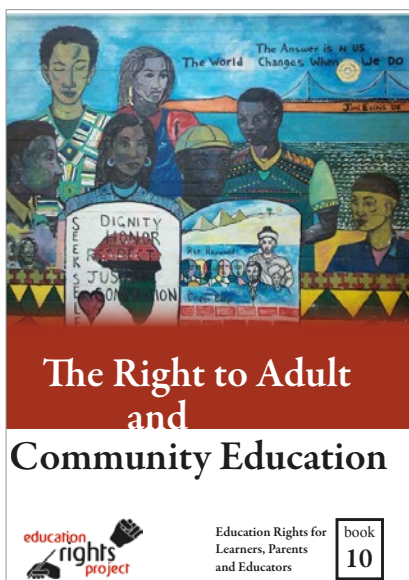
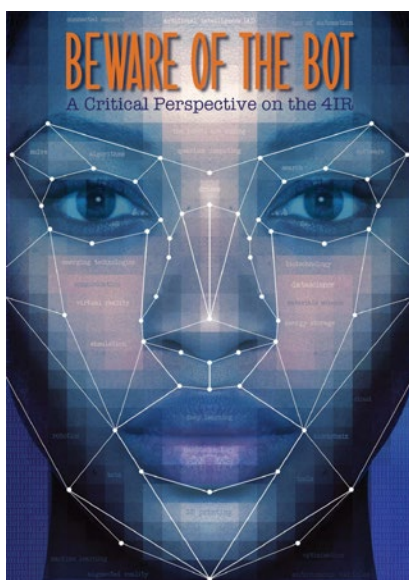
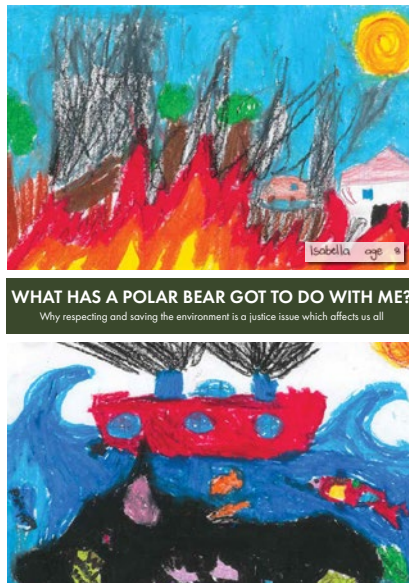
alforum@mweb.co.za

<https://www.facebook.com/adultlearningforum/>

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS



MOJA offers its community a space for sharing educational resources and materials. Since the launch of MOJA in April 2021, various organisations have started sharing resources with the MOJA community. These materials and resources are predominantly open source and to support our practices in diverse contexts. MOJA encourages adult education practitioners across the continent to add to the growing repository on the platform. Today our materials and resources include a focus on the ecological crisis and climate change; food and hunger; researching learning programme design, building adult and community education programmes and many more. Please visit our resource section at www.mojaafrica.net/en/resources



CAPACITY BUILDING

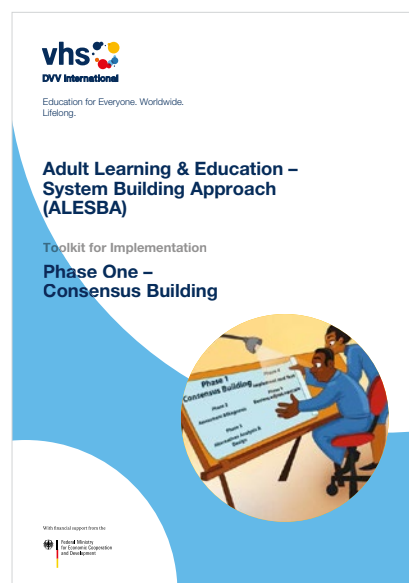
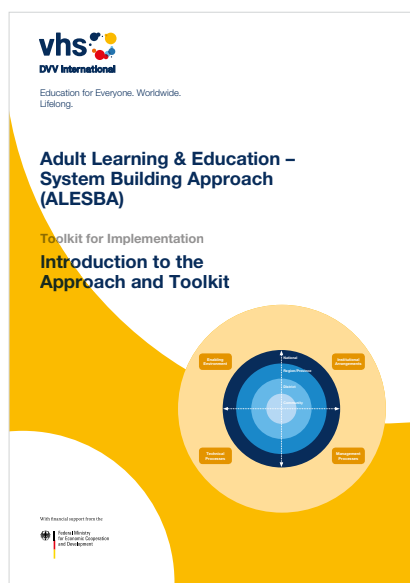


Capacity building in adult education remains an important area of work on the continent. The MOJA digital platform and supporting networks contribute to capacity building in various ways and continue to explore new ways of supporting practitioners working in the transdisciplinary field of adult education.

MOJA is currently supporting adult practitioners with support in two areas. MOJA runs a programme on building adult education systems and will implement a programme on the use of digital tools in adult learning.

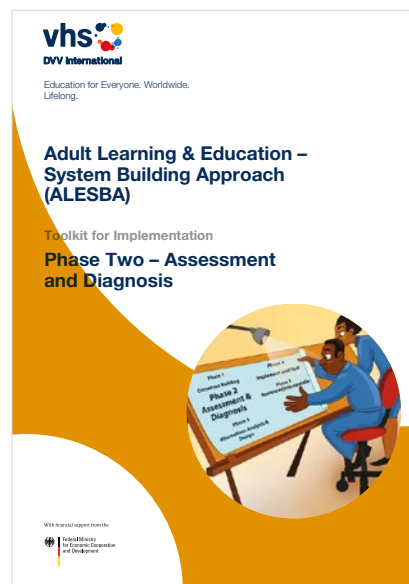
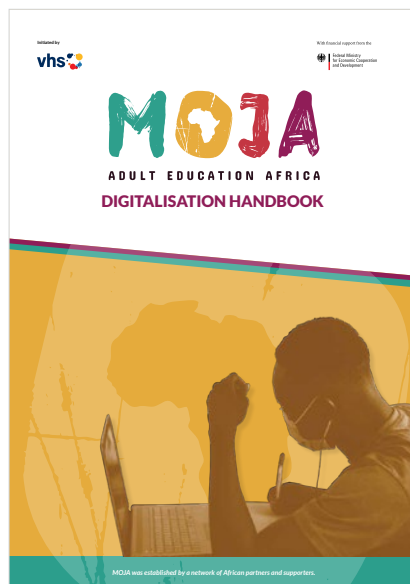
The ALESBA Course

MOJA provides adult education practitioners opportunities to broaden and deepen understanding in building national adult education systems. The Adult Learning and Education Systems Building Approach (ALESBA) is available to adult education practitioners. A series of booklets on ALESBA is available on the MOJA digital platform. These booklets can be downloaded from the platform. For more information about the ALESBA course please visit www.mojaafrica.net/en/training or write to mojaeducation@gmail.com



The MOJA Media Handbook

This handbook is a guide for adult education practitioners who want to create their own media for websites, the MOJA digital platform, newsletters, print and social media platforms. It is also a resource that facilitators can use when conducting media training for adult educators. The handbook covers various topics including foundational writing skills, how to produce articles, mobile journalism, writing for social media and using social media tools for distributing media content. MOJA is planning to offer capacity building exercises with adult education practitioners. For more information, please visit www.mojaafrica.net or write to mojaeducation@gmail.com



EVENTS



We publish events related to adult learning and education on a regular basis. Please find a list of upcoming and past events [here](#)

We encourage the MOJA community to use the platform to upload their events.

RESOURCES

We continue to update the resource section of MOJA. All the resources can be downloaded for use by our community. Please visit [MOJA](#) to see the variety of resources available.

USEFUL LINKS

MOJA provides a number of useful links to partners, associates and other useful organisations. These include links to Courses, Journals and Bulletins. Please visit [MOJA](#) to see these links.

NEWSLETTER

MOJA circulates a newsletter with information about organisations, events, resources and more. To receive our newsletter please sign up [here](#).

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

MOJA invites the adult education community to help build the platform. Please join us and [register](#) as a member.

MOJA - our platform for sharing insights, resources and experiences, and building connections to enhance adult education for transformation in Africa.

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