

To the ICAE - Thank you for 50 years of Hope

The Changing Landscape of Adult Learning and Education in Jamaica: Fifty Years and Beyond

Fifty years of adult education in Sweden

Critical pedagogy and radical democracy in times of hate

Climate justice education: A priority for Africa

Re-questioning Education and the role of Adult Education: an overview from the Arab Region

Where to Next in the Asia Pacific and Beyond: ASPBAE's Journey with ICAE and Partners in Informing and Following-Up on CONFINTEA VII Marrakech Framework for Action

Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967) and Education

A tribute to Professor Chris Duke – with a selection of his publications as an annotated bibliography

SEBAS PARRA NUÑO - Educar como se vive, vivir como se lucha, luchar como se estima...
La cotidianidad de un maestro de maestros

Ronald G Sultana (1958- 2023): An Appreciation

Transformative Sustainability Education: Reimagining Our Future

Reflections on ICAE General Assembly, Bali, NOV-30-Dec 1 2023

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Editorial

Timothy D. Ireland and Shermaine Barrett

In this special issue of *Convergence* to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ICAE, we look back and look forward. We look back over the 50 years since the ICAE was founded in 1973 and, at the same time, with the experience and wisdom accrued over this half century, we look forward to the next half century.

Discussions concerning the need to create an organization representing civil society were held on the side-lines of the CONFINTEA III, in Tokyo, in 1972. Fifty years later, the ICAE played an important role both in the mobilization for CONFINTEA VII held in Marrakech (Morocco) in 2022 and in the elaboration of the declaration adopted at the conclusion of the Conference – The Marrakech Framework of Action. The last number of *Convergence* (Vol. XL [3-4], 2007) before its suspension was published as a special issue in 2009 with the intention of helping “participants in the conferences (regional preparatory conferences for CONFINTEA VI) to make a more substantial contribution to the debate” (*Convergence*, 2007, p.9). More recently, *Convergence* arose like the phoenix from the ashes in 2022 under the guidance of Peter Mayo, the UNESCO Chair in Global Adult Education at the University of Malta, so it is symbolically important to commemorate the ICAE’s half century with another special issue of the journal.

Just as the CONFINTEA V, held in Hamburg in 1997, was preceded by the publication of the Delors Report, *Learning: the treasure within*, so CONFINTEA VII was preceded by the publication of the report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, *Reimagining our Future together: a new social contract for education*, to the background of the ongoing discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda for Education. This complex (and at times confusing) profusion of agendas and proposals was further increased by the launching of the Transforming Education agenda by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in September 2022. Of all these initiatives the only one to make specific reference to Adult Learning and Education is the Futures of Education Report. This constitutes a stark reminder that despite all ICAE’s efforts and the continuing cycle of CONFINTEAs, adult education remains a marginal agenda for a large number of countries and a low priority for many others.

The last four years have been particularly challenging for ICAE and Adult Learning and Education beginning with the COVID pandemic whose long-lasting effects are still

to be fully documented and analysed and accompanied by what the Declaration of the Civil Society Forum in 2022 described as “a complex spectrum of human created crises including (...) negative impact of digitalization, artificial intelligence and other new technologies, the nuclear threat, the weakening of democracy and the use of violence in place of negotiation and dialogue” (ICAE, 2022). And all this to the constant backdrop of the deepening climate crisis whose gravity threatens our very existence. According to the Global Tipping Points Report, five important thresholds already risk being crossed and three more may be reached in the 2030s if the world heats 1.5C above pre-industrial temperatures. According to this same report triggering these planetary shifts will not cause temperatures to spiral out of control in the coming centuries but will unleash dangerous and sweeping damage to people and nature that cannot be undone (The Guardian, 06/12/2023).

At its General Assembly in Bali (Indonesia) in December, ICAE reaffirmed its commitment to four core principles which have guided and will continue to guide its work. Education is understood as a fundamental human right, as a common good and collective endeavour, as participatory, inclusive, emancipatory and democratic in nature and as lifelong, life-wide, learner centred and gender focused. This was also clearly stated in the Declaration of the Civil Society Forum held in Marrakech on 14th June 2022:

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is a fundamental human right of all young people, adults and older adults. It is more than about enabling us to respond to crises: it is about laying the foundation for a common understanding of life in harmony with other people and forms of life in our common habitat, the planet earth. This involves understanding and then tackling systemic issues, including poverty, structural inequalities, global problems and power issues, on a permanent basis. (...) Hence the need, in the words of the UNESCO Futures of Education report, for A New Social Contract for Education. In this context, a new ALE needs to create and embrace long-term, sustainable solutions based upon the transformative power of adult learning and education rather than insist on its adaptive and responsive role. Peace is a precondition for planetary harmony which should be nurtured in the minds of women and men. The return on investments in education, literacy, critical thinking, learning to live together is much deeper, wider and longer lasting than that of investments in military hardware. ALE has a huge capacity to contribute to our personal and collective emancipation in both the life and work contexts, to gender equality and wider inclusion.

The challenge which was put to the contributors of this special issue was to bring together a series of articles which both stand alone and at the same time contribute to understand the development of Adult Education from the initial years of ICAE to the present and to look at future perspectives bearing in mind two of ICAE’s recent battle cries – *Because the Future cannot wait* and *Towards a Learning Planet*, with a focus on the theme of **Adult Learning and Education – past, present and future**. As editors we set ourselves the impossible task of attempting to achieve a balance between theory and

practice, the regional perspective, gender and generations. Each article represents one of the seven ICAE regions: North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, Africa, the Arab Region and Asia Pacific.

We open with Budd Hall's letter to the ICAE, "Thank you for fifty years of Hope", written on his 80th Birthday. As Hall states this is a more personal story of his own involvement in the Council beginning in 1970 and concluding in 1990 with his last World Assembly as Secretary-General, held in Bangkok, Thailand, and organised by Rajesh Tandon, President of the Asia and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) and Kasama Varavan, the Director-General of the Division of Non-Formal Education of the Government of Thailand. He concludes by declaring that his years with the ICAE were perhaps the most nourishing of his lifetime.

Shermaine Barrett's article, **The changing landscape of adult learning and education in Jamaica: Fifty years and beyond**, traces the country's adult learning and education journey outlining some of the initiatives - literacy programmes, skills training, the high school diploma equivalency programme and the establishment of the national qualification framework - developed in Jamaica as the country sought to transform its economic system from an agrarian dependent to an industrialized system based on education as a crucial investment and an engine for growth. It examines the changes in the Jamaican context that informed these initiatives over the last 50 years.

Writing from the European perspective, Cecilia Palm explores the evolution of adult education in Sweden over the past fifty years, using it as a representative case study of Nordic countries, in her article **Fifty years of adult education in Sweden**. Starting in the 1970s when only 10% of the active population had completed eleven years of primary education, the article compares the situation at that time with the current context in the 2020s, with a shift towards formal, publicly funded education, with an emphasis on universities and vocational education. Palm points to the challenges which remain, such as unequal educational access and integrating immigrants and concludes that despite the progress achieved, there continues to exist a need for a comprehensive adult education strategy to address current needs and future uncertainties, emphasizing the societal value beyond employability.

In her article entitled **Critical pedagogy and radical democracy in times of hate**, Giovanna Modé reflects on the unique importance of a civil society global network with the mission of defending the right to adult and youth education in a world immersed in multiple and systemic crises. Her argument is that in a context in which democracies and education are under attack, we should radicalize our principles, particularly by fostering popular education and critical pedagogy, of particular importance in Latin American debates, as part of the strategy for recovering the capacity for dialogue as well as the intersectoral connection with other human rights movements.

As Shirley Walters points out in her reflection on **Climate justice education: A priority for Africa**, the vast continent of Africa is home to over a billion people in 55 countries, with very different economies, resources, ecosystems and cultures. All the countries,

except Ethiopia and Liberia, share the common historical fate of having been subject to colonization. Her argument is that climate change and colonialism are inextricably linked and that it is impossible to address the effects of climate change without addressing the legacies of colonialism. Hence, she suggests, climate colonialism is a key concept within climate justice education, as is the related concept 'cognitive justice'. For this reason, climate justice education must be considered a priority for Africa.

The unfolding landscape of the emerging new global order poses new challenges for adult education in the Arab Region, which include the role of educators, the impact of artificial intelligence and other technologies, the continuing impact of extreme poverty and the role played by the creativity of women in the transition from the old to the emerging new order. Zahi Azar, in his article **Re-questioning education and the role of adult education: an overview from the Arab region**, makes the point that adult learning and education is no longer considered as a priority for decision-makers and policy makers in many Arab countries due, in part, to the fragility of partnership and networking between governments, civil society and the private sector. He concludes his article by acknowledging the historical significance of women's role in ALE and their potential to drive transformation and qualitative change based on their participation.

Our final contribution, **Where to next in the Asia Pacific and beyond: ASPBAE's journey with ICAE and Partners in informing and following-up on CONFINTEA V11 Marrakech Framework for Action**, comes from the Asia Pacific region, in which Helen Dabu emphasises the CSOs' ability to mobilise and urgently respond to those largely unmapped processes given the need to adapt to specific conditions generated by the pandemic in which the majority of the inter-governmental processes leading to the face-to-face main conference in Marrakech were conducted virtually. Dabu underlines the nature of the article as a lesson-learning piece, based on a documentation of the process with a view to serve as a reference for the next CONFINTEA cycle in 12 years, and equally to guide the frontline advocates for adult learning and education (ALE) on the strategic areas to monitor in the follow up to the MFA commitments to fully harness the transformational power of ALE.

To conclude we include a text celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of one of Europe's prominent and innovative critical pedagogues and social activists, the Italian priest and educator, don Lorenzo Milani, most widely known for his school project in the village of Barbiana. We also remember the lives and contributions to the field of education of three recently departed educators: Chris Duke, with his huge contribution to the work of ASPBAE and ICAE, the Valencian educator Sebas Parra Nuño and the academic Ronald G. Sultana from the University of Malta with his important contribution to social research.

In times of climate change, our book review is dedicated to Elizabeth Lange's **Transformative Sustainability Education: Reimagining Our Future**. As Shirley Walters comments, the book speaks to educators, addressing the central challenge of

how to midwife the big new story of Relationality. In it we are being called to reclaim education and reimagine our future towards relationality. In that sense, we are a transitional generation that stands in the liminal zone between two epochs, from what has been to what is to come.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ICAE, it would seem appropriate to conclude with the invocation with which the Declaration of the Civil Society Forum concluded “As members of ICAE, we remain committed and united for ALE as a fundamental human right and a precondition for social and ecological justice, well-being, change and transformation, because the future cannot wait”. Viva ICAE!

**To the ICAE
Thank you for 50 years of Hope**

Budd L. Hall

University of Victoria, BC and former ICAE Secretary General

In the Lekwungen-speaking territories of the island where I live, First Nations Peoples lift their hands towards the Creator as an expression of respect and appreciation. I lift my hands to the International Council for Adult Education, its leaders and members, its networks of thousands, its legacies of millions on this occasion of its 50th Anniversary.

I had imagined that I might write an intellectual contribution reflecting on 50 years of adult education at a global level with clever references and inspiring words from the many who have influenced me over these years. But I have failed in that task! My head is filled with so many memories and so many diverse ideas that it has proven impossible to create that kind of reflection.

Instead, please allow me to share a more personal story, a shorter story than I had hoped, but some words to contribute to the many others that will come forth over this year in celebration of the wonderful years of the ICAE.

In some ways my journey with ICAE began in 1970 when I was working on my PhD at UCLA in Los Angeles, California. One of my jobs as a research assistant was to accompany visitors to UCLA while they explored the university and the community. In June of 1970, a charming Deputy Director of the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Dar es Salaam, Nicholas Kuhanga came into my office. Nicolas, a former student of Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere, the founding President of Tanzania was visiting the United States looking at various experiences in adult education. I had been studying the ideas of Nyerere as part of my work in International and Comparative Education but had never imagined meeting someone who was already a leader in the Ujamaa

movement¹. I took Nicholas around various adult education centres in Los Angeles and before he left, he told me that the Institute was looking for a research fellow to join their Institute. He asked if that would be a position that might interest me? I said it would and he set up an interview arrangement with Professor Terrance Ranger, former history Professor of the University of Dar es Salaam. By August of 1970, I was in Dar es Salaam with my wife who was expecting our first son.

My work at the Institute brought me into the world of adult education, the vision of Mwalimu Nyerere and his leaders and the international legacy of adult education from all parts of the world, from India, England, Sweden, the USA, Canada, Germany, Cuba, Denmark and many other parts of the world. I was captivated by the idea of providing adults, people of an age when they could influence their own lives, families and communities, with learning opportunities. The idea of building people's confidence and skills through highlighting their own lived experiences and building a possibility for better lives was powerful then and remains powerful to me in 2023.

The Director of the Institute of Adult Education was Paul J. Mhaiki, a brilliant leader who articulated the vision of Ujamaa with passion and grace. Paul was invited to the 1972 UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA II) that was held in Tokyo, Japan. I co-wrote that national adult education paper presented at Tokyo with my Director, Paul. As it happens Tanzania and its vision about adult education attracted a great deal of positive attention at the conference. But it was also at the conference that the Canadian J. Roby Kidd proposed the idea of creating an International Council for Adult Education. Roby had been a proponent of international linkages in adult education since his early participation in 1949 at the Elsinore conference on adult education. He worked in India in the early 1960s and Jamaica later in that decade building adult education structures. He felt that while UNESCO was able to bring nation-states together in support of adult education, a non-governmental body was needed to make the connections with the grassroots and the practice of the field.

With support from Helmuth Dolff of the German DVV, Arthur Stock of England, Gordon Selman of Canada, Malcolm Adeshsiah of India and P. J. Mhaiki of Tanzania, the ICAE was formally launched in February of 1973. J. Roby Kidd was the founding Secretary-General, Malcolm Adishehiah was

¹ Ujamaa is the Kiswahili word for familyhood or community-led development. It was the political vision created by President Nyerere which called for people to live together in villages and build a future based on lived experience and local knowledge.

founding President, Helmut Dolff and Arthur Stock were Vice-Presidents as I recall and Paul J Mhaiki was founding Vice-President for Africa! The ICAE was founded as an organisation made up of national adult education bodies. Most of the founding members were from the British Commonwealth, countries where the English concept of adult education had spread. But year by year other countries would join. The Nordic countries came in a block in 1976 at the time of the first ICAE World Assembly of Adult Education.

When my contract was finishing in Tanzania, Paul Mhaiki wrote to Roby Kidd suggesting that he hire me to 'help build the ICAE'. So, in 1975, after some time spent at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, I joined Roby Kidd as the first full time employee of the ICAE. My position was that of a Research Officer. It was from that position that I began developing the International Participatory Research Network which had been based on my earlier work in Tanzania and which got a boost in visibility at the 1976 ICAE First World Assembly of Adult Education.

Roby had hired me with the idea that the First World Assembly on Adult Education and Development could be organized in Tanzania under the influence of Mwalimu Nyerere, Paul Mhaiki, Nicolas Kuhanga and others. He asked me to take on the job of Conference Secretary. Working with my former Director Paul Mhaiki who was by this time the Principal of Kivukoni College, I spent all of 1975 and the first half of 1976 getting the word out to all corners of the adult education world. We had funding from the Canadian government and from the Ebert-Stiftung Foundation of Germany but the vast majority of financial support came from national governments, local NGOs, personal budgets. In the end we were between 600-700 people from close to 100 countries. Mwalimu Nyerere was our keynote speaker and author of the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Adult Education. Majid Rahnema, architect of the UNESCO Learning to be Report, Lucile Mair, Jamaica's Ambassador to the United Nations and Paulo Freire were among many well-known names who gathered in the grounds of the University of Dar es Salaam. The key messages coming from the Dar es Salaam conference were that 'development' would not be attained without attention to adult education, that adult education had a transformative potential to change, that by coming together as a global movement all of our local work could be strengthened.

Between 1976 and 1979 I spent most of my time building the global participatory research movement. Working with several gifted graduate students from the University of Toronto such as Edward Jackson, dian marino, Deborah Barndt, Al Vigoda, and emerging global leaders such as Rajesh Tandon from India, Francisco Vio Grossi from Chile, Sylvia Smelkes of Mexico,

Ana Kranjc of Slovenia, Orlando Fals Borda of Colombia and others. We held participatory research gatherings in Venezuela, Ljubljana, New Delhi, Toronto, and The Netherlands. By 1979, the time of the ICAE Executive Committee meeting in Finland, participatory research was well known within the international development community.

In 1979, Roby Kidd stepped down as Secretary-General to become Treasurer of ICAE. I was named as the Secretary-General with Chris Duke of Australia named as Associate Secretary-General. I loved the work, the challenges and the vision of a global transformative movement with strong world links which would highlight the role of adult education in the common challenges of our times: literacy, poverty, health for all, women's perspectives and more. I remained Secretary-General until 1991 when I moved to academia in the adult education department of the University of Toronto.

The 1976-1979 period of the ICAE was one of making connections with UNESCO, ECOSOC, FAO, UNITAR and other UN bodies. It was also a period which was focussed more closely on those countries which had national adult education bodies. There was more of a focus on influencing adult education policies at the national and international levels. The 1979-1991 period had a focus on strengthening the links between adult education and the larger global social movements of the times. We had programmatic networks linked to the women's movements, health for all, participatory research, environmental adult education, worker's education, and older adults. The 1982 World Assembly brought the national associations together with the social movement adult educators at Marly-le-Roi outside of Paris. The French President Francois Mitterrand was our keynote speaker. Dame Nita Barrow of Barbados became our President. Our event was organized by Peuple et Culture under the leadership of Bernard Smagghe and Philippe Avenier.

1985 saw the third UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA III) in Paris. The ICAE brought several hundred adult educators from our membership to influence the agenda. A team of talented writers from ICEA in Quebec, led by Paul Bélanger, installed in the basement of the buildings at rue Miollis, pounded out and printed draft resolutions which were then taken to national delegations for action. Dame Nita Barrow did a keynote speech on The Right to Learn that was adapted as the declaration of the conference.

1985 saw the third ICAE World Assembly of Adult Education organized in Buenos Aires, Argentina to celebrate the return to democracy by President Alfonsín after the many years of military rule and oppression. President

Alfonsin was our keynote speaker. The Argentina world assembly saw the full emergence of the Latin American popular education movement. Francisco Vio Grossi, the Secretary-General of the Latin American Council for Adult Education (CEAAL) with local organizing done by the formidable Isabel Hernandez, brought the Latin American popular education to the attention of the world. We joined the Mothers in the Plaza de Mayo for a demonstration. The 'madres de la plaza de Mayo' were mothers of the disappeared young people who were killed during the years of oppression. The full energies of the social adult education movement were engaged.

Between 1985 and 1990, we kept our social movement networks active with meetings in many parts of the world. But we also began to work within the UNESCO and UN system to plant the seeds for a United Nations Year of Literacy. We met in Paris, in Germany, in India, in Toronto, in New York and elsewhere preparing the ground for the United Nations declaration of a Literacy year. By this time our President, Dame Nita Barrow who, as Ambassador of Barbados to the United Nations, was based in New York and helped us gain access and visibility. In the end it was Mongolia that made the formal resolution calling for a UN Year of Literacy and 1990 became that year. The ICAE led the International Task Force on Literacy, a coalition of NGOs supporting the year and bringing action to the pronouncements of the United Nations.

1990 was my last ICAE World Assembly as Secretary-General. It was organized in Bangkok, Thailand, under the planning brilliance of Rajesh Tandon, President of the Asia and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) and Kasama Varavan, the Director-General of the Division of Non-Formal Education of the Government of Thailand. We held the "People's Launch of the United Nations International Year of Literacy" at the time. That ceremony culminated with the Royal Princess signing a literacy declaration, an event which was streamed around the world, long before webinars became common.

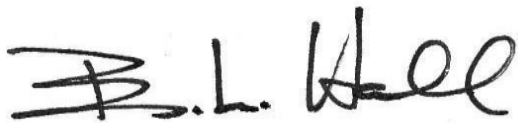
Reflections

I continued to play a role with the ICAE during the challenging years when there were ups and downs in both funding and leadership. I was pleased to have been able to provide some interim support until Celita Eccher, the remarkable Uruguayan Secretary-General and Paul Belanger, the visionary President were able to take over to carry ICAE through the next years of innovation and progress. I was delighted when Katrina Popovic was chosen as Secretary-General some years ago. Katrina is a progressive, scholarly, policy

intelligent leader who continues to carry the visions of the many founders forward. The next 50 years will be amazing!

My years with the ICAE were perhaps the most nourishing of my lifetime. I was exposed to so many brilliant people, powerful ideas, transformative experiences. I write this note on my 80th birthday. I give thanks to the thousands of people I have worked with in this remarkable movement.

Blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B.L. Wheeler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "B" and "W".

The Changing Landscape of Adult Learning and Education in Jamaica: Fifty Years and Beyond

Shermaine Barrett

University of Technology, Jamaica

Introduction

Throughout the course of the history of the development of nations, education has been regarded as a crucial investment and an engine for growth. This public good view of education is no different in the case of Jamaica. Consequently, as the country sought to transform its economic system from an agrarian dependent to an industrialized system, the education of its population played a crucial role in ensuring that the human resource needed to assure its development goals and the economic advancement of the country was available.

Writers such as Olaniyan & Okemakinde (2008) and McGrath (2010) make the point that education creates improved citizens and as such aids in the improvement of the general standard of living in a society. Education has been further conceived of as an enabling factor that opens up varied avenues of personal, community and national development. Jamaica has therefore been making continuous efforts to improve literacy and adult basic education, workforce education, and human and resource development through national policy and educational initiatives. This paper captures some of these initiatives and examines the changes in the Jamaican context that have informed these actions over the last 50 years.

The National Context

Jamaica is a part of the Anglo-Caribbean countries, located in the central Caribbean approximately 90 miles from Cuba and 100 miles from Haiti. It is the largest of the English-speaking Caribbean islands and is the largest demographic unit of the region with a population of approximately 2.93 million. Jamaica is categorized as an upper middle-income economy, with a

GDP per capita of USD 5,582 (2019). However, its long-term macroeconomic context has been characterized by low growth, high public debt, and exposure to external shocks (World Bank Group & UNICEF, 2021). Jamaica shares a heritage of British colonization which lasted for over 300 years, along with other British Caribbean neighbours (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). After emancipation, Jamaica, like its other Caribbean counterparts continued to be ruled by the British Monarchy under a Crown Colony form of government obtaining independence in 1962.

Miller and Murray (1977) noted that “with the advent of independence came the need for Jamaica to develop a new and viable economy no longer based on plantation agriculture and the marketing of a few main crops” (p. 82). This called for a diversification of the Jamaican economy. Consequently, the 1970s marked a shift in the Jamaican economy from agriculture to services.

Literacy a National Focus

One of my favourite phrases within the context of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is that adult education responds to its context. Given the context of the 1970s in Jamaica the focus was on building the nation’s economic base and more importantly, moving the economy from an agrarian base to an industrial and service base. This was important because of Jamaica’s history as a sugar plantation society under British Colonization.

A critical component of any country’s economic base is its human resource. Consequently, when in 1971 a study conducted by the Literacy Evaluation and Planning Committee with support from UNESCO showed that almost half of the nation’s population at the time (500,000) was illiterate, a legacy of the slave plantation and colonial period, the government saw this as a grave problem that would hinder the development of the newly independent state (Barrett, 2014). The government was resolute on challenging what existed at the time in order to conquer the future of the country. The prime minister of the day argued that “the half a million persons who were unable to read and write were blocked off from most of the normal avenues of economic opportunity and suffered tremendous disabilities”. He therefore argued that “in such a situation the chance of economic advancement for the country was also blocked which therefore left the entire society condemned to a lower standard of living than was necessary.” He further noted that “the door through which citizens march into full participation in the life of the country is the ability to read and write.” In recognition of the debilitating effect of illiteracy both at the individual and societal levels, the government took the decision to make literacy a national priority and as such to launch a vigorous and massive attack on illiteracy. This

decision gave rise to a national focus on literacy and the establishment of the National Literacy Board (NLB) in 1972 to implement the agenda to eradicate illiteracy. The NLB was soon replaced with the Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy (JAMAL). The new entity, JAMAL was established as a statutory agency under the Ministry of Education and Culture with primary responsibility for adult education in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The 1972 Ministry Paper that laid out the justification for the establishment of JAMAL stated that:

the government regards illiteracy as a grave and fundamental problem in Jamaican life. On the one hand illiteracy restricts freedom, self-reliance and potential for achieving true independence; and on the other hand, it impedes national progress by hindering the release and full utilization of human resources for economic and social development (JAMAL Foundation, 2008 p. 2).

The literacy agenda was therefore two-fold in focusing on personal growth of individuals and the promotion of a better society economically and socially. Given the fact that the greatest resource that Jamaica has is its people, then success in overcoming illiteracy was seen as removing one of the stumbling blocks to economic power. Learning to read and write, the government argued would release in persons self-confidence and a sense of self-reliance with the concomitant confidence being released within the society. Literacy for all was seen as the means by which the country would become a free, proud, educated society (Barrett, 2014).

Side by side with the JAMAL was the Jamaican Council for Adult Education (JACAE) whose formation was catalyzed by JAMAL. JACAE is a voluntary, non-profit organization whose members are individuals and organizations involved in a wide range of adult continuing education and lifelong learning activities. In its formative years its mission was “to promote the development of adult continuing education and lifelong learning for individual and national development and to unite adult educators in Jamaica.” Over the years JACAE collaborated with JAMAL, one of its founding members, to promote the importance of adult education and especially literacy. JAMAL’s work in literacy and the genesis and work in continuing adult education of JACAE had been inescapably linked over the years. For almost 30 years both JAMAL and JACAE have been members of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), an international NGO dedicated to promoting the right to education and learning for young people and adults. Through their membership in ICAE both entities have benefitted from their participation in various regional and global fora, events and initiatives focused on youth and adult education which

have served to strengthen their work locally through information sharing, skill development and access to educational resources.

Literacy and Work Skill Reclamation Thrust

In 1979, in response to statistics that revealed that 20% (70,000) of the youth population, 15 – 20 years old, were unemployed and approximately 140 thousand were unskilled for the productive workforce or self-employment, the Literacy and Work Skill Reclamation Programme was launched. Funding for this programme was provided through the assistance of the World Food Programme (Barrett, 2014).

The main objective of this thrust was to make students employable as well as literate by taking them through various levels of academic training before sending them to a skills training institution. Unskilled, non-reading young adults would be placed in a full-time educational institution to receive intensive training in basic literacy and work skills to make them suitable for entry into the work world. Later on, in 1988 the literacy and skills programme was expanded to include all persons attending JAMAL literacy classes whether day or evening. Over an 18-month period, trainees were able to gain skills in various areas related to the needs of the productive sector (Barrett, 2014).

Once again, in response to changing global demands, JAMAL was transformed into the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) in 2007. With the change in name came a change in mission and so the JFLL's mission was amended to read:

to provide, in partnership with other organizations, adult education programmes which would establish a culture of lifelong learning that would empower individuals and contribute to national development (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2022).

As an agency of the Ministry of Education, JFLL was responsible for providing non-formal, basic and continuing education for the adult learner population. In addition to its responsibility to deal with illiteracy, this new entity was tasked to address issues beyond illiteracy, beyond formal education, ensuring that Jamaican citizens would have the opportunity to be productive lifelong learners in society. Unlike JAMAL, which focused primarily on the eradication of illiteracy, the JFLL was now focused on promoting lifelong learning through a combination of literacy, numeracy and life skills (Jamaica Information Service, 2008). The success of Jamaica's literacy programme is reflected in the fact that literacy in 2020 stood at 88.1 percent (UNESCO, 2021) representing a

significant improvement since the 1970s when only 50 per cent of adults were literate.

Workplace Literacy Thrust

The strategy of the *Workplace Literacy* programme was to collaborate with manufacturers, and other types of producers, as well as the service sector to provide adult literacy education on the job to those who needed it. The approach sought to marry the resources of the private sector with the expertise of JFLL to train groups of people where they work and so to promote increased productivity in a meaningful way. The programmes were customized to meet the needs of the particular workforce. The process began with a simple 30-minute Diagnostic Test conducted by JFLL to determine the starting point. A confidential report was then shared with the relevant company outlining the findings and recommendations. The company then collaborated with JFLL to establish a plan of action based on the results. Classes were then scheduled at the convenience of the employers and their teams (JFLL Web). Through this programme, workforce training and certification was greatly improved.

Increased Focus on Skills Training for Youth and Adults

In the 1980s as the country began to see growth in output and an expansion in employment opportunities, improvement in employment levels spread over most sectors leading to an increased need for skilled workers. Additionally, there was the need to ensure that the country could successfully participate in the global knowledge economy and maintain a supply of highly skilled workers whose training adequately matched the world's shifting demand within certain skill areas. Consequently, in 1982, building on the work done by the JFLL, the government of Jamaica sought to consolidate its skills training programme with the promulgation of the Human Employment and Resource Training Act (HEART Act). The Act allowed for the setting up of a 3% training levy and tax credit for on-the-job training. The HEART Trust which was reorganized into the HEART National Training Agency (HEART NTA) was consequently established with the mandate "to finance and regulate the training programmes with the objective of producing a skilled, certified workforce consistent with the needs of the economy and the labour market" (HEART Trust National Training Agency, Jamaica, n.d. p 20). These developments gave rise to a new non-formal system of skills training for youth and adults under which training academies were established tied to the investment and job creation initiative of the government at the time (McArdle, 2003). The HEART Trust NTA became the focal point to integrate efforts from all levels and served as "the facilitating and coordinating body for workforce

development in Jamaica, providing access to training, competence assessment and certification for all working age Jamaicans and offering career development and employment facilitation services across Jamaica” (UNESCO, 2021).

A key characteristic of developing nations such as Jamaica is its reliance on foreign donors to manoeuvre the tight fiscal space in which they operate. Consequently, even provision of education is often affected by donor requirements. One critical example of external donor impact on the provision of youth and adult education can be seen in the case of Jamaica responding to the requirements under the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reduce the size of the public service. To that end, in 2019, Parliament passed an act merging the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning with three other government entities that provide education for youths and adults: *the HEART Trust NTA*, the *National Youth Service* and the *Apprenticeship Board of Jamaica* (Jamaica Information Service, 2019). Undoubtedly, this raised concerns that the merger would create an environment within which the strong, specialized focus on adult literacy, numeracy and basic education might be compromised. On the other hand, it was seen as an opportunity to promote a continuous process of learning and acquisition of levels of aptitude enabling learners to incorporate themselves in lifelong learning processes (UNESCO, 2015). In fact, the government argued that the merger of the functions and resources of the entities would solidify several benefits, including, but not limited to: the rationalisation of programmes and systems to meet efficiently and effectively the education and training needs of Jamaicans; the avoidance of duplication of administrative and other functions; the facilitation of the full alignment of remedial training, technical and vocational training and support of the employability skills programme; improvement of the quality of graduate output and expansion of training opportunities to unattached youth (youth who were not engaged in training or learning) and youth-at-risk in Jamaica (Jamaica Information Service, 2019). The Heart Trust NTA was subsequently rebranded the HEART National Service Training Agency Trust (HEART NSTA Trust).

Other important developments in recent years have been the development of the *High School Diploma Equivalency (HSDE)*, *National Qualifications Framework of Jamaica (NQF-J)*, the micro-credentials, *Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)*, *Flexible Learning* pathways.

High School Diploma Equivalency (HSDE)

The High School Diploma Equivalency programme was developed under the direction of the JFLL in 2013 in collaboration with the *Caribbean Examination Council (CXC)*, *E-Learning Jamaica*, the *Jamaican Library Service* and the *HEART Trust/NTA*. The goal of the *HSDE* is to equip youth and adult learners to achieve their personal, academic and professional goals; and thereby, supporting them to create thriving lives and sustainable communities. The *HSDE* is expected to equip recent school leavers and adults who are without the traditional qualifications usually acquired through the formal education system up to the secondary level with the certification necessary to matriculate in tertiary institutions or to get a job. The *HSDE* is a three-tiered programme comprising three distinct levels: Basic (Grades 1 to 6), Intermediate (Grades 7 to 9) and Proficiency (Grades 10 – 11) (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2022). Once again, demonstrating the strong link to the economic agenda of the country, this programme was a direct response to the growing demand for education and skills training for the adult population. The programme seeks to improve outcomes for the adult learner through a solid foundation for the acquisition of skills needed to make them marketable, both locally and internationally. Participants are expected to complete courses in subject areas such as English Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Health and Family Life and a skill area.

The National Qualifications Framework of Jamaica (NQF-J)

In recent years, Jamaica has made concerted efforts to ensure that all Jamaicans irrespective of their socioeconomic background have equal access to affordable and quality education and training opportunities (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2022). This is in keeping with the SDG 4.3 which aims to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. Additionally, the country's Vision 2030 - *Jamaica National Development Plan* - envisions a "Well resourced, internationally recognized, values-based system that develops critical thinking, life-long learners who are productive and successful and effectively contribute to an improved quality of life at the personal, national and global levels" (Government of Jamaica, 2009). The focus of this vision is on facilitating equality of opportunities, social cohesion and partnerships. The establishment of the NQF-J plays a critical role in achieving this vision.

The NQF-J was launched by the *Jamaican Tertiary Education Commission (J-TEC)*, the body that has been charged with responsibility for operationalizing, managing, coordinating, developing and maintaining the framework.

Acknowledging that different types of learning did not enjoy parity of esteem and that many qualifications were not linked to learning pathways, the framework is intended to:

provide recognition and credit for all learning of knowledge and skills and to provide the basis for evaluating and positioning various types of qualifications across the spectrum of the education and training system (PIOJ, 2009).

The establishment of the NQF-J is important to this paper because of its acknowledgement of *Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)*. At the root of *PLAR* is the acknowledgment that learning takes place in a wide variety of contexts other than through formal settings and that such learning is often not formally recognised in terms of qualifications or learning credit. From an adult education perspective, the argument is that there should be mechanisms to assess and recognise such learning to enable individuals to access further education, to compete for jobs or gain recognized certification and to achieve their life goals. The J-TEC defines *PLAR* as

the process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of the learning through formal and informal study. The process recognises and gives credit for knowledge, skills, and competencies that have been acquired experientially, that is, through work experience, unrecognized education or training, self-study, volunteer activities, and hobbies (J-TEC, 2023).

The inclusion of *PLAR* within the *NQF-J* is a major step in supporting continuous education and capacity development for all citizens including youth and adults which in the absence of a lifelong learning policy is very important. Additionally, the *NQF-J* has given rise to conversation and initiatives towards the inclusion of micro credentials and broadening access to education and training through flexible learning pathways.

Within the current context, the Jamaican Council for Adult Education continues to be an active voice for the education and training of youth and adults under its renewed mission to promote the education of youth and adults as a human right that is central to individual and national development.

Conclusion

Whereas the beneficiaries of government interventions reaped personal benefit it was evident that adult education provision over the past 50 years has had a

strong economic agenda in which education is seen as a capital good and relates to the economist's concept of human capital. This contribution of education and training to the overall economic development and growth of a country and to an individual's economic future has long been recognized by human capital theorist such as Gary Becker (1975) and Theodore Schultz (1961) who argued that education and training were investments that could add to productivity. From this perspective, the education and training of youths and adults in Jamaica has been treated as a capital good that is helpful in developing the human resource that is needed to support economic and social transformation. The concept of human capital emphasizes the development of skills as an important factor in production activities (Olaniyan, & Okemakinde, 2008). Therefore, as argued by Akinyemi and Abiddin (2013), the practice of youth and adult education in Jamaica over the past 50 years through literacy training, adult basic education, skills training, workforce education, and human resource development was geared towards developing the skills and competencies to enable the expansion of productivity, efficiency, performance and output.

This focus on the economic benefits of adult education within the Jamaican context can be viewed from the perspective of the government's effort to make the country competitive within the global space and to address the situation of low economic growth. This is Adult Education responding to the needs of its contemporary and historical context in which the colonial past in no way prepared the population or the national economy for an independent existence.

Mwalimu throughout behaved with integrity and commitment to the development and welfare of Tanzanians and the sovereignty of Tanzania and the African continent. Adult educators can learn from the struggles that emerged to put transformative education and participatory democracy into practice. For example, participatory methods and philosophy of learning, organizing and action research have been developed within the animation conceptual framework, often called [participatory action research](#). Several activist organizations in Tanzania have adopted animation as the way they organize themselves, and also how they facilitate dialogue, advocacy and participatory action among the communities in which they work. How prepared are they/we to put into practice Nyerere's call for liberating adult education in solidarity with the people?

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The Changing Landscape of Adult Learning and Education in Jamaica: Fifty Years and Beyond

Shermaine Barrett

Abstract

Grounded in the idea that education is a crucial investment, and an engine for growth, Jamaica has sought to transform its economic system from an agrarian dependent to an industrialized system, through the education of its population, including its adults, and in ensuring the human resource needed to assure its development goals and economic advancement. This paper outlines some of these initiatives including, literacy programmes, skills training, the high school diploma equivalency programme and the establishment of the national qualification framework, and examines the changes in the Jamaican context that informed these initiatives over the last 50 years. In commemoration of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) 50th anniversary the paper also speaks to the influence of the Council within the Jamaican landscape.

Key words

Adult Learning and Education, Jamaica, economic development

Le paysage changeant de l'apprentissage et de l'éducation des adultes en Jamaïque : Cinquante ans et au-delà

Shermaine Barrett

Résumé

Fondée sur l'idée que l'éducation est un investissement crucial et un moteur de croissance, la Jamaïque a cherché à transformer son système économique d'un système agricole dépendant à un système industrialisé, par l'éducation de sa population, y compris de ses adultes, et en assurant les ressources humaines nécessaires pour assurer ses objectifs de développement et son avancement économique. Cet article présente certaines de ces initiatives, notamment les programmes d'alphabétisation, la formation

professionnelle, le programme d'équivalence du diplôme d'études secondaires et la mise en place du cadre national de qualification, et examine les changements intervenus dans le contexte jamaïcain qui ont influencé ces initiatives au cours des 50 dernières années. À l'occasion du 50e anniversaire du Conseil international d'éducation des adultes (CIEA), l'article évoque également l'influence du Conseil dans le paysage jamaïcain.

Mots clés

Apprentissage et éducation des adultes, Jamaïque, développement économique.

El cambiante panorama del aprendizaje y la educación de adultos en Jamaica: Cincuenta años y más

Shermaine Barrett

Resumen

Partiendo de la idea de que la educación es una inversión crucial y un motor para el crecimiento, Jamaica ha tratado de transformar su sistema económico de un sistema dependiente de la agricultura a un sistema industrializado, mediante la educación de su población, incluidos sus adultos, y garantizando los recursos humanos necesarios para asegurar sus objetivos de desarrollo y su avance económico. En este documento se esbozan algunas de estas iniciativas, como los programas de alfabetización, la formación profesional, el programa de equivalencia del diploma de enseñanza secundaria y el establecimiento del marco nacional de cualificaciones, y se examinan los cambios en el contexto jamaicano que sirvieron de base a estas iniciativas en los últimos 50 años. En conmemoración del 50 aniversario del Consejo Internacional para la Educación de Adultos (ICAE), el documento también habla de la influencia del Consejo en el panorama jamaicano.

Palabras clave

Aprendizaje y educación de adultos, Jamaica, desarrollo económico.

Fifty years of adult education in Sweden

Cecilia Palm

There is a general perception that the Nordic countries have been far ahead in investments in adult learning and education, something that many reports including from the OECD² support.

In this article, I use Sweden as an example of a Nordic country. Public documents, authority reports, research and other literature provide the opportunity to contrast adult education in the early 1970s with that offered today.

It is a challenge to attempt a description of the development of a country's adult education over fifty years. What is covered by the concept varies over time, and content of a type of adult education can change between years. A comparison of the numbers of enrolment is almost impossible³.

This article does not claim to be a complete review of Swedish adult education during the past fifty years, it is more of a personal observation from someone who has been active in the sector for a long time. Hopefully, it will give some insights and arouse the reader's curiosity.

² The OECD report *Education at a Glance* was first published in 1998, and from 2000 it is annual.

³ In 1970, national identity numbers were not included in registration for study circles. Hence, a person who registered in more than one study circle was included in the total number of students for each registration. In the 2010s this changed, and we now speak of "unique participants". The same person registered in more than one activity counts as a 'unique' participant in the final total. In some types of adult education, participation is full-time, in others part-time. For folk high school participants, participant weeks are registered. Universities used to count a term of studies as 20 points. With the Bologna agreement, it changed to 30 points.

The Offer

Adult education in Sweden in the early 1970s

In the early 1970s, only about 10% of Sweden's active population (20 to 64 years) had concluded the primary eleven-year education. As many as 68% had only 6-7 years of primary education, while 23% had a basic education of nine years. An analysis of a possible design for special study grants estimates the size of the education gap at around 17 million school years, if everyone was to be brought up to the new primary level of eleven years (Prop. 1972:26). Women generally had a shorter basic education than men in 1975, but a higher representation in adult education such as folk high schools, study circles, municipal adult education (Ds U 1985:10).

The public investment in adult education that began in the late 1960s aimed to make it easier for people with short and inadequate schooling (mainly the older generation) to raise their level of education. Another purpose was to enable recurrent training for adults. Sweden carried out several major reforms to increase opportunities for education for adults.

In the early 1970s, according to a parliamentary bill (Prop. 1972:26) an adult in Sweden had the following opportunities to study.

- **Municipal adult education**, introduced in 1968, offering teaching according to the primary and secondary school curricula as well as some vocational education, especially technical education. The education was mainly organised as part-time. Participants could choose single subjects or full competence. In 1970/71, more than 180,000 participants were registered in municipal adult education, of which 92,000 were in vocational courses.
- **State adult education**, available in two Swedish cities, offered education according to the curricula for primary and secondary school in addition to vocational programmes. The teaching was a combination of correspondence school studies and face to face teaching.
- **Folk high schools** conveyed general civic education, often with a focus on a certain area such as music, theatre, art, media, development aid. However, many participants applied to the folk high school to receive basic education of a more general nature as a basis for further education. Folk high schools did not have a centrally determined curriculum. In the academic year 1970/71, more than 30,000 students participated in the Folk high school courses.

- **Study associations** whose main activity consisted of study circles⁴. In the academic year 1970/71, 162,000 study circles were organized and the number of participants was 1.6 million (one person could be a participant in several study circles). Some circles were at university level, with teachers having an academic competence.

- **Courses in radio and television** – broadcast adult education started in 1968 with some courses at upper secondary school level. In the spring of 1972, broadcast time for the educational programmes amounted to 16 hours a week.

- **Labour market training** which was aimed at the unemployed and basically consisted of continuing education and retraining. There were also reactivation courses for those who wanted to resume gainful employment after a break of a few years. The length of the courses varied from a few weeks to several years. An experimental activity with general subjects for people with previous short education began in 1969 with good results. Around 120,000 participants were in labour market training in 1970.

- **Post-secondary adult education** – for people lacking in formal eligibility for access to higher education. Previous professional experience gave the opportunity to study up to three semesters at university (about 4,700 students in 1969/70). A one-semester trial activity with vocational courses was also offered to adult students without formal qualifications. In addition, external university education was arranged in the form of individual courses outside the regular activities.

- **Correspondence courses** – offered by a few private national institutes. The range of courses was large and included individual subjects as well as combinations. To improve the outcome, the courses were combined, when possible, with group work in a study circle or with short boarding courses. In the 1970s, the correspondence institutes had around 127,000 new registrations per year.

- **The trade unions' training** - Sweden had (and still has) strong trade unions whose study activities had several purposes: giving members insights into trade union and societal issues as well as training individuals to represent the members in various situations. During 1970/71, nearly 11,000 participants took part.

⁴ A study circle had to include at least five and at most 20 participants and must comprise of at least twenty study hours spread over four study weeks, with a minimum of two gatherings per week.

- **Training of state personnel as well as personnel and elected officials in municipalities and county councils** – basic and continuing professional training organized for employees. In the municipalities, educational activities addressed to elected officials were important, and in the county councils training activities were an opportunity for continuous exchange of information and experience.
- **Training within the private business world** - an extensive effort for further training of employees which unfortunately was not mapped.

A major part of these education opportunities was publicly fully funded with the exception, of course, of education in the private business world. In addition, there was student financial aid for adults, i.e., a financial contribution to the cost of living for adults who chose to study.

To further facilitate adult studies, the right to study leave was legislated in 1974. As a result, the employer could not deny an employee leave for studies, only postpone it for a short period of time. The employer also had to allow the employee to return to work during the study holidays.

Adult education in Sweden in the 2020s

In 2022, Sweden had 48.5% university graduates aged 20-64. At the same time, the percentage with education below lower secondary was as high as 14.4% and there was still a need to increase equality in access to education based on socio-economic background (OECD 2023).

In the 2020s it is harder to get a picture of how politics relate to the view of adult education as a whole. The term lifelong learning is on everyone's lips, but the meaning can vary depending on whom you ask. The need for reskilling and upskilling during a lifetime of work is in focus and large investigative resources are used to find ways of improving infrastructure, supply and access. Emerging populism occasionally brings calls for more civic education, but these tend to fall into the background.

The focus is on formal, publicly funded education. Folk high schools are often included in these descriptions, even though they basically provide a non-formal education. The efforts of the study associations, also within the non-formal area, are less often mentioned in terms of adult education.

In an attempt to lay the foundation for increased coordination within the field of adult education, a number of authorities in the education area wrote a report in 2021 (MYH 2021:1275), in which the present-day adult education is described as follows.

1. **Municipal adult education** (Komvux) is a voluntary form of schooling for adults from the year they turn 20. Swedish for immigrants is part of municipal adult education, as well as basic and upper secondary education, also for people with special needs. The municipalities are responsible for this form of education, but they can outsource tasks in the area by way of procurement. Several municipalities can also cooperate to offer vocationally oriented programmes. In 2019, 366,000 individuals participated.

2. **The universities** are required to offer education that responds to the students' demand and the needs of the labour market. Since 2020, the universities also have a responsibility for lifelong learning. In 2019, there were approximately 360,000 students in undergraduate and advanced education at 50 universities and colleges, 60% of whom were women.

- a. More than a fifth of the students in 2018/2019 studied remotely.
- b. Some universities offer MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) which can be attended by anyone free of charge, but the courses do not give university credits.

3. **The higher vocational education or Vocational college** (Yrkeshögskolan) is a post-secondary education that must satisfy the business sector's need for qualified labour. Industry and commerce participate in the development and implementation of the programmes, and workplace-based learning forms a significant part. In 2019, there were 63,400 students on vocational programmes. In recent years, shorter courses and course packages have been presented. The National Agency for Higher vocational education has also developed the concept "YH-flex" which aims to shorten the time for training for a person who already has professional knowledge corresponding to a significant part of course work. The training courses are given on site and at a distance by both public and private providers who must regularly renew their application for a specific programme, to ensure that it corresponds to the business sector's demand.

4. **Popular adult education** (Folkbildning) whose goal according to political decisions is to "give everyone the opportunity to increase their knowledge and education for personal development and participation in society, together with others".

Folk high schools and **study associations** are still the providers of popular adult education. In many respects, the focus and design are very similar to that of fifty years ago. The folk high school is free from curricula and external governance but can validate skills equivalent to high school which gives the right to apply for higher education. In 2019, approximately 59,400 participants studied in the long courses at the folk high schools. As in 1970, the main activity of the **study associations** is the study circle which explores all kinds of subjects, theoretical, creative and scenic. Cultural programmes organized by the study associations are a very important element in all municipalities in Sweden, especially outside the metropolitan areas. In 2019, study associations existed in all of Sweden's 290 municipalities.

5. **Arts and culture programmes** (Konst- och kulturutbildningar), are post-secondary courses of 20 weeks or more in the artistic, cultural or cultural heritage field. They are run by private education providers but can receive state support through public grants and/or the right for students to apply for student financial aid. In 2019, there were approximately 6,200 students on the art and culture courses.

6. **Labour market training** (arbetsmarknadsutbildning) is procured by the Swedish Public Employment Service to train job seekers in areas of shortage. The courses must be short, preferably a few weeks, one year is maximum. In 2019, there were 15,650 people enrolled in such courses.

7. **Private courses**, offered by commercial as well as nonprofit private providers. These are non-formal education activities that the individual or the employer finances. There is no mapping of this activity.

8. The **learning centre** (lärcenter) is a municipal activity where the student is offered support in his/her learning from teachers and other staff and is given the opportunity to meet other students. In a survey study in 2017, 142 municipalities stated that they had established learning centres.

As in the 1970s, much of this supply is wholly or partly publicly funded. Student financial aid for adults has been expanded and perfected.

Fifty years of change

A general observation is that university studies are missing from the 1972 account of adult education. Obviously, there were universities, but the absence marks the difference that was perceived between academic studies, on the one hand, and vocational, supplementary, and generally oriented studies on the

other. Radio and television courses are not included in 2020s opportunities, despite the impressive work done by public service to access the general public directly as well as supplementing the educational efforts of others. In 2020 the broadcasting time was around 44 hours/week (UR 2020).

Impressive growth

The preceding presentation mentions several volumes of data, mainly regarding the number of participants in different types of education. They are not comparable over time, nor between different forms of education. Nevertheless, it shows the significant growth in adult education that has taken place. Of course, the population has also increased, but not nearly as much. There are more than twice as many participants in municipal adult education and in folk high schools, and three times as many studying at university.

Conversely, labour market training within the framework of the Swedish Public Employment Service has been downsized. Initiatives for jobseekers are primarily focused on coaching and matching, and education is reduced to a fraction of what it used to be.

Decentralisation and new reforms

In the early 1990s, some major reforms were carried out, in line with the decentralization trend that emerged during the 1980s and an overarching management by objectives replaced the previous direct or rule management.

- The youth school was municipalised.
- The previously earmarked state subsidy for municipal adult education was included in the general subsidy to the municipalities.
- The management of popular adult education was handed over to the Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet). A new governing body was established which was controlled by the umbrella organisations within popular adult education, an example of *self-governance*.

These reforms reduced the state's ability to advance adult education's cause and to see the various sectors within the framework of an overall adult education policy. The OECD's report examining the Swedish education system in 1995, commented on this:

“There is first, even though it is less explicitly expressed than the others – a new accent on child and youth education, as opposed to adult education. ... More generally, a coherent policy for adult education does not appear to be among the government's priorities” (OECD 1995)

Member of the European Union (EU)

Sweden became a member of the EU in 1995. Education is an area in which the EU can only support, coordinate or complement the action of member countries. It has no legislative power and may not interfere with member countries' ability to do so. However, the European Education Area initiative helps Union members to coordinate matters of education and facilitate exchanges across borders. This involves, for example, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), a translation tool to make national qualifications easier to understand and more comparable. The implementation of the corresponding Swedish framework, SQF, has also helped to clarify the interrelationships between different forms of education on the same topic in Sweden.

Another initiative is the European Social Fund (ESF), now the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). As the receiver of the ESF+ funds, the Swedish ESF Council has the government's mission to strengthen the individual's position in the labour market by financing projects that work with skills development, employment measures and integration efforts.

Membership gives access to Erasmus+, a programme whose goal is to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. It opens opportunities for exchanges and cooperation with other EU countries.

Focus on VET

In the 1970s, adult education policy was based on a distinct distribution policy objective. In the 1980s, the redistributive policy approach thinned out at the same time as questions concerning continuing education for employees and the qualification of the workforce came to the fore.

The advent of vocational college and vocational programmes in municipal adult education is perhaps the most significant change in formal learning. The introduction of vocational colleges was preceded by several public committee investigations, a pilot activity starting in 1996 and the establishment of the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education in 2009.

The latest reform, introduced in 2022, is the transition package to improve long-term flexibility and adaptability in the labour market. It involves a reformed labour law, a new student finance scheme and new basic transition and skills support. The publicly funded student finance scheme for transition and retraining makes it possible, under certain conditions, for people participating

in education for transition or skills development purposes to retain at least 80 per cent of their salary for up to one year.

“Marketisation”

Marketisation is an expression that has come to be used about the field of education. It describes a development where commercial companies and non-profit organizations carry out public education in market-like ways.

It began in the early 1990s, when the private sector was given the opportunity to apply for the right to open and run schools at primary and secondary level, with public grants of the same size as the municipal schools.

When a large investment in raising the education level for adults was carried out in 1997-2002 (110,000 education places per year for five years), it paved the way for external actors in adult education as well. The intention was to change and innovate formal adult education with the help of external actors. Calling on them was also a convenient way of quickly setting up this large-scale education project.

Within municipal adult education, more than half of all course participants at upper secondary level study with external organizers (Fejes, 2022).

The Swedish Public Employment Service’s role provides no in-house training, as its role is now to procure external suppliers for both guidance and training. At the same time, 75% of university of participants in Higher Vocational Education, where there is an application procedure for public and private providers, studied with private organizers (MYH 2023).

This development has led to the rise of several large education providers offering activities in youth schools, municipal adult education including Swedish for immigrants, vocational colleges, and labour market initiatives. Many, but not all, are commercial actors. Some study associations and folk high schools are also active in this field.

Other effects of the *marketisation* have become visible with time. It facilitates down-sizing or liquidation when demand decreases or the government subsidies end, and a large part of the risk-taking lies with the external actor. The procurement procedure often leads to price competition, which is not always beneficial to quality. Procurement rules established by the EU apply: the processes are time-consuming and protracted. Agreements are limited in

time, and there is often a change of provider after four years which is to the detriment of long-term quality improvement.

Issues of today

Remaining challenges

In spite of the remarkable progress since the 1970s, many challenges remain. One of them is that a person with a higher level of education or coming from a well-educated family is more likely to study or to sign up for continuing education.

It is also a fact that more should be done about the integration of the very large number of immigrants and asylum seekers in Sweden.

The large sector of continuing education for employees, usually paid for by the employers, is as unmapped today as it was in the 1970s.

It is no longer the case that all political parties value the benefits of popular adult education, at least not enough to be willing to contribute financially on the same level as before. Some think that study circles are more of a hobby and should be paid for by the participant. Others question the entire activity, saying that, as the popular adult education sector is self-governing it is impossible to control how the money is spent.

Evaluation and follow-up

The decentralization of the 1990s and the transition to management by objectives, together with marketisation, require a different kind of evaluation and quality control. It often involves several levels of society.

Municipal adult education is a good example. The National Agency for Education prepares knowledge requirements, regulations, general recommendations and gives support to education providers for municipal adult education. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate ensures that education provided is according to the previously mentioned regulations by way of inspections and quality studies. Each municipality must organize its own follow-up. In the case of external providers, delivery has to be verified according to the terms of the procurement. The quality control apparatus is growing, which has many advantages but also inconveniences.

The self-governance of popular adult education has for a long time been the exception where benefits have been, more or less, taken for granted: adult

education and learning is good for the individual and for society, and popular adult education reaches those who need it the most. Lately, that has changed. Incidents of cheating have given voice to the critics, who say that funding is too important not to be controlled by public authorities. However, since this type of education is based on free and voluntary participation where tests and examinations do not occur, it is harder to find measurable indicators to describe what is achieved. During the 2000s, several government committees and government agencies have investigated and submitted proposals for indicators to use in popular education, in particular for study associations. The report published in 2018 by The Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret Dnr 2014/199-5) listed over 50 possible indicators and key figures.

Other ways to paint the picture of what popular adult education achieves have been tried. Some interesting examples of how non-formal, non-graded education can be followed up are these:

- a longitudinal study carried out by researchers at the International Business School in Jönköping (Bjerke, Mellander 2019) shows that participation in study circles can strengthen people's prospects in the labour market. This connection is particularly clear for participants born abroad.
- Statistics Sweden has shown (SCB 2020) that six out of ten participants in the folk high school's general basic course go on to higher studies.
- Various studies have tried to describe the benefits of participation in popular adult education. The folk high schools lead to increased self-confidence and greater community involvement (Svedberg, Sjöstrand 2021); the study associations build networks and trust, new friends and learning for both work and association life (Rutgersson, Åberg 2020).

To conclude, there is a huge amount of reporting on the quality and results of adult education but I believe there is not always enough time to analyze it.

No comprehensive adult education strategy

Swedish adult education has been the subject of investigation, analysis, appraisal and reform suggestions by numerous government committees over the years. My impression is that the scope has narrowed considerably during the 21st century. None of the 200 government committee reports written since 2000 is about the adult education area as a whole.

A government committee (SOU 2000:28) argued that a policy for adult education should be developed within the perspective of lifelong learning and

presented a proposal for overall goals for publicly supported education for adults. The committee also suggested quantitative goals for various forms of adult education, such as that the proportion of adults between 20 and 64 years of age with below secondary level should decrease by ten percent within ten years and that at least 70% of the students should be satisfied with the guidance they have received. These suggestions of the committee are yet to be acted upon.

Another government committee recommended, without success, in 2006 that a National Agency for Adult Learning be created (SOU 2006::38).

The present policy objective speaks of education for all ages: *Sweden must be an outstanding knowledge and research nation characterized by high quality* (Prop 2023/2024:1). There are objectives for specific forms of education, like municipal adult education or vocational college, but none for adult education.

Final comment

I am grateful to live in a country where the opportunities for education and training for adults are so many and so accessible. Even at an advanced age, I can enrol at a university to further my education in history, take a high school grade in chemistry at the municipal adult education or learn to sing at a folk high school or study association. As an employee in Sweden, I have rich opportunities for continuing and further education, - on my own terms, and not just on those of the employers. The comparison between the two periods which are the focus of this article (early 1970s and the 2020s) confirms the expressive expansion of formal education for adults over the past 50 years.

At the same time, it becomes apparent that the whole area of organised adult learning, and by that, I mean formal and non-formal, publicly supported and not, requires a strategy. The process of elaborating the strategy would have great value in itself. A broad anchoring would ensure that the field of adult education is not exposed to rapid and short-term changes in the event of a regime change. A strategy would consider educational pathways other than the formal ones, and (hopefully) decide how the set goals for adult learning should best be achieved. Finally, I believe that a strategy would contribute to an understanding that adult education is more than what is required for employability, and that a broader perspective is of great benefit to our society.

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Interesting Facts

Committees

The Government may choose to appoint an expert or group of experts, known as commission or committee of inquiry, to conduct a more extensive analysis and preparation before a proposal is drafted and submitted to Parliament for a decision. Examples range from major policy decisions affecting the whole of Swedish society over long periods to smaller but technically complex issues.

Government committees of inquiry examine and report on matters in accordance with a set of instructions, known as terms of reference, laid down by the Government. These

identify the area or issue to be investigated, define the problems to be addressed and set a closing date for the inquiry.

Politicians and specialists in cooperation

Committees normally include experts familiar with the area or matter to be examined and, in some cases, politicians. Furthermore, the parliamentary opposition and different advocacy groups are given an opportunity to follow reform work from an early stage. The conclusions of an inquiry are published as reports in the Swedish Government Official Reports Series. Some 200 inquiries are usually in progress at any given time.

Referral process

After a committee has submitted its report to the Minister responsible, its contents are referred for consideration to relevant authorities, advocacy groups and the public. They are given an opportunity to express their views on the conclusions of an inquiry before the Government formulates a legislative proposal.

Swedish folkbildning or Popular adult education

Swedish folkbildning is the collective name for the activities conducted by the country's folk high schools and study associations in the form of courses, study circles and cultural activities. Every year, over a million Swedes participate in its activities.

Folkbildning is a form of accessible education with the focus on peer-to-peer learning. The critical component is that folkbildning is collaborative, with each participant bringing his or her point of view and experience to the process. Folkbildning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational formats, ranging from folk high schools (independent adult education colleges) to study circles on everything from rock music and sewing to political ideologies.

The emergence of folkbildning can in part be attributed to the rough life of factory workers and rural labourers, longing for knowledge at the beginning of the 20th century. With a lack of books and material and with widespread illiteracy being the norm, people with a thirst for educational discovery had no choice but to gather wherever such material could be found. This sparsity forced people to share. And discussing what was written became as important as the actual reading. As these popular movements grew, so did learning, and the methodology of folkbildning. The concept of study circles and folkbildning soon became a common part of society and appeared everywhere from churches to women's associations.

Folkbildning is still borne of the idea of a society with unequal access to education. There are always people, who for various reasons need alternatives to the formal educational system. Here, folk high schools and study associations have their most important mission, based on the fundamental right of all citizens to knowledge and development. Folkbildning is free from detailed national control. This freedom, like the strong ties to the non-profit sector, makes it a force for societal change.

Swedish folkbildning is largely financed through funding grants from the state, county councils and municipalities. There has been a broad political consensus that the state should provide economic support to folkbildning. The Swedish Parliament has

established overall objectives for the funding grants. The activities of folkbildning should address the following criteria:

- strengthen and develop democracy,
- make it possible for people to influence their life situation and create participative involvement in societal development,
- bridge educational gaps and raise the level of education and cultural awareness in society,
- broaden the interest for and increase participation in cultural life.

Based on these objectives, the study associations and folk high schools are free to shape the goals of the activities on their own.

Fifty years of adult education in Sweden

Cecilia Palm

Abstract

The article explores the evolution of adult education in Sweden over the past fifty years, using it as a representative case study of Nordic countries. In the early 1970s, only 10% of the active population had completed eleven years of primary education, prompting significant public investment in adult education. The landscape included municipal and state adult education, folk high schools, study circles, and various specialized courses. The 2020s see a shift towards formal, publicly funded education, with an emphasis on universities and vocational education. Marketization has introduced private providers, raising concerns about quality and sustainability. Challenges persist, such as unequal educational access and integrating immigrants. Despite remarkable progress, there is a call for a comprehensive adult education strategy to address current needs and future uncertainties, emphasizing the societal value beyond employability.

Key words

Sweden, Adult education, Lifelong learning, Inequality, Marketisation

Cincuenta años de educación de adultos en Suecia

Cecilia Palm

Resumen

Este artículo explora la evolución de la educación de adultos en Suecia durante los últimos cincuenta años y la utiliza como un caso representativo de los países nórdicos. A principios de la década de 1970, solo el 10% de la población activa había completado once años de educación primaria, lo que llevó a una importante inversión pública en

educación de adultos. El panorama incluía la educación de adultos municipal y estatal, institutos populares, círculos de estudio y diversos cursos especializados. En la década de 2020, se ha observado un cambio hacia la educación formal financiada con fondos públicos, con énfasis en las universidades y la formación profesional. La comercialización ha introducido proveedores privados, lo que plantea preocupaciones sobre la calidad y la sostenibilidad. Persisten desafíos, como la desigualdad en el acceso a la educación y la integración de los inmigrantes. A pesar de los notables avances, se requiere una estrategia global de educación de adultos que aborde las necesidades actuales y las incertidumbres futuras, haciendo hincapié en el valor social más allá de la empleabilidad.

Palabras clave

Suecia, Educación de adultos, Aprendizaje permanente, Desigualdad, Mercantilización

Cinquante ans d'éducation des adultes en Suède

Cecilia Palm

Résumé

Cet article explore l'évolution de l'éducation des adultes en Suède au cours des cinquante dernières années, en l'utilisant comme une étude de cas représentative des pays nordiques. Au début des années 1970, seulement 10 % de la population active avait achevé onze années d'enseignement primaire, ce qui a incité les autorités publiques à investir massivement dans l'éducation des adultes. Le paysage comprenait l'éducation des adultes au niveau municipal et de l'État, les écoles populaires, les cercles d'études et divers cours spécialisés. Les années 2020 ont vu une transition vers une éducation formelle financée par l'État, mettant l'accent sur les universités et la formation professionnelle. La commercialisation a introduit des prestataires privés, suscitant des préoccupations quant à la qualité et à la durabilité de l'enseignement. Des défis persistent, tels que l'inégalité d'accès à l'éducation et l'intégration des immigrants. Malgré des progrès notables, une stratégie globale d'éducation des adultes est nécessaire pour répondre aux besoins actuels et aux incertitudes futures, en mettant l'accent sur la valeur sociale au-delà de l'employabilité.

Mots clés

Suède, éducation des adultes, apprentissage tout au long de la vie, inégalités, marchandisation.

Critical pedagogy and radical democracy in times of hate

Giovanna Modé Magalhães

In the spirit of the celebration of ICAE's 50th anniversary, this brief contribution seeks to reflect on the unique importance of a civil society global network in defense of adult and youth's right to education amidst a world in multiple and systemic crises. Why its existence matters and how to catch up with the most contemporary challenges? As the ICAE's *Spotlight Report for Confinteia VII* pointed out, civil society organisations, local community groups and social movements involved in adult education have been and continue to be at the fore, allowing us not just to build our individual lives, but imagine, learn and contribute to achieving alternative collective futures. This piece sheds light on some considerations in view of the years ahead while simultaneously facing old and new challenges of our uncertain times.

In five decades of existence, the dynamic of a non-governmental body for the adult education movement allowed its members to witness and to play active roles in the buildup of new international agreements, to take part in inspiring experiences, to experiment victories and reversals in complex contexts. At the same time, members and activists have seen the rise of inspiring analysis and literature, local experiences, evidence-based research and passionate debates that have emerged over the last decades.

We argue that in times of democracy and education under attack, we should radicalize our principles. In this sense, this piece briefly sheds light on two reflections based on ICAE's principles with particular importance in Latin American debates and proposals: popular education and critical pedagogy as the possibility of recovering the capacity for dialogue and critical thinking in times of hate, along with the presence of the decolonial approach and epistemic justice and the intersectoral connection with other human rights movements as the only possibility of advancing a broad rights-based agenda in times of reversals.

Old and new challenges

Despite the recognition of its vital relevance in achieving gender equality, human rights and all sustainable development goals (GRALE 2023), ALE⁵ has been systematically sidelined in the education sector at international and national policy levels over the last years. Low policy priority accompanied by the scarce allocation in national budgets has resulted in the denial of education rights to a massive part of the population. Data from the last decades suggest little progress, particularly impacting the most marginalized. Moreover, in times of crises and emergencies, ALE programmes have been usually the ones to be cut off, contradicting the evidence of its potential to help in dealing with the crisis itself, offering relevant and effective approaches that provide support (Modé Magalhães and Entenza 2020, Jost 2022).

The 50th anniversary takes place in an unprecedented situation in which never, since the Second World War, has the planet experienced as many armed conflicts as it has nowadays. A recent statement of Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, affirmed that there are currently 2 billion human beings living in contexts of war, a quarter of humanity. Violent conflicts coexist with persistent inequalities, discrimination, racism and xenophobia, denying to a substantial part of the population their basic rights.

A closer look into emerging challenges is also essential for a better understanding of the current scenario, such as national or identity-based violence and discrimination, the rise of authoritarianism and new forms of populism, polarization of the political debate, spread of fake news as a strategy of power disputes. A scenario marked by the dissemination of hate speech and extremist ideas, disinformation and conspiracy theories, science and education under attack – with books being banned from schools and libraries and scientific knowledge denied, involving all areas of public debate, from vaccines to climate change to gender and racial issues (Civicus 2022). Such phenomena push back against conquered rights through well-financed cultural wars involving powerful tech corporations.

The insertion of ALE in this broader picture is essential not only to orientate the education we want but also to allow a better reading of the context for civil society actions. As Angela Davis recently said, it is imperative to have an international understanding of how fascism is spreading across the globe and

⁵ The text keeps the international denomination of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) while recalling that the literal translation of the political terminology most used in Latin America would be Youth and Adult Education, therefore giving further visibility to the youth group.

how it connects diverse countries unexpectedly. “The threads that connect various authoritarian regimes appeal to xenophobic nationalism, the call for racial cleansing, and powerful political pedagogical apparatuses that forge a discourse of hate, nativism, fear, and political violence as part of a broader effort to remake collective identity” (Giroux 2023, p. 126).

Furthermore, the climate crises cannot be ignored within the ALE debate, as the planet has reached an unprecedented tipping point. As the Brazilian indigenous philosopher Ailton Krenak has recently stressed, “What I learned over the last decades is that all of us need to wake up because if for a while we, the indigenous people, were facing the risk of a rupture or extinction of our ways of life, nowadays we all face the fact that the planet might not bear our demands” (2020, p.45), highlighting that the current model legitimates only one possible way to exist – the one based on the exploration of other forms of life. He states there are many other possibilities of non-extraction models, based on a much more harmonious coexistence with nature and the planet, that must gain further visibility if the planet is to survive.

In this context, civil society movements and networks in different areas such as, education, gender, climate change, culture and communication rights, as well as indigenous and land movements, have been playing a key role – nevertheless often facing retaliation and working under attack. At national and international levels, retrograde trends and shrinking space for civil society are observed, the right to participate is denied and there are fewer opportunities for broad-based dialogue on education, limiting the involvement of civil society in policy making.

As the Civicus 2022 report has pointed out, the lack of recognition of its crucial role and stigmatising narratives are major challenges civil society faces around the world, “not least because they enable violations of civic space and hamper its ability to do its vital work, facing challenges of sustaining demands for justice beyond protests, including climate, gender, racial and social justice, and putting forward progressive economic ideas that expand access to human rights”. Moreover, anti-NGO laws, arbitrary inspections, harassment, and criminalisation all strike at the roots of civic space. Is this part of a trend of ‘reverse transitions’, in which countries slide away from democracy, asks Buyse (2018), exploring the phenomena as a broader global trend, that affects civil society in its various forms.

Popular education and critical pedagogy, a necessary approach

In these circumstances, as stated by Giroux in his recent *Insurrections – Education in an Age of Counter-Revolutionary Politics* (2023), it is vital to acknowledge that education as an emancipatory force is central to politics because it provides the foundation for those willing to engage democracy as a site of struggle, which can only be waged through a consciousness of both its fragility and necessity. However, in such a complex scenario, education itself is under attack, particularly critical thinking in defense of human rights, as part of the cultural wars intensified in the last few years.

In spite of all the international human rights treaties ratified and declarations adopted at global and regional levels that guarantee not only the right of education for all but also its orientation towards the promotion of peace and human dignity, there has been, over the last decades, a clear dispute around the ultimate purpose of education. As a consequence, in times of anti-rights pressure coming from many sectors, progressive groups and movements within civil society are called not only to push the agenda further but also to defend the guarantees that have been achieved so far.

Under the human rights framework, there has been a growing understanding that education makes an essential contribution to building inclusive and democratic societies, in which differences of opinion can be freely expressed and the wide range of voices can be heard in pursuit of the acknowledgement and celebration of diversity (UNESCO, 2020). The Marrakesh Framework for Action, adopted at the VII Confintea in Marrakesh in June 2022, constitutes another tool in reaffirming education as a fundamental right and declaring that its implementation should be guided by a rights-based approach (par. 4; par.10) – a notable achievement of global advocacy led by civil society efforts.

The latter cannot be considered a minor detail, given the contemporary political disputes in the education sector. The active participation and engagement of civil society actors in the last decades have been critical in ensuring the approval of narratives and goals more aligned to the human rights framework, in a context in which results-driven proposals based on measurable learning outcomes have prevailed, pushing for the offer of basic skills and a narrowed curriculum, usually measured by international standardized tests (Croso, da Silva and Magalhães 2023).

The market-driven neoliberal policies, along with patriarchal and colonialist frameworks, that result from an exclusionary foundational origin, have accentuated society's inequalities and have had disastrous impacts (*Ibid, apud* Manahan and Kumar, 2021) – a scenario that has been further challenged, in

the last few years, by the above-mentioned conservative wave, resulting in a direct attack on education, and more precisely popular education and critical pedagogy.

In ALE, the reductionist pressure is also highly present and connected to the overall purpose of education. “The citizenship dimension of adult education in the post-World War II years, with its emphasis on emancipation, solidarity and democracy, has largely disappeared”, says Elfert (2019). Many actors have been promoting adult education guided by a human capital approach, basic needs and acquisition of job skills that are instrumental for economic growth, in which an individualistic way of thinking prevails while knowledge becomes another form of consumerism – namely the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

On the other hand, amidst adverse contexts further exacerbated by the pandemic in the last few years, local ALE experiences both from the public education systems and social movements, have shown possibilities and evidence of their potential to foster other human rights (CLADE 2022, UNESCO 2022, Cuenca 2018). Methodologies that, beyond individual and family benefits, are fully connected to communities, others based on environmental rights, or restorative circles in prisons preparing for reintegration, flexible curricula for migrants and refugees, youth appropriate pedagogies, programmes for young mothers and young pregnant women that include social support, others focused on the building up of young women’s life projects, including their sexual and reproductive rights – to mention but a few examples coming from the Latin America region. There are a vast range of experiences to scale up if the political will is in place, with appropriate funding. We argue that, in such a complex scenario, it is precisely the insistence on the polar opposite of such a trend, pushing further the principles of critical pedagogy and popular education that should be at the heart not only of ALE policies but the entire education systems. As Giroux has said, “education, both within and outside schools, should offer a space where hard questions can be asked, people learn how to listen carefully to each other, and where educators and other cultural workers create public spaces where it becomes possible not only to shift the way people think about the moment, but potentially to energize them to do something differently in that moment, to link one’s critical imagination with the possibility of activism in the public sphere” (2023, p. 126). Therefore, the defense of participatory, inclusive and emancipatory education, as stated in ICAE’s letter of principles, must be at the forefront while incorporating new strategies. An education that encompasses “the diversity of groups and which seek to question current paradigms, dominant social structures and global power relationships” and “inspire transformation and

innovative actions towards more distributive justice”⁶ are worth being claimed, along with the principle of democracy, “ALE embraces empathy and solidarity whilst empowering people to challenge the power relationships, structural inequalities and financial interests behind the problems”.

In this area, the Latin American and Caribbean region has a rich and vast experience to recover and contribute from the traditions of popular education and social participation, based on Freire's political and pedagogical principles of emancipation, as well as on its ethical paradigm of justice and horizontal dialogue. The latter has been informing and influencing a range of educators all over the world, in the region and beyond. In a beautifully written narrative on Freire’s influence in her life and teaching, bell hooks (2017) shared her constant search to live those principles in practice, to make the classroom or any other education space an open learning community, to listen to each other, to acknowledge each other’s presence. Each contribution is a different resource to the learning process, having as the main resource the social reality. In this sense, the student is at the heart of a horizontal relationship which creates knowledge and something new, the ultimate purpose of education.

Those same principles at the collective level lead to another layer, a reflection related to epistemic justice, another fundamental call from the Latin American region, very much in tune with the decolonial perspective. Official curricula have systematically excluded several kinds of knowledge that cannot only better represent diversity but also effectively contribute to the most contemporary societal challenges. Undoubtedly different types of indigenous knowledge would add to the way of dealing with nature, forests, climate and living together. In his provocative book “Ideas to postpone the end of the world”, the author (and Brazilian indigenous leader) Ailton Krenak says that the environment, rather than a “development resource”, is part of us, of our families and lives (Krenak 2020). In the same way, Afro communities, in different parts of the world, can share other visions of the African diaspora, in which Africans, instead of subalterns, see themselves as protagonists of world building and transformation, as active citizens and actors of globalization (Mbembe 2013). The false idea that there is only one way to live and understand the world is part of the same colonial ambition. There are different knowledges that have never entered schools and would be more than ever helpful in offering other forms of sharing the planet and alternative possibilities for human existence.

⁶ Letter of principles available on ICAE’s website <http://icae.global/>

Why do those narratives keep being forgotten and deleted, giving room to a superficial global narrative as if we had just one to be told? asks Krenak. “Our time is an expert in creating absences: of a meaningful life in society, of a meaningful life experience. And this generates an important intolerance towards those of us who are still able to experiment the pleasure of being alive, dancing, singing”. There are several small constellations of people that still do it, says the author, while stressing that the kind of humanity we are being called to integrate does not tolerate such a level of joy and life movement.

Strengthening connections with other human rights movements

Along with the call for a renewed commitment to popular education and critical pedagogy as a possibility to recover the capacity for dialogue and critical thinking, the connection with other human rights movements is a further critical point to help advance ALE connected to a broad rights-based agenda. Transnational solidarity is vital in struggles to resist regression. Movements will learn from each other while sharing strategies and pushing common horizons. The claim for educational rights must be framed within a broader political struggle, one of transformation, and one that has as its horizon more just and egalitarian societies.

All over the world, education advocates have been disseminating evidence that, beyond a right in itself, ALE is a means to achieve all human rights treaties and commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as gender, climate and ecological justice. The literature has highlighted the contribution of ALE to the development of democratic values, to peaceful coexistence and community solidarity, as well as more just societies and well-informed citizenships. The promotion of diversity, arts and cultural heritage has also been registered, along with the vital alliance with the health and nutrition sector, promoting a less harmful way of life. Not to mention maternal lactation and infant nutrition, resulting in a reduction in child mortality.

Multiple connections with a broader human rights agenda at national, regional and international levels have been at the forefront of the International Council for the last decades. “By the early 1980s the women’s movement, the peace movement, trade union movements, movement of indigenous people, and other movements were gaining momentum, and the Council, among many other activities, worked to strengthen the links between the adult education movement and other movements”⁷.

⁷ History available at <http://icae.global/en/about/history-of-icae/>

A vocabulary that keeps including the demands of a broader popular social movement in its newest forms and strategies, actively promoting synergy based on common principles, seems to be another vital pressing point for the years ahead. A stronger link with women's and indigenous movements, youth groups, communications rights, migrants and refugees, to name but a few, makes the connection clearer, amplifying the outreach of a joint agenda and transformative narrative.

In the last few years, inspiring movements for women and LGBTQI have had important gains against the odds (Civicus 2022). After many decades of social struggle on several fronts, ranging from the streets to the highest courts, Colombia and many Mexican states have recently recognised abortion rights, and same-sex marriage became a reality in several countries. These victories, though, have made civil society the target of a ferocious backlash. The transformative potential of ALE and its contributions to achieving gender equality has been widely registered, in an education process committed to the overcoming of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, while achieving the empowerment and autonomy of women in all their diversity, particularly rural indigenous women, women with disability, Afro-descendants, migrants and refugees, as well as LGBTQI people.

Another example worth mentioning are the young people in their multiple representations - far from being homogeneous, student and youth movements in different parts of the world have incorporated a vocabulary and claims that go far beyond their legitimate immediate demands, such as education and a decent job, but also including critical thinking, dialogue, decolonial and intercultural curriculum, gender rights, racism among other points. New strategies, forms of expression and platforms reshape traditional ways of occupying public spaces. At the same time, the desired synergy is only possible if the youth as a subject, its voice, claims and needs, are made further visible along the ALE movement and agenda.

The newest disinformation agenda is also crucial to have in mind in the years ahead, echoing and strengthening communications rights movements in different parts of the world, particularly in "an era in which algorithms get people hooked by feeding them increasingly extreme and simplistic content that reinforces their pre-existing views, distorts their perspectives and isolates them from diverse viewpoints" (Civicus 2022). Still according to Civicus (2022), civil society should play a leading role in developing anti-disinformation strategies, including fact-checking, enhancement of media literacy and, crucially, advocacy for higher regulatory standards for social media companies, consistent with respect for freedom of expression. Fact-checking

initiatives, however, are only a first step and are eclipsed by the sheer scale of the task. The challenge remains of forging a joined-up, multi-faceted global effort to counter disinformation – which must include better regulation of the social media and tech industry, developed through participatory processes and including safeguards for freedom of expression.

Final remarks

Throughout this brief reflection, we have suggested that in times in which democracy and education are under attack, we need to return to – and radicalize – the movement’s principles. On one hand, we point to popular education and critical pedagogy as a possibility of recovering the capacity for dialogue and critical thinking in times of hate, along with the presence of the decolonial approach and epistemic justice. On the other, we suggest the intersectoral connection with other human rights movements as the only possibility of advancing in a rights-based agenda in times of reversals. In celebrating five decades of existence, ICAE’s strength and power comes precisely from its history, legacy and territorial outreach. The capacity to resist and reinvent itself with different strategies and partnerships, is very much connected to its non-negotiable principles and the way it is part of a broader transformative agenda for a fairer world.

As critical pedagogy has said over the last decades, old paradigms give way to new ones through the medium of culture, language, and education. “It is in this space of communication and pedagogy that the incubation period takes place in which identifications are formed, consciousness settles on modes of recognition, and agency is constructed”, says Giroux. Narratives emerge, stories change lives, and politics becomes a flashpoint. In this pedagogical space of uncertainty, radical ideas can be born, take hold, and shape a social order” (*Ibid*, 2023, p. 125), says the author, stressing that not only is a counter-narrative necessary but a mass social movement to implement it.

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Critical pedagogy and radical democracy in times of hate

Giovanna Modé Magalhães

Abstract

In the spirit of the celebration of ICAE's 50th anniversary, this brief contribution seeks to reflect on the unique importance of a civil society global network in defense of the right to adult and youth education amidst a world in multiple and systemic crises. This piece recovers and sheds light to some considerations in view of the years ahead while simultaneously facing old and new challenges of our uncertain times, marked by national or identity-based violence and discriminations, the rise of authoritarianism and new forms of populisms, polarization of the political debate, disinformation and the spread of fake news as a strategy of power disputes. We argue that in a context of democracies and education under attack, we should radicalize our principles, particularly fostering popular education and critical pedagogy as a possibility to recover the capacity for dialogue as well as the intersectoral connection with other human rights movements to advance a common encompassing rights-based agenda.

Key words

ICAE, civil society networks, youth and adult right to education, popular education, critical pedagogy.

Pédagogie critique et démocratie radicale en temps de haine

Giovanna Modé Magalhães

Résumé

En commémoration du 50e anniversaire du CIEA, cette brève contribution vise à réfléchir sur l'importance singulière d'un réseau mondial de la société civile dans la défense du droit à l'éducation des adultes et des jeunes dans un monde confronté à des crises multiples et systémiques. Elle reprend et éclaire certaines considérations en vue des années à venir, tout en faisant face simultanément aux défis anciens et nouveaux de notre époque incertaine, marquée par la violence et les discriminations nationales ou identitaires, la montée de l'autoritarisme et de nouvelles formes de populisme, la polarisation du débat politique, la désinformation et l'utilisation de "fake news" comme stratégie de lutte pour le pouvoir. Nous soutenons que dans un contexte où les démocraties et l'éducation sont attaquées, nous devrions radicaliser nos principes, notamment en encourageant l'éducation populaire et la pédagogie critique comme une possibilité de récupérer la capacité de dialogue ainsi que la connexion intersectorielle avec d'autres mouvements des droits de l'homme pour faire avancer un agenda commun et englobant basé sur les droits.

Mots clés

CIEA, réseaux de la société civile, droit à l'éducation des jeunes et des adultes, éducation populaire, pédagogie critique.

Pedagogía crítica y democracia radical en tiempos de odio

Giovanna Modé Magalhães

Resumen

En el espíritu de la celebración del 50 aniversario del ICAE, esta breve contribución busca reflexionar sobre la singular importancia de una red mundial de la sociedad civil en defensa del derecho a la educación de personas jóvenes y adultas en un mundo marcado por múltiples y sistémicas crisis. Este escrito retoma y aclara algunas consideraciones de cara a los años venideros, enfrentándose simultáneamente a desafíos antiguos y nuevos de nuestra época incierta, caracterizada por la violencia y las discriminaciones nacionales o identitarias, el ascenso del autoritarismo y nuevas formas de populismo, la polarización del debate político, la desinformación y la propagación de "fake news" como estrategia en la lucha por el poder. Sostenemos que en un contexto donde las democracias y la educación están siendo atacadas, debemos radicalizar nuestros principios, especialmente al fomentar la educación popular y la pedagogía crítica como una posibilidad para recuperar la capacidad de diálogo y la conexión intersectorial con otros movimientos de derechos humanos, con el fin de avanzar en una agenda común y abarcadora basada en derechos.

Palabras clave

ICAE, redes de la sociedad civil, derecho a la educación de jóvenes y adultos, educación popular, pedagogía crítica.

Climate justice education: A priority for Africa

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Introduction

The voices of 150 African women resonated loudly at the second Women's Climate Assembly where participants from 17 countries across Central and West Africa came together in Lagos, Nigeria in September 2023. They came to learn and share more about their linked struggles under the banner of *African Women Unite for climate justice, reparations, and development alternatives*. It is women who are most impacted by the escalating climate crisis, yet their voices are largely mute. The Assembly aimed to change this.

With the support of non-governmental organisations working in solidarity with community women and a steering group of women's movements and grassroots networks, the assembly provided a crucial political space for women from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea Conakry Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. They participated in various activities from teach-ins, political education workshops, singing, poetry, to poster and banner making. Participants exchanged knowledge, on building and supporting women-led movements; on development alternatives, moving from an extractivist economic model to a just, people-centred one. The assembly also joined the third African People's Counter COP 2023, where they learnt more about green colonialism. The two parallel events provided a much-needed platform to strengthen people in their collective struggles, towards climate justice on the continent. [African Voices Call For Radical Action At Women's Climate Assembly | WomIn African Alliance](#)

The Women's Climate Assembly is a contemporary example of adult learning and education (ALE) in action at a time when Africa is warming faster than the global average. From deadly floods in West Africa, droughts, and famine in East Africa to devastating cyclones in Southern Africa, the climate emergency calls for drastic action if Africa is to avoid carbon emissions breaching 1.5 degrees of climate warming. No

longer will women accept being mere spectators to the global crisis deeply affecting their lives and livelihoods.

In this article, I will argue that climate justice education is a priority for Africa. I start by sketching the context, which links accelerated climate change to colonialism. I then discuss a related concept of cognitive justice which is central to climate justice education. Two illustrative stories are then told of African climate justice education in action, before moving to closure.

Setting the scene

Climate Colonialism

Africa is a vast continent with over a billion people and 55 countries. It is home to diverse economies, resources, ecosystems, and cultures. All countries were colonised except for Ethiopia and Liberia. The major colonial powers were Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal. Colonialism has left indelible legacies. Climate change and colonialism are inextricably linked. Addressing the effects of climate change cannot be achieved without also addressing the legacies of colonialism. Therefore, considering the impact of historic and ongoing colonialist practices is essential in tackling climate change. Colonialism is responsible for centuries of harmful extractive practices across Africa, and elsewhere, that have driven wealth in the Global North and poverty in the Global South. (Okunola, 2023)

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s sixth report on the impact of global warming on the planet asserts that colonialism has exacerbated the effects of climate change. Historical, and ongoing forms of colonialism have helped to increase the vulnerability of specific people and places to the effects of climate change. (Harriet Mercer, 2022) Colonialism can refer to the practice of acquiring full or partial control over another group's territory; it can include the occupation of that land by settlers as well as the economic exploitation of land to benefit the colonising group. Research has shown direct links between dispossessing Indigenous people of their land and environmental damage. As Mercer states, "Connecting climate change to such acts of colonization involves recognizing that historic injustices are not consigned to history: their legacies are alive in the present."

The first connection to colonialism is about the historic causes of climate change. The Global North is responsible for the climate crisis, with the Global North countries responsible for over 92% of carbon emissions. Yet, it's Global South countries – which are disproportionately impacted by poverty that also has its root in exploitative colonial activities and practices – that are experiencing the worst impacts of climate change, particularly extreme weather events. As Greenpeace UK (2022) states, "The

environmental emergency is the legacy of colonialism.” This is because colonialism had established a model through which the air and lands of the Global South have been used as places to dump waste the Global North does not want. It’s this injustice that has sparked a wave of calls for climate reparations – essentially, calling on wealthy countries in the Global North (that have caused climate change) to financially support those countries that have done the least to cause climate change in responding to its impacts.

The second way climate colonialism is manifesting is through exploitation of resources of the Global South by Global North nations for their `green agendas`. There is a rush to mine ‘green minerals’ in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with tragic, exploitative practices on the mines and horrific environmental degradation. Carbon offsetting is often found to be a practice by which wealthy countries purchase the right to release a larger amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) than they had agreed on and invest in carbon sequestration facilities in the Global South to compensate for that. Western countries and companies can continue to pollute as normal, which disproportionately affects Indigenous, black, and poor people. Pursuing climate ambitions on the backs of the poorest people is referred to as ‘green colonialism’.

Zografos and Robbins (2020) define climate colonialism as “the deepening or expanding of domination of less powerful countries and peoples through initiatives that intensify foreign exploitation of poorer nations’ resources or undermine the sovereignty of native and Indigenous communities in the course of responding to the climate crisis” (p. 543). The legacy of colonialism has not only increased most peoples’ vulnerability to climate change, but also subjected them to climate policies that violate their individual and collective rights. (Stein & Hare, 2023)

Some of the emerging realities of accelerated climate change describe the existential crisis Africa faces. Africa is heating disproportionately quickly, and with little infrastructure and resources to mitigate heating and adapt to a warmer world. This is a grave injustice, given that Africa accounts for only two to three per cent of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions from energy and industrial sources since the start of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and Europe. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released its *State of the Climate in Africa 2019 Report* in October 2020 and draws the conclusion that average temperatures in Africa have increased over 1°C (greater than the global average indicated above) since 1901. (Hargreaves, 2023).

As Hargreaves (2023) elaborates, warming in large areas of the continent will likely exceed 2°C by 2080 to 2100 if emissions continue at their current levels. With this climate warming, the deterioration of food security has resulted in a 45.6 per cent increase in the number of undernourished people since 2012. In the Sahel region, its

reported that roughly 80 per cent of the farmland is degraded by rising temperatures and that conflicts rage as desperate people fight to control farmlands and scarce water bodies. Women constitute a sizeable percentage of the world's poor, and about half of the women in the world are active in agriculture. The WMO estimates that in developing countries, women constitute 60 per cent of food producers, and in low-income, food-deficit countries, 70 per cent of the same; the projected impacts of climate warming on agriculture will affect them severely. Droughts, floods, hurricanes, persistent malaria, and generalised water scarcity are likely to increase in the next few decades. In low-lying coastal areas, rising sea levels have taken metres of coastline, along with people's land, housing, and communal social services. The direct links between climate change and biodiversity loss is important to recognise – they need to be tackled together. Biodiversity (the diversity within species, between species, and within ecosystems) is declining faster than it has at any other time in human history. Biodiversity is essential for the wellbeing of all life forms.

Climate colonialism, which frames all these realities, becomes a key concept within climate justice education as does a related concept 'cognitive justice'.

Cognitive justice: Recognizing multiple knowledges.

Cognitive justice (Burt, 2020) is an essential part of the struggle for justice against domination which recognises the validity of different ways of knowing. de Sousa Santos (2014), informed by decolonial theory, highlights that the struggle for all forms of justice is inseparable from the struggle for cognitive justice and he introduces the idea of epistemicide, as 'the murder of knowledge' of 'the other', be it based on race, sex-gender, class, ethnicity, language, and so on. The ideology of science and technology has long dismissed other knowledges with women's embodied knowledge often referred to disparagingly as 'intuitive'.

Cognitive justice is integral to decolonial struggles and an example of cognitive justice at work, is the move to reclaim *ubuntu* as important for the future. Ubuntu is an African worldview and philosophy – it is an African-wide ethical paradigm that expresses the obligation to look after one another and the environment - all our wellbeing is mutually contingent. Ubuntu literally means: a person is a person through other people. There is complementarity between ubuntu and Latin America's *buen vivir*. Both reject modernity's nature-society duality and regard restorative justice as the principal mechanism to achieve harmony with the cosmos. (Terreblanche, 2018)

Decolonising knowledge involves collective, systemic, and systematic processes of dismantling the ways discourses and practices perpetuate cognitive injustices. The concept of cognitive justice illustrates how the legitimization of Western knowledge

often involves an act of seizing power in the intellectual sphere by belittling or ignoring the knowledge held by diverse cultures and countries in the Global South – a form of epistemicide – central to the brutalising processes of colonisation. (Ghosh, 2021) Ghosh graphically illustrates how the destruction of people went along with destruction of their knowledge. This seizing of intellectual power often includes the domination of mechanisms of knowledge generation such as the media, universities, internet resources, and professional institutions.

The quest for global justice, de Sousa Santos argues, must be premised upon the quest for global cognitive justice. One criticism of cognitive justice has been that, in its attempt to value local and Indigenous knowledge systems, all knowledge becomes viewed as relative or, alternatively, that Western science reduces the reality of Indigenous knowledge to a quaint pseudoscience. de Sousa Santos states that cognitive justice has nothing to do with relativism or with an anti-science stance. The centrality of social and cognitive justice calls for the centrality of the struggle against injustice since societies are structurally unjust.

With this premise he has been developing the idea of the epistemologies of the South, epistemologies focused on validating knowledges born in struggle. (de Sousa Santos, 2014; 2018) All these knowledges are valid to the extent that they may also contribute to those struggles. This is a difficult point since it involves discussing epistemology as politics and politics as epistemology. But he invites us to have a deeper look into the reality that has been built on conceptions of neutral epistemologies. For centuries the validity of science alone has been affirmed. This has led humans to the verge of an imminent, fatal ecological crisis and deepening inequalities.

Similar understandings are reflected in the praxis of ecofeminists (Salleh, 2017; Walters et al, 2021) who make a direct link between ecological degradation, capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, and racism. Cognitive justice is at the root of ecofeminism. They argue for the centrality of the knowledge and understandings of those people who are most marginalised and are on the front lines dealing with the fall-out of environmental destruction i.e., working class, poor, peasant and Indigenous women.

In a nutshell, capitalism, colonialism, racism, and patriarchy have been implicated in destroying other ways of knowing. Cognitive justice is an essential part of the struggle for justice against domination which recognises the validity of different ways of knowing. It counters the idea that science has monopoly of valid knowledge. Particularly through Indigenous people's influence, the humanist orientation of cognitive justice is expanded to include all life forms.

Stories of Climate Justice Education

Climate justice demands fundamental change in the political and economic order towards decolonised, socio-economic, gender and racial justice. Social movements and organisations of civil society are at the forefront of climate justice organising and educating. There is substantial evidence that those who gain most from the status quo will do little to change it with some governments denying the realities of accelerated climate change. Most states continue along a carbon-intensive energy paths, with devastating results. Growing numbers of scholars, on available evidence, have dire predictions for the human species. Environmental activist-scholars are warning that political, economic and community leadership are failing to provide systemic solutions to climate crises. Climate justice education, within a lifelong learning framework, includes learning and education throughout life, but here we focus mainly on adult learning and education within civil society.

Climate justice education is challenging the status quo; therefore, it is most often a bottom-up, grassroots endeavour. It is about foregrounding those people who have contributed least to 'crises' and are most affected by them – in the process acknowledging that their knowledge and understandings must contribute to the solutions. It's a vast landscape. The climate justice learning, and education responses are equally vast. We can't begin to know the full extent of the climate justice education initiatives within African civil society. I therefore choose two illustrative stories to describe climate justice education on the ground. (von Kotze et al, 2022)

Story One: WoMin African Alliance

WoMin is a cross Africa alliance which supports African women in communities of resistance against extractive projects. There are community organisations educating and organising both to support immediate struggles and to imagine alternative futures. A network of ecofeminists, the Womin African Alliance (WoMin), has a programme on Advancing African Ecofeminist Development Alternatives (AAEDA) which are ecofeminist, post-extractivist and transformative. This entails building African ecofeminist perspectives, conceptualizing, and advancing an African ecofeminist concept of the 'Just Transition', defining just, renewable energy alternatives, and supporting the democratization of decision-making through struggles of women and their communities. (Randriamaro, 2021)

Peasant, Indigenous and working-class women are leading communities to challenge degradation of their land and destruction of their livelihoods. WoMin collects their inspirational 'stories of struggles and resistance' that illustrate what women, collectively, do to defend the commons. (WoMin, 2021a, WoMin, 2021b) For example, a group of women in Bargny in Senegal (CFFA, 2021) have been bound to the ocean

over centuries. Commercial fishing and changes in climate are threatening their ways of life. They are defending the ocean and their land – they are imagining alternatives which allow them to continue with ancient ways. In Burkina Faso, women are saying no to gold mining as they defend a future for their children. Over 500 women’s associations in West African countries, the NSS (Nous Sommes la Solution), have organised themselves into an ecofeminist movement that promotes agroecology and food sovereignty. They promote sustainable farming practices, often rooted in traditional practices held by women. As the leader, Mariama Soko, says: ‘It’s the Indigenous knowledge and the practices that have always supported food sovereignty and this knowhow is in the hands of the women ... Ecofeminism for me is the respect for all that we have around us.’ (Shryock, 2021)

WoMin runs a Feminist School which crosses national boundaries, brings people together to learn from one another, to deepen their analysis of the issues and to build solidarity amongst one another. The women carry the burden of the crises because they are primary household food producers, caregivers and harvesters of water, energy and other basic goods needed for reproduction of life and well-being of people. But these roles also place them at the frontlines defending the natural world and its right to exist, without which the survival of all beings would not be possible.

To many African women who are defending their lives and livelihood, an ecofeminist analysis is not a theoretical construct – it makes practical sense. While not necessarily using the language, they know that patriarchy, racism, capitalism, and ecological degradation are entangled with one another. Using ecofeminist popular education, the schools reinforce and build towards strengthening movements of women with Pan-African consciousness.

In the educational and organising work, they invite possibilities of other knowledges and ways of seeing and being in the world, interrogating how Eurocentric thought, knowledge and power structures dominate present societies, and how that thought, and knowledge have consistently undermined colonised people. These processes help in the imagination of alternative futures.

The schools are part of an ecosystem of popular education activity – this includes solidarity exchanges across communities of resistance at the national and Pan-African levels; assemblies of women in struggle, as described earlier, to build the collective and strengthen movements; and the making and distribution of a wide range of popular education materials increasingly using visual media, such as film, animations, and photography. One is the documentary film made by WoMin, *Women Hold up the Sky* (WoMin, 2021). This is a vivid depiction of women, their ideas, and their struggles, many of whom have been part of the schools. <https://womenholdupthesky.co.za/>

The WoMin website and the Facebook Page is a rich source of climate justice education materials, resources, political debate, learning opportunities. [African Women Activists | WoMin](#) Their politics are clear: without confronting capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and neo-colonialism, socio-ecological justice is not possible.

Story Two: Xolobeni and African wisdom

As mentioned earlier, Ubuntu is an African-wide ethical paradigm that expresses the obligation to look after one another and the environment. Ubuntu - abbreviated from 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' - literally means: a person is a person through people'. It expresses an obligation to look after one another and the environment, believing that all our wellbeing is mutually contingent. Ubuntu, being for/through the other relies on an encounter with the other, a coming into being through the other, a building of relations and relationships. This is the core of care and, arguably, of education.

Nonhle Mbuthuma (2022, p. 91), the spokesperson for the Amadiba Crisis Committee of Xolobeni, a rural village in Pondoland, South Africa, describes how their community, and those still to come, would not survive if ubuntu was not practiced. She illustrates ubuntu at work when she says:

This culture helps people love and care for each other. For example, barter exchange: If you know that that family does not have livestock, you think "no let me do that and let me share". You know sharing is very rare these days, but my community has the kind of culture where if I left my child at home with your children, there is no problem. I'm not worried that my child will be stolen.... I am very proud of our community to say that we are feeding ourselves.

As an ethic of relationality, it is situated in the communitarian social fabric of caring and sharing. It resonates with other Indigenous people around the world. (Lange, 2023)

Since the 1950s when colonial powers were trying to colonise the whole of Pondoland, the Amapondo have been fighting for their right to determine their own future. Their land is agricultural and ancestral. Their ancestors fought for the land so that the present and future generations can survive and live in a peaceful environment. Today, Xolobeni is at the forefront of the fight for environmental and sustainable rights in their area. In 2021 the community won a legal battle against Australian mining company, Mineral Commodities (MRC) which sought to access what is claimed to be the world's 10th-largest deposit of ilmenite, a core titanium ore, on the Umgungundlovu land.

As one resident, Mam' Sonjica, says, 'They must not bring us mines. We do not want mines. They must not carry out extractivism in our oceans because that ocean gives us life. They must bring clinics, hospitals and fix the roads. (Ngcuka, 2022)

Learning from communities who are conserving their land, who know how to live sustainably, with a sense of 'enoughness', is key for climate justice education. It's the practice of cognitive justice where Indigenous, working class, peasant women and men's knowledge, skills and understandings are placed at the centre. It's a source of inspiration in the quest to challenge the worldview which has humans as superior and separate from Nature. It is an example of the kind of community with whom climate justice activists/scholars around the world can be in solidarity, Dawson (2022) argues:

In the face of mounting environmental and social calamities, the only coherent stance must be to join Indigenous and local communities around the world in demanding the return of stolen land, respect for their sovereignty, and a radical transformation of the Colonialism that characterizes the unsustainable behavior and policies of the wealthy.

Not so much an end as a beginning

The climate crisis is a clarion call for Africans to prioritise climate justice education at all ages and stages of life, in all educational and religious venues, on the streets, in the malls, in the workplaces, in the fields, around kitchen tables, on sports fields. It's a call to all of humanity to change how we live. There are many communities, networks, movements, and organisations trying to prefigure ways of undertaking collective action, which is more just, equal, and respectful. Individual and collective support for those at the forefront of confronting capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and ecological degradation, creating conditions for greater equality, is important as part of imagining alternative futures. We all need to become ecologically literate.

We need to avoid climate colonialism, firstly by recognising that colonialism is a root cause and driver of climate change. This has long been recognized by Indigenous Peoples. The second recognition is that many institutions, including higher education, have been and continue to be complicit in settler colonialism, including through the production and dissemination of colonial knowledge, the occupation and degradation of Indigenous lands, and complicity in educational assimilation. (Stein & Hare, 2023)

The impacts of the 'climate crisis' are nothing new for Indigenous people who have for 500 years fought off the social, cultural, and environmental genocides of racist settler-colonialism, patriarchy, global capitalism, the 'externalities' of toxic, industrial and consumer waste, the killing, starvation and sickening of their people, forests, lands, air, seas, and rivers. (Walter, 2021) Cognitive justice, where multiple knowledges are

recognised, is key to climate justice education – as is our own learning through attentive listening to local perspectives and old wisdoms.

Climate justice requires radical systemic change. This radical change is unlikely to be led by those who have both created the catastrophe that is unfolding and are most invested in the status quo but through people's action. People engaging in real-life struggles learn what climate justice means by the entanglement of co-constitutive local and global lives. Within their movements and actions, they challenge injustices and rehearse alternative ways of relating.

Unless climate justice learning works within the radical traditions of adult education and lifelong learning, it will not address the multiple injustices which drive contemporary ecological breakdown. This could lead to educational responses that are simplistic and do not address the systemic reasons for the climate emergencies that are unfolding. Ecofeminist popular educational approaches are critical to giving space for multiple epistemologies to emerge.

This moment, as we celebrate the ICAE's remarkable 50 years, adult education networks - international, regional, national, local - need to commit ourselves to deepen collective and collaborative climate justice education partnerships. Important progress has been made as captured in an article, "Towards an emergent curriculum for climate justice adult educators/activists" <https://ajal.net.au/latest-issue/> and also in recent PIMA special bulletins on climate justice education www.pimanetwork.com/bulletinjanuary2023 and [Special Issue - Climate Justice | PIMA Network](#). But we can do much more.

Climate justice education is a political/pedagogical process for the educators/activists/ learners. Working together cooperatively allows us to practice and rehearse the common future we are working towards. Through respectful collaboration, together, we can extend our reach.

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Climate justice education: A priority for Africa

Shirley Walters

Abstract

The Women's Climate Assembly is a contemporary example of climate justice education in action at a time when Africa is heating disproportionately quickly, and with little infrastructure and resources to mitigate heating and adapt to a warmer world. This is a grave injustice, as Africa accounts for a tiny per cent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. The vast continent has over a billion people, in 55 countries, with diverse economies, resources, ecosystems, and cultures. All countries were colonised except for Ethiopia and Liberia. Climate change and colonialism are inextricably linked. Addressing the effects of climate change cannot be achieved without also addressing the legacies of colonialism. Therefore, considering the impact of historic and ongoing colonialist practices is essential in tackling climate change. Climate colonialism is a key concept within climate justice education, as is the related concept 'cognitive justice'. Climate justice education is a priority for Africa.

Keywords

Africa; climate justice education; colonialism; cognitive justice; ubuntu; ecofeminism; radical adult education.

L'éducation à la justice climatique : Une priorité pour l'Afrique

Shirley Walters

Résumé

L'Assemblée des femmes sur le climat est un exemple contemporain d'éducation à la justice climatique en action à une époque où l'Afrique se réchauffe de manière disproportionnée et rapide, avec peu d'infrastructures et de ressources pour atténuer le réchauffement et s'adapter à un monde plus chaud. Il s'agit d'une grave injustice, car l'Afrique ne représente qu'un petit pourcentage des émissions mondiales de dioxyde de carbone. Ce vaste continent compte plus d'un milliard d'habitants, répartis dans 55 pays, avec des économies, des ressources, des écosystèmes et des cultures diversifiés. Tous les pays ont été colonisés, à l'exception de l'Éthiopie et du Liberia. Le changement climatique et le colonialisme sont inextricablement liés. Il est impossible de s'attaquer aux effets du changement climatique sans s'attaquer également à l'héritage du colonialisme. Il est donc essentiel de prendre en compte l'impact des pratiques coloniales historiques et actuelles pour lutter contre le changement climatique. Le colonialisme climatique est un concept clé de l'éducation à la justice climatique, tout comme le concept connexe de "justice cognitive". L'éducation à la justice climatique est une priorité pour l'Afrique.

Mots-clés

Afrique, éducation à la justice climatique, colonialisme, justice cognitive, ubuntu, écoféminisme, éducation radicale des adultes.

Educación para la justicia climática: Una prioridad para África

Shirley Walters

Resumen

La Asamblea de Mujeres sobre el Clima es un ejemplo contemporáneo de educación para la justicia climática en acción, en un momento en que África se calienta de manera desproporcionada y rápida, con escasas infraestructuras y recursos para mitigar el calentamiento y adaptarse a un mundo más cálido. Se trata de una grave injusticia, ya que África representa un porcentaje ínfimo de las emisiones mundiales de dióxido de carbono. Este vasto continente cuenta con más de mil millones de habitantes distribuidos en 55 países, con economías, recursos, ecosistemas y culturas diversos. Todos los países fueron colonizados, excepto Etiopía y Liberia. El cambio climático y el colonialismo están inextricablemente unidos. No se pueden abordar los efectos del cambio climático sin abordar también los legados del colonialismo. Por lo tanto, es esencial tener en cuenta el impacto de las prácticas coloniales históricas y actuales para luchar contra el cambio climático. El colonialismo climático es un concepto clave dentro de la educación para la justicia climática, al igual que el concepto relacionado de "justicia cognitiva". La educación para la justicia climática es una prioridad para África.

Palabras clave

África, educación para la justicia climática, colonialismo, justicia cognitiva, ubuntu, ecofeminismo, educación radical de adultos.

Re-questioning Education and the role of Adult Education: an overview from the Arab Region

Zahi Azar

Beyond Technology: rethinking Adult Education in a changing landscape

This reflection seeks to address questions that delve into a new reality within the realm of education, particularly adult education. Presently, we find ourselves at the crossroads between two worlds. Just two years ago, we did not experience this sensation; however, today we are confronted with emerging realities that challenge us. It appears that we are on the brink of two or even three educational revolutions or significant transformations. The foremost transformation involves reevaluating the landscape of adult education, which has been greatly impacted by the resurgence of the global order.

Identifying this transformation is not straightforward, as it begins with the recognition that beyond technology, a multitude of ideologies are reshaping the entire educational framework. This contributes to the emergence of a somewhat nebulous and unclear concept of education. These shifts affect not only adult education in general but also the involvement of women in the field. This landscape is still nascent and constantly evolving, with the potential for rapid change.

Reevaluating reality

Within this reevaluation of reality, we are compelled to address the influence of artificial intelligence (AI), not only in isolation but also in tandem with the escalation of global poverty. To illustrate, at the outset of 2023, coinciding with the advent of AI's dominance, some stark statistics demand attention. While acknowledging the positive aspects of AI, it cannot be ignored that according to a report from the investment bank Goldman Sachs, as many as 300 million jobs could be lost in the USA and European Union alone. (CNN, 2023). While delving into specifics is unnecessary, it is crucial to note that two-thirds of those affected are women. Furthermore, individuals trapped in the throes of extreme

poverty (earning less than \$1.9 per day, by the definition of the World Bank) bear the brunt of these changes, majority of them being women (Oxfam International, 2023), often evading statistical representation.

“The economic forecast [for USA] is equally staggering, with AI's estimated economic impact reaching a colossal \$15.7 trillion by the same year” (SEO.AI's Content Team, 2023).

Simultaneously, it is projected that these figures could increase by an additional 250 million in the coming year. Moreover, “over 1.9 billion people, or 26.2 percent of the world’s population, were living on less than \$3.20 per day in 2015. Close to 46 percent of the world’s population was living on less than \$5.50 a day.” As for the Arab region, World bank provides data for Middle East and North Africa: “Even though the region saw an increase in the number of people living on less than \$1.90 a day, levels of extreme poverty remained low. However, the region had more people living on less than \$5.50 per day in 2015 than in 1990.” (The World Bank, 2018). The data in the post-COVID-19 era are probably even worse. This demographic is poised to become increasingly vulnerable to these imminent changes.

Emerging challenges: facing the harsh realities

The logical progression of events paints a rather bleak future for our planet. One of the pressing questions now is how humanity will endure this newfound poverty that is spreading across the globe. Additionally, we must contemplate the meaning of political struggle amidst these challenging circumstances.

Could this widespread poverty lead to a surge in internal conflicts and external wars? On the political front, coping with poverty might necessitate a shift towards increased centralization worldwide. With the primary focus being the survival of affected populations, concepts like democracy and elections could recede. The difficult path of human rights in our lives might be neglected or interrupted under these new challenges. Could the future of education be reduced to mere survival? And how will all of this impact adult education, which is already grappling with its classical difficulties?

Furthermore, women's historical struggles may be similarly affected, if not more so. It raises the question of whether social and educational struggles will become luxuries when the fundamental need is sheer survival, all within an oppressive atmosphere of violence and wars. It is worth noting that, until the past two years, the idea of a nuclear war was largely regarded as a "fantasy" to discuss. However, under the weight of these global challenges, there is genuine concern that it might become a terrifying reality, albeit in different forms. This

is a part of the emerging new world where violence appears to be a normalized option.

Education for All: adapting to new realities

The theme of "Education for all" faces significant disruption due to these new realities. Education cannot remain neutral in the face of ongoing events. While it is true that education has never been entirely neutral, often influenced by dominant capital interests, civil society has strived to derive some benefits, even in the realm of adult education.

Consider the Arab region, where women make up almost half of the total population, with a significant portion being illiterate (about two-thirds of the total). Remarkably, in recent years, science and research is one area where Arab states are closer to gender parity, despite societal norms that often sideline them. "In tertiary education, the Arab States' GPI is 1.58 in GCC countries and 1.22 in Maghreb countries, while it is very low in LDCs, standing at 0.43. In some GCC countries, such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, the enrolment rate for women is double that of men..." (UNESCO, 2017); This underscores that, despite various challenges, a substantial percentage of young women have been able to pursue traditional education within the past decade. However, in the last two years, public university education has significantly deteriorated, leading to a considerable number of women leaving universities. Meanwhile, the demand for adult education continues to grow steadily.

The general situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) within the perspective of lifelong learning in the Arab region

Despite the remarkable development in our Arab region in the field of education/learning, there are still great challenges and gaps that threaten lifelong learning, including:

1. The cost of education being an obstacle to the continuation of lifelong education / learning, especially for poor and low-income people.
2. ALE no longer seen as a priority for decision-makers and policy makers in many of our Arab countries.
3. ALE being marginalized or underestimated, with the absence of rooting the concept of lifelong learning, and adult education is treated with traditional methods that lack creativity and innovation.
4. Marginalization of the values of tolerance and peace, acceptance of difference, and citizenship, limiting them to a theoretical framework without practice and application.

5. The absence of policies and future visions to deal with emergencies and pandemics, and the consequent displacement, asylum, further marginalization, and the absence of psychological and social security.
6. Fragility of partnership and networking between governments, civil society, and the private sector, particularly in the field of ALE.
7. The unavailability and lack of clear, specific and accurate data with regard to education in general and ALE in particular.
8. Most adult education activities being limited to literacy and the ability to read, write and do arithmetic.
9. Weak evaluation mechanisms and tools by bodies concerned with ALE, and reliance on quantitative rather than qualitative performance and evaluation.

Achievements and challenges

By analyzing the context in the Arab region, it was possible to monitor the achievements and challenges related to ALE issues:

1. The emergence of unified and participatory initiatives and visions to support ALE in the region through networking and partnership between civil society organizations, the government sector, as well as the private sector.
2. The existence of successful models and experiences. It is necessary to look at this accumulation and circulate these experiences and successful expertise, especially the field initiatives and interventions by AHAED members that have been developed to face the Corona crisis.
3. Recently, many studies and researches have appeared that are concerned with education / learning issues.
4. There is an attempt to unify visions and concepts and develop curricula that take into account the needs of adults and start from their reality and are interested in linking education / learning and the labour market.
5. There are attempts to integrate the private sector and soft forces to embrace ALE issues.

Despite all these efforts and the progress made, there are many challenges facing ALE in the region, the most important of which are:

1. The lack of educational innovation and the weakness of new methods that enhance the added values of teaching / learning.
2. The lack of government policies that support ALE.

3. Poor funding and allocations by governments or donors to support ALE.
4. The governments' preoccupation with the security and political challenges facing the Arab region.
5. Weakness and deficiencies in curricula, experiences, qualifications and training centers concerned with ALE and lifelong learning.
6. The weakness of the link between the levels of knowledge and skills provided by education and learning programs for adults on the one hand, and qualification for the labour market on the other hand (vis-à-vis the importance of Recognition/ Validation of Prior Learning).
7. The weakness of programs that promote and entrench human rights and active citizenship.
8. Lack of interest in education and nurturing from a human value perspective, social restructuring and psychological security, especially in areas that suffer from armed political unrest in some places of conflict in our Arab countries.
9. There is no common and clear understanding about ALE in the Arab region. ALE is taking place in urban and rural communities. It is implemented by civil society as well as public and private institutions. It is taking place through literacy education, personal and skills development, civic and cultural education. However, there are no holistic policy frameworks representing ALE in countries of the Arab region.
10. Weak employment of technology in the field of ALE, especially in times of crisis.
11. The existence of a gap between teaching and learning in practice with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as a basic input to reducing poverty, destitution and marginalization.

AI in education: navigating challenges and redefining priorities

As we observe the escalating fragility of education, particularly in the Arab world, due to the rising tide of poverty, a new contender is poised to enter the arena: artificial intelligence (AI) educational systems. These AI-powered schools, with their affordability and efficiency, threaten to supplant traditional educational models. Some experts (such as Kamalov, F., Santandreu Calonge, D., and Gurrib, 2023) predict that AI-driven schools and universities might become the remedy for educational crises in many third-world nations. Such a shift could lead to minimized budgets, with the assurance of quality through AI systems, sidelining the fundamental connection between education and teaching. This decoupling has already begun and will likely intensify with the full integration of AI.

The term "education" itself warrants a redefinition, given that non-academic aspects such as human rights, citizenship, and gender issues hold little significance within the priorities of AI-driven education. This presents a significant challenge in the coming years. It is crucial to recognize that the poorest nations are likely to embrace AI education first, due to its cost-effectiveness and practicality – ideal for those who seek a streamlined learning process devoid of critical thinking. These systems also centralize education, providing an all-inclusive curriculum and knowledge repository, devoid of individualized teaching considerations.

This prompts us to examine the stark distinction between Education and Artificial Education, with the latter inevitably gaining prominence. The ensuing issues within AI educational systems will invariably impact our approach to adult education. How do we reshape the concept of adult education amidst these seismic shifts? What attributes should instructors possess, and which programs and curricula will resonate with the needs of these new adult learners?

In the Arab world, “the total number of illiterates decreased from 51.774 million in 2012 to 51.43 million in 2015, while the female literacy rate increased only from 66 per cent to 67 per cent due to population growth and other socio-economic factors” (UNESCO, 2017). In another words: “Between 2000 and 2019, overall literacy rates in the region increased from 65.29 per cent to 75.14 per cent, with youth literacy increasing from 82.06 per cent to 86.16 per cent (UIS, 2020). Despite this, literacy rates among adults and youth are still below the global averages of 86.48 per cent and 91.73 per cent, respectively” (UIS, 2020). These percentages might increase in the coming years, potentially reaching 60-70%, a trend that might extend globally. This poses a growing predicament for civil society stakeholders. The erosion of adult education values is imminent. The influx of learners may lead to centralization in adult education, potentially fostering increased control measures. Will this shift lead to a simplification of adult education components, gradually eschewing ideological complexities?

As we tread this transformative path, the role of NGOs comes into question. Will their ideological underpinnings be affected? How will they adapt to this changing landscape? Could they potentially find themselves distanced from the core impetus for change and the ideologies they champion?

The struggle for Adult Education: embracing change and reimagining impact

In the face of increasingly pragmatic societies driven by survival, it is worth pondering the role that the wisdom of figures like Paulo Freire and the pursuit of values and non-academic outcomes will have. As we simplify our perspectives, we find ourselves asking: how can these ideals find their place in societies racing to endure? This question reverberates among those championing adult education for a better world, including the advocates for environmental sustainability and freedom, who have long been stalwarts within adult education.

In this unfolding landscape, will educators transform into mere teachers, engaged in a competitive race? Will the realm of Adult Education remain untouched by AI, or will it, too, be transformed by its advances? The realm of creativity, particularly women's creativity, stands at a crossroads. Will it straddle the line between the old and the emerging new world? Amidst these transitions, crucial questions emerge, demanding our attention in this historical juncture.

This could be the moment when adult education activists must embrace the art of questioning, recognizing that answers may not be readily at hand. As we navigate this nuanced period, let us endeavor to dissect our circumstances. Despite the odds, even in the face of adversity, the spirit of adult education persists. It is imperative for Adult Education to embark on a significant breakthrough, actively engaging in the formulation of vital strategic questions. This participatory process should encompass every echelon, with women's voices resonating across its facets.

Together, we must decipher reality and cultivate the skill of questioning. Not solely for the sake of questioning, but because, in the process of inquiry, we pave the way for answers, evolving alongside our communities. With humility and unity, Adult Education is charting a roadmap for resilience in the impending years. In this journey, our vocabulary and approaches, within a participatory framework, must undergo profound realignment. The unchanging theme within Education should be more precisely defined: amidst relentless pressures, Adult Education stands poised to liberate life. It becomes an education that liberates life, focusing on rekindling the process with a simple yet profound directive: the evolution of self-realization.

In this endeavour, we acknowledge the historical significance of women's roles. Their potential to drive transformation remains pivotal, and their participation holds the key to qualitative change.

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A Re-questioning Education and the role of Adult Education: an overview from the Arab Region

Zahi Azar

Abstract

This article addresses diverse questions posed by the unfolding landscape of the emerging new global order for adult education in the Arab Region. These include the role of educators, the impact of artificial intelligence and other technologies, the continuing impact of extreme poverty and the role played by the creativity of women in the transition from the old to the emerging new order. We outline the general situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) within the perspective of lifelong learning in the Arab region which suggests that ALE is no longer considered as a priority for decision-makers and policy makers in many of our countries and point to the fragility of partnership and networking between governments, civil society, and the private sector. Amongst the challenges for ALE in the coming years we point to the weakness of programmes that promote and entrench human rights and active citizenship and to governments' preoccupation with the security and political challenges facing the region. We conclude by acknowledging the historical significance of women's role in ALE and their potential to drive transformation and qualitative change based on their participation.

Keywords

Arab Region, Adult Learning and Education, artificial intelligence, role of women, impact of poverty.

El replanteamiento de la educación y el papel de la educación de adultos: Una visión general de la región árabe

Zahi Azar

Resumen

Este artículo aborda diversas cuestiones planteadas por el panorama del nuevo orden mundial emergente para la educación de adultos en la Región Árabe. Entre ellas se incluyen el papel de los educadores, el impacto de la inteligencia artificial y otras tecnologías, el impacto continuado de la pobreza extrema y el papel desempeñado por la creatividad de las mujeres en la transición del viejo al nuevo orden emergente. Esbozamos la situación general del Aprendizaje y la Educación de Adultos (AEA) dentro de la perspectiva del aprendizaje a lo largo de toda la vida en la región árabe, que sugiere que el AEA ya no se considera una prioridad para los responsables de la toma de decisiones y de la formulación de políticas en muchos de nuestros países, y señalamos la fragilidad de la asociación y del trabajo en red entre los gobiernos, la sociedad civil y el sector privado. Entre los retos para el AEA en los próximos años, señalamos la debilidad de los programas que promueven y afianzan los derechos humanos y la ciudadanía activa, así como la preocupación de los gobiernos por los retos políticos y de seguridad a los que se enfrenta la región. Concluimos reconociendo la importancia histórica del papel de las mujeres en la EAJA y su potencial para impulsar la transformación y el cambio cualitativo a partir de su participación.

Palabras clave

Región Árabe, Aprendizaje y Educación de Adultos, inteligencia artificial, papel de la mujer, impacto de la pobreza.

Remettre en question l'éducation et le rôle de l'éducation des adultes: un aperçu de la région arabe

Zahi Azar

Résumé

Cet article aborde diverses questions posées par le paysage du nouvel ordre mondial émergent pour l'éducation des adultes dans la région arabe. Ces questions comprennent le rôle des éducateurs, l'impact de l'intelligence artificielle et d'autres technologies, l'impact continu de l'extrême pauvreté et le rôle joué par la créativité des femmes dans la transition entre l'ancien et le nouvel ordre émergent. Nous décrivons la situation générale de l'apprentissage et de l'éducation des adultes (EFA) dans la perspective de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie dans la région arabe, ce qui suggère que l'EFA n'est plus considérée comme une priorité par les décideurs et les responsables politiques dans bon nombre de nos pays et souligne la fragilité des partenariats et des réseaux entre les gouvernements, la société civile et le secteur privé. Parmi les défis que devra relever l'éducation et la formation des adultes dans les années à venir, nous soulignons la faiblesse des programmes qui promeuvent et renforcent les droits de l'homme et la citoyenneté active, ainsi que la préoccupation des gouvernements pour les défis sécuritaires et politiques auxquels la région est confrontée. Nous concluons en reconnaissant

l'importance historique du rôle des femmes dans l'éducation et la formation des adultes et leur potentiel de transformation et de changement qualitatif basé sur leur participation.

Mots clés

Région arabe, apprentissage et éducation des adultes, intelligence artificielle, rôle des femmes, impact de la pauvreté.

**Where to Next in the Asia Pacific and Beyond: ASPBAE's
Journey with ICAE and Partners in Informing and
Following Up on CONFINTEA VII Marrakech
Framework for Action**

Helen Dabu

Secretary-General

Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)

Optimising this opportunity to contribute to the Special Issue of Convergence to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), ASPBAE deemed it valuable to document and share its journey with ICAE and other partners in informing the processes leading to and following-up on the outcomes of the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII) as codified in the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA).

In the main, this piece is meant to serve as a resource for participation in the follow-up process of CONFINTEA VII especially in concretising the MFA, and for future engagements of civil society advocates for adult learning and education (ALE), particularly members and partners of ASPBAE and ICAE, to inform the next CONFINTEA process.

Influencing and learning together: Documenting and synthesising the civil society commitment at all levels in the CONFINTEA VII processes

CONFINTEA, as a framework and commitment-setting process every 12 years, is a UNESCO intergovernmental conference (Category II), enabling a global policy dialogue on adult learning and education (ALE) and related research and advocacy.

The most recent one, CONFINTEA VII, was envisaged to help shape policy directions for ALE within a lifelong learning perspective in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) laid down in the United Nations' 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development in general, and SDG 4 on education in particular. It was a global policy space for Ministers from UNESCO Member States and other stakeholders to discuss the current situation of ALE and articulate a set of recommendations for its further development over the coming 12 years, drawing on the 5th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE), which was launched on this occasion.

In sum, the recommendations that emerge from this process - in this case through the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) as the main outcome document of CONFINTEA VII - will guide policy, practice and international cooperation in ALE.

Within the UNESCO architecture, it is the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), in cooperation with a host country government - in this case, the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco - which was assigned to coordinate the organization of and preparatory process for CONFINTEA VII, in partnership with a broad range of international stakeholders such as other UN agencies, CSOs/NGOs and other partners.

For the CONFINTEA VII, the working documents that guided the process and its outcomes include the following: UNESCO Futures of Education Report; CONFINTEA VI Belém Framework for Action (BFA); 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE); Synthesis of the Global Report on ALE (GRALE) 1, 2, 3, and 4; GRALE 5, Synthesis reports of the CONFINTEA VII regional preparatory conferences and; Suwon-Osan CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Statement.

There were key spaces in which the civil society, including ASPBAE, ICAE, DVV International, and the academe have engaged in and fully optimised to advance the ALE agenda with a rights-based, gender-transformative, climate-saving and sustainable lenses:

- *Participation in the 5th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 5) process*

The Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) was the main mechanism for monitoring UNESCO Member States' progress in meeting the CONFINTEA VI or Belem Framework for Action (BFA) commitments as well as the Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE), adopted by Members States in 2015. The 5th Report or GRALE 5, one of the working documents for CONFINTEA VII, had a thematic focus on Citizenship

Education and offered an overview of emerging trends and challenges in the field of ALE.

In 2020, ASPBAE, ICAE and DVV International partnered with UIL in organizing the Asia Pacific Regional capacity-building webinar on GRALE 5 to support Members States in organizing their national-level responses to the GRALE 5 Survey. The regional webinar was helpful to the CSO participants as well in helping them appreciate possible opportunities for their engagement in the country-level survey processes informing GRALE 5. Unfortunately, the country-level GRALE 5 processes offered hardly any spaces for CSOs to participate and contribute. To adapt to this situation, ASPBAE and its members instead undertook the development of Civil Society Spotlight Reports on ALE to offer an alternative CSO perspective on ALE policy and practice. Spotlight Reports were developed in 10 countries in Asia Pacific, the findings of which offered evidence for CSO advocacies in the subsequent processes of CONFINTEA VII at the regional and global levels.

- *Being part of the CONFINTEA VII Consultative Committee (CC)*

To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are represented in the CONFINTEA VII process, a Consultative Committee (CC) was steered by UIL to provide advice on relevant conceptual and organizational aspects of the conference.

In the main, the CC is a 32-member body consisting of representatives from UNESCO Member States representing all regions (6), the Host Country (1), UN agencies (2), multilateral agencies (7), CSOs (3), Academia (2), UIL Governing Board (2) and UNESCO (9).

In May 2021, ASPBAE was invited by the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini, to be part of the CONFINTEA VII CC and occupy one of the three (3) CSO seats allocated in this space. These CSO seats were occupied through the representations of ASPBAE, DVV International and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) which, for decades, have worked closely together in CONFINTEA processes to engage UNESCO, governments and development partners towards ensuring that there will be greater ambition and commitments for adult learning and education (ALE).

Amongst others, being part of the CC offered opportunities to be in strategic discussions from the start of the preparations until the process of producing the zero draft of the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) on ALE.

Held against the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when mobility and travel restrictions were in place, a total of seven (7) virtual Consultative Committee meetings were held, in which ASPBAE actively participated, between July 2021 until May 2022 to guide the preparations and consultations leading to the main conference.

- *Sub-regional, regional and global consultation processes - where CSOs have also effectively advanced the transformative ALE agenda*

At the onset, and as it was in the previous process, it was made clear with and through the CONFINTEA VII CC that the main conference would be preceded by a series of regional preparatory conferences throughout 2021. And, given the opportunities offered by virtual platforms to hold consultations amidst the pandemic, sub-regional consultations were also held, especially in the Asia Pacific region.

ASPBAE actively engaged in and informed the sub-regional and regional CONFINTEA VII Consultations organised by UNESCO-Bangkok, UNESCO Sub-Regional Offices and UIL. For the 4 sub-regional CONFINTEA VII consultations in which ASPBAE participated (in Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific) in 2021, it also organised CSO preparatory meetings to collectively analyse the CONFINTEA VII consultation documents and agenda.

In these processes, ASPBAE was able to gather CSO recommendations and inputs which were presented in the official sub-regional consultations and further developed into a regional CSO position paper which was officially presented and submitted by ASPBAE during the regional CONFINTEA VII consultation on 22 September 2021. ASPBAE's inputs and recommendations were strongly reflected in the contextual analysis and the 9 key recommendations contained in the official regional Outcome Document steered by UNESCO-Bangkok. These were further echoed in the interventions and representations made by ASPBAE in the CONFINTEA VII Consultative Committee at the global level to prepare and inform the CONFINTEA VII documents and processes leading to the main conference in Morocco in June 2022.

- *Drafting Committee for the new framework for action on ALE*

Constituted at the start of the conference, this committee consisted of representatives from UIL Secretariat (2), the host country - Morocco (1), and UNESCO Member States across regions, particular from Togo (1), Austria (1),

Brazil (1), Latvia (1) and South Korea (1). The committee was steered by the Chair of the UIL Governing Board, Daniel Baril. The civil society were part of and have actively influenced the outcomes of the drafting committee deliberations, represented by the ASPBAE Secretary-General (Helen Dabu) and ICAE Secretary-General (Katarina Popovic).

Both ASPBAE and ICAE, carrying the civil society analysis and positions at various levels, contributed directly to strengthening the MFA which was finally approved on the last day of the conference in Marrakech.

It has to be emphasised that the outcome of the CONFINTEA VII, through the MFA, was not only anchored on the work of the drafting committee during the conference, but in all the processes that contributed to this important result. And in all these processes, CSOs at the country level, including ASPBAE members in the Asia Pacific, and in various regions, especially those from ICAE membership, were at the forefront of influencing.

The sub-regional and regional consultations with their corresponding regional outcome documents provided important inputs which were used by Member States and other partners, including CSOs, to improve and strengthen the draft MFA.

The members of CONFINTEA VII Consultative Committee also received an embargoed copy of the preliminary draft MFA in February 2022 with very limited turnaround time to comment and provide inputs. Nevertheless, the CSO representatives - ASPBAE, ICAE and DVVI - and those from the Academia managed to submit a joint and substantive response, analysis and recommendations to improve the draft. At that preliminary point of the document, major improvements were needed on the framing and in elevating the ambition set in the document. The CSO submission was also informed by the various CSO meetings and engagements organised in 2021, especially in shaping the CONFINTEA VII Regional outcome documents, including from the Asia Pacific, to which ASPBAE significantly contributed.

While UIL, which was steering the writing of the draft MFA, adopted many of the CSO inputs, a range of areas still needed improvement in the updated draft that was circulated for public online consultation launched on 3 April 2022 to which the public was invited to provide input and comments until 13th April 2022.

As it has done in the CONFINTEA VII sub-regional and regional consultations in 2021, and to enable wider participation from CSOs in the Asia Pacific, in

informing and responding to the public online consultation on the draft MFA, ASPBAE organised a virtual Regional Meeting on CONFINTEA VII Draft Marrakech Framework for Action on 7th April 2022. This meeting offered a space for ASPBAE and its members to collectively analyse the current state of the draft and put together recommendations that became the basis of ASPBAE's and its members response to the online consultation by UIL. ASPBAE also used the inputs from this consultation to continuously advance the CSO positions and recommendations in the pre-final draft that was circulated to Member States represented in Morocco.

A day before the start of the CONFINTEA VII main conference, on 14th June, ICAE organised a Civil Society (CS) Forum in Marrakech which offered another opportunity to further deliberate and strategise on key CSO positions and advocacies. ASPBAE actively engaged in this CS Forum, including providing analysis and recommendations on the latest draft of the MFA which had become the 'zero draft' sent to Member States and Consultative Committee a day before the start of the conference.

In its input to the CS Forum, ASPBAE particularly highlighted - for the broader CSO constituency at national, regional, and global levels, the areas in the MFA that needed to be protected since these captured what have been advocated for by the CSOs throughout the CONFINTEA VII processes, and the areas that needed to be improved by offering concrete text edits into the main document. Additionally, ASPBAE, through its Secretary-General, was part of the CS Forum Drafting Committee which finalised the Civil Society Manifesto that was delivered by the ICAE Secretary-General on the first day of the main CONFINTEA VII conference on 15th June 2022.

ASPBAE also helped put together the key CSO asks and recommendations to the zero draft of the MFA which was formally submitted to the CONFINTEA VII Consultative Committee and was also used by the CSO delegates from various regions - Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Middle East and Africa - to engage their government representatives present in the conference.

Propelled by the strong CSO efforts prior to and in the main conference, Member State delegates provided inputs through their representatives to the MFA Drafting Committee which facilitated consensus and also enabled the inclusion of the CSO inputs into the final outcome document.

In terms of the MFA Drafting Committee process, the first meeting which happened on the second day of the conference involved looking at the various

submissions and inputs received until that point and finding ways to incorporate these in the zero draft. An updated draft from this process was then shared with the Drafting Committee members in the evening for further deliberation.

The second and last meeting was on the following morning, the last day of the conference, which involved a more rigorous process of: 1) resolving the most contentious parts and issues and; 2) a line-by-line, paragraph-by-paragraph review and agreement by the Drafting Committee members, ensuring all matters had been resolved or that there was a general consensus within the committee on why certain inputs could not be accommodated, and that the overall substance and contents of the document aligned with the overall aspirations set for ALE in the next 12 years.

As has been the case in various global processes for education, financing for ALE, including through the CONFINTEA VII MFA, was a key area that merited a lengthy deliberation by the Drafting Committee. While the final outcome document rallied Member States for a commitment to increase public funding for ALE, prevent regression on existing ALE budgets, and re-affirmed the currently agreed commitments for education financing, the Drafting Committee, stopped short at mentioning a concrete path to increasing domestic resources for education, including ALE, by widening the tax base. Some Drafting Committee members did not feel confident in tackling tax systems in such a global framework document as they were of the view that the issue falls within the sovereign powers of countries. And while it was countered that this sustainable path to domestic resources for education has been reflected in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the consensus safely fell back to the more familiar commitments for financing.

Another area which drew some further deliberations revolved around international cooperation for enactment and monitoring. Substantive efforts by CSOs were exerted to ensure that UNESCO, through UIL, would continue to play a critical role in steering the reporting and monitoring process for the MFA. Emphasis was also put to ensure strong country-level engagements in the follow-up and monitoring, and for the effective and participatory implementation of the recommendations of the Framework.

Once the key contentious areas had been deliberated, the process of going through the rest of the document, through a line-by-line, paragraph-by-paragraph review, went through quickly with only some editorial clean up and tightening needed to be done. But even in this process, the CSO representation in the Drafting Committee made sure not only to protect those areas that were

advanced and embedded by CSOs through the various consultative processes, but also ensured that they were correctly and logically expressed in the final document in this finessing process by the Committee.

The final document reviewed and agreed by the Drafting Committee was then circulated to the Member States in the afternoon of the last day and was then formally adopted by acclamation by the delegates.

Post-Marrakech: The CONFINTEA VII Follow-Up Meeting in Asia in 2023

On 30th May 2023, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Offices in Bangkok, Beijing, Jakarta and New Delhi, organised a virtual Regional CONFINTEA VII Follow-up Conference for Asia as part of their efforts to pursue the commitments made in CONFINTEA VII codified through the MFA.

This regional inter-governmental conference offered an important step within the region to both engage governments in the Asia Pacific to expand dissemination efforts on the CONFINTEA VII commitments, and to also concretise these by identifying action points made in the MFA with a focus on policies, funding, provision and quality and governance, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The follow-up mechanism was also discussed at the preliminary stage to track progress to be made and exchange good practices within the region.

ASPBAE, as an organizing partner for this regional conference pursuing the CONFINTEA VII outcomes, presented the “*Civil Society Recommendations in the Implementation and Monitoring of CONFINTEA VII Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA)*” within the plenary session which featured governments and other stakeholders’ perspectives on the MFA implementation, including priority areas and good practices in the region. More than 60 participants from governments in the region, UNESCO sub-regional offices and various stakeholders, including civil society organisations (CSOs) represented by ASPBAE and some of its members, and representatives from DVV International Southeast Asia Office, attended this virtual regional conference.

As part of ASPBAE’s practice to ensure that its input to this regional process reflected the perspectives and recommendations of CSOs, especially its members in the Asia Pacific region, it organised a virtual preparatory CSO consultative meeting on 23rd May 2023. This meeting brought together representatives from ASPBAE’s membership consisting of ALE advocates and

practitioners from countries in South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia and Central Asia. The outcomes of this CSO consultative meeting along with the CSO Spotlight reports on ALE developed by ASPBAE members at the country level were put together into a summary recommendations paper presented by the ASPBAE Secretary-General in the main intergovernmental regional conference on 30th May and was also submitted in writing to UIL and UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Offices in the region.

In the main, ASPBAE's recommendations in the pursuit of CONFINTEA VII MFA commitments in the Asia Pacific revolved around the key areas of national ALE policy and financing; equity and inclusion; ALE and digital equity, literacy and citizenship; quality delivery and provisioning of ALE; ALE governance and systems; monitoring and accountability mechanisms of the MFA and; promoting good practices from countries within the Asia Pacific.

Amongst others, ASPBAE emphasized that governments must enact a comprehensive legislation and policy on ALE as a right within the lifelong learning framework, with the participation of civil society and other ALE stakeholders. The national law should be followed with clear implementation rules and guidelines, defining specific roles of the national and local governments and with categorical policy on annual budget allocation from the national or central government.

ASPBAE also urged governments to address the massive financing gap for ALE by increasing and allocating public funding to the development, implementation, and monitoring of ALE policies, plans, and programmes that cater to the learning needs of all learners, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable groups. In this regard, governments should allocate at least 4-6 % of GDP and/or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure to education as already affirmed both in the Education 2030 Framework for Action and the Marrakech Framework for Action on ALE. It reiterated the CSO call even in CONFINTEA VI (Belem) for countries to allocate at least 6% of the national education budget to ALE with at least 3% dedicated to adult literacy in countries where high levels of illiteracy persist. ASPBAE also urged developed countries to fulfil their commitments to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA to developing countries.

Strengthening the equity lens of government responsibilities to deliver ALE, there is a need to prioritize and target special population groups who are diverse, complex, marginalized, minorities, youth and adults with special needs and adapt instructions as per their learning needs. Underserved and vulnerable population groups should always be prioritized in ALE by

delivering inclusive ALE programmes in partnership with CSOs that are at the forefront of ALE provisioning in grassroots communities.

At the ground level, there is need for countries to urgently support and finance community learning centres. Learners, parents, family members, and communities must have access to community-based learning, gender-just skills education, family literacy programmes, reading centres, and other programmes that foster intergenerational learning and support the continuity of learning, especially on mental health, food and nutrition and community resilience efforts.

Cognisant of the accelerated pace towards digitalisation in many countries in the region, ASPBAE highlighted that education systems should set into motion affirmative actions toward ensuring access to multilingual education and digital literacy for families, especially in remote rural areas and other marginalised communities.

Further, to ensure CONFINTEA VII MFA commitments are pursued, ASPBAE called for a wider information dissemination campaign from local to national levels about the state of ALE at the country level, and the need to start a country and multi-stakeholder process of developing an Action Plan for ALE and the implementation of the MFA where clear country targets, financing and indicators for monitoring progress are defined. This should ensure the participation of CSOs and other key stakeholders in defining priority areas and action plans. To reach out and achieve wider support, the MFA and country action should be translated into the country's language. Capacity building of local governments, CSOs and other stakeholders on concretising the MFA into policies, financing and programmes will also be critical in the coming period.

Finally, ASPBAE emphasised that issues such as climate change, migration and refugee crisis, conflict and disasters need international cooperation. It therefore urged Member States to define a regional ALE agenda with clear cooperation plans that will provide learning and opportunities in conflict-affected countries, Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

As CONFINTEA VII follow-up efforts have only just begun in the Asia Pacific, ASPBAE, together with its members, affirmed its commitment to sustain its active engagement and contribution in these processes. It will continue to work with national, regional and global CSO formations, including through the wide network of ICAE, to advocate for a more ambitious, gender-just, climate-saving and inclusive ALE agenda through the Marrakech Framework for Action.

Final reflections for the next CONFINTEA

Considering the challenges posed by the pandemic in going through all the CONFINTEA VII processes, especially in virtual and blended mode of engagements, there was much to celebrate in the way the civil society successfully engaged in and influenced the outcomes. These need to be recognized, sustained and protected at all levels.

Building on these strong efforts of CSOs to sustain support for ALE, both in practice and policy, more advocacy strategising needs to be set in place to ensure governments will have a more pro-active role, ownership and involvement in charting the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms even at the start of the process of shaping the new framework. Not fully concretising this area at the onset and in the main document might risk leaving the follow-up process to be ambiguous and dependent on who and what entity takes over.

Further, the battle for the sustainability of ALE delivery and implementation at the country level, to truly deliver the right to ALE within a lifelong learning framework, will continue to be dependent on strong and concrete public funding guaranteed by governments, especially in protecting the interest of those on the margins. Civil society should neither concede this advocacy nor leave it to other stakeholders, especially the private sector, to define this important agenda for ALE.

Finally, much learning and strategising need to be set in place on virtual modes of engagements especially in shaping transnational agreements on education, including ALE. Recognising that there is no turning back to the previous norm where key agreements are shaped and defined through rigorous face-to-face modes of discussions and negotiations, working procedures for a mix of modalities need to be reshaped and improved in such a way that does not sacrifice the time and substantive quality of consultations and engagements, and ensuring that the final outcomes remain true to the representative voice of delegates and partners for CONFINTEA.

There is no doubt that the context in 12 years' time will be much changed, driven by further acceleration in technology, climate change, geopolitical dynamics, wars and conflicts, and persistent inequalities. This will necessitate important processes like CONFINTEA to continue to adapt, to be connected to grassroots and country-level challenges, and to hold its value in contributing to a more equal and just society. CONFINTEA VII's outcome through the MFA ultimately laid the ground for what is expected now and in the next process –

that is, to fully harness the transformational power of adult learning and education.

Where to Next in the Asia Pacific and Beyond: ASPBAE's Journey with ICAE and Partners in Informing and Following Up on CONFINTEA VII Marrakech Framework for Action

Helen Dabu

Abstract

Strategic efforts at all levels were exerted by the civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly members of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) including ASPBAE, in substantially informing the processes and outcomes of CONFINTEA VII as codified through the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA). This commitment and influencing efforts were notable in the CSOs' ability to mobilise and urgently respond to those processes shaping the outcomes, especially as they were adapted to a pandemic context in which the majority of the inter-governmental processes leading to the face-to-face main conference in Marrakech were conducted virtually. As a lesson-learning piece, it is important to document these efforts not only to serve as a reference for the next CONFINTEA process in 12 years, but also to guide the frontline advocates for adult learning and education (ALE) on the strategic areas to monitor in following-up the MFA commitments to fully harness the transformational power of ALE.

Keywords

ALE advocacy, CSO commitment, CONFINTEA VII follow-up, Marrakech Framework for Action, transformational ALE.

Próximos pasos en Asia-Pacífico y más allá: El viaje de la ASPBAE con el ICAE y sus socios para informar y dar seguimiento al Marco de Acción de Marrakech de la CONFINTEA VII

Helen Dabu

Resumen

Las organizaciones de la sociedad civil (OSC), en particular los miembros del Consejo Internacional de Educación de Adultos (CIEA), incluida la ASPBAE, llevaron a cabo esfuerzos estratégicos en todos los niveles para informar de manera sustancial los procesos y resultados de la CONFINTEA VII, tal como se reflejan en el Marco de Acción de Marrakech. Este compromiso y los esfuerzos de influencia fueron notables en la capacidad de las OSC para movilizarse y responder de manera urgente a los procesos que dieron forma a los resultados, especialmente dado que se adaptaron a un contexto pandémico en el que la mayoría de los procesos intergubernamentales que condujeron a la conferencia principal presencial de Marrakech se llevaron a cabo virtualmente. Como lección aprendida, es importante

documentar estos esfuerzos no solo para que sirvan de referencia en el próximo proceso de CONFINTEA dentro de 12 años, sino también para guiar a los promotores de primera línea del aprendizaje y la educación de adultos (AEA) sobre las áreas estratégicas que deben monitorear en el seguimiento de los compromisos del MAAM para aprovechar plenamente el poder transformador del AEA.

Palabras clave

Promoción del AEA, compromiso de las OSC, seguimiento de la CONFINTEA VII, Marco de Acción de Marrakech, AEA transformador.

Prochaine étape dans la région Asie-Pacifique et au-delà : Le parcours de l'ASPBAE avec le CIEA et ses partenaires dans l'information et le suivi du Cadre d'action de Marrakech de CONFINTEA VII

Helen Dabu

Résumé

Les organisations de la société civile (OSC), en particulier les membres du Conseil international d'éducation des adultes (CIEA), dont l'ASPBAE, ont déployé des efforts stratégiques à tous les niveaux pour informer de manière substantielle les processus et les résultats de la CONFINTEA VII tels que codifiés dans le Cadre d'action de Marrakech (CAM). Cet engagement et ces efforts d'influence ont été remarquables dans la capacité des OSC à se mobiliser et à répondre d'urgence à ces processus qui ont façonné les résultats, d'autant plus qu'ils étaient adaptés à un contexte de pandémie dans lequel la majorité des processus intergouvernementaux menant à la conférence principale de Marrakech se sont déroulés virtuellement. En tant qu'élément d'apprentissage, il est important de documenter ces efforts non seulement pour servir de référence au prochain processus CONFINTEA dans 12 ans, mais aussi pour guider les défenseurs de première ligne de l'apprentissage et de l'éducation des adultes (ALE) sur les domaines stratégiques à surveiller dans le cadre du suivi des engagements du MAE pour exploiter pleinement le pouvoir de transformation de l'ALE.

Mots clés

Plaidoyer pour l'EFA, engagement des OSC, suivi de la CONFINTEA VII, Cadre d'action de Marrakech, ALE transformationnelle.

Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967) and Education

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Last 27th May, we commemorated the centenary of the birth of Lorenzo Milani, priest and educator, who dedicated his life to providing the conditions for the least socially positioned to come into voice. About the Prior of Barbiana, much has been said and written, not always accurate, and more will be said and written as this year draws to a close. Some will quote or refer to him as an authority to validate their own ideas. Others will depict him as the cause of all ills that have befallen the Italian school. Others will represent him as an inimitable model. Not all read what he wrote or study his actual experience. Some do not allow themselves to be provoked by his own testimony. As aptly put by his spiritual advisor, don Bensi, in an interview with Fr. Nazzareno Fabretti in June 1971, don Lorenzo Milani, “transparent and hard like a diamond, was at risk of being wounded and wounding” (literal translation from Italian original). Allowing oneself to be touched by this diamond, at risk of being wounded, would even today be a healthy move as this can help convey the art of 'doing school' and of allowing the poor to come into voice.

Revisiting Don Lorenzo Milani's writings, even today, offers the reader a 'formative' experience. Spurred on by the Prior of Barbiana's words, at times provocative, at times full of paradoxes, never banal, the reader is urged to engage in profound critical reflection as part of the pursuit of truth. A careful reading would allow one to gain access to what don Lorenzo Milani defines as "the pedagogical secret of Barbiana". This is described in *Esperienze Pastorali* (Pastoral Experiences): “Friends often ask me how do I succeed in 'doing school' and having it full. They insist on providing them with a method, with specific programmes, subjects and didactic techniques. They ask the wrong question. They should not be concerned with how one 'does school' but how one must *be* to 'do school'”.

It is a question of *being*. One cannot explain in a few words how one should *be*. Read *Esperienze Pastorali* thoroughly until the end and you might well understand how you should *be* to carry out popular schooling.

One needs to have clear ideas with regard to social and political issues. One has to not be interclassist but take sides. One should be gripped with the anxiety to raise the poor to transcend their current status to reach a superior one. I am not saying to the level equivalent to that of the actual ruling class but to a superior one: more to that of a fuller human being, a greater spiritual level, more Christian, more in every respect." (free translation from Italian original, in Milani 1958, 239)

The way of being educators, the way they would go about things and their commitment to dedicating themselves completely to the service of those who are socially least positioned is at the heart of the Milanian experience. These are what even today make his message timely and relevant.

The Popular School of San Donato: bringing the poor into voice

Before being appointed Prior of the miniscule parish of Sant'Andrea a Barbiana, on Mount Giovi, don Lorenzo Milani carried out his apostolic mission at the parish of San Donato a Calenzano (Florence). He arrived there in October 1947 with all the enthusiasm of a neophyte and a newly ordained priest. He betrayed all the anxiety and eagerness to communicate his 'interior discoveries' among the faithful. His enthusiasm was quickly dampened. It did not generate any interest on the community's part. The general religious practice lacked any internal significance. Mostly absent were the "interests worthy of a human being" as he himself put it in his Italian original centered around the popular Italian androcentric conception of 'uomo' (Man, *sic.*) - human beings viewed holistically in all their subjectivity.

The identification of issues in a society undergoing rapid transformation and their connected pastoral perspectives are expressed with great lucidity and remarkable understanding, quite unusual at the time, in *Esperienze Pastorali* (Pastoral Experiences). This text is a must read for one to understand the pastoral and educational experience of don Milani at Calenzano. In this regard, one ought to lament the fact that, though providing important educational insights, the book was almost totally ignored by scholars of pedagogy. In this volume, don Milani expresses his profound conviction that an adequate civic education is an indispensable prerequisite for embracing the Holy Gospel. He discarded the usual apostolic practices - he did not hold back in his severe criticisms of orators, Catholic associations, parish cinema halls. He gave pride of place to education as the kernel of his pastoral activity.

Don Lorenzo Milani posits the conviction that the effectiveness of religious instruction is contingent on the quality of civic education. The challenge is not so much that of fostering religious instruction, which can be more or less reduced to a few fundamental precepts, but to spread a widespread and holistic education. On 15th January 1949 don Primo Mazzolari wrote: "To speak of the poor...to speak to the poor...to speak in the name of the poor...all these are different from giving voice to the poor. It is easier to give them a flag, a membership card, a chant, a pass, a hand bomb, a gun...than to foster the ability to reason".

The key importance attached to the teaching of language in the popular school derives from the conviction that what differentiates the poor peasant from the bourgeois citizen is not the treasure that each one carries within oneself but the means to express it. With this view in mind, don Milani proposed to his friend, G.P. Meucci the idea of establishing in Florence a great popular school: "Not as a gift to the poor but as a debt to pay and a reward to receive. Not to teach but only to provide the poor with the technical means (language) to reveal the inexhaustible richness of equilibrium, of wisdom, of concreteness, of religiosity that God has hidden in their heart almost as if to compensate for their cultural inequality of which they are victims"⁸. (translation from original in Italian, in Milani 2017, 352).

To possess the 'right words' involves having the means of expressing oneself, of communicating with others. It also means that entering into dialogue also with the same Verb is an essential condition for engaging with what is real in its most hidden significance. Through teaching the use of words, don Milani reveals his general conception of life, "a conception for which one breaks away from the confines of ignorance and distances oneself from the temptation of being entrapped in one's own partial visions. It means that one tenaciously embarks on the quest for the truth of things and regarding persons. One uses such knowledge not for egotistic purposes but to be attentive to the word that seals that sense of love towards others rendered as one's purpose in life." (approximate in spirit to the Italian original in Pazzaglia 1983).

The School of Barbiana and *Lettera a una professoressa* (Letter to a Teacher)

Don Lorenzo Milani reached Barbiana on 6th December 1954, after having experienced seven years of pastoral life at the parish of San Donato a Calenzano. Barbiana was a tiny parish on the northern side of Mount Giovi.

⁸ don Lorenzo Milani's letter to Gian Paolo Meucci of 02.03.1955.

The Florentine curia had decided to close it as a result of the continuous migration of its population towards the plains below. It was kept open specifically to accommodate a priest, don Milani, who proved inconvenient, keeping him out of sight, out of mind. Notwithstanding his 'exile' and confinement to this tiny mountain parish, Lorenzo Milani, for his part, did not stop developing his pastoral approach. No sooner had he arrived there, than he set about organizing the school.

The opening pages of *Lettera a una professoressa* describe, through the narrative of his young student/teachers, the salient features of the School of Barbiana: the lack of facilities, intense rhythms of work, collective writing, peer teaching/tutoring: "When I arrived, Barbiana seemed far from being a school. There was no teacher's chair, no blackboard, no desks. There were only large tables around which we had our schooling and our meals. There was only one copy of every necessary book. The boys huddled together on it. It was difficult to realize who was slightly older and taught the rest. The oldest among those teachers was 16 years of age. The youngest was only 12 and filled me with admiration. From the very first day, I decided that I would also have to teach. Up there, life was tough. Discipline and making of scenes were sufficient to make one lose the desire to return. The child who lacked the basics, however, who was slow and listless was made to feel being the preferred one. The child was welcomed in the same way you would welcome the first in class. It looked as if the school was there only for this child. Until this pupil understood what was taught, the others would have not move forward. There was no recreation. Not even Sunday was a holiday. Nobody gave the matter any great thought because work is worse. But every bourgeois visitor raised a hue and cry about this [...] The following year I was a teacher. In actual fact, I was a teacher for three and a half days a week. I taught Geography, Maths and French at the level of first year middle school. One does not need a university degree to scroll through an atlas. If I was wrong at something, that was not a big deal. It would have come as a relief to the children. We researched things together. We were serene and without fear and awe as the clock ticked the hours. You do not know how to carry out schooling as I do.

Teaching taught me many things. For example, I learnt that others' problems are similar to mine. Tackling and emerging from them together is politics. Tackling and emerging from them on one's own is avarice." (Translation from Italian original, in *Scuola di Barbiana* 1967, 12; 14). What seems *prima facie* a personal issue is indeed a *public* issue.

The school is here conceived as a public good, a vehicle for the humanisation of persons. It has the task of protecting young persons against individualism,

to educate them to care towards others and to inculcate that sense of common social responsibility. Unfortunately, the school, as denounced by the Barbiana students, generally favours competition and, alas, encourages an instrumental use of knowledge and reasoning: "Even the goal of your youngsters' learning is a mystery. Maybe it does not exist, maybe it is vulgar. Day by day, they study for the register, the results sheet, for the diploma. In the meantime, they are distracted from the beauty of the things they study. Languages, history, sciences... everything becomes empty and nothing more. In those sheets of paper lie only individual interests. The diploma and money. No one among you admits that. But at the end of the day, that is the essence of it all. To study willingly, in this system, one must be a careerist at 12. Few are careerist at 12, so much so that the majority of your youngsters hate school."(Original in Italian in Scuola di Barbiana 1967, 24).

Furthermore, the school is a good for all that cannot measure its success by the achievements of the 'cleverest' and by discarding students encountering the greatest difficulties: "We saw this at first hand. With them, schooling becomes more difficult. There would often be the temptation to dispose of them. But if it loses them, the school is not worthy of being called so - a school. It would be a hospital that cures the healthy and rejects the sick " (translated from Italian original in Scuola di Barbiana 1967, 20). Ultimately, the school is obliged to safeguard equality among all pupils without reducing this task to just a quantitative measurement "because there is nothing more unjust than treating unequal parts as equal ones." (translation from Italian original in Scuola di Barbiana 1967, 55).

At the time when the boys of Barbiana wrote to their counterparts at the School of Piadena, in 1963, don Milani's school already had an established organizational set up. The boys of Barbiana describe it thus: "Our school is private. It consists of two rooms in the *canonica* together with two others that serve as an office. In winter, we feel crowded but from April to October, we carry out schooling in the open air and therefore we do not lack space! We are now 29. Three little girls and 26 boys...the youngest is not even 11, the oldest 18. The youngest are at the level of 'prima media'. There is then a second 'media' and a third technical one. Those who accomplish the third vocational one study foreign languages or mechanical design. The languages are French, English, Spanish and German. Francuccio, who wants to become a missionary, is now beginning also to study Arabic. The timetable is from 08.00 till 19.30. There is only a brief break for lunch...School Days are 365. 366 in leap years. Sunday is different from the rest only because we hear mass. We have two rooms we call the office. There we learn woodwork and iron work. We construct all objects required by the school. We have 23 teachers! Save for the seven little ones, all

others teach those who are younger than them. The Prior teaches only the older ones. To obtain diplomas, we sit for exams as private candidates in state schools." (translated from Italian original, in Milani 2017, 948-949)⁹.

There are several occasions for carrying out schooling at Barbiana. Lessons are often geared towards the acquisition of the necessary ability to respond to everyday challenges, tied to concrete situations. In this respect, they are intended as practical courses organized for boys and girls at the school and open to the occasional adult.

Several important documents emerged from Barbiana (*Lettere ai Cappellani Militari* [Letter to the Military Chaplains], *Lettera ai Giudici* [Letter to the Judges], *Lettera a una professoressa* [Letter to a Teacher]). They were position statements that derived from common reflections and the coherence and seriousness with which the Prior tackled everything that afforded an opportunity for teaching/learning: "I live for them. All the rest are instruments for our school to function. Even the Letter to the Chaplains and to the Judges are episodes from our life that serve solely to teach the youth the art of writing, that is to say, to express love towards others, in short, education (*fare scuola - literal translation into English as 'education in its fuller humanist sense', editorial note*) (Milani 2017, 1222)¹⁰. The school had to develop in its students a sense of 'legality' and a nuanced 'political' sense; it had to cultivate the desire for better legislation, also at one's personal cost when and if necessary.

"At this stage, I need to explain the fundamental problem of each school" writes don Milani. "We have arrived at a key moment in this trial because, as teacher, I have been accused of excusing a crime, that of a 'bad school'. We would therefore need to agree on what constitutes a 'good school'. The school is different from a court tribunal. For you magistrates, it is only the established law that matters. The school however is ensconced between past and future and should keep both in mind. It is the delicate art of leading students towards being on a knife edge: on the one hand, conveying among them a sense of legality (in this sense, this is in keeping with your function). On the other hand, there is the need for better laws in the [*deeper*] political sense (this is where one differs from your function)." (Translation from Italian original in Milani 1971, 36).

The school is at the center of all the vital tensions in don Milani and, at the same time, lies at the juncture where the two essential elements in Christianity meet: transcendence and immanence (Acerbi 1983, 141). For don Milani, the School

⁹ Letter of the Barbiana students to those of Piadena, 1st November 1963.

¹⁰ Letter to Nadia Neri, 7th January 1966.

means commitment, entailing one's assuming responsibility and concern for the situation of others. "The sentence 'I Care' was prominently written on one of the school's walls. It is the motto of the best U.S youngsters. 'It concerns me, it's close to my heart.' It lies opposed to the Fascist mantra [*which would suffer in translation - editorial insertion*] 'I do not give a damn!' "(Milani 1971, 34).

Social responsibility or one's responsibility for others signifies tackling situations which become public issues one needs to address. Feeling responsible and engaged in the situation of the other renders possible the raising of social awareness and developing the ability to listen. 'I care' implies the ability to 'jump out of one's skin' to take on the problems of others. Educating is tantamount to problematising, to be ill at ease to allow oneself to be transformed and to transform. The ultimate goal of any educational intervention is to ensure that the other grows, opens up and surpasses her or his teacher: "the school should rest in anticipation of that glorious day when the best student will tell her 'Poor old woman, you do not understand anything anymore!' and the school responds by desisting from exploring her child's secrets, content only that she/he is alive and a rebel." (Translated from Italian original in Milani 2017, 969)¹¹. For don Milani, making way for the other, through the word, communication and teaching are not simply acts of generosity; they are acts of justice marked by a great ethical stance. This is what he himself accomplished, placing himself on the side of the socially least positioned (*dalla parte degli ultimi, translated literally in the Gospels' sense of 'on the part of the last ones', the downtrodden or the oppressed*). We gather this from his writings, recordings or through the testimony of those who knew him personally. He continues to pose a similar challenge to us in this day and age. For this reason, "anyone interested in education who avoids *Lettera a una professoressa*, irrespective of how one estimates it, does so at one's peril. There is a simple reason for this. It is a symbolic text. It affected and resonated with the ideas, choices, feelings and actions of the Italian school. This influence can, in various ways, still be felt today. Because it is a tough book, which does not leave one indifferent, which provokes strong reactions and thoughts, which continues to generate debates and sharp stances. Because it is a useful book, capable of nurturing in the reader an educational commitment within the school, characterised by passion, intelligence, criticality, constructiveness" (Translation from Italian original in Triani 2011, 205).

The *Lettera* urges us to recognise the many imperfections of the school and to explore together pathways to overcome them. It invites us, once more, not to abandon the strong ideal of a school and educational system at large, including

¹¹ Letter of don Lorenzo Milani to Michele Gesualdi, 15th December 1963.

adult and community education, capable of helping to develop liberated persons in solidarity with others: "Find yourself a goal. It is important to be honest... not to wish for the youngster anything other than being a full human being. This is a conception which sits well with believers and atheists. I know this. The Prior has impressed this upon me since I was 11 and I thank God. It saved me a lot of time. I knew minute by minute why I studied. The ultimate justice-oriented end is to dedicate myself to others." (Translation from Italian original in Scuola di Barbiana 1967, 94).

Commenting on the *Lettera*, Pier Paolo Pasolini claims to have discovered "One of the most beautiful definitions of literature I have read, that is, poetry would be a hatred that once deepened and clarified becomes love". Reference is made to the definition of art contained in the *Lettera*: "So we understood what art is. It is to want to hurt someone or something. To think about it for a long time. Getting help from friends through patient teamwork. Gradually what is true underneath the hatred emerges. The work of art is born: a hand stretched out to the enemy to change." (Translation from Italian original in Scuola di Barbiana 1967, 132).

The art of writing is conceived of as an act of love. It springs from the desire to search for truth. For this reason, don Milani writes: "The art of writing is religion. The desire to express our thoughts and understand the thoughts of others is love. And the attempt to express the truths that we only feel through intuition makes us and others discover them. So being a teacher, being a priest, being a Christian, being an artist, being a lover and being loved are basically the same thing." (Translated from Italian original in Milani 2017, 1262)¹².

Conclusion

Lettera a una professoressa invites us to look to Barbiana not as a model to imitate but rather as a stimulus to create something new because the School of Barbiana, "if rendered as an ideal model, can foster a utopian sense of inertia or escapes into the private sphere. It is not a model. It is a message, and the message is never imitated, it is always a call for new creations." (Translation from original in Italian in Balducci 1995, 50). The message of the *Lettera* must therefore still be embraced in its non-conjunctural absoluteness and generative potential: "The proposals of Lorenzo Milani and Barbiana therefore remain all valid and possible albeit probably unfeasible - writes Pecorini - all necessary, therefore all indispensable. And we must continue to focus and work on all of them, though knowing that they may never be implemented. Indeed, precisely

¹² Letter to Dina Lovato, 16th March, 1966.

for this reason. (...) Exporting the secret of the Barbiana of Mugello, which all lies in the objectives, and repeating the method, which is all in the commitment and coherence, in the many Barbianas of the world, is the only possibility/hope we have left" (Translated from Italian original in Pecorini 1996, 150). The writings of Don Lorenzo Milani challenge each reader calling for a response expressing commitment and solidarity for a school that allows each person to become a "sovereign citizen".

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Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967) and Education

Domenico Simeone

Abstract

This article pays tribute to one of Europe's prominent and innovative critical pedagogues and social activists in the year of the first centenary of his birth: don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967). His innovative approach to education, which has wider resonance than just for schooling and incorporates adult and youth education and community education, is rooted in his criticism, and that of the students with whom he worked, of the Italian public education system. It is also rooted, as Pier Paolo Pasolini stated, in a critique of Italian society at large. This article underlines Milani's view of education as an act of love, and as a means to create the conditions for the least socially positioned to come into voice. As a result, education can reveal the treasure which lies within them. The text highlights Milani's belief in collective rather than individualistic egotistical endeavour. Students learn, deepen their awareness of issues and write collectively. Their mantra is caring for others whereby individual challenges are perceived as public ones. The article also highlights the true political purpose of Milani's lifelong commitment to education: to help the conventionally marginalised develop as 'sovereign citizens'.

Keywords

Citizens, Law, Community, Collectivity, Love

Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967) y la educación

Domenico Simeone

Resumen

Este artículo rinde homenaje a uno de los pedagogos críticos y activistas sociales más destacados e innovadores de Europa en el año del primer centenario de su nacimiento: don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967). Su innovador enfoque de la educación, que tiene una resonancia más amplia que la mera escolarización e incorpora la educación de adultos y jóvenes y la educación comunitaria, hunde sus raíces en su crítica, y la de los alumnos con los que trabajó, al sistema educativo público italiano. También tiene sus raíces, como afirmaba Pier Paolo Pasolini, en una crítica a la sociedad italiana en general. Este artículo subraya la visión de Milani de la educación como un acto de amor, y como un medio de crear las condiciones para que los menos favorecidos socialmente puedan hacerse oír. Como resultado, la educación puede revelar el tesoro que se esconde en su interior. El texto subraya la creencia de Milani en el esfuerzo colectivo y no en el egoísmo individualista. Los alumnos aprenden, profundizan en sus conocimientos y escriben colectivamente. Su mantra es el cuidado de los demás, por lo que los retos individuales se perciben como públicos. El artículo también destaca el verdadero

propósito político del compromiso de Milani con la educación: ayudar a los marginados convencionales a convertirse en "ciudadanos soberanos".

Palabras clave

Ciudadanos, Derecho, Comunidad, Colectividad, Amor.

Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967) et l'éducation

Domenico Simeone

Résumé

Cet article rend hommage à l'un des pédagogues critiques et activistes sociaux les plus éminents et les plus novateurs d'Europe, à l'occasion du premier centenaire de sa naissance : don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967). Son approche novatrice de l'éducation, qui ne se limite pas à l'école et englobe l'éducation des adultes et des jeunes ainsi que l'éducation communautaire, est ancrée dans sa critique, et celle des étudiants avec lesquels il a travaillé, du système d'éducation publique italien. Elle est également ancrée, comme l'a déclaré Pier Paolo Pasolini, dans une critique de la société italienne dans son ensemble. Cet article souligne que Milani considère l'éducation comme un acte d'amour et comme un moyen de créer les conditions permettant aux personnes les moins bien placées socialement de s'exprimer. Ainsi, l'éducation peut révéler le trésor qui se trouve en eux. Le texte met en évidence la croyance de Milani dans l'effort collectif plutôt que dans l'effort égoïste individualiste. Les élèves apprennent, approfondissent leur conscience des problèmes et écrivent collectivement. Leur mantra est l'attention portée aux autres, les défis individuels étant perçus comme des défis publics. L'article met également en lumière le véritable objectif politique de l'engagement de Milani en faveur de l'éducation tout au long de sa vie : aider les personnes traditionnellement marginalisées à devenir des "citoyens souverains".

Mots clés

Citoyens, droit, communauté, collectivité, amour.

IN MEMORIAM
Chris Duke

*A Tribute to Professor Chris Duke - with a
selection of his publications as an annotated
bibliography*

Heribert Hinzen

It was a sad day for lifelong learning when Chris Duke passed away on 22nd June 2023. He is certainly missed by his family, but also colleagues and friends around the globe. For almost 60 years he contributed to the development of adult learning and education (ALE) as well as lifelong learning (LLL) which he saw as a profession, as an academic discipline, but also as a movement to engage in, where another world was possible.

Throughout his professional life he was a highly respected writer and editor of all kinds of publications which have relevance for today and should be read or even re-read in a different context and time. This tribute serves as one key.

CONVERGENCE and ICAE

For this special issue of *CONVERGENCE* to celebrate 50 years of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Timothy Ireland and Shermaine Barrett (Guest Editors) invited me to write a tribute to Professor Chris Duke. Both knew very well that Chris has been close to this journal throughout his life in ALE as well as LLL, and also of course to ICAE. His contribution *Does what goes around come around? - the late 20th century adult learning and education agenda today* (Duke 2023) in *CONVERGENCE* (Vol. 44, Issue 1) may be his last published work before his untimely death.

This final article is a clarion call in which he touches on some of his lifetime concerns such as never to mix education with learning; the need to stay close to your communities; the urgency of combatting further destruction of our environments; the need to engage in democratic participation. Here he looked

back to see a certain continuity of his engagements with ICAE and *CONVERGENCE*, and his last great challenge to build PIMA and its *Bulletin*. He was one of the key figures in starting the PASCAL (Place And Social Capital And Learning) International Observatory, and later PIMA, the PASCAL International Membership Association, or (what he liked even more) 'Promoting, Interrogating and Mobilising Adult Learning & Education' (PIMA).

For the *CONVERGENCE* article Chris took his time to look at a number of volumes of *CONVERGENCE* between 1976 and 2007 in which he had roles as a reader, author and steady supporter. In the early years of ICAE (Hall 1995) after its foundation in 1973, Chris served as Associate Secretary-General alongside Budd Hall as Secretary-General. Together with other champions like Professor Roby Kidd and President Julius Nyerere, they gathered at the First World Assembly in Dar es Salaam and afterwards steered ICAE through its stormy foundational years (Hinzen 2006). Alan Tuckett (2015) has described how ICAE became a strong mover in shaping ALE and LLL for the global development agenda.

ASPBAE and Asia Pacific

In these early years, Chris was also Secretary-General of the Asian South Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) which had been founded in 1964, but then retired for a decade like a kind of sleeping beauty. Chris had moved from England to Canberra for a founding chair in adult education at the Australian National University, and complementary to his university engagement he was eager to do regional work in Asia Pacific through ASPBAE as a professional civil society organization. He brought the *ASPBAE Journal* back to life, and this was included in a cooperation agreement of ASPBAE with DVV International which started in 1977. Since then, the journal has continued strongly until today, with constant adaptations to dramatic and fast changes both regionally and globally.

One of these important changes in the 1980s was the opening-up of China, including for adult education. Chris was behind a major meeting and served as Guest Editor of a *CONVERGENCE Special Issue* which he started off with an article on *Learning from and with Liberation: Report from ICAE China Symposium in Shanghai* (Duke 1984). Key figures at the time like Yao Zhongda, Zhao Wengqing and Anil Bordia contributed; the respective group photo shows Dame Nita Barrow, ICAE Honorary President, together with more than 60 participants from China and 20 other countries. Many opportunities for deepening the exchange through visits, publications and studies followed.

Even earlier, Chris had served as Guest Editor for a *CONVERGENCE Special Issue* looking at *Adult Education, International Aid and Poverty*. In his report, Chris called for a Commission of Inquiry to deepen understanding of this important theme (Duke 1980). Malcolm Adiseshiah, Francisco Vio Grossi, Noren Clark and Margaret Snyder contributed articles. Chris continued to pay special attention to aid and poverty and took the Commission very seriously. Through his efforts two major publications: *Combatting Poverty Through Adult Education: National Development Strategies*, and *Grassroots Approaches to Combatting Poverty through Adult Education* (Duke 2019) brought his substantial experience to bear, so that both books are being re-published around 25 years after their first appearance. The publications will be ready for our current discussions on ALE, contributing to poverty reduction, and hence acting on the first of the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Higher Education

Throughout his working life Chris was employed by a number of different universities in England and Australia. In his earlier years, for two decades, he was also the editor of the *International Congress of University Adult Education Journal*. The number of periodicals and series where he served as editor or member of the editorial board has still to be identified. Chris stayed on as Consulting Editor of the *International Review of Education – Journal of Lifelong Learning*.

For a period of time Chris moved out of and beyond the adult education movement. His career took him to the highest levels of the higher education sector – from Director and Professor of a Department to the Vice Chancellor and President of a University. His collections and reflections of that period later appeared as stories in *The Learning University* (Duke 1992) or *Managing the Learning University* (Duke 2002) published by the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE). Later, *Making knowledge work: sustaining learning communities and regions* (Duke et al. 2006) was published by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) together with PASCAL. After his retirement from university life he made use of his wide experiences and excellent skills in analysing, reporting and recommending new ways of doing things through numerous reviews for the OECD or the EU, UNESCO and DVV International. Somehow, and especially through his involvement with PASCAL and the learning regions and communities, he found a bridge back into adult education, where he continued to serve very actively for another decade.

CONFINTEA

Chris was active in influencing UNESCO's work for CONFINTEA in a variety of ways. I am not sure whether he joined already in Tokyo for the Third World Conference in 1972, but he was present and one of the rapporteurs in Paris for CONFINTEA IV. He frequently mentioned what he remembered so well: the frozen atmosphere at a high time of the cold war, and the importance of the declaration on *The Right to Learn* (UNESCO 1985) which reads almost like a poem, especially compared with many other world declarations.

He contributed immensely to the *CONFINTEA VI Special Edition of CONVERGENCE* in 2007 with co-authored articles on *Adult education in migration and integration* as well as *Policy, legislation and financing for adult education*. It was a double issue that included an *ICAE Public Paper*, a historical review on the first five CONFINTEAs by Joachim H. Knoll, and many more contributions by Paul Bélanger, Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo, János Tóth, Alan Tuckett, Cecilia Soriano, Babacar Diop Buuba and Malini Ghose to name a few (Agostino et al. 2007). Timothy Ireland ensured that a Portuguese version of this *CONVERGENCE VI Special Edition* was produced and made available widely.

It was a time when Chris Duke's knowledge and understanding of broader contexts opened many doors. He joined the *International Conference on Adult Education and Poverty Reduction: A Global Priority* which the World Bank and DVV International jointly sponsored and organised together with the University of Botswana (DVV International 2004). Chris provided his services for the General Report. He inspired publications like *Basic and continuing adult education policies* (Duke, Hinzen 2006) or *Knowing More, Doing Better. Challenges for CONFINTEA VI from Monitoring EFA in Non-formal Youth and Adult Education* (Duke, Hinzen 2008). He became fully involved in the *International Conference on Financing Adult Education for Development* in Bonn in 2009 which was co-organized by ASPBAE, DVV International, EAEA, ICAE and UIL, where he again wrote the Conference Report and in addition co-authored the *Background Note: A New Effort for New Times – Steps in the Long March to Belém* (Duke, Hinzen 2009). When, much later, during CONFINTEA VI, the Belém Framework for Action was discussed in the Drafting Group, his financing of ALE section was the hottest and most controversial topic.

This challenge of financing ALE as a human right, within a perspective of LLL remained high on the agenda for CONFINTEA VII. The issue had already surfaced in the preparatory phase where DVV International supported a study which Chris co-authored on *Financing of popular adult learning and education (ALE): experience, lessons and recommendations from 14 countries and case studies*

(Duke et al. 2021), and where ICAE took a global perspective for *Financing adult learning and education: the way forward, what works, how and why* (Popović 2021). If we look further at CONFINTEA VII then a number of interventions where Chris was involved come to mind. He had a keen interest on communities and their learning opportunities which he showed in a *Synthesis Report on the State of Community Learning Centres in Six Asian Countries* (Duke, Hinzen 2016) which had been commissioned by UIL and based on respective country reports. He continued this search on learning regions, learning cities, and learning communities with co-author Khau Huu Phuoc in *Community Learning Centres in the Asia Region: Popular Education and Community Transformation* (Duke, Phuoc 2023). All of this background work meant that community learning centres became a strong theme in the outcome document of CONFINTEA VII, the Marrakech Framework of Action.

On a regional level Chris Duke was part of a team which wrote the *CONFINTEA VII Central Asia Sub-regional Report: Challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for ALE in Central Asia and beyond* (Dmitrienko et al. 2021). Members of the team were well placed to do this as in parallel they were all involved in a comparative study on policies in Central Asian countries which developed a *Regional Policy Brief: Policies on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan* (DVV International 2022). Chris co-authored *Community Learning Centres (CLCs) for Adult Learning and Education (ALE): development in and by communities* (Belete et al. 2022) which was one of the articles (pp.259-290) in the *Special Issue on Strengthening the Future of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning for All: Building Bridges between CONFINTEA and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Vol. 68, issue 2, 2022) of the *International Review of Education. Journal of Lifelong Learning* published by Springer and the UIL.

As Chris believed in the importance of mobilizing civil society voices, he co-edited *Global Collaboration and Advocacy for Adult Learning: Contributions of a Civil Society Network* (Duke, Hinzen 2022) just before the conference in Marrakech. He provided space as the editor for the *PIMA Bulletin Special Issue on CONFINTEA* (Denholm et al. 2022) which shared experiences from all the world's regions.

Recognitions

Chris received several recognitions in his lifetime. I mention a few here which cover different aspects of his life and work, his universities and associations. Chris received an Honorary Doctorate from the Daegu University in the Republic of Korea for his outstanding support in the development of lifelong learning in the Asia Pacific. During his full-time employments and his

university career he was invited by several other universities to be their Visiting or Honorary Professor, namely Glasgow, Leicester, and Stirling in the United Kingdom, and RMIT in Australia. In 2014 he was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame for his contributions to global adult education as a scholar and practitioner.

When in 2022 he informed the PIMA Executive Council that he would step down as Editor of the PIMA Bulletin it was decided to prepare a *Special Issue Honouring Chris Duke*. Members from the Executive joined hands as co-editors and invited colleagues from all over the world who had been working with Chris in a variety of contexts. The outcome is a wonderful collection of articles and letters, and even the link to a video of a conversation. This was called the *Chris Duke Study Circle* (Hinzen et al. 2023).

In Memoriam

Chris followed, much too early on, three other champions in our field of ALE and LLL with a view on their potential of transformative perspectives towards a world we want:

- Professor Lalage Bown, the pioneer of contributions to adult education in Africa and globally from a strong base in Scottish Universities. A former Editor of *CONVERGENCE*, Lalage was a renowned and remarkable speaker, she died in 2021.
- Professor Alan Rogers, the great researcher on ethnographic literacy and his remarkable efforts through the Uppingham Seminars, who published *The Base of the Iceberg. Informal Learning and Its Impact on Formal and Non-formal Learning*. He died in 2022.
- Professor Dénes Koltai, who served in the professionalization of adult education at Hungarian colleges and universities starting from the University of Pécs, co-hosting 2009 the European CONFINTEA VI Pre-conference. He died in 2022.

Chris knew all three of these outstanding colleagues for a long time. Most probably, the longest friendship was with Lalage from their early joint activities in ICAE in the 1970s. Dénes worked with Chris only for the last two decades when he hosted the *International Conference on Adult Education Studies at Colleges and Universities in Central-East Europe* at the University of Pécs in Hungary. Here Chris wrote another of his reporting masterpieces *From Comparison to Cooperation. Partnership and Diversity in the Training and Accreditation of Adult Educators by Institutions of Higher Education* (Duke 2004).

Some personal remarks

I first met Chris and his wife Liz when the cooperation of ASPBAE and DVV started. It was in the context of a conference in Bali in 1978 that we went together for a walk in the mountains and forest beyond Ubud. We shared a number of passions in our struggle for a better world, but also to become better gardeners. He visited our local environmental campaign area and helped in translating information leaflets. Our families met each other in a variety of places in France and the UK, in Thailand and in Germany. Most enjoyable was a getting together with families in an ecological lodge in the Chiangmai hills. Chris and Liz made a final visit to our village home in September 2022.

I enjoyed working with Chris throughout those 45 years we knew each other. At one point we thought about sitting down to write a sort of biography together, which turned out as *Adult learning and education: Active global citizens for sustainable development – a political, professional and personal account* (Duke, Hinzen 2018). It certainly was a little challenge, but worth doing. It now serves as one of those many memorials to a long walk together. I shall certainly continue to miss him.

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Glossary of abbreviations used in this text:

ALE	Adult Learning and Education
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education
CONFINTEA	International Conference on Adult Education, managed as world conferences by UNESCO
CLC	Community Learning Centre
DVV International	DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association.
EAEA	European Association for the Education of Adults
EU	European Union
ICAE	International Council of Adult Education
LLL	Lifelong Learning
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (founded in 1921, covering England and Wales and now called the Learning and Work Institute (L&WI))
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PASCAL	Place And Social Capital And Learning - A programme of activity led by academics and activists in adult education, with international membership:
PIMA	PASCAL International Membership Association also as Promoting, Interrogating and Mobilising Adult Learning & Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals, as agreed by all countries
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
UIL	UNESCO Institute of Education (based in Hamburg)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

IN MEMORIAM
Sebas Parra Nuño

*Educar como se vive, vivir como se lucha,
luchar como se estima... La cotidianidad de
un maestro de maestros*

Pep Aparicio Guadas
Instituto Paulo Freire de España

Traducción: Rosa Navarro Piquer

Ahora, todavía se hace difícil pensar sobre aquello que experimentamos en muchas ocasiones, en todo el Estado español y, en algunas situaciones y en algunos lugares, vivimos juntos, sin miedo ni esperanza, a pesar de nuestras raíces freireano-marxistas, pero Sebas lo hacía habitualmente en un definido horizonte de defensa de la vida en su plenitud y de una manera perenne... construyendo vínculos y relaciones, así como concibiendo sobre el territorio - valles, pueblos, ciudades, asociaciones, organizaciones...- una intensa y profunda imaginación -afectos, perceptos y conceptos- política, educativo-cultural, socioeconómica... Siempre desde una posición claramente alfabetizadora, emancipadora y de clase, distintivamente antagonista, primero desde una vertiente digamos obrerista.

A continuación de esta perspectiva-dinámica obrerista, de raíz marxista y quizás macro-revolucionaria, Sebas empezó, a la vez, una honda actuación educativa, y esta sería su segunda vertiente, que atravesaba los diversos ámbitos y espacios de formación y que disponía de las actividades, acciones y obras de las mujeres y de los hombres que luchaban como perspectiva completiva-asociativa del obrerista y que, básicamente, tiene que consistir en educar como se habla, se estima, se lucha... y haciendo de estas acciones el elemento fundamental de los aprendizajes, de las resistencias y de las creaciones alternativas: en las aulas, en las asociaciones, en las universidades, en los sindicatos... Educarse, dejarse educar y educar, todavía, como expresamos

hace cierto tiempo (véase: *aparicio guadas, pep (2012). El fil de la vocació. Publicaciones del Instituto Paulo Freire*), lejos de radicalismos estériles y de izquierdismos sin sentido.

Esta perspectiva-dinámica, también contenía inherente una doble matriz y corolario, prerequisite imprescindible de la sociedad que él quería y queremos nosotros hacer advenir: *el quehacer de asociación* –de personas, entidades, prácticas, luchas...– y *el quehacer de cooperación, solidaridad y de ayuda mutua* –luchas, prácticas, organizaciones, personas...– Estas dos acciones de composiciones y re combinaciones múltiples son el espíritu dialógico-amoroso-solidario-curador-revolucionario... que nutre su vida y sus obras hasta el final; pasiones alegres siempre que, quizás lentísimamente, sustentaban su cotidianidad y su convivencialidad y que, también poco a poco, alimentaron la sustancia obrerista inicial, injertándola alegremente y transformándola. Nunca olvidaremos la imagen militante de mujeres y hombres en un gran teatro de Sao Paulo cantando y bailando la Internacional, a ritmo de samba, y nosotros (Sebas, Joan, Iolanda, Jordi, Encarna, Àngel, Consuelo, Dani... de pie) cantando también, pero sin bailar. Con la dimensión de sexo-género y el feminismo radical, la cuestión nacional y la independencia, la naturaleza y la intensión-extensión ecológica... verificando en todo momento que, la ‘ganancia’ viva de la potencia de nuestro deseo de transformación y mudanza microrrevolucionaria, lo hace/nos hace perseverar en su/nuestro ser en un presente actual y activo en el cual la composición-recombinación de afectos, perceptos y conceptos nos mueve-y-moviliz a la posibilidad de posibilidades de cre-acción de vínculos y relaciones de libertad, a la cre-acción de redes de libertad y horizontes de autonomía real.

Y la apuesta libre y liberta por una no-ascética política, cultural... profundamente alfabetizadora, feminista, ecologista, emancipadora y de clase, impura y viviente material-espiritual y corpórea, animada y vivificante... Sin ninguna renuncia en las prácticas solidarias, de cooperación y asociación, etc. por una vida digna, y viva, por una celebración real y activa de la vida, sin ningún miedo en las prácticas de subversión... reconstruyendo múltiples horizontes de acción: en las prácticas educativas de libertad, en las movilizaciones, en las ocupaciones y en la creación de espacios de cooperación y solidaridad... (SEPT, Salt, Samba Kubally, GRAMC, Instituto Paulo Freire, los cuadernos de educación continua, círculos de conversación, *Fem un Salt solidari*, cooperación con la AEPFCFA y Nicaragua; cooperación y dinamización en Marruecos; la red Universitaria Yo Si Puedo; la UPA; la Guerrilla Comunicacional...) y *nosotras-estamos-juntas-en-esto*.

Una pequeña reflexión anterior configuró el editorial del número 48 de la revista *cuadernos de educación continua* –número que le dedicamos, amorosa y políticamente al camarada, compañero y amigo Sebas– que ahora mismo querríamos recuperar, un poco revisado, ya que nos ayudaría quizás a establecer algunas vinculaciones y afinidades que nos enlazan con varias prácticas, espacios, dispositivos... de autonomía y de alfabetización antagonistas: El próximo año, muchas de las iniciativas de educación y formación de personas adultas de nuestros países harán cuarenta años, la mayoría de ellas fruta afectada por el poderoso impulso que, desde la Diputación de València se generó en el periodo 1980-83 (es el tiempo en el que, algunas de nosotras, conocemos y asociamos con Sebas Parra Nuño: *'para ser un poco más libres...'*, *el manifiesto de los trabajadores exigiendo educación permanente*; *el SEPT: servicio de educación permanente de los trabajadores;...*).

Unas iniciativas que contagiaron de un compromiso profundo, dialógico y amoroso, cooperante y transformador, hacia las mujeres y los hombres y hacia la institución instituyente de los valores y las prácticas anteriormente aludidas en la red incipiente de otros centros públicos de formación de personas adultas que, a partir del año 1984, se pusieron en marcha y que, quizás hasta el año 2007, mantuvieron cooperaciones, vínculos, alianzas... con las diferentes luchas sectoriales y/o específicas de los barrios, pueblos... donde estaban situadas-en-contexto pero que, tendencialmente a partir de 2002, fueron abandonándolas y/o transformándolas en 'el día de...', 'en la semana de...', escolar y ordinariamente, y la crítica de los valores patriarcales, capitalistas, autoritarios... fue cambiando y/o desapareciendo, produciendo un doble efecto perverso y nocivo:

- i. dominador-opresor en las relaciones educativas –también en otros tipos de relaciones– y
- ii. banalizador adiestrador-conservador de las prácticas educativas, concebidas solo como herramienta para ser competente y tener éxito material, individualmente, tal y como son conformadas por la pedagogía del capital y las economías del aprendizaje.

A pesar de esta tendencia pronunciadísima hay otras tendencias, más o menos potentes, desde iniciativas de educación popular vinculadas a los barrios y pueblos, a los centros ocupados, a entidades cooperativas y autogestionarias, a colectivos de coinvestigación y de lucha, en todo nuestro país y también en otros países que, en tempranas y alegres alianzas, hacen ensanchar el cuerpo y la mente para aprender a aprender a aprender, para pensar críticamente y actuar críticamente... y para fortalecer a las personas jóvenes y adultas implicadas-imbricadas, en las sociedades en las cuales estamos inmersos y al

bien común -*commonfare*-. Teniendo en cuenta, como bell hooks indica (*Ensenyar pensament crític. Raig verd editorial. Barcelona, 2022*) que: “a pesar de los graves contratiempos, ha habido, y continuará habiendo, cambios constructivos y radicales en la manera como enseñamos y aprendemos mientras, con la mente ‘centrada en la libertad’, enseñamos a transgredir y transformar” en las prácticas educativas de libertad, como un trabajo en proceso -luchas, instituciones y recursos, espacios y contextos... compartidas-, son imaginadas-creadas y puestas en marcha subjetivaciones antagonistas que tendrían que volver a influir en las actuaciones educativas institucionales.

Unas prácticas de autonomía y de alfabetización entre iguales que, empapadas por la libertad, se convierten en el eje motriz-matriz de las resistencias -donde hay resistencia hay la potencia requerida para poner en marcha las microrrevoluciones necesarias- y de las luchas -donde hay luchas hay la semilla franca y fecunda de las movilizaciones y a la vez de la cre-acción de espacios, movimientos y de formas de vida de una convivencialidad plena y fértil, alternativa y antagonista y coefectuación de la resistencia-. Y, a la vez, de praxis singulares y comunes, transformadoras y/o cre-adoras, para reinventar el mundo, reinventarnos y dejarnos reinventar en las dinámicas que implementan el paso de los círculos de lectura y escritura al tejido social, político, cultural... Tal y como expresaremos en el libro colectivo ‘*La lectura, i l’escriptura, del món de Paulo Freire*’ (Sebas Parra Nuño y pep aparicio guadas editores. Publicaciones del Instituto Paulo Freire. Xàtiva, 2009), pluralmente, desde nuestras experiencias situadas y vividas y, *nosotras-estamos-juntas-en-esto*.

Alternativas que son, necesariamente, un deseo-acto de cre-acción, de reinención, de recomposición y recombinación que, actúan integralmente en el plano de proliferación de las posibilidades en la cotidianidad ciudadana y de clase, mediante unas prácticas entendidas como modo de actuar y, a la vez, de pensar para poder-saber vehicular-trasladar la lectura del mundo. Y que, simultáneamente, tiene que concebirse como escritura del mundo, en un proceso sustantivo y, compañero, *nosotras-estamos-juntas-en-esto*, ya que como nos recuerda Paulo Freire “Una de las tareas del educador o de la educadora progresista, a través del análisis político serio y correcto, es descubrir las posibilidades -cualesquiera sean los obstáculos- para la esperanza, sin la cual poco podemos hacer puesto que luchamos dificultosamente, y cuando luchamos como desesperanzados o desesperados es esta una lucha suicida, un cuerpo a cuerpo puramente vengativo”.

Y las luchas de clase están presentes, plenamente en la perspectiva de la explotación-utilización capitalista biocognitiva que implementa y está inmersa al desarrollar, por un lado, procesos vigorosos de aprendizaje enclavados en procesos dinámicos, activos y vivos, de redes y, ambos, por otro lado, en las

rabiosas economías del aprendizaje *-learning-* y de redes *-networking-* ligadas con las creaciones de conocimientos, saberes, tecnologías, dispositivos, prótesis, etc. y a las conformaciones territoriales, sectoriales, de clase... de la redistribución y/o control de estos conocimientos, saberes, tecnologías... en un proceso de variación-transformación, a la vez político, epistemológico... y, por lo tanto, educativo.

Y, en estas circunstancias, las múltiples hiladas que tienen que ser guía de las prácticas de libertad, críticas y emancipadoras, que hemos podido trenzar y reconstruir, cumplir y recombinar... Todas estas acciones, a la vez singulares y comunes, que producen las diversas subjetividades en proceso que reconfiguran-reconstelan una posible y real ciudadanía-en-mutación. Estas plurales acciones buscan y/o practican reasociar y/o recomponer variadas vertientes absolutamente imprescindibles para la emancipación: el acercamiento decolonial y afectivo, la deconstrucción patriarcal y desamorosa de los cuerpos, de las relaciones... y del mundo, la asunción de una pedagogía crítica y dialógica, radical y popular, con una democracia absoluta así como una acentuación intensa del aprendizaje dialógico, mutuo, cooperativo, relacional... con el cual reiniciaremos el proceso de experimentar los pensamientos y de pensar las experiencias... Ahora justo que, como señala Paul B. Preciado, estamos transitando *"de una sociedad escrita a una sociedad ciber-oral, de una sociedad orgánica a una sociedad digital, de una forma de control disciplinario y arquitectónico, a formas de control micro-prostéticas y mediático-cibernéticas..."* (*Dysphoria mundi*. Editorial Anagrama. Barcelona, 2022).

Ir haciendo que la educación, la política, la cultura... requieran no solo de la resistencia sino también del afán y la potencia de activar la fuerza generadora de las prácticas, de las iniciativas, de los afectos, de las posibilidades... que siempre son las semillas de formas de empoderamiento alternativo y, como asegura Rosi Braidotti: *'esta praxis requiere abrirse a los otros y co-construir estructuras sociales alternativas y deseos alternativos que sostengan la labor de transformar lo negativo (...) es una manera de aprender a vivir la vida no-fascista.'* (*Coneixement posthumano*. Arcadia editorial. Barcelona, 2020). Y claro, una educación, una pedagogía... popular y permanente, feminista, antipatriarcal, anticapitalista y rural, ecologista... se hace imprescindible para posibilitar la deriva-acontecimiento como sujetos-en-proceso, como una apertura a un horizonte sin fin de emancipaciones cotidianas, conjugando y/o reasociando: i) la crítica a la dominación capitalista y patriarcal; ii) el sistemático cuestionamiento de la cultura androcéntrica; iii) la reflexión que apunta a la deconstrucción de las categorías duales, binarias; iv) la investigación de horizontalidad y de autonomía; v) la valoración del diálogo en la práctica política -y en la educativa, cultural...; vi) la radicalidad en la denuncia de los

ordenamientos que pretenden disciplinar el campo de los que resisten la dominación; la cre-acción de espacios y tiempos de libertad.

Mientras Sebas, las llamadas 'guerras' culturales que, en el periodo 1973-1989, teníamos claramente delimitadas y, además, en su cómputo glocal –es decir local y global– podríamos decir que nuestras clases trabajadoras y populares eran derrotadas pero nunca vencidas y el principio de acción-pensamiento, correlativo, de alfabetización-emancipación-liberación de las opresiones-ocupaciones de barrios, fábricas, instituciones... actuaba a la vez, de manera insurreccional y democrática pero, a partir de este momento, las capacidades movilizadoras y antagonistas entraron en hondas dificultades y las 'guerras' culturales ahora ya clarísimamente anti-ilustradas fueron ganando territorios, ámbitos, sujetos... y empezaron a autenticar y regularizar, nuevamente, las opresiones y las dominaciones, las extracciones y las destrucciones de la naturaleza y de los seres vivientes –periodo 1989-2023– así como a promover un régimen social-político-cultural quizás diverso pero profundamente autoritario conformado por la servidumbre y la creencia voluntaria en un tipo de analfabetismo ilustrado, como nos señala Marina Garcés y, además, sin atender-escuchar y poner en marcha la reflexión crucial aportada por Toni Negri, tal y como afirmaban en su momento. (*La lectura, i l'escriptura, del món de Paulo Freire. Publicacions del Institut Paulo Freire. Xàtiva, 2009*).

Unas 'guerras' culturales que van avanzando, tanto en intensidad como extensidad y, en la actualidad, podríamos decir que aíslan los prototipos mentales y corporales, así como las escasas instituciones instituyentes –monstruo las llama Raúl Sánchez: *Prototipos mentales e Instituciones monstruo. Algunas notas a modo de introducción. Universidad Nómada. transform.eipcp.net*– que hemos estado capaces de crear en este último periodo y que operaban en el “seno de estos movimientos sociales, a través de las luchas y la lectura-escritura de estas mediante operativos como la coinvestigación: *Esto es, de inserción, también subjetiva, de los intelectuales-militantes que investigaban en el territorio-objeto de investigación [...] lo cual los convertía en sujetos-agentes adicionales de aquel territorio, y de implicación activa de los sujetos que habitaban aquel territorio (fundamentalmente, obreros, en alguna ocasión estudiantes y amas de casa) en el proceso de investigación, lo cual convertía a estos últimos en sujetos-investigadores. Cuando este doble movimiento funcionaba de verdad, la producción de conocimiento de la investigación se mezclaba con el proceso de autovaloración y de producción de subjetividad rebelde en la fábrica y en los barrios.*” (*Nociones comunes. Experiencias y ensayos entre investigación y militancia. Traficantes de sueños. Madrid, 2004*)

Nuevamente, si ponemos atención, oiremos el denso rumor de estos movimientos que franco se esparce... escuchémoslo y escuchémonos inmersos en estas luchas y rebeliones que nos mueven y nos movilizan, Sebas, contra el nuevo proceso de acumulación capitalista plenamente biocognitivo que como sabemos, ahora sí, funda la explotación –y por tanto las dominaciones, las opresiones, las sumisiones...– de dos nuevos tipos de economía de escala: los procesos dinámicos de aprendizaje y los procesos dinámicos de redes, haciendo en todo momento que el conocimiento sea la base de cualquier acumulación... fruto de los intercambios y las relaciones de aprendizaje y/o de intercambio e interacción social y, aquí, sugestivamente surgen potentes y antagonistas las alfabetizaciones necesarias y requeridas ahora y, como afirma Christian Marazzi, sí lo que nos está afectando y colonizando es *“un modelo de ‘producción del hombre por el hombre’ en el cual la posibilidad de crecimiento endógeno y global se debe sobre todo al desarrollo del sector educativo (inversión en el capital humano), del sector de la salud (evolución demográfica, biotecnología) y del sector cultural (innovación, comunicación y creatividad), estas alfabetizaciones sociopolíticas, culturales, afectivas y saludables tienen que ser las que propician las acciones de des(cons)trucción del carácter antropogenético de la producción capitalista contemporánea y como señala Andrea Fumagalli, “puesto que la praxis guía la teoría, en el capitalismo biocognitivo solo el conflicto y la capacidad de crear y organizar movimientos contrasistémicos permitirán el progreso social de la humanidad”.* (Neoperaísmo. Mauro Reyes (comp.). Caja negra editora. Buenos Aires, 2020).

Finalmente, concluyendo, pero sin cerrar. Sí, como hemos actuado y pensado y dicho y actuado en numerosas circunstancias y situaciones, el espíritu material de los muertos, así como sus luchas, sus acciones y palabras... viven vivientes en la memoria de los seres vivos, tu espíritu material, Sebas, es y será perenne... Sencillamente iluminará con estrellas rojas, con el tacto y la palabra... unos caminos que quizás sean sendas... Ahora elevadas como si fueran cenizas: rojo y negro el tiempo de siempre; rojo y violeta el tiempo que pasa; rojo y ocre el tiempo de ahora... y como escribió Vicent Andrés Estellés *‘Seràs el rent que fa pujar el pa,/ seràs el solc i seràs la collita,/ (...) seràs la clau que obre tots els panys,/ (...) Seràs l’ocell i seràs la bandera...’* Y nosotras que estamos-juntas-en-esto, seremos tu memoria en movimiento y en lucha, seremos tus manos, seremos... Y dejaremos de llorarte y nunca te olvidaremos... Ahora recibe inmaterial un cálido, fraternal-sororal y revolucionario abrazo, ahora que apenas florecen los rosales bordes, en este mes de mayo tan actual, pero siempre teniendo presente que...

Las herramientas del amo nunca desmontarán la casa del amo
AUDRE LORDE

IN MEMORIAM
Ronald G Sultana (1958- 2023)

Peter Mayo
Convergence Editor

Like most people in my country and many beyond, especially in the education research and sociology fields, I was shocked by Ronald G Sultana's sudden demise at 65. I am still reeling from the phone call I received on Friday morning from a mutual friend and once collaborator of Ronald's, informing me of his death.

Finding it hard to pull myself together, I begin to feel that Ronald's passing is about to represent a watershed in my relationship with social research in Malta. There is (a) when there was Ronald and (b) post-Ronald if my hourglass allows me more time to experience this fully.

I write this as I am travelling on academic work to a place, I recall Ronald telling me about, that captivated him on one of his journeys, probably from New Zealand, when he was a Commonwealth Scholar there studying Sociology of Education at PhD level, supervised by the renowned PDK Ramsey, at Waikato University. I too was studying Sociology of Education as a Commonwealth Scholar though at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, and at Master's level. On both returning to our homeland, we would meet for the first time in a kick off meeting for that year's Sociology of Education programme, as we were both recently employed by the University of Malta Council, he on a full-time basis and I, part-time.

We had first met at a five-day course in thinking, delivered by the late Edward De Bono in 1983, though Ronald never had any recollection of meeting me then. We however hit it off when lecturing at the University of Malta. We seemed to have been cut from the same sociological and political cloth. Left wing politics ran through our veins. We spoke the same language, with he being more ethnographically inclined and I more social theory driven.

We enthused about an excellent group of students we were honoured to teach, from which emerged mainstays in the local social activist, education, literary and eventually academic scenes. Ronald's superb pedagogical approach has often been highlighted. He attributes part of its origins to his being formed as an educator within the Society of Christian Doctrine. He had a healthy respect for the Society's founder, Dun Gorg Preca, a source of inspiration which persisted in Ronald's later more secular years. Wary of the danger of lapsing into hagiography, he would position Preca's pedagogical approach and politics of language against the knowledge struggles of the time, well in anticipation of Vatican II. Of course, Preca was presented as a 'person to think with', his approach juxtaposed against those of Paulo Freire and later Lorenzo Milani, with the necessary provisos in place. The piece he wrote on Preca and the Politics of knowledge, for a book I edited and which I encouraged him to submit beforehand to the International Journal of Lifelong Education, reveals the tensions between religious class politics and constituted ecclesiastical authority.

By then Ronald had been publishing pieces on transition education and various aspects of the Sociology of Education in middle range and top tier journals, notably, in the latter case, the British Journal of Sociology of Education (BJSE). This became, in my eyes, the leading publication outlet for academic pieces in our specific areas of specialisation: 'get into it and you've arrived', or so I thought. Of course, Ronald made important inroads into Education, Guidance (his earlier postgraduate specialisation at University of Reading) and Work education and eventually Comparative Education. He combined all these by producing books, initially starting with Mireva and then PEG, before eventually moving into international book outlets, including Routledge before running his own series for Brill which had taken over Sense. Significant was his single authored study on vocational education in Malta (based on what he termed his Trade School Project), launched towards the end of 1992 which was the subject of a very favourable review Symposium in the BJSE. There is also his volume on Education in the Arab World, co-edited with his Palestinian, Canada-based friend, André Elias Mazawi, and his pioneering work of co-editing (with Godfrey Baldacchino) arguably the first full scale volume on Sociology in Malta heralded as a 'big book', because of 'its admirable comprehensiveness', by Anthony Giddens in his Preface. He also published numerous short monographic studies for different institutions such as UNICEF which enabled him to carry out research in many Arab countries, including Palestine. In addition, he launched a unique journal, the Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies, which ran into several volumes before morphing into a book series. All this was at the heart of the work of the EURO-Mediterranean Center for Educational Research (EMCER). The main course offered by the

Centre was the MA in EURO-Mediterranean Comparative Education Research in which top scholars from Malta and abroad, a whole galaxy of acclaimed international scholars, taught and supervised theses. Some of the Master's and PhD students from the Centre developed into accomplished researchers in their own right and became established faculty at our Alma Mater.

And yet for all his academic and late 80s and 90s engagement as a public intellectual, also being at the heart of a school reform project (the Tomorrow's Schools document), while serving as Faculty of Education Dean during a biannual period in the 90s, when the Faculty was given top priority by the government of the time, he jealously guarded his family time. He regulated his time well.

We, of course, had our differences and fallouts. This was to be expected as we had contrasting personalities. It did not, however, take long for our friendship to be back on track.

He was, in many respects, a quite remarkable man. I was privileged to get to know him within certain carefully delineated boundaries. He was generous with me, as with many others, though he did not suffer fools gladly. He was certainly most generous in his citations of close Maltese colleagues, something which cannot be said of everyone in a small state like ours.

I shall miss him. I shall never forget his mantra: we are midgets standing on the shoulders of giants.

My sincere condolences to and solidarity with his spouse Rosaline and his two sons and their young families. May he rest in peace.

BOOK REVIEW

Transformative Sustainability Education: Reimagining Our Future, By Lange, Elizabeth, A. 2023, Routledge, 437 pp., ISBN: 978-0367-74706-0

Shirley Walters

The world, as we know it, is not sustainable. To change these realities, we need to dig deep to the very roots of Western thinking – this is a big story of alternative worldmaking.

Ethical adult educators cannot continue to provide the same old curricula as if the very existence of the planet was not in peril: we have a “response-ability” (Sterling and Martin, 2019) to contribute to the struggle for ecological justice. Some of the many pressing questions we face are: how do we unpick the false assumptions about the separation of humans from the more-than-human world; and how do we re-learn relationality – and why do these questions matter? These are profound personal, political, and pedagogical questions.

Elizabeth Lange’s new book speaks to educators. We are being called to reclaim education and reimagine our future towards relationality. We are encouraged to foster active hope. We are the transitional generation that stands in the liminal zone between two epochs, from what has been to what is to come.

We are now undergoing a reality revolution from mechanistic ways of knowing and being towards a relational way of knowing and being. There is more of a shift back to wisdom that is already known by humanity but was eclipsed – now discovered through New Science. A relational ontology is a relational understanding of reality and existence. A relationing way of seeing perceives reality as an organic web of relations where the cosmos is connected as a vast sea of energy and all things are connected within a living system. This relational shift, Lange argues, has much potential to address the crisis in education and constitutes a transformative approach to sustainability education.

The book is comprehensive in its scope. As stated on the back cover, overall, the book “enacts a relational approach to transformative sustainability education that draws on post-humanist theory, process thought, relational ontology, decolonization theory, Indigenous philosophy, and a spirituality that builds a sense of sacred toward the living world”. She argues that this time of epochal shift is the time for a profound rethinking of all elements of Western civilization, for these have backed us into a tight corner. She describes us as the transitional generations who will experience the long climate emergency but also have the opportunity, especially as educators, to find pathways into the emerging story of Relationality.

Stories, old and new, are used to frame much of the book. She argues that stories matter – big stories have powerful transformative capacity to shift consciousness and elevate humanity. It is the Western big story, shaped by science, that is now being transformed by science itself. As Lange (p. 336) describes,

“The machine story of the last 300 years is founded on a worldview of four disconnects: estranging us from the natural world, erasing place-based traditions and spiritualities, detaching individuals from community and extended family, and uprooting Land-oriented ways of living. The machine story has been a process of alienation for humans -their bodies from their minds, their self from the social world, their being and knowing from the physical natural world and spiritual worlds, and their labour from their work and the products of their work.”

There is movement towards the big new story of Relationality which has been intuited by mystics over human history. It is also supported by New Science which demonstrates how humans and nonhuman beings are not discrete entities but entangled. Lange (p.258) quotes cultural historian Charlene Spretnak who states:

We are profoundly relational beings who have been living -with some difficulty- in anti-relational systems of thought and ways of doing things. Finally, all that has begun to change.

Lange’s purpose is for us to loosen the grip on the old story, which is primarily one of separation and machine logic, while stretching into various veins of new thinking, reimagining, reembodying. In this way we can play a role as transformative leaders for deep sustainability which can enable a flow into a new civilization.

Lange argues that transformative educators need to be critical students of history, with knowledge of root causes of issues and ongoing insights into social change movements and processes. She provides substantial material for educators and others working for social change through a recounting of the journey of education, its constitution and reconstitution within larger systems. It is offered to prod educators' historical and sociological imagination. Out of this, a pluriverse of possibilities is proposed that can help in this momentous epochal shift to break through to another way of thinking and being. There is urgency for humans to unlearn and re-learn on a grand scale.

Lange (p.400) advocates for lifelong learning, which values interconnectedness. She quotes Stuchul, Prakash and Esteva, who state that:

Lifelong learning, we propose is simple, yet profoundly sophisticated - to learn again together, to recover and to extend traditions of hospitality. Such learning cannot but occur over our lifetimes, cannot but be worthy of our living.

Elizabeth Lange has produced a book of great depth, intellectual breadth, filled with compassion and creativity. She invites critical engagement with her ideas. It addresses the most pressing issues for educators - how to midwife the big new story of Relationality. It is an important text which can usefully be used in study circles of educators and social change actors to think deeply on processes of unlearning separation and relearning the vision and purpose of Relationality.

References

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ICAE General Assembly Bali 27 Nov-1 Dec. 2023 Some Personal Reflections

Peter Mayo
Convergence Editor

The General Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), in its 50th year of existence, celebrated in this special issue, took place in Bali, Indonesia, 27th November to 1 December, 2023. It was held in the lavish surroundings of the Holiday Inn complex, Barunia, specifically in the Cinnamon Ballroom and other well equipped rooms for the various workshops.

Adult educators and their organisations, national and regional, hailed from different corners of the globe. For some, such as me, travelling as UNESCO Chair in Global Adult Education, it meant a long trek from Malta to Dubai with a nine hour wait at Dubai International Airport and an eight hour journey onward to Bali. Luckily, the organisers provided hospitality and the hotel provided a welcome shuttle. The weather was not clement and most of my time away from assembly commitments were spent indoors, as thunder and lightning at times rent the skies. There was a tinge of sadness as this assembly occurred against the background of a terrible human carnage in Palestine and specifically Gaza, while the war in Ukraine shows no signs of abating. This was a rather strange time to celebrate 50 years of endeavours for human education when human life is treated cheaply and rendered ever so disposable. To avoid this issue is to render such calamities the elephant in the room. Innocent lives, including those of adults and children, are terminated abruptly. What we witnessed is a callous murderous sortie targeting civilians and youth. What we have since been witnessing are ongoing mass scale reprisals taking the form of destruction and genocide.

The Assembly also occurred against the background of stalwarts in the field having departed this world in recent years. They were remembered during the final dinner. Many were also remembered in the various 'In Memoriam' pieces

in this journal since its revival in 2022, three of them in this special issue. Many names of departed adult educators were called out, at the final dinner, as part of the Assembly's reminiscences of the ICAE's 50 years of existence. To these we just now add (at the time of writing) that of West Bengali adult educator, Srabani Maitra from the University of Glasgow. A tribute to her will be included in the first issue of the next volume of *Convergence*.

On 29th November, a former ICAE Associate Secretary General (1976-1985) and Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) Secretary General (1972-1985), Chris Duke, a mainstay in the international adult education field, was duly remembered, at the Assembly. There was a touching tribute by Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan. Chris Duke's article in the last issue of *Convergence* is probably his last published piece, unless others will appear posthumously.

On a happier note, this was a festival of adult educators and adult education provision on a global scale. We witnessed a galaxy of adult education associations, national and regional, foremost among the latter ASPBAE and PEKKA. PEKKA stands for, in loose English translation, Women Heads of Family Empowerment Foundation. We were given a taste of Indonesian culture through traditional dancing during the social events and were guarded against the hazard of stomach upsets by the provision, in our hotel room, of sealed bottles of water. I confess to having once lowered my guard and lapsing into my routine sipping of tap water, perhaps distracted by the loss of a colleague and friend whose funeral service I had just followed through streaming on my computer. My body did not take long to rebel, though the inevitable visceral diarrhoea did not last long and I promptly recovered. We were also given a taste of the humdrum of life in and around Bali on our group visit to our chosen adult education project, which offered me an opportunity to appreciate the greenery around the locality and its excessive cacophony of motorcycles, very much the staple of life on the roads. Never have I seen so many motor bikes as I did in Bali.

On an alarming note, I gathered from my group's study visit, that the struggle against AIDS still features prominently on the Adult Education agenda in Bali. We also had concurrent workshops in the main conference site covering such themes as Citizenship, Partnerships, Gender and Skills, Media Literacy, Adult Literacy, Racism and other Discrimination, Climate Change, Civil Society, Learning Cities and Curriculum GlobALE, to name a selection. Key ideas were gleaned and carried forward by the moderator from each workshop.

There were very forward looking and inspiring talks, not least the opening address by the ICAE President, Robbie Guevara with his penchant for specific gestures he encouraged us to repeat when the situation warranted it. This time it was different numbers of claps in response to different stimulating Adult Education ideas. He was also great in enculturating us into aspects of local ritual. Katarina Popovic was her usual business-like self as she impressed upon us the serious effort involved in spreading the adult education gospel far and wide. She is after all a shining product of that venerable school of Andragogy that is the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade, testament to the legacy and inspiration of the redoubtable Dusan Savicevic. This is one person who made his mark in the international adult education firmament and who has his place in the pantheon of distinguished international adult educators. The ICAE 50 years have also been enriched by stalwarts such as him, Budd L. Hall, Dame Nita Barrow, Julius K. Nyerere, Paulo Freire, Lalage Bown, Alan Tuckett, Peter Jarvis, Shermaine Barrett and the rest of the galaxy that made this event - a veritable Adult education jamboree - a truly memorable one.

The ICAE's half century of existence will continue to be celebrated, on a much smaller scale, at the Second Malta International Global Adult Education Seminar this April. The invitees this time will be a small coterie of people connected with the International Council. As with the first seminar, the articles emerging from their presentations will hopefully appear in a forthcoming issue of *Convergence. An International Adult Education Journal*, the outlet given its due prominence at this General Assembly in Bali.

NB. Ideas expressed in this reflective report represent the personal views of the author and should not in any way be attributed to the International Council for Adult Education.

CONVERGENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Articles are accepted in English, French and Spanish.

General Directions

CONVERGENCE. AN INTERNATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION JOURNAL is a biannual journal published in open access by the UNESCO Chair in Global Adult Education, Faculty of Education, in collaboration with the International Council for Adult Education, aimed at an international readership.

Because of our international distribution, we attempt to select articles of interest to a broad audience of practitioners, field-workers, planners, trainers, teachers, researchers and administrators.

In addressing issues, practices and developments in adult education, CONVERGENCE provides a forum for a discussion and exchange of experiences and ideas. Articles are accepted in English, French and Spanish.

Points to Remember

- We prefer to receive a letter of enquiry describing the content of the proposed article, its treatment and why you believe it is suitable for CONVERGENCE. Our experience has been that those who read the journal regularly are more likely to have a good sense of an appropriate article. The enquiry letter also helps us to judge if a similar subject or the same region has appeared in a recent issue – we attempt to maintain a balance among subject matter and regions of the world.
- An article may be about a particular country, programme or activity, but the interpretation, description and analysis should be of interest and generally applicable to the work of colleagues in other countries. Papers written for another purpose (e.g., a local audience, a course of study, part of a thesis) are usually unsuitable.
- Put yourself in the position of a colleague in another part of the world and ask: Does this article include what I would wish to know about another country or programme? Is the context clear? Have unfamiliar abbreviations, references or concepts been used?
- Heavily statistical research reports are not accepted. Interpret data, results and conclusions in terms of practical application and lessons learned.
- Since CONVERGENCE is open access, no payment is made to authors of articles or book reviews. Reviewers may keep the book that they review.

Style and Presentation

CONVERGENCE follows The Chicago Manual of Style (latest editions) for formatting references and notes; consult the most recent issue if you do not have access to this manual.

Writing should be informal, without jargon or convoluted sentences.

Keep footnotes and references to a minimum. Tables and graphs are considered only when they depict essential information that cannot be described adequately in the text. US and UK spelling accepted for texts in English. Numbers ten and under are spelt out; 11 and over use numerals.

Review Process and Response from the Editor: Articles are sent out to international reviewers; please expect a delay of three to six months for a response. **Requirements Submission:** Authors are asked to transmit their articles in ASCII format via e-mail attachment. **Length:** Feature articles should be no longer than 5000 words; information reports up to 800 words; book reviews, 600–1000 words. **Abstract:** Upon acceptance, an abstract of 150–200 words is requested for translation into other languages. It should summarise clearly the points of the article. **Book reviews, conference reports, other reviews and obituaries do not require an abstract.** **Author's information:** Include the title, position, place of work and a background explaining your affiliation with the subject or country you are writing about. Include your address, fax and telephone numbers and e-mail address. For more information, contact: CONVERGENCE Editor, Dr. Peter Mayo, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Global Adult Education, Department of Arts, Open Communities & Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida MSD2080, Malta. Tel. (prefix 356) 99845476, peter.mayo@um.edu.mt

CONVERGENCE BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES

General Directions

Book reviews are an important source of information for adult educators in that they provide a valuable synopsis and summary of important recent texts in the field. Book reviews must provide a concise summary of the contents of the book and must address whether or not the book is a valuable contribution to the field. As such, reviews should evaluate the usefulness of the book and mention who would find the book useful.

We strongly recommend the review is introduced by a brief introduction to the text, with reference to its stated objectives, layout and chapter structure, etc. It is also recommended that reviews discuss the extent to which the text:

- a) Is comparable (or not) to other works in the genre, with examples on where this is particularly evident;

- b) Testifies to efforts that positively exploit and disseminate the state-of-art; primary / secondary research findings etc.; give voice / opportunity to 'silenced' / 'marginalised' authors, etc.
 - c) Resonates with the work programme / agenda of our journal *Convergence: An International Journal of Adult Education*? More info on this is available in the editorial of the first issue of the relaunched version of the journal, also summarised below:
 "articles... should help lift spirits in a disturbing time. Readers need little reminding that we face multipolar imperialisms bringing us potentially close to a Third World War. We are still reeling from a global pandemic and witnessing wider environmental degradation. Climate change is wreaking and will continue to wreak havoc especially in the Geographical Global South leading to constant mass migration flows. It is against this ominous global scenario that this journal is being resuscitated. The call for socially engaged adult educators strikes me as being ever so urgent" (Mayo, 2022, p. 3);
- and
- d) What would be the specific research interests of readers / adult education specialists / practitioners that the text can support? (e.g., 3-4 examples of specific research interests and/or specific nomenclatures / levels of scholars / specialists / practitioners that the text can support).

The timeline for completion of a review will be negotiated between the book review editor and the reviewer. While most book reviews are solicited by the editor, CONVERGENCE does accept unsolicited book reviews. The editor reserves the right to reject reviews.

Style

Reviews should be written in a manner that is accessible to a general readership rather than to an academic audience. Footnotes and references must be kept to a minimum. For writing in English, CONVERGENCE accepts UK and US spellings. Numbers ten and under are spelt out; 11 and over use numerals. Include the title, author, place of publication, publisher, number of pages, ISBN in the title space of your review.

Requirements

Length: Reviews should not be longer than 600–1000 words (about two to four pages).

Submission: Emailed submission is preferred (maria.brown@um.edu.mt), however, one copy may be mailed if email is not possible. The review should be typed doublespaced. MS Word format is preferred.

Author's Information: Include your institutional affiliation and its national location with the review. Also include your address, fax and telephone numbers, and your email address (if one is available).

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