Appreciation Programme

Adult Education and Social Change

Module - II

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Introduction and Objectives

Introduction

Following from Module 1, it is evident that adult education has grown to become central in development and access-related discourse with several organizations and social networks working at international, national or local levels, to address the learning needs of adults. This module seeks to provide a brief description of the activities undertaken by various international bodies and networks in addressing different issues centred on adult education. The module also describes the roles played by different public and private sector organizations and civil societies in adult education. This subject is of prime consequence to understanding adult education, especially in the context of social change because it is the collaboration and contribution of various agencies at different levels that can and will work to make adult education more effective and viable both at the micro (local level) and the macro (global) level.

Objectives

At the end of this module the learner will:

- Develop an understanding of adult education coalitions and their work, specifically in national and international fora such as Education for All (EFA) and CONFINTEA V and VI.

- Develop an understanding of progress in adult education since the sixth international conference on adult education(UNESCO), especially on how discussions post CONFINTEA VI on adult education are increasingly becoming the key to progressive education in the 21st century.

- Develop an understanding of the role of public, private and civil society actors in adult education efforts and examples of collaboration between these different institutions.

Unit 1: International Organisations and Networks in Adult Education

1.1 Objectives of International Organisations in Adult Education:

International organizations (The CONFINTEA VI Consultative Group, 2009) like UNESCO, ICAE, dvv International and ASPBAE provide a platform for and give a momentum to promote adult education globally (The CONFINTEA VI Consultative Group, 2009). Partnerships with these organizations have enabled the forming of pressure groups for advocacy. The typical role of international organizations is to:

- Become involved in policy dialogue regarding adult education and lifelong learning
- Interact with other global/local partners to mobilize and transfer resources
- Initiate a network of adult education providers
- Develop and share global experiences

In addition, international organisations support local institutions in following ways:

- Organise international seminars, material development and workshops for updating programmes on adult education and lifelong learning
- Promote collaborative research
- Promote publications of significant value
- Ensure the quality of delivery by granting fellowships to the institutions for innovative work
- Support field based programmes & training of workers in adult learning interventions

1.2 Some International Organizations In Adult Education:

1.2.1 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning's (UIL) strategic goal is to ensure that adult education is recognised and developed from a lifelong perspective and integrated into sector-wide strategies and development agendas (UNESCO UIL, 2013). A special effort is directed at drawing attention to adult education within the Education for All (EFA) agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNESCO conducts a series of world conferences on Adult Education, widely known as CONFINTEA; following its French title of *Conférences Internationales sur l'Éducation des Adultes.* UNESCO began the series of CONFINTEA conferences in

- CONFINTEA I in Helsingor, Denmark, as far back as June 1949
- CONFINTEA II in Montreal, Canada in August 1960
- CONFINTEA III was held in Tokyo, Japan in August1972
- CONFINTEA IV in Paris in March 1985
- CONFINTEA V in Hamburg, Germany, July 1997
- CONFINTEA VI was hosted in Belém, Brazil, December 2009

With the momentum gained through CONFINTEA VI, UIL is pursuing the adult education agenda and focusing on the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action (BFA) which states:

"Now is the time for action, because the cost of not acting is too high"

The efforts include advocacy and communication, as well as international level coordination of the follow-up process, the search for the best strategies and the development of tools. The UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning comprises of representatives from governments, the UN organisations, NGOs, and professional institutions.

1.2.2 The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

OECD strongly believes that adult education is important for economic growth and also for social and personal development (OECD Education Committee, 2005). The mission of the OECD is to promote policies that will ensure the economic and social well-being of people around the world. It provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems.

Although there is a growing understanding of the benefits of adult education, there is still very little participation. Adult education takes into account a vast scope of the population, ranging from adults who lack basic literacy skills, to the unemployed and includes learning for vocational and non-vocational purposes. As noted by the OECD, adult education has taken on a much higher profile in the last decade. OECD promotes creation of concrete policies to expand adult learning opportunities rather than dwelling on the rhetoric.

1.2.3 The World Bank

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. According to the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) (EFA Committee, 2010):

"**Every person - child, youth and adult shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs**".

It has been recognized that education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social well-being, and laying the basis for sustainable economic growth. The World Bank statistics show that throughout developing countries youth literacy rates are higher than adult literacy rates (The World Bank, 2013).

1.2.4 Action Aid

One of the focuses of Action Aid's current education work, is the empowerment of women through literacy using the 'Reflect' approach, which works towards empowering marginalised girls and women to analyse and challenge the structural issues driving inequality (ActionAid, 2005; Reflect Action, 2009).

'Reflect' is an innovative approach to adult learning and social change, which - integrates the theories of Paulo Freire with the methodologies of participatory rural appraisal. It was developed in the 1990s through pilot projects in Bangladesh, Uganda and El Salvador and is now used by over 500 organisations, in over 70 countries worldwide.

A wide range of participatory methodologies are used within the 'Reflect' process to help create an open, democratic environment in which everyone is able to contribute. Visualisation tools developed by the practitioners of Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) are used in the form of maps, calendars, matrices, rivers, trees and other diagrams, as well as theatre, role-play, song, dance, video and photography.

In 2010 Action Aid embarked on developing a list of rights based indicators on quality of education. Their work also advocates for a greater share of funds to be spent on education in ways that benefit girls and marginalised children.

1.2.5 The International Council of Adult Education (ICAE)

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) is a global network created in 1973, composed of non-governmental organizations, regional, national and sectoral networks in more than 75 countries (ICAE, 2007). ICAE is an NGO in formal consultative relations with UNESCO and with consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

It is a strategic network that promotes adult learning as a tool for active citizenship and informed participation. ICAE's mission is to promote lifelong learning as a necessary component for people to contribute creatively to their communities and to live in independent and democratic societies.

1.2.6 The Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE)

ASPBAE believes that adult education and basic education are critical to each other's advancement. In particular it emphasizes that (ASPBAE, 2013):

- Universal primary and secondary education cannot be achieved in the absence of safe, enabling learning environments in homes and communities
- The potential for meaningful 'learning throughout life' for all individuals rests on a strong basic education foundation
- Education and adult learning are essential means to combat poverty, fight all forms of discrimination, and equip citizens to actively participate in development and governance.

ASPBAE seeks to build and strengthen an Asia-Pacific movement dedicated to advancing the right to relevant, quality and empowering basic education and learning opportunities for all. Recognising the importance of lifelong learning and adult education, , Participatory Research In Asia (PRIA) along with organisations such as Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) and Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (dvv international) have developed a virtual resource center (PRIA, 2010).

1.2.7 The Latin American Council for Adult Education (CEAAL)

CEAAL is a forum and a platform which seeks to strengthen the skills and comprehensive training of educators, with a view to help them promote socio-cultural processes and develop liberating agendas and public policies in favour of the democratic transformation of societies (CEAAL).

Founded in 1982, CEAAL serves a membership of more than 200 Latin American non-government providers of adult education. These member organisations fill critical gaps in the public system of education and cater to the needs of broad sectors of the population in a flexible and praxis-oriented approach to continuing education (CEAAL, 2013).

1.2.8 The European Association for Education of Adults (EAEA)

EAEA is a European NGO with 127 member organisations, from 43 countries, working in the fields of adult learning. EAEA promotes adult learning of all kinds, but with a particular focus on (EAEA, 2013):

- Increasing participation in learning
- Improving access to learning
- Targeting under-represented groups in society

1.2.9 The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association

dvv International (the Institute for International Cooperation of the Associations) is the federal umbrella association for the 16 regional associations, of Germany's community adult education centres (Volkshochschulen, VHS) (Dvv International, 2013).   Its work is informed by the millennium development goals (MDGs) and it primarily fosters the exchange of information and expertise on adult education. It also focusses on Education for All (EFA) programs and development in Europe and the world over.

The organization provides support for the establishment and development of youth and adult education structures in developing countries in the area of policy and legislation amongst others and recognizes education as a universal right for both youth and adults.

1.2.10 The Global Campaign for Adult Education (GCE)

GCE understands that education is imperative to tackle problems of poverty, health conditions, financial resources etc. It recognizes that a child born to a literate mother has better chances of survival (GCE, 2013). GCE is made up of organisations and individuals who believe that education be accessible to all. Since the campaign started in 1999, it has fought to hold all world leaders, governments and institutions to account. Since 1999, the Global Campaign for Education has strived to ensure that world leaders, governments and institutions are accountable to their promises and that the goals of EFA are achieved.

Unit 2: Progress In Adult Education –
The CONFINTEA Series And Beyond

The right to education has been universally recognised since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UN, 1984). Since then world leaders have made many promises to make this right a reality. The most significant of these is the setting of the Education for All (EFA) targets, at the World Economic Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 (UNESCO, 2000).

These targets, set for 2015, include (World Education Forum, 2000):

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to complete, free and compulsory primary education of a good quality
- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes
- Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

While there has been some progress on EFA goals, there is still a long way to go. With particular reference to adult literacy, the period 2000 to 2006, saw an increase in global adult literacy rates from 76% to 84 %. Progress was especially marked in the developing countries. Some governments have actively sought to work with civil society to provide non-formal learning opportunities with a wide range of content, objectives and target groups. The provision of non-formal education has diversified, covering topics such as human rights, citizenship, democracy, women's empowerment, HIV prevention, health, environmental protection and sustainable development. Signatories to the Dakar Framework for Action are increasingly recognizing the benefit of gender-sensitive provision in adult learning and education, particularly with respect to women (Hinzen, 2002).

There is some evidence for increased acquisition of basic skills by individuals required for better living especially through educational channels including literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Systems of information, documentation, monitoring and evaluation for adult learning and education programmes have been introduced. Validation and accreditation of learning has added weightage to the learning process. Synergies between formal, non-formal and informal learning has yielded better results for learners and institutions (Unterhalter, 2013).

By the 1990s there was a shift in terminology from 'lifelong education' to 'lifelong learning' (Valdés-Cotera, 2011). Prominent adult educators felt that the term 'learning' was more learner-centric and encompassed the idea of participatory education as opposed to a prescriptive form of education. The fifth international conference on adult education (CONFINTEA V), held in Hamburg in 1997, had called for the change in the terminology (UNESCO USIL, 1997), however this change was adopted during the 12 years between CONFINTEA V and VI held in Belém, Brazil (UNESCO UILL, 2010).

Today lifelong learning is the key principle for education and training systems (UNESCO, 2013). Lifelong learning acknowledges that learning is termed as being 'lifelong' in terms of temporality (not restricted to a particular time in life) and space (can happen within and outside the confines of an educational institution).

One has to be mindful of the fact that lifelong learning is not only about adults but includes people from every stage in life. Lifelong learning embraces a learning continuum from formal to non-formal to informal learning.

The key role of adult learning and education is in the achievement of the MDGs and EFA, including gender equality. The Hamburg Declaration on the Right to Learn stated that "Adult learning encompasses formal and continuing education, non-formal learning and the spectrum of informal and incidental learning available in a multi-cultural learning society, where theory and practice-based approaches are recognized." (UNESCO USIL, 1997)

Therefore, lifelong learning is a form of democratic citizenship connecting individuals and groups to the structure of social, political and economic activity in both local and global contexts (Medel-Añonuevo & Mitchell, 2003). In this context, governance plays a key role in the effective implementation of adult education and lifelong learning interventions. Good governance facilitates the implementation of adult learning and education policy in ways which are effective, transparent, accountable and equitable. Representation by and participation of all stakeholders are indispensable in order to guarantee responsiveness to the needs of all learners, in particular the most disadvantaged.

Unit 3: The Role of Public, Private and Civil Society in Adult Education

There is often an uncomfortable partnership between public and other sectors. Until the 1980s, such collaboration tended to be sporadic, with international politics largely remaining the territory of governments. In adult education, there have been linkages between national governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In the developing world, collaborations between NGOs and governments to deliver adult education or adult basic literacy have been of some significance. In recent times there has been a renewed understanding of the role played by partnerships between private and public sector bodies in reaching out to marginalized communities. 'Public-Private Partnerships' (PPPs) are now making an appearance as a significant initiative in linking literacy to workplace based learning (Ahmed, 2009).

Despite the disappointment felt by several members of the NGO community with the lack of progress since Jomtien and Dakar, the focus of these NGOs on community development and mobilization approaches has worked to revitalise the adult education space (UNESCO, 2007; UNESCO; World Education Forum, 2000).

Studies of adult education led participatory interventions have shown that government-driven programmes achieve wide and often national reach but are relatively shallow in impact with limited long- term effect. Non-government adult education programmes, often supported by small and time-constrained amounts of aid have achieved significant changes using a more integrative community approach (dvv International, 1997) .

When Kofi Annan arrived as Secretary General of the United Nations in January 1997, he opened the UN to the private sector. At the fourth UNESCO adult education world conference in 1985, although there was a significant NGO presence, the agenda largely remained government dominated and heavily influenced by the macro-political relations of the Cold War (UNESCO, 1985).

By the time of the fifth Conference at Hamburg in 1997, the NGO sector was an equal partner in deliberation and in the making of resolutions. At the mid-term review in Bangkok six years later, the dominant voices were, with few exceptions, non-governmental. There was, also, a serious concern at the absence of many nations who appeared to have turned away from adult education (UNESCO, 1997).

The changing priorities of governments and the fact that improving education around the world is in the long term interest of every business make for good reasons for governments and civil society to work together. There are benefits from engaging in enhancing skills of workers, developing brand reputation and strengthening community relations. Over the past few years, even UNESCO's partners from the private sector have increased phenomenally (UNESCO Office of Partnerships ERC, 2010).

Multi-sector partnerships involve the private sector and/or government working with not-for-profit actors such as social entrepreneurs, community development charities, church groups, advocacy organizations or research institutes. Some define such arrangements as public-private-civil society partnerships (PPCPs).

PPCPs that involve strategic alliances between private companies and not-for-profit organizations offer added value in at least two ways (Genevois, 2008). They:

- Bring local knowledge about beneficiary needs, limits to affordability, gender and cultural sensitivities
- Provide ongoing communication channels to the local population and opinion formers.

However, there is some criticism faced by this partnership approach. There is concern among decision – makers regarding the growing influence of the private sector. Critics also feel that such a partnership by the government is just a way to keep out opposition.

However, proponents of such a partnership claim that public services are delivered quicker, cheaper and better. Government benefit from public-private partnerships by gaining access to corporate expertise and experience in management, strategic planning, innovative problem solving, labour market expertise, skills development, efficient delivery of goods and services, product development and logistical delivery processes. (Genevois, 2008).

3.1 Examples of Collaboration:

A variety of laws in African countries dealing with the promotion of national languages, the creation of adult education institutions, the incorporation of adult education and literacy in the general education system, all demonstrate a recurring phenomenon of the uneven and limited understanding of what constitutes adult education and the necessary legal framework that needs to be in place. One such example is of African Platform for EducationWith the support of ICAE and dvv International (German Adult Education Association), the four African networks on Education, met in March of 2008 to plan and strategize for CONFINTEA VI. A concrete outcome of this meeting is the formation of the African Platform for Adult Education. This coalition of four networks aims to establish an African civil society capable of taking part in or influencing decisions concerning preoccupations and challenges in the literacy and adult education domain, with a vision of quality services for everyone. (African Platform for Adult Education, 2007) Other examples of such collaborations are in following countries.

 A few examples are cited below:

Gambia

- A series of multi- sectoral policies broadly suggest what sectors should be integrated with adult education policy including:
- The Revised Education Policy 1998 – 2003
- The National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women 1999
- The National Education Policy 2004 – 2015
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2006
- Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006 – 2015
- The Public Expenditure Review 2006

Ghana

Adult education related policies have emanated from the ministry of Manpower Development and Employment and the ministry of Women and Children's Affairs.

South Africa:

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) provides for the establishment of public and private adult learning centres, funding for basic education and training, the governance of public centres and quality assurance mechanisms for the sector. In addition, the Human Resource Developmental Strategy (2001) is a joint initiative of the departments of Labour and Education to reinforce the establishment of an integrated education, training and development strategy to harness the potential of adult learners.

Summary

In this module we have discussed major international organizations, conferences and reports that have led to the formation and pursuit of adult education, as a tool for social change across the globe. We have examined organisations like the World Bank, the OECD, the UNESCO etc. and their contributions to the promotion of adult education. We also learnt about the evolution of 'lifelong education' to 'lifelong learning' and discussed some key issues in adult education in the 21st century, including multi-sectoral partnerships. We briefly looked at the benefits of public-private-civil society partnerships in promoting adult education profitable to all concerned groups. Through examples of some countries, we looked at how legislation the world over is increasingly opening itself to public-private partnerships, to enable efficient adult-education centres.

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