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MID-TERM REVIEW 2017

The status of adult learning and education in sub-Saharan Africa

 REGIONAL REPORT

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Prepared by John Aitchison



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INTRODUCTION: A SITUATION ANALYSIS

Eight years after the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), held in Belém in Brazil in 2009, this report provides an update on subsequent developments in adult learning and education (ALE) in sub-Saharan Africa.

The report can only outline some of the policy, governance and implementation changes (or lack of them) in a continent that has not been immune to the effects of financial and other difficulties consequent to the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009.

The report also notes the new developments and education policy agendas of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the *Incheon Declaration – Education 2030* and the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*, all issued in 2015. The role of ALE is explicitly or implicitly addressed in these international declarations and they challenge the field in sub-Saharan Africa to examine what has been achieved since CONFINTEA VI and what is still to be done. What has adult learning and education done, and what will it do, to foster and develop democracy and human rights, communities, societies and general well-being?

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND THE WORLD OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

The third *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (GRALE III) (UIL, 2016) provides an excellent picture of the state of ALE in the world and the general developments and innovations that have occurred since 2009. ALE, along with education and development as a whole, is increasingly having to justify itself on the basis of accurate evidence of its accomplishments and its proven impact on the lives of people – not only on their knowledge and skills gained but also on their livelihoods, health and well-being and on their lives as citizens. In a time of financial austerity, ALE is often neglected compared to formal schooling and post-schooling, and has to be even more energetic to gain funding, even though it can point to the benefits that ALE can bring to people's lives. Also, in a time of rapid growth in information and communication technologies, ALE has to keep up to date.

In sub-Saharan Africa these trends are also strong but are made more complicated by the realities of the economic and educational situations of African countries. On the whole, Africa remains a poor continent, further challenged by the rapid growth in population and with weak or very modest educational outputs. Although there have been dramatic developments in terms of access to universal primary education, the very growth in enrolments often compromises quality and creates the need for second-chance education to remedy that lack of quality. Illiteracy levels have shown a promising decline (see the Annex), but, for many countries, literacy and adult basic education programmes remain necessary as the key form of ALE provision. In the region, the full continuum of lifelong and lifewide learning remains somewhat underdeveloped. Illiteracy and low levels of education correlate with low productivity, lower incomes and poorer health (and susceptibility to HIV/AIDS), as well as acting as barriers to continuing education and training. Lastly, sub-Saharan Africa remains something of a data desert in regard to research and data on ALE and even when research is done and data are collected, it is often unavailable for comparative purposes (Aitchison, 2012, pp. 6–7).

SCOPE, SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS REPORT

This is a short report, and some of its themes and content are discussed in a more thorough way in *GRALE III*. It is designed to briefly outline what has changed since CONFINTEA VI was held at Belém in Brazil in 2009 and to make observations as to whether the recommendations in the Belém Framework for Action (UIL, 2010c) have been undertaken or need further implementation.

This document is largely based upon the questionnaires submitted by Member States to provide information for the compiling of *GRALE III* and in preparing for the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review in 2017 (that will itself be looking at further strategies to advance ALE up until CONFINTEA VII in 2021). The survey questionnaire was answered by 33 of 46 countries, usually completed by an education ministry though sometimes assisted by other ministries such as social affairs, health and labour/employment, by national institutions, and by a variety of civil society agencies and organizations. This information

was supplemented where necessary from other sources. The limitations of this report include its necessary brevity and compression, lack of data in certain key areas, and country differences in how adult education is defined, conceptualized and distinguished from (or identified with) 'non-formal education', 'lifelong learning' and 'development'.¹

WHAT WAS THE FOLLOW-UP TO CONFITEA VI?

In 2009, CONFITEA VI issued the Belém Framework for Action, which provides a set of recommendations for further developing ALE. Various follow-up regional conferences were held between 2011 and 2015 to assess progress, identify factors conducive to successful policies and practices, and prepare action plans which identified specific actions to implement the Belém Framework in each region. The document affirms three basic principles: that education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right, that it is a public good and that gender equality is linked to the right to education for all. It provides descriptions related to each target and indicative strategies for implementation in countries, the modalities of which are categorised under Adult literacy, Policy, Governance, Financing, Participation, Inclusion and equity, Quality, Effective coordination and Monitoring the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action. There is also a draft set of proposed indicators.

Sub-Saharan Africa held a follow-up Regional Expert Meeting with the theme of 'Increasing the participation of youth and adults in learning and education' in November 2012 in Praia, Cabo Verde. The objective of this meeting was to identify successful examples of adult education policy and practice and to share and learn from these achievements. Additionally, the meeting set out to develop effective regional action points for implementing the Belém Framework for Action. A report was issued (UIL, 2013), followed by a matrix comprising action points (UIL, 2014).

The Cabo Verde meeting noted (UIL, 2013, p. 8):

- that countries needed to distinguish between mere declarations of political intention and actual political will, which is translated into action and reflected in funding and implementation mechanisms;
- the lack of operational strategies and concrete policy recommendations;
- the two crucial success factors – the mobilization of financial and material resources, and an inter-sectoral approach.

The matrix of action points included those related to (UIL, 2014, pp. 1–2):

- **Policy.** Advocate for a holistic approach to youth and adult education at regional, sub-regional and national levels.
- **Governance.** Advocate for effective inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral cooperation and coordination in youth and adult education, support networking, partnership and the involvement of youth, and advocate for the establishment or strengthening of relevant, well-staffed and well-resourced agencies specialized in youth and adult education.
- **Participation, equity and quality.** Map the situation of vulnerable youth and assess their needs, conduct needs assessments to ensure the development of contextually and culturally relevant and useful programmes, develop alternative programmes for marginalized and disadvantaged groups, improve training-delivery systems to better meet the needs of vulnerable youth, revise curricula to better fit with the specific needs of marginalized groups, especially youth, and train curriculum designers to do so, and develop knowledge-management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of both qualitative and quantitative data and good-practice reports to inform policy development and practice.

¹ There is a continuing need for some pan-African standardization of the terminology relating to literacy, adult basic education, non-formal education and lifelong learning, not in any restrictive or prescriptive way, but simply to aid understanding and comparability of data and research emanating from countries. Clarity is also needed in distinguishing ALE from the formal education and training system and from general development activities.

All participants agreed on the importance of robust and concrete follow-up measures, including advocacy and consultations with all relevant stakeholders, concretizing responsibilities and forming coordination bodies, and specifying timelines for national implementation.

NEW INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS THAT WILL INFLUENCE ALE BEFORE CONFITEA VII

In 2015 there were three major international declarations that will influence both the context and activities of ALE in the foreseeable future.

The United Nations approved *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Transforming the World* (United Nations, 2015), with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated 169 targets. SDG 4 – ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ – had 10 targets, five of which directly or indirectly relate to youth and adult education:

- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.
- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

The educational response was the World Education Forum 2015’s *Incheon Declaration: Education 2030. Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All* (World Education Forum

2015, 2015) and the companion *Education 2030. Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4* (World Education Forum 2015 and UNESCO, 2015).

Also in 2015, after an intensive consultation process, UNESCO adopted a revision of the 1976 *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* (UNESCO, 1976); a revision that had been proposed at the two previous CONFITEAs. The 2015 *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* (UNESCO and UIL, 2016) supersedes the earlier iteration. It provides key definitions of ALE, taking a comprehensive and systematic approach, and outlines three key domains of learning and skills – literacy and basic skills, continuing education and vocational skills – as well as liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills. The aims and objectives of ALE are defined and targets listed in the key areas of action, namely: Policy, Governance, Financing, Participation, inclusion and equity, and Quality. It complements the Belém Framework for Action in view of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and is an up-to-date, comprehensive tool for ALE policy- and decision-makers, researchers, practitioners from governmental and civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

SUMMARY: THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report will attempt to document the:

- Outcomes and results of the CONFITEA VI recommendations, i.e. the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action in the region.
- Outcomes of existing regional or country action plans.
- Information for the CONFITEA VI Mid-Term Review.
- New information to complement the findings of *GRALE III*.
- Draw some conclusions about the way forward for further advancing ALE in the region in the light of the 2015 UNESCO *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* and the *Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*.

1. POLICY

INTRODUCTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

African nations have a long tradition of practising lifelong learning, preparing participants through education and apprenticeships for a wide range of social and professional roles in society.

In the context of ALE, policies are the courses or principles of action adopted or proposed or agreed to by a government about what to do to further the development of lifelong learning in particular situations. In the normal course of events, policies lead to strategies and plans and sometimes to legislation and new institutions, so that the policies may be implemented. The existence of a policy is an indication, though sometimes only a partial indication, that government takes seriously a particular need or challenge in society and alignment with international engagements. Checking on this was a key focus of the *GRALE III* monitoring survey, and advocating for a holistic approach to youth and adult education policy processes was one of the action points from the Cabo Verde follow-up meeting to CONFITEA VI in Africa.

Most policies make some attempt to define what sector or part of a sector they are about and the definitions of ALE used by countries give some idea of how ALE policies are conceptualized (though almost three-quarters of the countries accept that ALE is such a diverse sector that it is difficult to define precisely). The Belém Framework for Action argues that (UIL, 2010c, p. 7):

policies and legislative measures for adult education need to be comprehensive, inclusive, integrated within a lifelong and life-wide learning perspective, based on sector-wide and intersectoral approaches, covering and linking all components of learning and education.

HOW DO COUNTRIES DEFINE ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION?

A majority of countries (84 per cent – 26 of the countries responding to the questionnaire) have an official definition of adult learning and education (ALE). In some cases the wording of these definitions corresponds to the broad UNESCO-generated ones,² though in many cases they do not.

The countries with broad definitions include Benin, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia and Tanzania. Namibia, for example, includes formal adult learning, non-formal adult learning and informal adult learning (each carefully defined) and spells out examples of these. Many of the broader definitions do, however, include some emphasis on literacy (or *alphabétisation*, as it is called in the French-speaking countries)³ and post-literacy adult basic education (called non-formal education by many).⁴ Some also make brief mention of the anticipated (developmental) benefits of, or the target groups of, such learning.

Several countries restrict their ALE definition to literacy (*alphabétisation*) or adult basic education, e.g. Burkina

2 These broad definitions include those in the Nairobi Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education of 1976, the 1997 CONFITEA V *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning and Agenda for the Future*, and the definition provided in the *GRALE III* monitoring survey that adult learning and education (ALE) encompasses all formal, non-formal and informal or incidental learning and continuing education (both general and vocational, and both theoretical and practical) undertaken by adults (as this term is defined in any one country). ALE participants will typically have concluded their initial education and training and then returned to some form of learning. But in all countries there will be young people and adults who did not have the opportunity to enrol in or complete school education by the age foreseen, and who participate in ALE programmes, including those to equip them with literacy and basic skills or as a 'second chance' to gain recognized certificates.

3 The English word 'literacy' has tended in the last few decades to have its meaning, originally applied to the basics of reading and writing (and sometimes numeracy), applied to a wide continuum of practices and even extended to cover virtually any type of basic knowledge or set of practices in a particular field at any academic level. The French *alphabétisation* is a much less ambiguous term for basic literacy.

4 By 'non-formal' is simply meant that the educational provision is not part of the formal school system. It does not describe the nature of the provision, its level or its approach to teaching and learning.

Faso, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Uganda, though the definition may be embedded in much sustainable development language. Sometimes even what is termed 'lifelong education' is clearly only literacy. A few countries quite explicitly restrict it to literacy and second-chance schooling: e.g. Gabon, Malawi and Mali. Some apply it to apprenticeships and professional training (TVET): e.g. Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Many countries continue to use the term 'non-formal education' in an ambiguous way. It is usually applied to second-chance schooling but can also be a synonym for literacy, literacy and post-literacy, adult basic education, literacy and adult life-skills, technical and vocational education and training (professional education) or a mix of any of these. So even knowing that 93 per cent of the countries believe that 'NFE is important' is not particularly helpful.

Given the clear conclusion that relatively few countries have a truly comprehensive guiding definition of ALE it would be good for more countries to consider adopting the one in the 2015 *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* (UNESCO and UIL, 2016, p. 6):

Adult learning and education is a core component of lifelong learning. It comprises all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work. It denotes the entire body of learning processes, formal, non-formal and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities, organizations and societies.

This would help also support the fulfilment of the Nairobi Declaration of 2008 (UIL, 2009, p. 3, Clause 12), which stated:

There is a narrow vision of youth and ALE, often limited to literacy ... A rapid pan-African clarification and standardization of the terminology and concepts relating to youth and ALE is required to enable comparability of data and to help regional collaboration and the dissemination of information and research.

That an ongoing process of definitional clarification is needed is evidenced by the fact that few countries (34 per cent – 10) had acted to change or create definitions since CONFITEA VI (those that did so apparently because of

the need to incorporate vocational, continuing and socio-economic development-related learning, as in Chad, Mauritius and Tanzania).

ARE THERE NEW POST-CONFITEA VI POLICIES?

A majority of countries (58 per cent – 18) claimed to have new policies, though very few were comprehensive (that is, covering the broad field of ALE) and it is difficult to judge whether these new policies are in some sense a response to CONFITEA VI.

These examples, mainly taken from the *GRALE III* questionnaire responses, were some of the areas covered by the new policies:

Literacy: Benin (in process), Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo (2012), Mali (2010), Senegal, Togo (2014), Uganda (2011, 2014), Zambia (in process)

Adult (basic) education: Benin (in process), Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya (2010), Mali (2010), Rwanda (2014), Tanzania (2014), Zambia (draft)

Second-chance schooling: Kenya, Malawi (but does not have a specific policy on ALE), South Africa (examinations)

Non-formal education: Democratic Republic of the Congo (2012), Gambia (2010), Ethiopia, Togo (2014), Zimbabwe (2015)

Community college system: South Africa (2015)

Continuing education: Kenya (2010)

Technical and vocational education: Cabo Verde, Malawi, Madagascar, Mali (2010), Nigeria, Senegal

General education: Cote d'Ivoire (2012, 2015), Guinea-Bissau

Lifelong learning: Mauritius (in process)

Cabo Verde is an example of a country with a broad-ranging integrated policy on education, training and employment and a qualifications-recognition system, which encourages cooperation between government departments.

Given the interest at the Nairobi pre-CONFITEA VI conference in 2008 in turning ALE into YALE – youth and adult learning and education – there was little sign of a special focus on youth (Zambia was an exception in its policy on youth and adult literacy) although a majority of countries

(93 per cent) did see youth and ALE as an integrated whole. One can conclude that the question on the youth component of adult learning and education needs to be revisited, particularly because of the large populations of youth who are not in education, employment or training in Africa.

Very few policy documents are accessible via the internet, and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning website collection of these is very thinly populated with African examples (<http://www.uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/lifelong-learning-policies-database/collection-lifelong-learning-policies-and>). In many countries, the main civil society adult education institutions and practitioners have little knowledge of or access to policy, legal and regulatory documents (Aitchison, 2012, p. 10). One can conclude that the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning needs to energetically compile a full set of current ALE policy documents from Africa.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS IN AFRICAN POLICIES

Because of the importance and prominence of literacy, adult basic education and basic skills, most countries affirm – and their definitions of adult education reinforce – that literacy and basic skills remain the top ALE priorities. Adults with low-level literacy or basic skills are the priority target group in 97 per cent (30) of the sub-Saharan African countries.

Situational demands clearly drive the ongoing concentration on literacy and adult basic education and skills training in the majority of countries, many of which have some kind of national policy or declaration on literacy. This focus on the truly disadvantaged does appear to have delivered results – in the form of general progress in improving the levels of literacy (though it is always hard to distinguish the impact of adult literacy programmes from the effects of better primary school access).

GRALE III came to the following conclusions about such literacy and basic skills policies (UIL, 2016, p. 33):

- They should be framed in terms of the human right to education.
- They should focus on skills (in which literacy played a central role) with an impact on health, economic development, poverty reduction and social cohesion.
- There should be formal recognition of achievement.
- Marginalized and disadvantaged groups should be targeted.

- There should be measurable outcomes.
- Policies should be long-term.

Now, few of these points are particularly prominent in the responses from countries. Apart from the belief that literacy provision to adults should be limited to ‘functional literacy’, formal recognition and equivalency to conventional schooling are the strongest themes.

WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS OF LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS POLICIES?

Equivalency, recognition and articulation regulations, transfer from non-formal education (NFE) classes to formal schools: Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Gambia

Functional adult literacy/literacy plus skills: Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Togo, Zambia

Funding bodies (related to faire-faire):

Burkina Faso

Micro-finance for learners: Gambia

Monitoring and evaluation of programmes: Gambia

New approaches and curricula: Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya

New institutional framework: Burkina Faso

New materials: Gambia

New programmes: Burkina Faso

REFLECT approach: Malawi

Research studies and needs assessments:

Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia

Sustainable development: Togo

Even though African policies may prioritize literacy they do not often incorporate the whole range of ALE: there is insufficient attention to language issues and the creation of a literate environment; there is little attention to the idea of literacy as a continuum or to the enlargement of what is considered basic literacy in modern technological environments.

The prioritizing of literacy is at times accompanied by policies or regulations relating to partnerships between state and civil society, and notably, in West Africa, the *faire-faire* ('make do') decentralization and outsourcing strategy, in which the roles of the state (as supervising body and fair distributor of additional resources), local associations and NGOs (as delivery partners), and local communities are clearly defined.

Sometimes, these literacy-focused policies are in themselves broad, as is the case in the **Gambia**. The country's policy approach to literacy and basic skills includes:

- Conducting comprehensive needs assessment prior to any intervention.
- Incorporation of viable life and livelihood skills in the programmes.
- Facilitation of access to micro-finance facilities for the programmes.
- Innovative mechanisms for enrolment and retention to ensure sustainability of the programmes.
- Ensuring increase in enrolment and retention by providing functional literacy and skills development to mothers.
- Facilitation of the transition from 'non-formal education' classes to formal schools.
- Building synergy between formal and non-formal education.
- Collaboration with providers to ensure effective and efficient service delivery.
- Mobilization of resources for the effective monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
- Strengthening the capacity of staff to produce materials in local languages.

In **Kenya**, functional approaches to literacy include basic financial knowledge and computer use and ensuring that the learners immediately apply the skills acquired to improve their social and economic well-being.

Generally, these literacy, basic education and skills programmes target adults with low levels of literacy or basic skills (97 per cent – 32 countries) and young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) (73 per cent – 24 countries), particularly those in rural areas (52 per cent – 19). Some attention is given to individuals seeking personal growth and a widening of knowledge (58 per cent – 19) or to update work skills (46 per cent – 15) or to make life transitions (30 per cent – 10). Relatively neglected were groups such as the socially excluded, the disabled, minorities, migrants, refugees and the long-term unemployed.

What is clearly lacking in policies focused on literacy and basic education is much attention to what happens after learners exit the programmes. Even those countries

where the main ALE focus is on literacy and adult basic education there is a need to pay policy attention to post-basic continuing education and technical and vocational training for learners.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) provision in most countries did not match the need, and 36 per cent of countries agreed that ALE (seen mainly as adult literacy and basic education) was not integrated with continuing vocational education and training.

ARE THERE POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING?

Twelve countries had a policy framework for the recognition of prior learning prior to 2009 and another 11 developed such policies subsequently to accredit non-formal and informal learning: Benin, Cabo Verde, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zimbabwe.

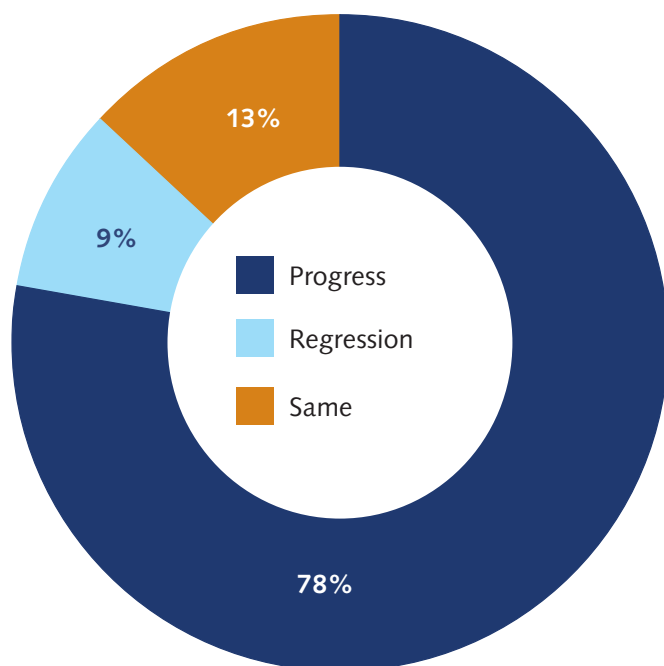
Prior to 2009, various countries in Africa had established national qualifications frameworks which allowed for such recognition of prior learning, notably South Africa, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia. There have been ongoing developments in developing a regional Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework. Also prior to 2009, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning had collaborated with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority in launching a pilot project on the recognition of prior learning for unemployed workers from the sugar and textile sectors who were to be recruited into the tourism and hospitality industry.

DO POLICIES REFLECT A POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO ALE?

A large majority of countries (25 out of 32 or 78 per cent) thought there was progress in political commitment to ALE but it is difficult to judge to what extent this commitment is to a broad 'lifelong and lifewide', sustainable, long-term multi-sectoral approach that encompasses social, economic and individual benefits or just to literacy and basic education and skills provision.

Because of an often narrow focus on literacy and adult basic education, evidence of political commitment was frequently expressed in terms of increases in literacy rates

Figure 1.1
Do policies reflect political commitment to ALE?



or enrolments in literacy classes (Benin, Cabo Verde, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania).⁵

Cabo Verde provided a very strong statement on political commitment:

Cabo Verde policy and practice in ALE recognizes the contribution that it can bring to all other sectors of society. It follows the international recommendations wherever possible. Since independence we have made enormous progress in education of adults. The literacy campaigns conducted after 1975 (when the illiteracy rate was 63.9 per cent) show the political vision of the Cabo Verdean government on the importance of ALE. The government has made a big investment in training Cabo Verdean people while thinking about the contribution that ALE could bring to the health sector, the environment, tourism and society in general.

One aspect of the political commitment to ALE is the strength of the engagement of government authorities with other parts of society and the taking into account of the views of ALE stakeholders in the development of ALE policy. There does appear to have been progress here, as will be seen in the section on governance.

WAS AN ACTION PLAN FORMULATED AFTER CONFITEA VI?

Both the Belém Framework for Action (UIL, 2010) and the Cabo Verde meeting's matrix comprising action points (UIL, 2014) work on the assumption that comprehensive action plans will be developed in each country that would cover areas of policy, literacy, governance, financing, participation and quality. Were such policy-related plans developed and was enhanced implementation of programmes the result?

The reality is that only 54 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa countries which responded developed a post-CONFITEA VI action plan. The 14 countries that did so said that their plans were comprehensive and covered all or most of the indicated areas.

WAS THERE COLLABORATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMMES?

When looking at both policy and governance developments it is noted that consultation with stakeholders (public education and health agencies and civil society stakeholders [NGOs, private providers]) has increased since 2009. Did this collaboration extend to the development of action plans and the design and delivery of programmes? Not to any great extent is the answer, though it is increasing and the general principle of such collaboration seems to be generally accepted. Little information is available on collaboration.

⁵ One needs to note that increasing literacy rates cannot automatically be claimed as the result of ALE as they may be largely a sign of more access to primary schooling and the deaths of older, illiterate people.

Chad's various action plans and associated institutional and programmatic developments are complex: a National Action Plan on the Education of Adults in Literacy (2012); a National Plan for the Development of Literacy 2013–2015; creating a Support Fund for the Development of Literacy and Non-Formal Education in 2014; updating of the Non-Formal Education Programme in 2012 and the integration of literacy into development projects; the setting-up of a National Literacy Programme; and, in 2015, establishing an institutional framework for the Ten Year Plan for Development of Education and Literacy 2017–2026. Their various plans included materials development, the monitoring of quality, educator training and communication through various forums.

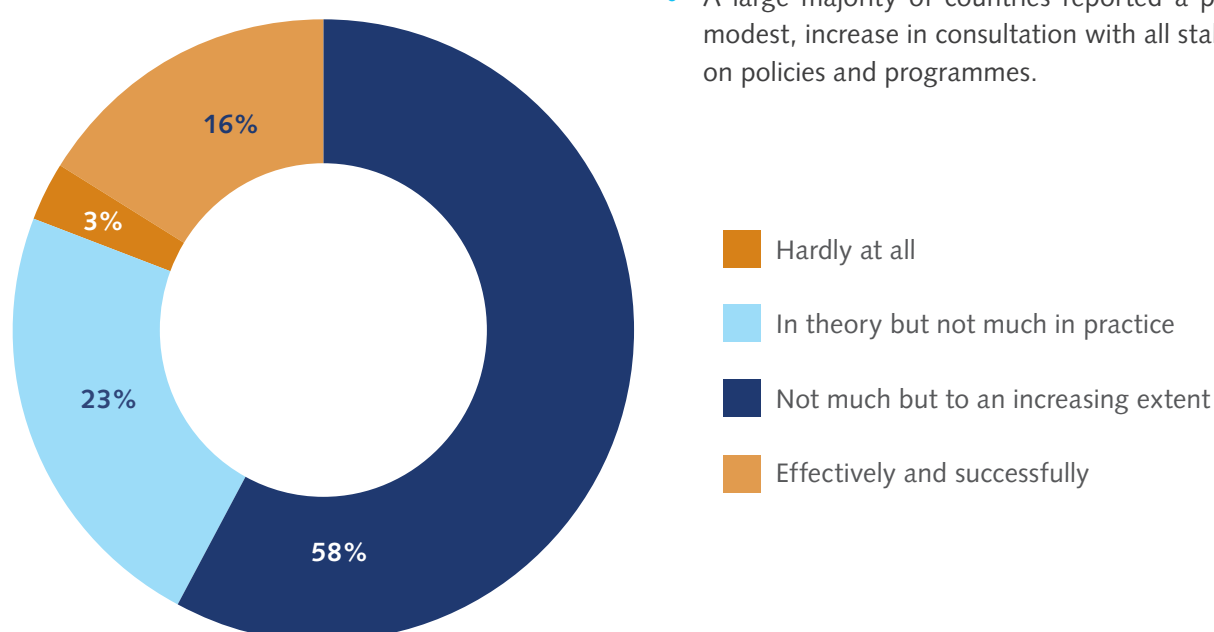
Mali has introduced and implemented the Dynamic Literacy and Promotion of National Languages Programme (Programme Vigoureux d'Alphabétisation et de Promotion des Langues Nationales), the ALE budget has increased significantly and there has been a push towards the adoption of education policies and strategies designed to connect formal and non-formal paths more effectively. The creation of national directorates to bolster further education aims to improve the employability of rural youth.

Both these examples are of moving beyond single-focus literacy programmes towards complex programme, funding, governance, planning and policy arrangements.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON POLICIES

- Most countries' policies on ALE are informed by definitions of ALE, a few broad, but many with narrow ones focusing mainly on literacy and adult basic education. However, few countries have revised their definitions since 2009 and there is scope for more comprehensive definitions (in line with the 2015 *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*).
- A majority of countries have new post-2009 policies, though few were comprehensive and there were few signs of a special focus on youth.
- A small majority of countries had comprehensive post-CONFITEA VI action plans that covered areas of policy, literacy, governance, financing, participation and quality.
- Literacy, adult basic education and basic skills (sometimes given recognition as being equivalent to conventional schooling) remain top ALE priorities, and literacy policies are sometimes accompanied by partnerships between state and civil society. Follow-up post-literacy and technical and vocational education and training provision did not match the potential need.
- About two-thirds of countries have policies for the recognition of prior learning.
- Most countries reported progress in political commitment to ALE, at least in the form of literacy and basic education.
- A large majority of countries reported a positive, if modest, increase in consultation with all stakeholders on policies and programmes.

Figure 1.2
Stakeholder participation in design and delivery



2. GOVERNANCE

In considering the role of governance of ALE one has to look at all the mechanisms created to assist in the state's implementation of policies and the delivery of services promised in those policies. These mechanisms include what legislation and regulations have been promulgated and the institutions (departments, units and agencies of government, legally constituted institutions and formal public-private partnerships) set up, as well as the strategies for delivery.

DOES LEGISLATION EXIST (AND COMPLEMENT ALE POLICIES)?

A number of countries have explicit legislation on ALE or a sub-set of it (usually literacy or basic education – 'non-formal education') or legislation that sets up a body or institution or commission to deal with literacy or adult basic education or broader adult education.

Those with recent legislation include Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Nigeria and South Africa. Unfortunately, two countries, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, noted a regression since 2009, in the latter despite the adoption of the education system Guidance Law in 2011. In Guinea, a ministry was created in 2010 and closed in 2013.

DO STATE INSTITUTIONS AND STRATEGIES EXIST FOR ALE?

Most countries have some form of state governance of ALE, most commonly a department, unit or agency within a ministry of education. It is difficult to determine significant changes since 2009, as some new developments may simply be a renaming or restructuring of previous ministries or directorates or new iterations of development plans.

- **Burkina Faso** has a Ministry of National Education and Literacy (Ministère de l'éducation nationale et de l'alphabétisation), a General Directorate of Non-Formal Education, and a Directorate of Research in Non-Formal Education.

- **Cabo Verde** created a Directorate at the Ministry of Education and Technical Education.

- **Chad** has a General Directorate of Literacy and Non-Formal Education and has set up three literacy-related technical directorates: a Literacy Directorate (Direction de l'Alphabétisation), a Directorate for the Promotion of National Languages and the Directorate for Non-Formal (Education Direction de l'Éducation Non-Formelle). Each of these are represented at local levels by literacy inspectors and supervisors. An institutional framework has been set-up in relation to the Ten Year Plan for Development of Education and Literacy (2017–2026).

- **Democratic Republic of the Congo** instituted a sub-sectoral Development Strategy for Literacy and Non-Formal Education in 2012.

- In **Gambia**, The National Technical Committee gives technical advice and support management to the Adult and Non Formal Education Unit and other programme interventions.

- **Mali** introduced a number of new national directorates to strengthen NFE and also implemented programmes in literacy, rural youth development and vocational training.

- In **Tanzania**, the Minister's Advisory Committee is responsible for giving advice on the implementation of ALE.

- **Togo** has incorporated literacy as a component of the education sector plan and has chosen *faire-faire* as an implementation strategy for literacy programmes.

- In **Zambia**, the National Adult Literacy Technical Committee coordinates providers of adult literacy education in Zambia.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ALE GOVERNANCE

The Belém Framework for Action's commitments with regard to governance (UIL, 2010c, p. 7) stressed the importance of the involvement of stakeholders and the capacity-building of these stakeholders:

creating and maintaining mechanisms for the involvement of public authorities at all administrative levels, civil society organizations, social partners, the private sector, community and adult learners' and educators' organizations in the development, implementation and evaluation of ALE policies and programmes; ... undertaking capacity-building measures to support the constructive and informed involvement of civil society organizations, community and adult learners' organizations, as appropriate, in policy and programme development, implementation and evaluation

There is currently a fairly general set of international assumptions, particularly among providers of foreign aid, that multi-sectoral participation by all stakeholders is a good thing, as are decentralization of governance and democratization.

There was a generally highly positive response about governance from the African countries that completed questionnaires. The majority agreed or tended to agree that governance had improved greatly since 2009 and these changes were shown in all the various components of governance, as seen in *Figure 2.1* on improvements in ALE governance since 2009.

Figure 2.1
Improvements in ALE governance since 2009

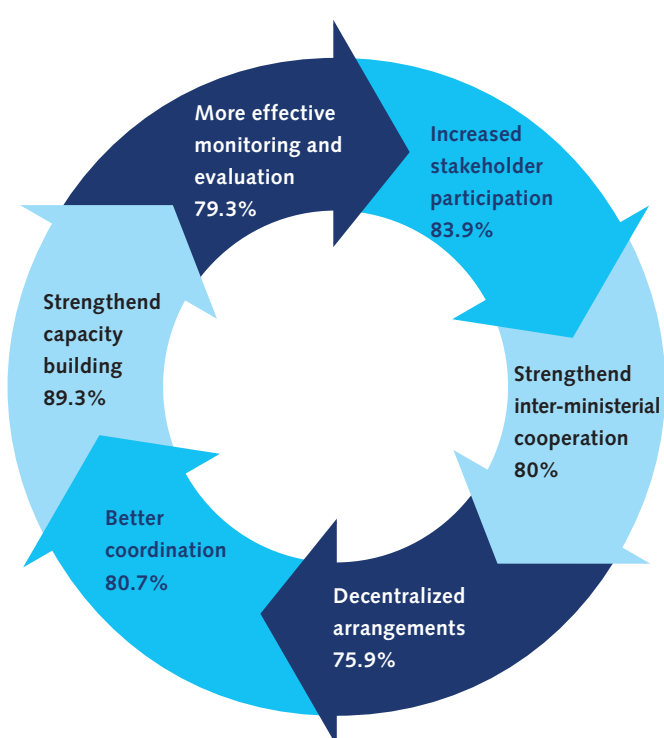
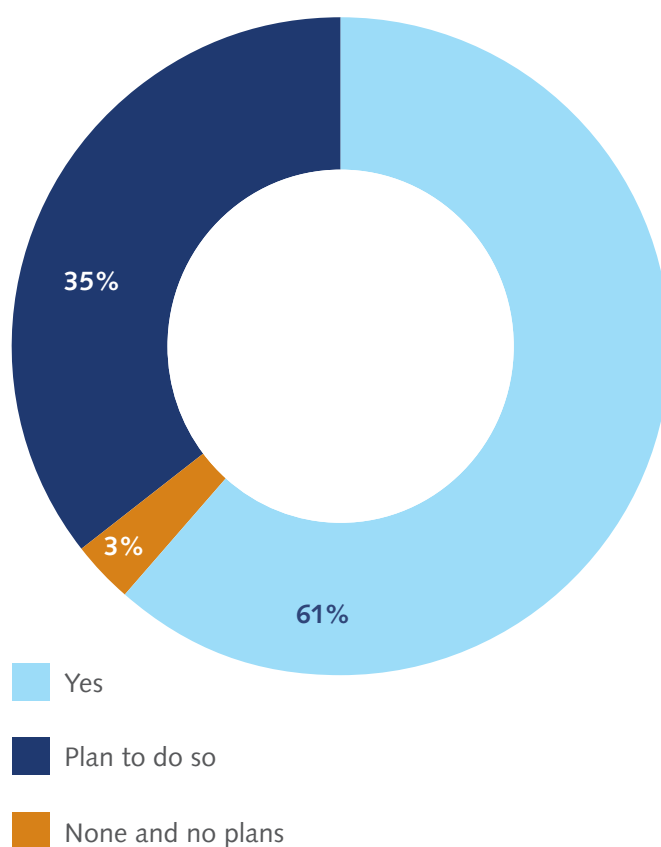


Figure 2.2
Consultations with civil society

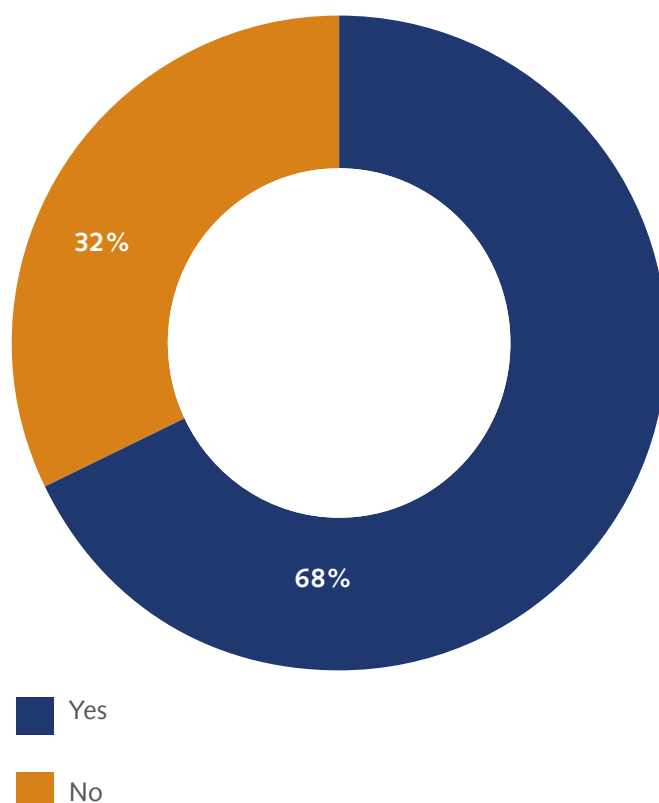


There was a positive finding on increased stakeholder participation (or at least government plans to consult with stakeholders and civil society) in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of ALE policies. More had happened since 2009, with 19 (61 per cent) of countries reporting such consultations and 11 (35 per cent) reporting plans to do so. Countries listed a range of mechanisms for such consultation with stakeholders, including (in order of popularity): policy briefings and validations, civil society networks, public comment on draft policies, forums and working groups, government departments and directorates, inter-ministerial structures, public-private partnerships, policy conferences, technical, advisory and steering committees with stakeholder representatives, focus groups and research interviews, seminars, evaluations using stakeholders, and literacy weeks.

There was an even more positive response from 19 (68 per cent) of the countries on new developments and innovations in governance since 2009, though the details given were somewhat imprecise and seemed mainly to say that policy, consultation and provision were better than before.

- **Chad** developed a National Non-Formal Education and Literacy Development Programme in 2010 together with survey mechanisms for identifying the capacity-building needs of ALE stakeholders with regard to teaching and organizational and institutional frameworks. There are also new faire-faire funding strategies in Chad.
- **Eritrea** and **Ethiopia** have better articulation between basic and further and non-formal education.
- In **Eritrea**, a new lifelong learning curriculum has been developed for adults and out-of-school youth that articulates with formal schooling and basic reading room resources provided.
- In **Ethiopia**, consultation with stakeholders is part of the dynamic relationship between the federal and regional state governments and local government (kebeles). The federal level handles ALE goals, policy guidelines formulation, the overall regulatory framework (including accreditation, research dissemination and documentation), coordination with stakeholders, and negotiations with funders. An Adult Education Board integrates relevant stakeholders at federal and regional levels, but the Ministry of Education has no direct authority over the Regional Education Bureaux. At local (kebele) level, programme services are coordinated, needs and demands identified and learners recruited.
- There are public-private partnerships in **Gambia**.
- In **Kenya**, since 2010, all committees, including advisory committees that spearhead issues of ALE, are chaired by non-state agencies which are stakeholders. Membership of these advisory committees is derived from key stakeholders and the leaders (chairpersons), drawn from non-state stakeholders' agencies, are elected for a period of four years, renewable only once.
- There are new faire-faire funding strategies in **Togo**.
- **Zambia** has a corporate governance system which allows communities to participate in the affairs of their governments through decentralized organizational arrangements ('management boards').
- There are public-private partnerships in **Zimbabwe**.

Figure 2.3
Innovations in governance since 2009



The statement in *GRALE III* (UIL, 2016, p. 42) on changes in governance is important here:

Overall, the *GRALE III* monitoring survey reveals that governance of ALE has become more decentralized since 2009, which implies that decisions about specific demand for programmes and the correct supply are being made at more local levels. This poses certain challenges, as capacity building is necessary at different levels of government to enable proper assessment of learning needs and adequate provision to satisfy such needs. Joined-up initiatives dealing with multiple needs are necessary to reduce learning gaps. Inter-ministerial cooperation is the only way to combine efforts and resources to tackle multiple forms of disadvantage in adulthood.

The message from sub-Saharan Africa is positive in that there have been changes in governance since 2009 and that it has become more consultative with all stakeholders

and more decentralized and responsive to the needs of people on the ground. Whether the stage has been reached where there is 'effective inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral cooperation and coordination in youth and adult education' (UIL, 2014, p. 2) will inevitably be determined by whether there are 'relevant, well-staffed and well-resourced agencies specialized in youth and adult education' and whether the capacities of different stakeholders have been built up to enable them to contribute to governance. This capacity-building challenge remains. It can be concluded that a regional framework for capacity-building on working with different partners needs to be developed and its application monitored.

At the Regional Expert Meeting for the Follow-up of CONFINTEA VI, in Praia, Cabo Verde, in November 2012, it was reported (UIL, 2013*b*) that:

good governance remains a key issue and is not easy to resolve. An ideal model of good governance would include effective inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral cooperation, participatory and performance-based programming, an accountable and transparent funding management and responsiveness to the needs of the most vulnerable parts of society, as well as to the present and future needs of society as a whole. Ideally, good governance would also enable a broader public participation to ensure that education priorities are based on a social and economic consensus. It would equally facilitate access to information on budget allocation, implementation and evaluation in a transparent manner. This would enhance a sense of ownership, which ultimately would result in improved quality service delivery.

The urgent tasks are to address limited capacities in the smooth implementation of the various mechanisms at decentralized levels and in institutionalizing regular and timely meetings of all relevant stakeholders.

Among the proposed action points related to governance were to hold annual reviews and consultation meetings to share experiences and promote accountability, to exchange best practice accounts (that could make use of existing monitoring and evaluation tools such as Community Score Cards) and to identify and build the capacity of different stakeholders to enable them to contribute to governance.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON GOVERNANCE

- Some countries have explicit ALE legislation but there were few new legislative developments and little progress in dealing with information management or accreditation or certification of ALE programmes.
- Most countries have some form of state governance of ALE, most commonly a department or unit or agency within a ministry of education. It is difficult to determine significant changes since 2009, as some new development may simply be a renaming or restructuring of previous ministries or directorates or new iterations of development plans.
- The extremely positive note was the near universal assessment that governance has improved greatly since 2009 – in stakeholder participation, inter-ministerial cooperation, decentralized arrangements, coordination, capacity-building and in monitoring and evaluation.

3. FINANCING

INTRODUCTION TO FINANCE DEVELOPMENTS

The Belém Framework committed countries and international bodies to continuing the slight progress made prior to 2009 in increasing funding for ALE. Specifically, countries were to (UIL, 2010c, pp 7–8):

- increase the share of resources allocated to ALE (and to education generally, with a benchmark of 6 per cent of GDP);
- integrate financial provision for ALE into various government departments as part of an integrated ALE strategy;
- establish transnational funding for ALE;
- create incentives for funding for ALE from non-state sectors;
- prioritize funding of ALE for vulnerable, marginalized and disabled people.

At a series of international events – especially the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development of 2015 – countries have been encouraged to set nationally appropriate spending targets on education, in order to increase and improve international and national financing for education.

A quarter of sub-Saharan African countries already spend at least 6 per cent of GDP on education (Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome et Principe, South Africa, Swaziland). However, generally, the amount spent on ALE is a very small percentage of overall educational expenditure.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN ALE

Public education spending refers to all national and local government spending on primary, secondary, tertiary and adult education. Only three countries reported spending 4 per cent or more of public education expenditure on adult education (see *Table 3.1*). This is not an unexpected finding given the dire financial impacts arising out of the global financial crises of 2008 and 2009.

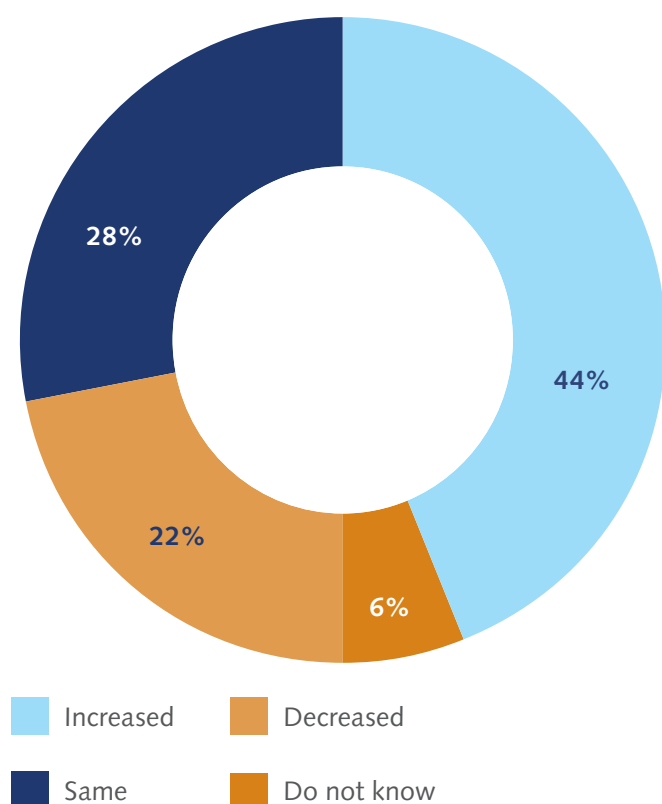
It is notable that 14 (44 per cent) countries reported that since 2009 there had been an actual increase in ALE spending (as a proportion of public education spending), though seven (22 per cent) noted a decrease. These increases may, unfortunately, be illusory, given the severe depreciation in the value of the majority of African currencies since 2009. It was disturbing that 23 per cent of respondents did not have information on this educational expenditure at all. More positive was the reporting that 24 (77 per cent) countries are planning to increase ALE spending.

Caution has to be expressed about assessing progress in increasing the funding of ALE over time. Like needs to be compared with like. If a broad definition of ALE is used, as applied to reporting on ALE financing, it may conceal the fact that there may have been little growth in funding of what had been previously and conventionally defined as adult education or non-formal education – literacy and adult basic education and second chance education. But, given the number of countries where we do not have data on ALE in all its forms, making judgements on the increase or decrease of funding is very difficult. This continues to hamper rational planning and decision-making in the sector.

Table 3.1: Percentage of education budget spent on ALE in sub-Saharan Africa

0%–0.4%	0.5%–0.9%	1%–1.9%	2%–3.9%	4% OR MORE	DO NOT KNOW	NO RESPONSE
8	1	7	5	3	7	2
26%	3%	23%	16%	10%	23%	—

Figure 3.1: Changes in ALE spending since 2009



SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS IN ALE FINANCING SINCE 2009

Although 13 (46 per cent) of responding countries claimed significant innovations since 2009 it was not clear in what sense these were particularly significant or innovative – mainly sharing costs with civil society partners or charging fees!

The examples below are mainly those of enhanced support funds.

- In **Benin**, the Support Fund for Literacy and Education in National Languages was reformed and opened up to technical and financial partners and civil society.
- **Burkina Faso** also started involving other stakeholders (ministries and institutions, associations and NGOs) in the field of financing of non-formal education so as to attract additional funding. There is a Fund for Literacy and Non-Formal Education.
- **Chad** also created a Support Fund for Literacy and Non-Formal Education in 2014.

- **Kenya** charges fees for adult secondary education (as most learners are in some kind of employment). In literacy and basic education learners may be asked to make some contributions that go towards payment of a stipend to volunteer facilitators.

- **South Africa** has continued throughout the post-2009 period to fund the large-scale Kha Ri Gude adult literacy campaign (which started in 2008), which pays the stipends of volunteer educators, supervisors and coordinators. Additional finance for the campaign is gained from servicing government work creation projects such as the Expanded Public Works Programme.

- Some countries have received new funding from international bodies; thus, for example, **Senegal's** literacy and nutrition programmes were funded by United Nations Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund.

- In May 2011, **Nigeria**, through the Federal Ministry of Education, signed a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO on establishing a self-benefiting fund to revitalize literacy in the country and providing technical assistance in its implementation. The Revitalising Adult and Youth Literacy Project in Nigeria 2012–2016 includes the use of e-learning through mobile phones and laptop computers, and targets 110,000 illiterate girls and women in a number of states. As an example of inter-regional support, this project built on an earlier UNESCO project in Senegal.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON FINANCE

- It is difficult to give a fair assessment of gains or setbacks in public ALE financing given, first, the austerities consequent on the global financial crisis of 2008 (and depreciation of many African currencies would have eroded the modest increases in ALE spending reported by some countries), and, second, by the total lack of data from at least a quarter of the countries.
- Generally, most countries spent less than 2 per cent of the national education budget on ALE.
- Positively, most countries have plans to increase spending on ALE, and nearly half the countries report innovations in ALE funding since 2009 (usually some form of cost-sharing with civil society partners).

4. PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN ALE PROGRAMMES

While it is pleasing that learner participation had increased in more than half (17) of the countries that returned questionnaires, it is disconcerting that eight countries (26 per cent) reported that they had no information on participation.

Countries' responses on the actual details of ALE participation were also minimal (12 only) and not very informative: two simply repeated definitions of what ALE was, four clearly confused participation rates (which should be a percentage of the adult population) with attendance or completion rates (which is a percentage of the people initially enrolled), and the age-group ranges (given by only seven countries) were all different (making inter-country comparisons impossible). Only two countries gave data sources and none an actual URL to access those data.

The lack of availability of data and the poor quality of data on participation remain big issues. Given the lack of accurate data, other information supplied in the

questionnaires may at best be 'guesstimates'. Without accurate standardized data on participation it is impossible to monitor the quality of programmes, ascertain whether the programmes are contextually and culturally relevant, or check on their cost-effectiveness.

DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATION BY MEN AND WOMEN

It is clear from *Figure 4.2* that the imbalance in participation by men and women is visible everywhere. Women predominate in adult education as a whole, in non-formal education and massively so in literacy. Men predominate in general education and massively so in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Both general education and TVET cost more to provide than literacy and non-formal education, and provision of TVET is in many countries far short of the potential demand. It seems that men are given preferential access to TVET.

An intriguing and almost counter-intuitive feature of current educational statistics for the region is that in those countries where most children of both sexes are at least

Figure 4.1: Participation in ALE since 2009

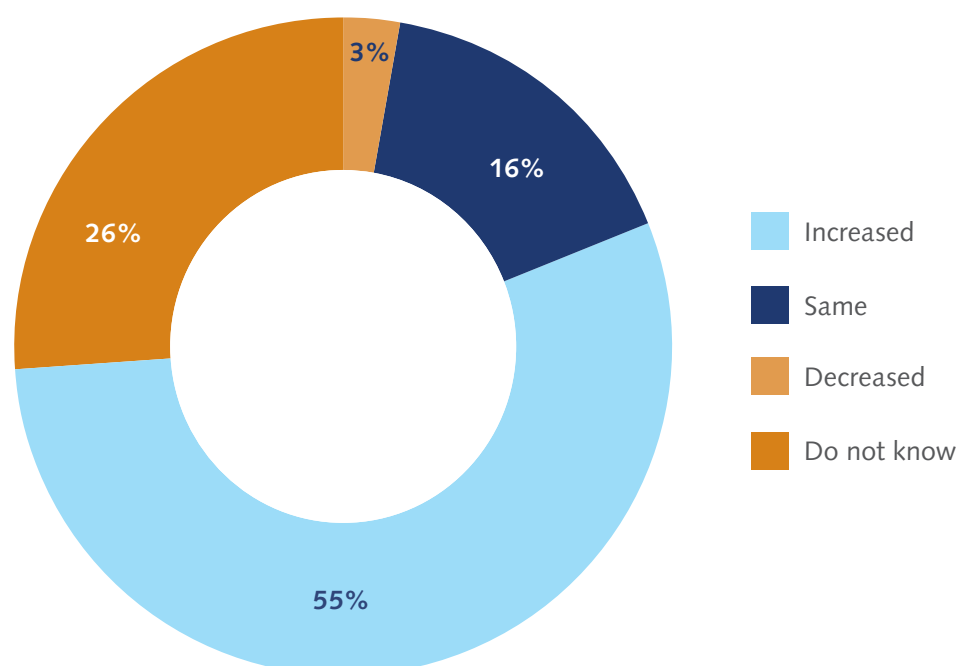
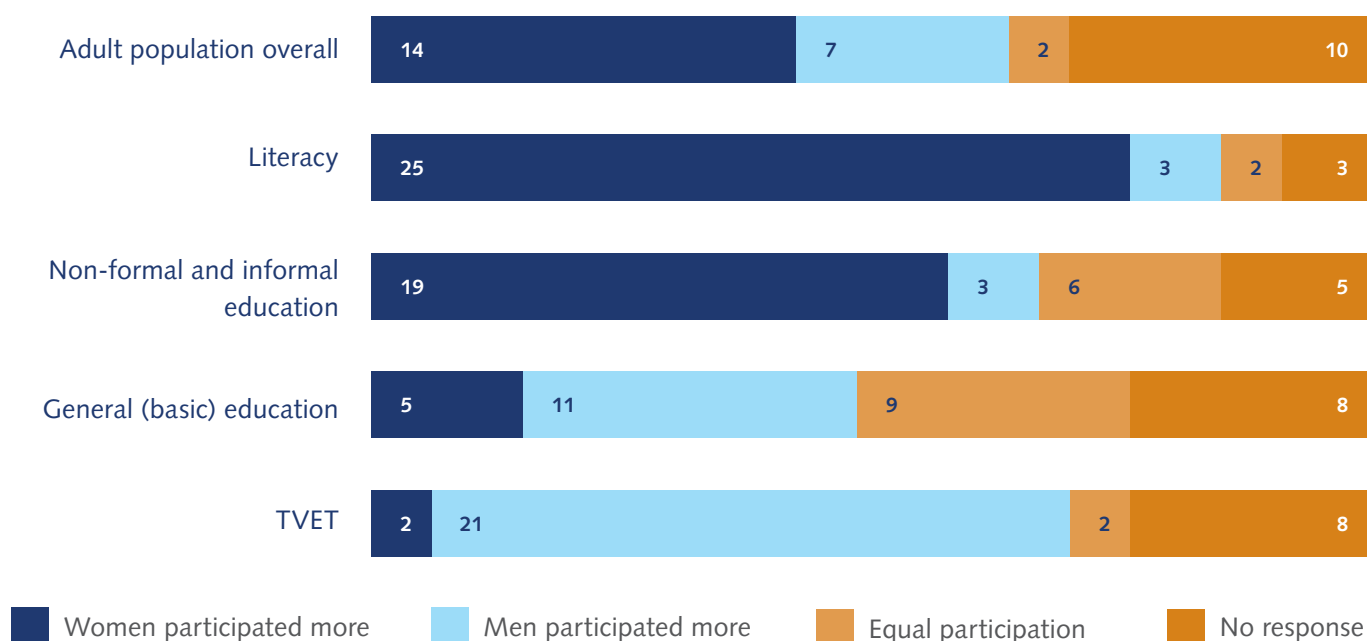


Figure 4.2: Differences in participation

attending primary school, there are higher percentages of males of school-going age who are out of school. Once there is equal participation by males and females in primary education, low levels of literacy may well become primarily a male problem. Regarding males as a special target of youth and adult education initiatives will be one of the key shifts that improved adult education provision has to make (Aitchison, 2012, p. 13).

CHANGES IN PARTICIPATION RATES

In accord with the general increases in participation, all the various categories of beneficiaries had increases, though predominantly among those with low levels of literacy and unemployed youth. Growth in participation among migrants, refugees, the disabled, the elderly, prisoners and the long-term unemployed was low – these are, after all, the hard-to-reach groups (See *Table 4.1* overleaf).

Table 4.1: Changes in participation rates in different categories of ALE

CATEGORY	RESPONSES (Number [Percentage of responses])				NO RESPONSE
	Increased	No change	Decreased	Do not know	
Adults with low-level literacy and basic skills	21 (72%)	3 (10%)	4 (14%)	1 (3%)	4
Young people not in education, employment or training	20 (80%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	8
Residents of rural and remote areas	17 (71%)	4 (17%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	9
All those seeking recognition for prior learning (especially non-formally and informally acquired)	15 (71%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	4 (19%)	12
Adults living with disability	13 (62%)	4 (19%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	12
Workers in low-skill, low-wage and precarious employment	12 (50%)	3 (13%)	1 (4%)	8 (33%)	9
The long-term unemployed	6 (33%)	2 (11%)	---	10 (56%)	15
Migrants and refugees from other countries	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	11 (55%)	13
Minority ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities and indigenous peoples	4 (25%)	3 (18%)	---	10 (59%)	16
Senior citizens/the retired (third-age education)	4 (21%)	3 (16%)	2 (11%)	10 (47%)	14

INNOVATIONS IN ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION SINCE 2009

Some 21 countries (78 per cent) claimed that they had experienced innovations that impacted on participation. From the details provided it is not always clear that these innovations were in fact really new post-2009 ones and there was a general failure to provide links to sources of evidence. Indeed, a majority seemed to be simply the implementation or expansion or updating or better publicizing of the usual sort of programmes.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

- More knowledge is needed about participation, the outcomes of participation and the quality of those outcomes.
- Understanding the dynamics of participation in ALE in sub-Saharan African is harmed by the inadequacy of information and statistics. A quarter of the countries were unable to provide participation data at all.
- It is clear that relatively few countries have developed knowledge-management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of both quantitative and qualitative data on participation.
- Developing and running such systems should be a priority and be supported by international partners and particularly the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.
- Participation is reported to be growing and there is a broad sense of those areas of provision which women have difficulty in accessing. Women predominate in adult education as a whole, in non-formal education and massively so in literacy. Men predominate in general education and massively so in technical and vocational education and training.
- With the growth of universal primary education with equal participation by males and females, low levels of literacy may well become primarily a male problem in the future.
- Growth in participation was low among hard-to-reach groups – migrants, refugees, the disabled, the elderly, prisoners and the long-term unemployed.
- There is little information about new approaches or uses of information and communication technology.

-
- **Burkina Faso** had special sub-programmes paying attention to issues of access and quality.
 - **Chad** and **Tanzania** used new strategies (e.g. faire-faire) or literacy methods (REFLECT, Yo sí puedo – though these are hardly innovations), and Chad used a new funding mechanism.
 - **Kenya** provided a number of interesting examples: men-only classes have been established in remote areas as men do not like mixing with women due to cultural differences; mobile classes and libraries have been established in areas where people are nomadic; evening classes have been opened in the larger urban centres for learners who are working during the day; some learners have been involved in developing their own reading materials; and individualized paid-for tuition has been given to some older and wealthy people who would not like to be identified as illiterate – they are now taught separately in their homes and the times they choose.
 - **Mauritius** has developed new formal qualifications for literacy educators and a second-chance programme which aims to inculcate basic numeracy and literacy skills in youth aged 16 to 21 years who have dropped out of school and who are neither in full-time employment nor full-time training and then orient them to vocational training programmes. The objectives of the programme are to develop reading, writing and communication skills, life skills and a positive attitude, to psychologically prepare young people for the world of work and to provide recognition of prior learning.
 - Some countries now link literacy provision with skills acquisition (**Nigeria**). Other countries link programmes with various sectoral development activities (health, agriculture, industry, micro-finance, etc.) (**Mauritius, Senegal**).
 - **Zambia** expanded parallel programmes for in-service and distance education for pre-service and in-service in colleges and universities.
-

5. QUALITY

The theme of quality is increasingly important in discourse about education. The Belém Framework for Action urged that quality be looked at in ‘content and modes of delivery, learner-centred needs assessment, the acquisition of multiple competences and knowledge, the professionalization of educators, the enrichment of learning environments and the empowerment of individuals and communities’.

Although it can be argued that quality was hard to achieve when education as a whole was under-resourced and effective schooling available only to a minority, the growing scale of general education provision brings its own quality problems. Easier access and greater participation in education may compromise quality outcomes because of a lack of qualified educators and materials and unbearable loads on infrastructure. To put it another way: the increasing access and participation in primary schooling may have knock-on effects when the primary

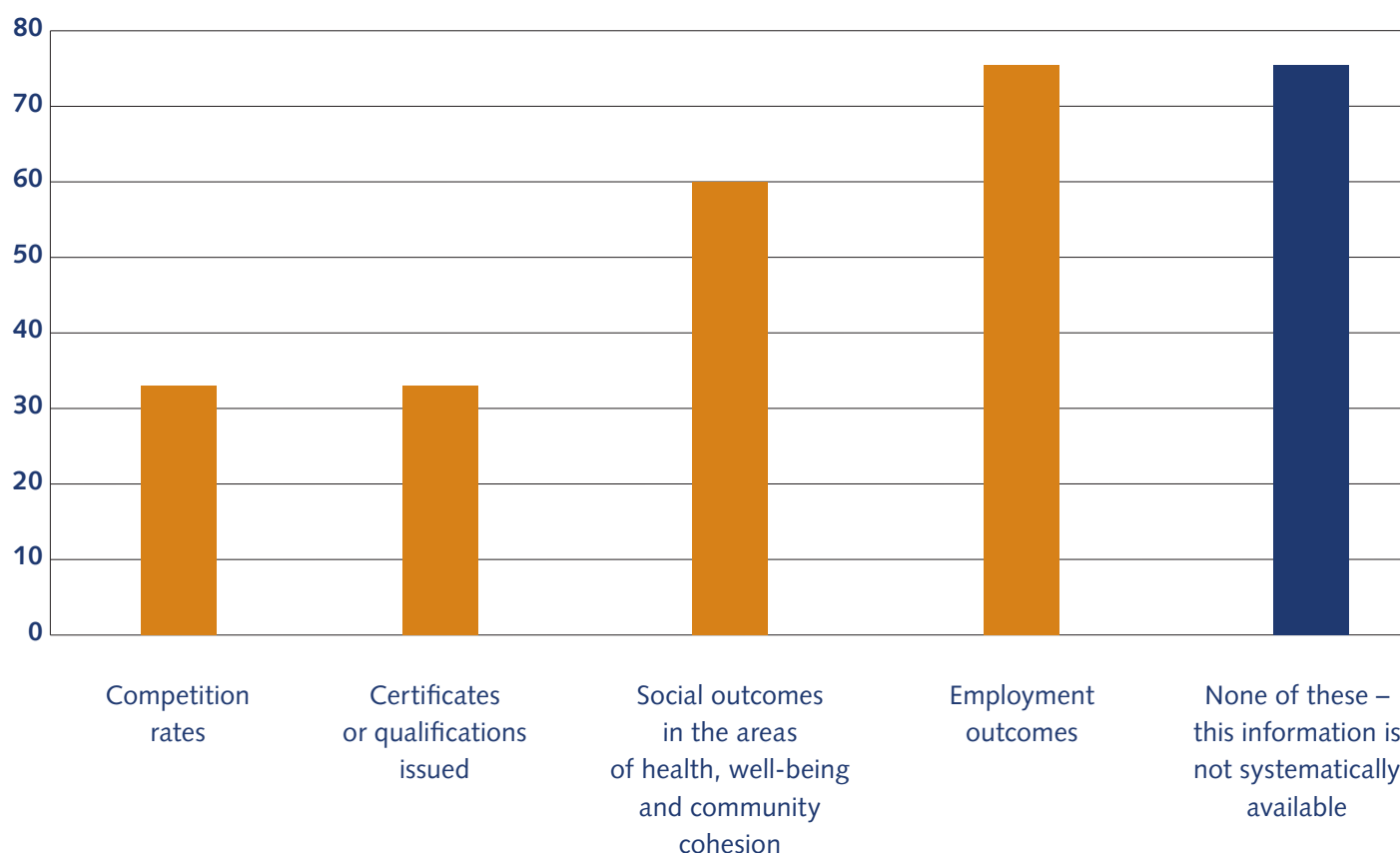
school system ejects large numbers of underprepared students (who become a further ALE burden).

To be able to judge quality there has to be systematic collection of accurate information and substantial research to back up and interrogate that data. Areas that have to be looked at include the pre-service, in-service and continuing development of educators and trainers and the qualifications they hold, as well as the curricula they teach and the materials they use.

IS INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY OF ALE SYSTEMATICALLY COLLECTED?

From country responses it would seem that some information on quality is being collected, ranging from 11 countries which collect information on completion rates (a disturbingly low figure) to 25 countries which collect information on employment outcomes.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of countries that systematically collect quality-related information on ALE



Yet, 25 countries also said that information was simply not available on quality outcomes. This is an obvious contradiction.

The low level of collection of completion and certification data calls into question the reliability of the relatively high amount of information collection on social and labour-market outcomes.

It is probable that in most countries the social and employment data collected for various uses is largely that derived from general household and community surveys of a census type, which are highly unlikely to be able to directly link ALE provision data to such complex outcomes.

Only a couple of countries gave details of the specific activities on which they collected information:

Chad collected data on participation in school management, fertilizer use, the creation of income-generating activities, animal husbandry, rights and duties and civic spirit.

Togo gave a long list of what data are collected:

- Attendance rates at adult education and non-formal education centres (as a percentage of all adults)
- Illiteracy rates for those aged 15 to 45 years
- Number of students enrolled
- Number of children of 9–14 years attending
- Headcount by region and prefecture
- Employees by area (rural/urban/suburban)
- Proportion of women and girls in the workforce
- Success rate
- Socio-economic inclusion rate
- Learner drop-out rate
- Ratio of the materials in each language
- Educator : learner ratio
- Ratio of learners : manuals
- Number of textbooks produced by language that comply with curricula
- Number of adult education materials developed and disseminated
- New curricula introduced and implemented
- Number of books/media for post-literacy produced and disseminated

TEACHING QUALITY: ARE THERE INITIAL, PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR ALE EDUCATORS?

Good educator training is a known positive quality factor. Generally, there were positive indications that ALE educators and trainers were receiving pre-service training in 27 (84 per cent) of the countries. Pre-service qualifications were increasingly required in 29 (91 per cent) of the countries (though only 44 per cent of countries required them for all programmes). Some 16 countries said that they had done analyses of the quality criteria for teaching and learning, e.g. in curricula and methods.

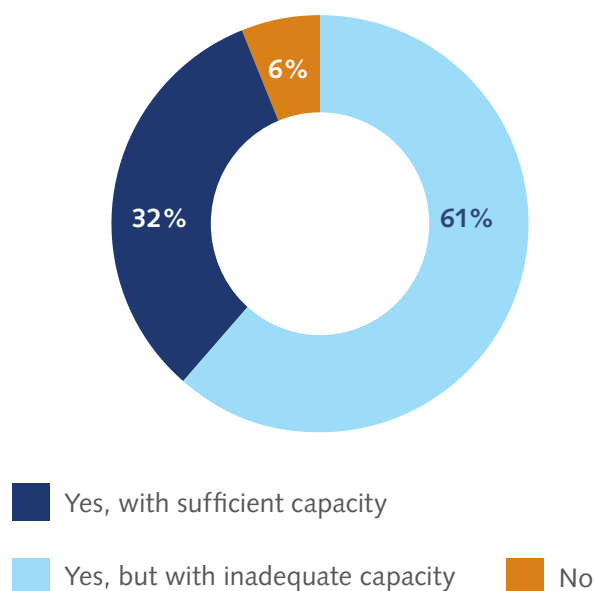
In some countries, some or many ALE educators/facilitators/trainers still work on a voluntary, unpaid basis and receive little training.

ARE THERE CONTINUING, IN-SERVICE PROGRAMMES FOR ADULT EDUCATORS?

There are also significant signs of the growth of in-service and continuing education and training for practitioners; though it was noted that 19 countries (61 per cent) had inadequate capacity, 10 (32 per cent) had sufficient capacity.

One can conclude that the professionalization of adult educators is increasing, though the process is under-resourced.

Figure 5.2:
Are initial pre-service qualifications required?



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION SINCE 2009

Apart from the influence of research, there were a number of interventions directed at quality improvement in the region. Some 16 countries (59 per cent) said that there had been quality improvements over this period.

- **Benin** has set up a literacy programme quality-control mechanism in each department (province or sub-region) comprising the departmental director for literacy, the departmental coordinator for literacy, and a school inspector. They collect data on quality standards compliance and hold annual reviews.
- **Burkina Faso** has guidelines on the experimentation and validation of innovations.
- **Chad** checks the educational and socio-economic outcomes of the new Minimal Literacy Programme.
- **Cote d'Ivoire** is developing specific curricula for each target group.
- **Ethiopia** improved its supervision practice.
- **Kenya** has an Integrated Education Management System. Books used in ALE programmes have been revised to make them more relevant. Computers are being introduced into education facilities.
- **Madagascar**, with CAPEFA support and through a sectoral consultative process, strengthened the quality of TVET policies and programmes, produced and used TVET statistical workbooks, and developed sustainable capacities in producing and using TVET statistical yearbooks as well as an innovative and participatory approach for targeting out-of-school youth and matching skills supply and demand for rural development. In addition, two literacy-teaching approaches were adapted for use in TVET programmes. Capacity-development in data collection and processing was provided by experts from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics for TVET managers and regional directorates for improving data quality.
- **Mali** has renovated the curricula of all components of non-formal education by introducing a lifelong learning perspective to all of them.
- Through its Mauritius Qualifications Authority, **Mauritius** has registered literacy programmes and qualifications for literacy educators and instituted recognition of prior learning for people in a second-chance programme.

- **Malawi** had a curriculum review.
- **Nigeria** has made greater use of the mass medium of radio to enhance literacy programmes.
- **Senegal** has adopted a competency based approach in the flexible curriculum used in educator training and also uses ICTs in this.
- **Zambia** developed guidelines for open and distance education providers.
- **Zimbabwe** undertook a curriculum review.
- Assessment of literacy and adult basic education learners was improved in **Kenya** (with annual literacy proficiency tests), **South Africa** (with literacy campaign assessment of learners and a massive national moderation and verification of that assessment), **Zambia** and **Zimbabwe**.
- Many countries improved their learner materials (particularly in local languages).

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

- It is clear that quality is on the African ALE agenda, and there are some positive developments. In the context of the clear focus on quality in the Incheon Declaration, it will undoubtedly gain in importance in the next decades.
- Pre-service qualifications are increasingly required in nearly all countries (at least for some programmes) and there is growth in in-service and continuing education for practitioners (though the capacity for this is limited).
- Notable interventions were the assessment process in the Kha Ri Gude literacy programme in South Africa and annual literacy tests in Kenya, for literacy has long been an area where quality assessment of learner progress was rare.
- The number of countries engaging in curriculum reviews, the development of new materials and the introduction of new instructional approaches has also grown.
- With support from international programmes such as CapED (the reshaped successor to CapEFA that is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 – 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' – and Agenda 2030, sustainable improvements in monitoring and evaluation capacity are being made. This is essential for checking that quality improvements are real.
- However, the continuing lack of data on quality improvements and innovation may hamper a fair assessment of progress in the region. Only about a third of the countries collect information on completion rates.

6. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

There is evidence of inter-state cooperation within the sub-Saharan Africa region, particularly in West Africa, though it is often difficult to evaluate either quantitatively or qualitatively the full extent of collaboration with non-African countries and with international agencies.

RESPONSES TO INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS AND POLICY INFLUENCES

Many states have responded positively to international declarations related to education in general and to ALE in particular. This was most obvious in relation to the Dakar Declaration of 2000 with its deadline of 2015 for reaching various literacy and other targets.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

A CONFINTEA VI follow-up Regional Expert Meeting was held in November 2012 in Praia, Cabo Verde, with the objectives of identifying successful examples of adult education policy and practice and developing effective regional action points for implementing the Belém Framework for Action. It was organized by UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in Africa and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Many countries report on attending various international workshops on ALE and in particular on literacy, as well as more generally on education, including through the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

There have been ongoing developments in sub-regional frameworks, particularly on capacity building. One of the most impressive of these has been the Action Research on Measuring Literacy Programme Participants' Learning Outcomes project, known by its French acronym RAMAA (Recherche-action sur la mesure des apprentissages des bénéficiaires des programmes d'alphabétisation). The project develops capacities for evaluating and monitoring literacy programmes at national and sub-regional levels. Countries involved in the first phase were Burkina Faso, Mali, Morocco, Niger and Senegal. The second phase of this project will support 12 national universities in building a sub-regional doctoral school in measurement of

literacy learning outcomes. The project is managed by UIL in partnership with UNESCO offices in West Africa with support from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and technical and financial partners from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the African Development Bank and ADEA.

The first phase of the project has produced positive results leading to redevelopment of national literacy policies and strategies, for example in Niger. The Phase 2 plan, with 12 countries committed, includes improving the quality of the existing measurement tools, revision of the competence framework and the strengthening of governance.

ADEA, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and UIL have launched Zankey Faba, an innovative network to focus on the specific needs of vulnerable young people in Africa in the fields of literacy and life skills and general youth development. The new network arose from a multi-country research and policy dialogue process entitled 'Literacy and Life Skills Education for Vulnerable Youth', which was launched in 2010 by the Canadian International Development Agency and UIL. Zankey Faba is a direct response to the action points developed at the CONFINTEA VI follow-up meeting in Cabo Verde in 2012.

FUNDING COOPERATION AND RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Some countries have received new funding from international bodies. Thus, for example, Senegal's literacy and nutrition programmes were funded by United Nations Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Education has a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO on the establishing of a self-benefiting fund to revitalize literacy in the country; UNESCO administers this fund to support the Revitalising Adult and Youth Literacy Project and provides technical assistance in its implementation. Chad has CapED (previously CapEFA) support for the development of educational materials for literacy and non-formal basic education and pilot production in local languages. The Swiss Development Cooperation is funding a four-year project to boost the quality of adult education educators, facilitators and trainers and to improve the teaching/learning environment.

The German Adult Education Association, DVV International, has long been a sponsor of long-term partnership and adult educator training capacity-building in ALE in Africa, and currently is focusing, via its regional offices, on work in East Africa (Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Sudan), Southern Africa (South Africa, Mozambique Zimbabwe and Angola) and West Africa (Mali and Guinea). In 2012, DVV International, together with the Open Society Initiative Southern Africa, published baseline studies on youth and adult learning in Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland conducted by a sub-regional team (Aitchison, 2012; Figueria and Inácio, 2012; Jele, 2012; Luis, 2012; Setoi, 2012; Shaleyfu, 2012).

International agencies such as the Commonwealth of Learning and UIL are supporting a project in Mauritius to develop recognition of prior learning policy and process in identifying, assessing and validating the previous learning and competencies of beneficiaries, developing guidelines for facilitators and assessors, and developing tools, methods and didactic materials.

ALE knowledge-management systems are generally weak in the region, and there have been various technical support initiatives to build up data-collecting and analysis capacity. Allied to the need for better data on participation is the need for research on impacts arising from ALE that is evidence-based and well-communicated. Support for building such research capacity has come from UIL and other international organizations. Good examples of these internationally supported research interventions are the previously mentioned RAMAA programme and the DVV International/Open Society Initiative five-nation study on youth and adult learning and education in Southern Africa.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- The sub-Saharan region's responses to international declarations and policy influences have been positive (most obviously so to that of Dakar 2000 with its literacy and other targets).
- There have also been positive developments in quality-related regional research, particularly with the action-research RAMAA programmes in West Africa, and in regional cooperation such as the youth development Zankye Faba network, which was an outcome of the 2012 Cabo Verde meeting.
- The region is very dependent on funding cooperation and research and technical support and there are positive examples of this that have been supported by UNESCO, CapEFA (now CapED), DVV International, the Commonwealth of Learning and UIL.
- The weakness of, or lack of, ALE knowledge management systems in sub-Saharan Africa is an ongoing limiting factor in cooperation.

7. THE IMPACT OF ALE ON HEALTH, WORK AND SOCIETY

What is the interaction between ALE and society, particularly as regards dimensions of life such as work, physical and mental health, and social well-being? It is difficult to answer such a question in the African context given the dearth of actual research on the impact of ALE in Africa⁶ and the multiplicity of factors influencing human life. Many of the links between ALE and broader social and economic outcomes are undoubtedly indirect. Also, it is difficult to distinguish the impact of ALE from the more general beneficial influence of better access to primary schooling, as indicated in this statement from Tanzania (UNESCO, 2011, p. 43):

The primary level thus has the greatest impact on social outcomes, contributing to almost 60 per cent of the total impact of education on social development, which further reinforces the justification for efforts made to ensure that all Tanzanian children complete at least the primary cycle. At equal investment, the efficiency of the primary cycle in enhancing human development is 2.4 times higher than that of the secondary cycle.

It is increasingly recognized that ALE operates in multiple dimensions, not just in the conventional overtly 'adult education' ones. It also becomes increasingly difficult to separate out whether, in a particular ALE programme, it is the general literacy and adult education that makes an impact, or whether it is specific content and skills training embedded in the programme (related to such things as nutrition, food security, health education and income-generating skills) that makes the difference. Good examples of this are seen in the way a number of countries have included health education into ALE programmes and materials: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Uganda.

Is health education conducted by hospitals and clinics ALE? Is agricultural extension ALE? In the broad definition sense, yes, they probably can be so categorised, and the reporting on ALE needs to take this into account.⁷ But the downside of so doing may disguise the extent to which there is direct state support for ALE programmes.

Sub-Saharan countries differ in many respects from the rest of the world in the general incidence of poverty, the high rates of illiteracy, the much lower degree of industrialization, the youthfulness of the populations, and the nature of health issues (notably in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS). This affects the types of ALE current in African countries and the nature of their possible impact.

Generally, in the last few decades there has been increasing evidence that adult education has a positive impact on the development of a society and the psycho-social well-being of its citizens and their health. This has influenced both the Millennium Development Goals and the new Sustainable Development Goals and their incorporation of educational goals.

Has the reality of this evidence reached the policy-makers and opinion setters? Can they direct policy, planning and the implementation of ALE programmes towards outcomes that really make a positive difference to people's lives? This was a major theme of *GRALE III*, which dedicated substantive discussion to the interaction between ALE and health, work and life in society.

DO POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS RECOGNIZE THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ALE?

Responses suggest that ALE is indeed increasingly seen by policy-makers and practitioners as having a positive

⁶ What very limited research evidence exists is often found in more general studies of a country's education system, for example the Tanzania Education Sector Analysis (UNESCO, 2011), which tend to show the clear positive impact of education (and particularly primary education) on health and social behaviours.

⁷ There is a downside to the recognition of the existence of ALE in multiple sectors. It may be reported that ALE is directly financially supported by the state when what is being supported is in a health or agricultural programme, while conventional adult education of a general nature through literacy and second-chance programmes does not receive direct state support on the scale needed.

general impact on the community and as being useful in the health education of the poorly educated. This recognition has somewhat less traction in the difficult area of employment and skills training.

Given this positive perception of the benefits of ALE, has this led to changes in ALE policies? The responses are a resounding, Yes! This is shown in the two charts under 'Knowledge of the benefits of ALE'.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE BENEFITS OF ALE

The data in these two charts tell a somewhat complex story. In *Figure 7.1*, the benefits of ALE are seen as impacting most on society as a whole, then on health and well-being, and much less on direct employment and market outcomes.

However, *Figure 7.2* shows that the economic returns to individuals and society are seen as having as strong an impact as non-economic returns.

Figure 7.1: Who benefits?

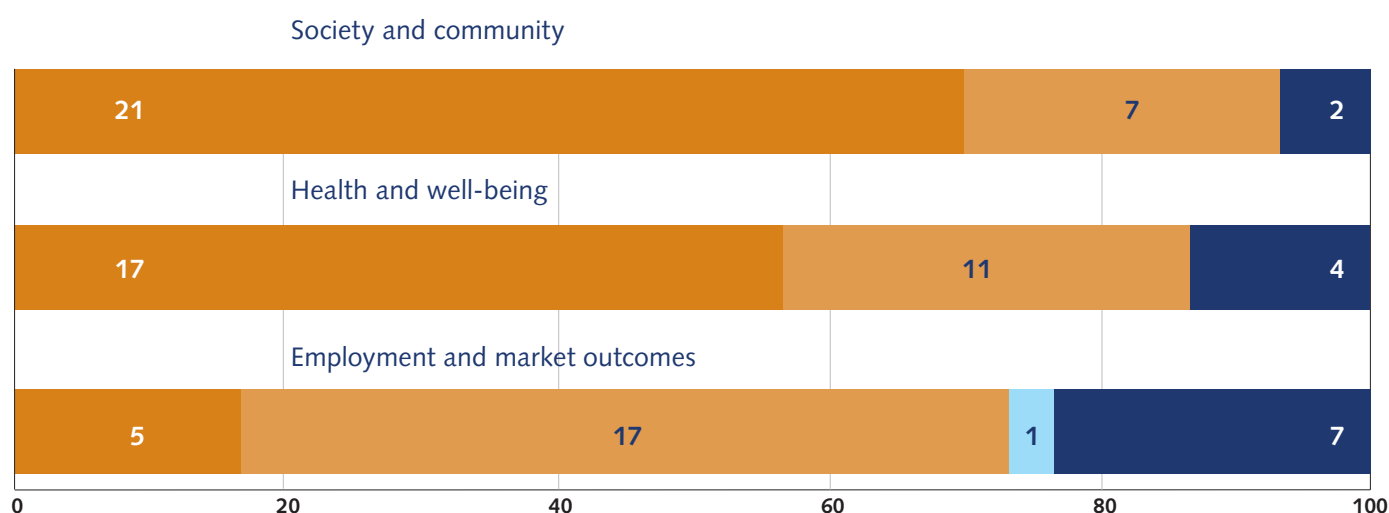
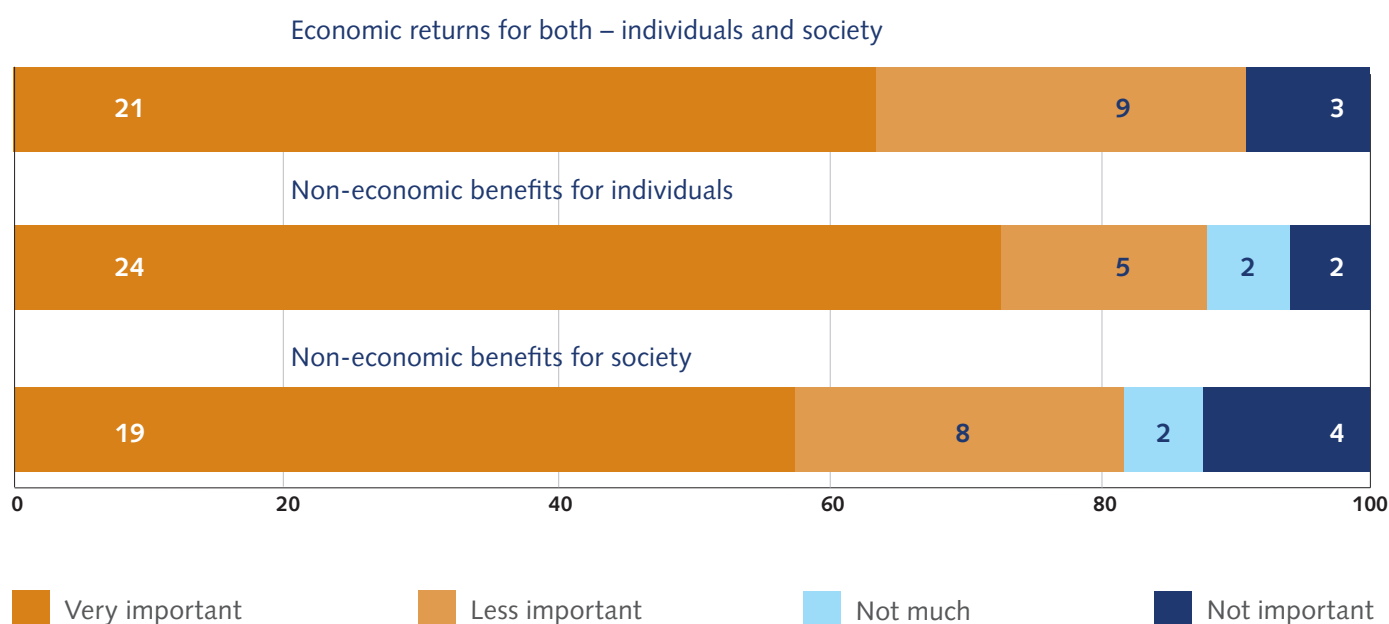


Figure 7.2: What are the benefits?



It is interesting that, though policy-makers' knowledge of the economic benefits of ALE was weaker than their knowledge of its benefits for health and social well-being, the actual policies highlighted the economic impacts of ALE.

Some countries, such as Senegal, claim to have developed literacy programmes that focus on nutrition and child and food security, themes which bring together health, education, agriculture and industry and are linked to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Some 93 per cent of responding countries (27) stated that ALE policy and practice recognize the contribution that ALE can make to personal health and well-being. According to 52 per cent (14 countries) such policies and practice also follow the World Health Organization's holistic approach to health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1946).

Over two-thirds of the countries believed there was evidence that ALE impacted on health by making the environment healthier (through community action), helping maternal health, providing knowledge of disease-prevention and

accessing treatment, and aiding sexual and reproductive health. Over a third also saw ALE's benefits in advancing healthy lifestyles, mental health and general well-being.

Eggoh et al. (2015) in their study of 49 African countries over the period from 1996 to 2010 found that though public expenditures on education and health did take investment away from economic growth, the human capital benefit from efficient and effective education and health expenditure was positive (the reason education and health were given priority in the Millennium Development Goals). They do note, however, that education and health expenditures must exceed a threshold to have positive effects on growth (p. 107). They recommend that education and health spending are complementary and should be jointly increased.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES ALE POLICY AND PRACTICE RELATED TO HEALTH MEAN?

In many of the examples given in questionnaire returns it is not clear that ALE as such was responsible for these positive impacts as it is not clearly distinguished from the effects of such things as greater access to primary schooling and health education at hospitals, clinics and in the mass media.

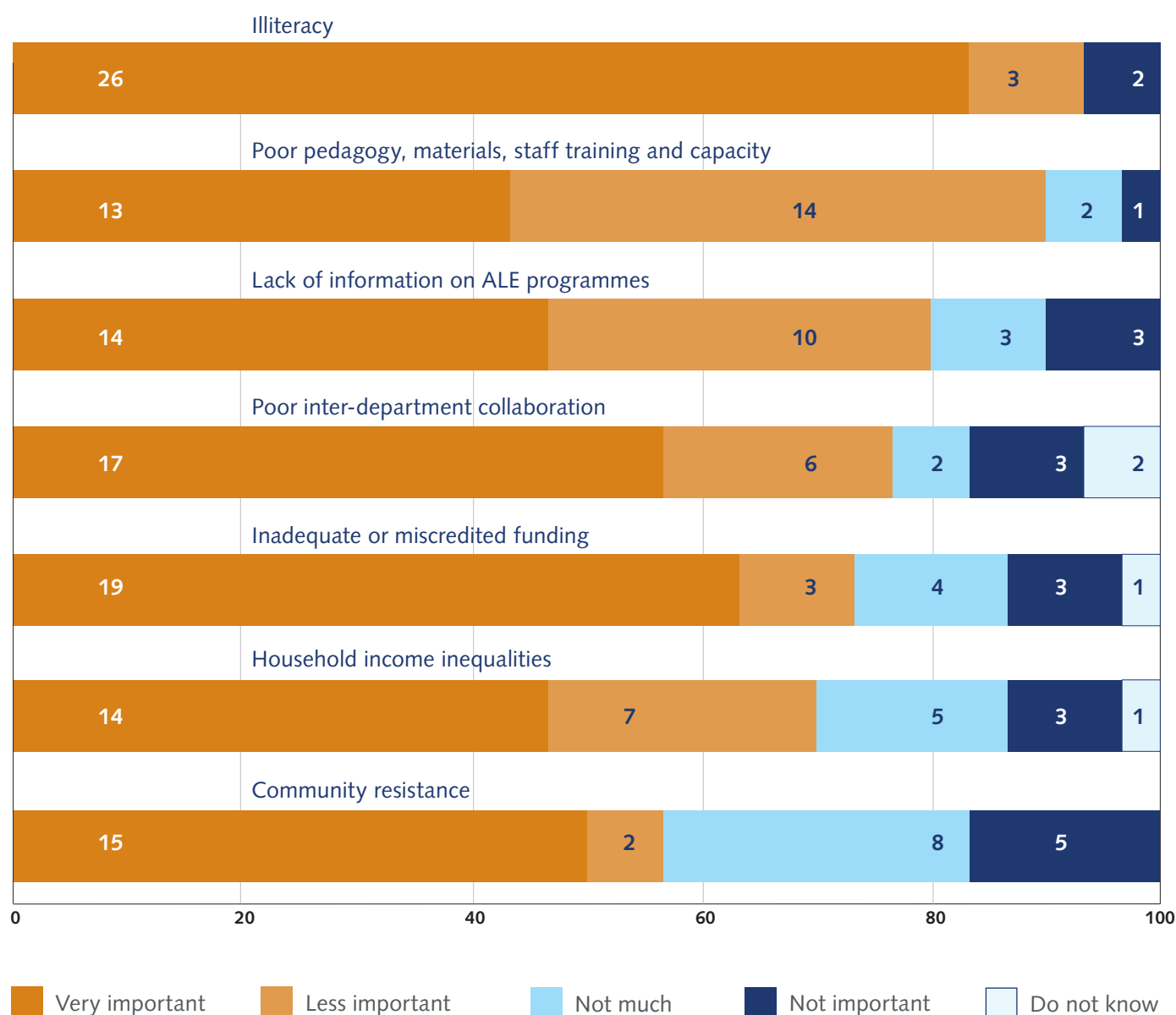
Table 7.1: Health-related ALE policies and practices

CATEGORY	COUNTRIES
ALE link to health noted in ALE policy frameworks	Benin, Cabo Verde, Kenya
Health education integrated into ALE programmes and especially literacy programmes [Note: Sometimes the health-related content in programmes concentrates on HIV/AIDS]	Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire (plans to), Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Uganda
Health education integrated into ALE materials	Benin, Guinea, South Africa
WHO holistic approach included in policies, decrees and programmes	Chad, Kenya
Special ALE programmes for the disabled	Gabon, South Africa

- Some countries, such as **Guinea-Bissau** and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, cited health surveys that show improvements in the health field by way of better coverage of vaccinations for various diseases, higher rates of breastfeeding and the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, but again it was not clear how directly ALE could be linked to such improvements.
- **Ethiopia's** Integrated Functional Adult Education Programme provides health education and influences the fact that the majority of mothers went to health centres to give birth and have knowledge of disease-preventive measures.

- Those who have gone through ALE programmes in **Kenya** have improved health status and living standards. They also take their children to hospitals for vaccinations to prevent communicable (especially childhood) diseases.
- **South Africa** has had a number of successful HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. The 2012 National Communication Survey on HIV/AIDS found the country's HIV communication programmes were having a positive effect, particularly on youth (aged 15–24). By contrast, knowledge around safe breastfeeding practices among pregnant mothers living with HIV remained low.

Figure 7.3: Barriers to ALE impact on health



WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE ALE FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?

Reinforcing the general African focus on literacy and post-literacy programmes, the dominant perception held by 84 per cent of countries is that illiteracy is the main barrier to a healthy life.

The only other two barriers seen as high on the very important scale are inadequate or misdirected funding and poor inter-departmental collaboration.

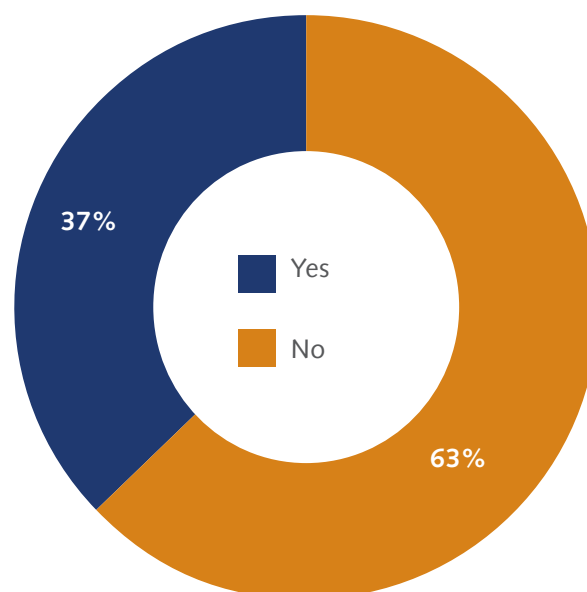
ARE THERE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL OR CROSS-SECTORAL COORDINATING BODIES FOR ALE FOR PROMOTING PERSONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?

Given the perception that poor interdepartmental cooperation is a significant barrier to ALE having a beneficial impact on health and well-being, what is the situation in sub-Saharan countries?

This is an area for development, as less than 40 per cent of countries had such an inter-departmental coordinating mechanism for health. Some countries do have an inter-departmental or cross-sectoral coordinating body for ALE in a more general sense, not just health matters. Often this body is the ministry of education or a section thereof.

- In South Africa the social cluster of ministries leads intergovernmental coordination between agencies and state departments involved in the health and well-being of the population.
- Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and Child Care plans to implement coordination of health education and promotion of activities in the country.
- In Cabo Verde the Adult Education Service has the task of coordinating, promoting and supporting educational activities and adult education throughout life, working with other organizations and institutions in the implementation of actions for cultural promotion and the professional qualifying of young people and adults.
- Ethiopia's Ministry of Education is the coordinating body, with a mandate to chair and lead the other ministries to facilitate the coordination among them from Federal down to regions, zonal and woreda** levels.

Figure 7.4:
Countries possessing inter-departmental coordinating mechanism for health



LIFELONG LEARNING, EMPLOYABILITY AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Does ALE have a positive impact on various aspects of the economy and employment in Africa?

The ways in which education, skills and life circumstances affect employability depend on the particular country's economic and social structures, though in the contemporary world participation in lifelong learning and improved employability are connected (Babos et al., 2015). The way an individual copes with changing economic and social environment is, in a major way, connected to his or her employments prospects. Employability, the ability to find, keep or change a job position when an individual needs or wishes to, is determined by combination of attitude, knowledge and skills. These interact with personal characteristics and background conditions and the way in which an individual performs in the labour market. Engaging in lifelong learning – life-long and life-wide – is a natural response to the new demands on individual skills (Rubenson, 2002). As such, lifelong learning is an optimal candidate for the interconnecting support element of social policy and is in particular well suited to target enhanced employability.

** Woreda is the third-level administrative division of Ethiopia.

Discussion and data⁸ on this connection are confusing, as it is often hard to distinguish ALE from formal technical and vocational training, and also from the beneficial impact of such things as a rise in the general level of literacy (caused by better primary schooling) on an economy. The *GRALE III* questionnaire claims for benefit are modest, reflective of the relatively low rating of the evidence for ALE in the context of the labour market. The examples given by countries are also few in number.

- **Burkina Faso** states that non-formal education has improved living and working conditions. There is a support programme for the sectoral policy for technical and vocational education and training.
- In **Gambia**, a 2009 beneficiary impact survey of a community skill improvement project found that ALE interventions had made some changes in the lives of some beneficiaries: encouraged a culture of saving in banks, developed marketing and income generating skills, ability to read health information, etc.
- **Guinea** has a support project sponsored by DVV International for the peanut industry of Boké, working with 24 peanut producer groups in the four rural communes of Boké and its surroundings. It directly reached 912 people, 622 of them women, and indirectly reached 92 intermediaries (specialized dealers and female peanut processors) working with the 24 economic interest groups. The total beneficiaries are estimated at about 64,323 persons (16 per cent of the local population) (Bah, 2012). The project was well-monitored and data on success indicators was collected semi-annually and annually.
- **Kenya** states that beneficiaries have been able to engage in self-employment and some have been able to pursue further education by enrolling for adult secondary education. Some who were formally illiterate or semi-literate have acquired certificates and got salaried employment in government service or in the private sector. Others have earned promotion to higher grades in their employment after going through the programme and gaining certificates.

- In **Malawi**, graduates from adult literacy centres gain new community respect and positions in civic society. Many now aspire to continue their education.
- **Senegal** has literacy programmes related to Millennium Development Goals linked to food security and nutrition that bring together health, education, agriculture and industry. Changes in behaviour and economic and social practices, better citizen participation in and benefits from local development are seen as ALE impacts.
- In **Sao Tome et Principe**, people in agriculture now work through fair trade structures and get better prices for their produce. Many ALE learners move on to better jobs.
- **Senegal** found better productivity and facilitation of the flow of products among working literate women, plus increased self-confidence and motivation.
- In **Togo**, development programmes and companies that have integrated literacy as a component of implementation of their programmes or as input for business productivity play a role (an example is the Togolese Cotton Company).
- In **Tanzania**, the programmes for ALE are designed to enable learners to improve their livelihoods and also participate in the development of their country. Folk Development Colleges (modelled on those of Sweden) between 2001 and 2010 provided 221,716 adults with skills in different trades, including agriculture, carpentry, masonry, tailoring and mechanics. A majority of the graduates (54 per cent) were self-employed, 39 per cent were involved in agriculture and masonry, 33 per cent of the female graduates in rural areas were tailors (also involved in agriculture), and 47 per cent of urban women were tailors. A very few graduates (about 2 per cent) were engaged in private garages doing mechanical work. Also, 57 per cent of technicians in the villages surrounding the colleges were graduates from these colleges, mainly in carpentry, masonry and tailoring. Half of the graduates had built decent houses, could pay for their children's education and were healthy, demonstrating that ALE had a significant impact on people's lives (UNESCO, 2011, p. 257).

⁸ Only eight countries cited surveys showing the impact of ALE on economic matters and these were largely census-type household or labour market surveys. There are some new action research literacy impact studies (Action Research: Measuring Literacy Programme Participants' Learning Outcomes, Bolly and Jonas, 2015) that will start to provide useful evidence. The South African Kha Ri Gude adult literacy campaign has a mass of as yet unanalysed data on this matter.

- In **Uganda**, the beneficiaries of ALE (both men and women) have started income-generating activities; some have become local civic leaders and some have gained employment.
- In **Zimbabwe**, functional literacy has led to increased knowledge of jobs and the ability to use new technologies. Women, in particular, improve their prospects.

There was not much accessible documentation to confirm this evidence. Reference was made to the activities of ministries, departments, agencies and NGOs, sometimes to internet sites, and to personal observation of provision and participation happening – but participation in provision is not the same as the impact of the provision on learning, skills and employment advancement. Also, sometimes the sources clearly are dealing

Table 7.2: Perceived productivity (blue) and employment (white) effects of ALE

CATEGORY	STRONG	MODEST	NO EFFECT	DO NOT KNOW	NO RESPONSE
Literacy and basic skills	22 (73%)	8 (27%)	--	--	3
	9 (33%)	16 (59%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	6
Initial vocational education and training	16 (53%)	14 (47%)	--	--	3
	9 (33%)	17 (63%)	--	1 (4%)	6
Continuing vocational education and training	17 (61%)	10 (36%)	1 (4%)	--	5
	13 (52%)	8 (32%)	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	8
Informal workplace learning	10 (37%)	17 (63%)	--	--	6
	9 (35%)	12 (46%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	7
Company training	13 (48%)	10 (37%)	1 (4%)	3 (11%)	6
	9 (33%)	12 (44%)	2 (7%)	4 (15%)	6
Self-directed learning	10 (37%)	13 (48%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	6
	4 (15%)	16 (62%)	1 (4%)	5 (19%)	7
Advanced professional education	14 (56%)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	8
	13 (48%)	9 (33%)	1 (4%)	4 (15%)	6
Distance education and e-learning	8 (32%)	8 (32%)	3 (12%)	6 (24%)	8
	7 (27%)	11 (42%)	2 (8%)	6 (23%)	7

with conventional schooling, not ALE. Sometimes, better employability as a result of ALE was interpreted as applying to increases in the number of staff in ALE provision. Namibia was particularly frank when it stated that 'No systematic evidence is available. We might have to commission a study to get the evidence.'

HOW STRONGLY DO ALE POLICYMAKERS PERCEIVE THE EFFECTS OF ALE PROVISION ON PRODUCTIVITY AND EMPLOYMENT?

This question sought to find out what types of ALE provision were thought to have had most impact on productivity and employment (See *Table 7.2* on previous page).

In most countries, ALE was thought to have an impact on both productivity and employment, though it was a much more powerful factor on productivity. This may reflect the high unemployment rates in the formal economy. Employability had its strongest effect in continuing vocational education and training and advanced professional education.

SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

Lifelong learning in its social aspects addresses the continuous learning and transformation needed to be an effective citizen in the changing social, economic and political environment (Jivanjee et al, 2106).

As in the other thematic areas, most African countries accept that ALE has a positive impact on an individual's participation in social, civic and political activities (26 countries – 79 per cent), on general social cohesion (21 – 64 per cent) and on social trust and tolerance of diversity (17 – 52 per cent). Even most (24 – 80 per cent) literacy and basic skills programmes deal with social and cultural development – they do not restrict themselves only to alphabétisation and numeracy. Many also deal with environmental sustainability.

As evidence for this impact, country responses usually simply noted various agencies or surveys without indicating what evidence they provided.

- **Cabo Verde** states that basic skills are updated according to new requirements, either cultural or economic or in conformity with new educational theories which pay particular attention to social, ethical and political dimensions.

- In **Guinea-Bissau**, literacy activities help create a literate environment that strengthens cultural and social resources.
- **Kenya** states that those who have benefited from ALE are more understanding and tolerant of divergent opinions. ALE learners are able to conserve their environments by planting trees and using devices that conserve energy. These include the use of solar, energy-saving ceramic jiko stoves, etc. They also collect and preserve cultural artefacts in community learning resource centres for future generations to benefit from.
- In **Malawi** it was found that development programme project committees actively recruited ALE graduates, and most graduates are elected to senior positions in these committees, including being secretaries or treasurers. In addition to that, most graduates actively participate in economic-empowerment activities which have eventually improved their living standards.
- In **Mali**, the AEA programmes give participants knowledge and skills to participate in the development and transformation of their communities. They ensure the empowerment of girls and contribute to national unity and cohesion.
- **Sao Tome et Principe** says that there is greater participation of women in rural communities in general social activities.
- **Senegal** states that literacy allows people to identify problems in social, civic and political participation and to work towards their resolution. It installs confidence and self-esteem and helps build a culture of integration, acceptance of others and solidarity.
- **Zambia** finds that ALE helps overcome the following barriers:
 - Limited analytical skill in decision making
 - on social, civic and political issues.
 - Resistance to innovation.
 - Apathy towards development initiatives.
 - Negative response to new knowledge.
- In **Tanzania**, literacy and basic skills programmes encourage empowerment, participation, ownership and sustainability of the community through better use of social resources and the preservation of cultural heritage.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON THE IMPACT OF ALE

- Africa does undoubtedly see ALE as addressing a large set of social, political, cultural, health and economic challenges and locates these ALE activities within the broader picture of sustainable development.
- Policy-makers and practitioners do believe that ALE does indeed have a very positive impact on individual people's lives and that there is some evidence of this impact – for example, over two-thirds of the countries saw positive evidence that ALE impacted in a general way upon health.
- At this stage, the evidence for these positive conclusions is modest and often semi- anecdotal. Whilst accepting the known difficulties in establishing causal links between education (and particularly adult education) and such desirable impacts, more evidence-based research is needed – if only to assure the state funders of ALE that the current investment, and more investment, in adult learning and education is worthwhile.
- In relation to health, the continent's focus on literacy is congruent with the known correlation of higher levels of literacy with better health and gives impetus to the need for inter-departmental and multi-sectoral coordination of health-related ALE. The finding (Eggoh et al., 2015, p. 107) that health and education expenditure over a certain threshold does help economic growth can spur further attention to ALE's positive role in development.
- *GRALE III* provided an excellent summary of the evidence for the impact of ALE on labour market outcomes, particularly in relation to the informal sector where even limited ALE may have profound effects. While it is clear that the ALE authorities in African countries believe that ALE leads to economic benefits, this remains merely a belief, lacking good evidence that can be communicated to important stakeholders. More evidence is needed to prompt higher levels of investment in ALE. Though many countries in the world see initial vocational education and training as having the most positive impact on productivity and employment there is a problem: a lack of sufficient facilities in many African countries to provide such TVET to the graduates of basic education (whether from schools or adult education).
- Positive perceptions abound about the societal outcomes of ALE and most literacy and basic skills programmes deal with social and cultural development issues. Unfortunately, there is little African evidence

available to prove this contention that social capital has been increased by ALE programmes. The only area to which serious attention seems to have been paid is environmental awareness.

- Linked to the need for better data on participation is the need for research on impacts arising from ALE that is evidence based and well communicated. This will need support from academic institutions nationally and from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and other international organizations.

8. THE WAY AHEAD: CONCLUSIONS AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

PREPARING FOR GRALE IV AND CONFITEA VII

In October 2017 there will be an international Mid-Term Review of ALE progress held under the auspices of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. It will provide a forum for critical analyses, evaluation, and reports of successes and steps backwards since CONFITEA VI in 2009. It will also examine the extent to which the new Sustainable Development Goals have begun to be assimilated into ALE thinking and planning. It will examine successes in generating and standardizing data on ALE.

Thereafter, there will be another data-gathering exercise for *GRALE IV*, scheduled to be published in 2019, which will have a special focus on ALE indicators of success.

Then, finally, in 2021, CONFITEA VII will be held. Member States will report and share their stories about ALE.

In all these events and processes the two key questions asked of Member States will be: 'What have you done? What do you (still) need to do?'

HAVE COUNTRIES MADE PROGRESS ON ALE SINCE 2009?

The overwhelming impression from the responses to the *GRALE III* research was of progress since 2009, though that progress was extremely modest, something not unexpected in the austere financial climate of this period.

Only a small majority of countries had comprehensive post-CONFITEA VI action plans that covered areas of policy, literacy, governance, financing, participation and quality.

Some conclusions can be drawn about this progress, however limited, in these key areas of action itemized in the Belém Framework for Action, as well as some recommendations made to take certain actions forward. The conclusions themselves are modest and qualified because of the often limited evidence available.

POLICIES

Much African ALE policy is directed at the literacy and basic education and skills of a substantial section, if not a majority, of the population. Because of this, ironically, minorities, the truly marginalized and refugees do not figure strongly as the targets of programmes (though possibly some of the countries that did not provide data do in fact serve these groups). However, there was some policy support for the development of writing and literacy in indigenous languages by developing relevant programmes, methods and materials, while adequately promoting the teaching of the second language of wider communication.

Two gaps are evident: first, the place of youth in (Y)ALE needs to be revisited – it was not prominent in the reporting; second, those countries where the main ALE focus is on literacy and adult basic education and training also need to pay policy attention to post-literacy continuing education and technical and vocational training for learners.

Some new policies were developed that were aligned to the spirit of the Belém Framework for Action and often, though not necessarily explicitly, to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

For comparative purposes and as exemplars and examples, it would be useful for a full set of current ALE policy documents to be collected from all Member States and made available by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning on its website.

Generally, the encouragement in the Belém Framework for Action for the use of common benchmarks and indicators measuring the progress, achievements, quality, limitations and gaps in provision has not resulted in visible achievements, except in a few countries. The continuing gaps are themselves a sign of a generally weak follow-up to Belém and to the regional post-Belém meeting in Cabo Verde. Capacitation at national level, from policy level down to implementation and monitoring and evaluation, is still strongly needed here.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Much more energetic international, regional and sub-regional support must be given to propagating the message of the Belém Framework for Action and the three new statements of 2015 – the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the *Incheon Declaration: Education 2030*, and the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* – and to providing reports, templates, benchmarks, models and primers, and encouraging their use.

Positively, there was some deliberate attention to the Education for All Dakar Framework for Action imperative to reduce illiteracy by 50 per cent by 2015 and there are some indications that many countries achieved this (though not necessarily all as a result of direct ALE interventions).

RECOMMENDATION 3:

As much action as possible in the ALE field should be congruent with and benefit from the multiplier effect of also implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the targets of the Incheon Declaration.

A large majority of countries believe that there has been progress in political commitment to ALE, at least in the form of literacy and basic education, as well as a positive, if modest, increase in consultation with all stakeholders on policies and programmes. Most countries' policies on ALE are informed by definitions of ALE. A few are broad in scope, but many have narrow ones focusing mainly on literacy and adult basic education. Few countries have revised their definitions since 2009.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Member States should be encouraged and supported to construct more comprehensive and internationally comparable definitions of ALE (in line with the 2015 *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*) that do not identify adult education solely with alphabétisation and adult basic education but encompass the full range of adult learning and education.

Literacy, adult basic education and basic skills (sometimes given recognition as being equivalent to conventional schooling) remain top ALE priorities, and literacy policies are sometimes accompanied by partnerships between state and civil society. Follow-up post-literacy and technical and vocational education and training policies and provision did not match the potential need.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Serious attention should be given to post-literacy and basic continuing education provision, including of technical and vocational education and training.

Some countries still do not have policies for the recognition of prior learning.

There are more attempts to create pathways from adult education and so-called non-formal education programmes into the formal education and training systems via various forms of certification and accreditation, though there is, as yet, little accessible evidence of how successful such attempts have been.

GOVERNANCE

Some countries have explicit ALE legislation but there were few new legislative developments and little legislation or regulation deal with information management or accreditation or certification of ALE programmes.

Most countries have some form of state governance of ALE, most commonly a department or unit or agency within a ministry of education. It is difficult to determine significant changes since 2009, as some new development may simply be a renaming or restructuring of previous ministries or directorates or new iterations of development plans.

The extremely positive note was the near-universal evaluation that governance has improved greatly since 2009 – in stakeholder participation, inter-ministerial cooperation, decentralized arrangements, coordination, capacity-building and in monitoring and evaluation. It is possible that some indicators have proved useful in highlighting the engagement of many players in ALE.

FINANCING

It is difficult to give a fair assessment of gains or setbacks in public ALE financing given, first, the austerities consequent to the global financial crisis of 2008 (and depreciation of many African currencies that have also eroded the modest increases in ALE spending reported by some countries), and, second, the total absence of data from at least a quarter of the countries.

Generally, most countries spent less than 2 per cent of the national education budget on ALE. Positively, however, most countries have plans to increase spending on ALE and nearly half the countries report innovations in ALE funding since 2009 (usually some form of cost-sharing with civil society partners).

Clearly, not all policies were fully costed and budgeted for (as seen particularly in South Africa's recent community college policy).

It is generally recognized that even in the most advanced countries it is hard to get accurate and comprehensive financial data on state- and donor-funded ALE expenditure. Much funding of actual ALE may be categorized as something else, such as early childhood education (where much donor funding is now going, since universal primary education has become more common in Africa). It is increasingly likely that future funding strategies for ALE will need to be linked to Sustainable Development Goals implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Ongoing technical support is needed to support Member States in developing the capacity to gather more accurate financial data on ALE and to keep abreast of new donor-funding trends.

PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

More information is needed about participation, the outcomes of participation and the quality of those outcomes. In particular, there is little information about new approaches or uses of information and communication technology.

Participation is reported to be growing.

Women predominate in adult education as a whole, in non-formal education and massively so in literacy, and there is a broad sense of those areas of provision which women still have difficulty in accessing. Men predominate in general education and massively so in technical and vocational education and training. With the growth of universal primary education with equal participation by males and females, low levels of literacy may well become primarily a male problem in the future.

Growth in participation was low among hard-to-reach groups – migrants, refugees, the disabled, the elderly, prisoners and the long-term unemployed.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Ongoing technical support is needed to support Member States in developing the capacity to gather more accurate data on participation, including use of suitable data-gathering templates.

QUALITY

It is clear that quality is on the African ALE agenda, and there are some positive developments. In the context of the clear focus on quality in the Incheon Declaration, it will undoubtedly gain in importance in the next decades. However, the continuing lack of data on quality improvements and innovation may hamper a fair assessment of progress in the region; for example, only about a third of the countries provided completion rate data.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Ongoing technical support is needed to support member states in developing the capacity to measure and gather data on the quality of ALE provision.

Pre-service qualifications are increasingly required in nearly all countries (at least for some programmes) and there is growth in in-service and continuing education for practitioners (though the capacity for this is limited). The number of countries engaging in curriculum reviews, the development of new materials and the introduction of new instructional approaches and forms of assessment has also grown. Notable interventions were

the assessment process in the Kha Ri Gude adult literacy programme in South Africa and annual literacy tests in Kenya, for literacy has long been an area where quality assessment of learner progress was rare.

With support from international programmes such as CapED and the Agenda 2030, sustainable improvements in monitoring and evaluation capacity are being made – and they are essential for checking that quality improvements are real.

THE IMPACT OF ALE ON HEALTH, WORK AND SOCIETY

Africa definitely sees ALE as addressing a large set of social, political, cultural, health and economic challenges, and locates these ALE activities within the broader picture of sustainable development.

Policy-makers and practitioners clearly believe that ALE does indeed have a very positive impact on individual people's lives and that there is some evidence of this impact – for example, over two-thirds of the countries saw positive evidence that ALE impacted in a general way on health.

At this stage, the evidence for these positive conclusions is modest and often semi-anecdotal. While accepting the known difficulties in establishing causal links between education (and particularly adult education) and such desirable impacts, more evidence-based research is needed – if only to assure the state funders of ALE that investment in ALE is worthwhile.

In relation to health, the continent's focus on literacy is congruent with the known correlation of higher levels of literacy with better health, and gives impetus to the need for inter-departmental and multi-sectoral coordination of health-related ALE. The finding (Eggoh et al., 2015, p. 107) that health and education expenditure over a certain threshold does help economic growth can spur further attention to ALE's positive role in development.

While ALE authorities in African countries believe that ALE leads to economic benefits, this remains merely a belief – unless and until there is substantiating evidence that can be communicated to important stakeholders. More evidence is needed to prompt higher levels of investment in ALE. Though many countries in the world see initial vocational education and training as having the most positive impact on productivity and employment there

is a problem here: a lack of sufficient facilities in many African countries to provide such TVET to the graduates of basic education (whether from schools or adult education). Positive perceptions about the societal outcomes of ALE, and most literacy and basic skills programmes deal with social and cultural development issues. Unfortunately, there is little African evidence available to prove the contention that social capital has been increased by ALE programmes. The only area to which serious attention to evidence of impact seems to have been paid is environmental awareness.

Though present, critical popular education perspectives are not prominent, which is unfortunate considering the current context of growing world inequality and the diversion of educational resources to the graduates of better schooling in higher education.

Linked to the need for better data on participation is the need for research on impacts arising from ALE that is evidence-based and well-communicated. This will need support from academic institutions nationally and from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and other international organizations.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Ongoing international technical support is needed to support Member States in developing the capacity to research the impact of ALE provision on health, the economy and society.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Africa's responses to international declarations and policy influences have been largely positive (most obviously so to that of Dakar 2000 with its literacy and other targets). There have also been some positive developments in quality-related regional research, particularly with the action-research RAMAA programmes in West Africa, and in regional cooperation such as the youth development Zankey Faba network, which was an outcome of the 2012 Cabo Verde meeting. Unfortunately, the weakness of, or lack of, ALE knowledge management systems in sub-Saharan Africa is an ongoing limiting factor in such research cooperation.

The region remains exceedingly dependent on funding cooperation and research and technical support. There

have been positive examples of all of these, supported by international agencies such as UNESCO, CapEFA (now CapED), DVV International, the Commonwealth of Learning and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. There were some African attempts to construct inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral coordinating mechanisms for ALE and/or ALE and health and it is likely that the pressure for this will grow, allied to more openness about wider consultation with all stakeholders, including those in civil society. It does seem that governance is now more transparent, accountable and responsive.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

A regional framework for capacity-building on working with different partners needs to be developed and its application monitored.

MONITORING ALE AND STRENGTHENING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

The Belém Framework for Action encouraged making use of common benchmarks and indicators measuring the progress, achievements, quality, limitations and gaps in provision, and the capacitation of educators and trainers. Countries needed to collect and analyse disaggregated data on participation, learning processes, outcomes and impact in a timely, reliable and valid manner and to take appropriate measures to follow up on the results of the monitoring and evaluation. It is clear that these goals have not been fully achieved, except in a few countries.⁹

Data collection and management has to be established as a necessary, integral component of all adult learning and education systems. Without it one cannot accurately assess achievements and impacts. Understanding of the dynamics of participation in ALE in sub-Saharan African continues to be hindered by the inadequacy of information and statistics. A quarter of the countries were unable to provide participation data at all. Developing and running knowledge management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of both quantitative and qualitative data should be a priority and be supported by international partners and particularly UIL. The

enhancement of the capacity of international bodies (such as UIL) is largely pointless unless the local capacity to produce quantitative and qualitative data and disseminate it is increased. Such capacitation also requires more attention to clarifying what the data is about. It is recommended that countries have a truly comprehensive guiding definition of ALE and clear definitions of its various components.

Allied to the need for better data on participation is the need for research on impacts arising from ALE that is evidence-based and well-communicated. This will need support from academic institutions nationally and from UIL and other international organizations.

BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING RESEARCH CAPACITY

Allied to the need for better data collection for the purposes of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing is the need for systematic interdisciplinary research in adult learning and education. This is particularly the case, difficult though it is because of its multi-factoral complications, for assessing the true impact of ALE provision on people's lives and work and living environment.

Many previously strong university-based centres of adult education research are currently either gone or a shadow of their former selves. This negative development has to be reversed.

Often, university and civil society research, surveys, projects and network initiatives, however excellent in themselves, are not subsequently capitalized on. An example of this was the five-nation study on youth and adult learning and education in southern Africa funded by the Open Society Initiative and DVV International that could have provided a baseline for subsequent data collection in those countries.

Some countries claimed to have done substantial analyses of various issues but little evidence was given of these and not a single URL provided. It is indeed likely that there are many small-scale research studies done in externally funded projects and programmes but that there is no repository, either national or international, to provide access to them.

⁹ Often via whole educational sector analyses undertaken with UNESCO help or in Education for All reports, as in the case of Tanzania (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and UNESCO, 2011; Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2014).

RESPONDING TO INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS

There is evidence that international declarations such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All were taken seriously and became useful tools in energizing ALE activity. The year 2015 saw three new statements: the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the *Incheon Declaration – Education 2030* and the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*. Work will need to be done to enhance their impact on ALE activity.

One can note the following:

- The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The fourth SDG on education – ‘Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning’ – compared to the previous equivalent Millennium Development Goal, puts emphasis not just on access to education but also on quality. Indeed, five of the ten targets are concerned with the quality of education and providing better and more relevant knowledge and skills – achieving universal basic skills is a key agenda.
- The *Incheon Declaration – Education 2030* has a vision of equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all in the context of the ‘unfinished business’ of the Millennium Development Goals and the Dakar 2000 declaration. Hence, the theme of quality will remain prominent (as also will the need for monitoring and evaluation systems to check it) and ALE policies and implementation will have to ensure that there are indeed lifelong learning opportunities for everybody in all settings and at all levels. The Incheon Declaration notes (Clause 24) that:

all youth and adults, especially girls and women, should be provided with opportunities to achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire skills for life and decent work. Importantly, the provision of adult learning, education and training opportunities must be ensured. Cross-sector approaches traversing education, science and technology, family, employment, industrial and economic development, migration and integration, citizenship, social welfare and public finance policies should be used.

The deadline for universal literacy and numeracy is 2030.

- The *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*, an update on its predecessor (1976), will be useful particularly for definitional purposes, for its comprehensive vision of what ALE is and for its guidance on ALE policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion and equity, quality and international co-operation.

ALE AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Many African countries responded to the illiteracy reduction challenge of the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action and the broader vision of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. What this showed was that these internationally supported targets could indeed mobilize nations into action.

The Millennium Development Goals period ended in 2015 and the new Sustainable Development Goals will inform developments for the next 15 years. Adult learning is central to this process. Adult learning provides a way of making local poverty-reduction and economic development efforts – whether agriculture, natural resource management, small enterprises or credit mediation – more participant-driven, cost-effective and locally self-managed, and therefore more sustainable. The development of civil society and the progressive democratization of social institutions require the means for new skills and broader knowledge. Similarly, public health promotion and, in particular, efforts to overcome the HIV/AIDS pandemic are areas where necessary knowledge and skills and the active participation of adults in eradication efforts are absolutely essential.

A priority task for the animators of ALE in each country is to ensure that the congruent messages in four declarations – the Belém Framework for Action, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Transforming the World*, the *Incheon Declaration. Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all*, and, finally, the new *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* – are integrated into the foundations for the development of policy, planning, implementation and monitoring for the next stage of ALE in Africa.

The Sustainable Development Goals include educational targets which are entirely congruent with the existing focuses of ALE in African countries – to ‘ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy’ (4.6), to ‘substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship’ (4.4) and to ‘ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development’ (4.7). National targets and the criteria for success in reaching those targets will need to be developed. Undoubtedly, international cooperation and international support can help this gearing-up process.

The above task of unpacking the meaning of the four key documents is one way of reactivating the Belém Framework for Action. It is not clear that this declaration has received the attention it deserves. Relatively few countries based new policies or action plans on it. Now, together with the other documents, bringing with them more powerful development support and resources, it is time to try in a more serious way to implement the Belém Framework.

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ANNEX: POPULATION AND ILLITERACY STATISTICS

COUNTRIES OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	WHOLE POPULATION	ADULTS (15+) who are illiterate	
		% OF ADULTS	NUMBER
Angola	25,831,000	29	3,777,176
Benin	11,167,000	62	3,873,563
Botswana	2,304,000	12	181,171
Burkina Faso	18,634,000	62	6,134,744
Burundi	11,553,000	14	894,981
Cabo Verde	527,000	12	42,236
Cameroon	23,924,000	25	3,356,336
Central African Republic	4,998,000	63	1,873,774
Chad	14,497,000	60	4,401,908
Comoros	807,000	22	102,957
Congo	4,741,000	21	540,083
Côte d'Ivoire	23,254,000	57	7,409,110
Democratic Republic of the Congo	79,723,000	23	9,505,291
Equatorial Guinea	870,000	5	24,660
Eritrea	5,352,000	26	782,307
Ethiopia	101,853,000	51	29,665,183
Gabon	1,763,000	17	181,826
Gambia	2,055,000	44	476,007
Ghana	28,033,000	23	3,928,258

COUNTRIES OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	WHOLE POPULATION	ADULTS (15+) who are illiterate	
		% OF ADULTS	NUMBER
Guinea	12,947,000	70	5,037 876
Guinea-Bissau	1,888,000	40	439 269
Kenya	47,251,000	22	5,878,971
Lesotho	2,160,000	21	281,695
Liberia	4,615,000	52	1,361,467
Madagascar	24,916,000	35	4,992,995
Malawi	17,750,000	34	3,213,474
Mali	18,135,000	67	6,128,667
Mauritius	1,277,000	9	96,392
Mozambique	28,751,000	41	6,299,204
Namibia	2,514,000	9	142,896
Niger	20,715,000	81	7,973,987
Nigeria	186,988,000	40	41,261,920
Rwanda	11,883,000	29	1,967,998
Sao Tome and Principe	194,000	8	9,013
Senegal	15,589,000	45	3,775,609
Seychelles	97,000	5	3,456
Sierra Leone	6,592,000	52	1,918,037
Somalia	11,079,000	?	?

COUNTRIES OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	WHOLE POPULATION	ADULTS (15+) who are illiterate	
		% OF ADULTS	NUMBER
South Africa	54,979,000	7	2,082,916
South Sudan	12,733,000	68	4,861,307
Swaziland	1,304,000	13	101,018
Togo	7,497,000	33	1,411,842
Uganda	40,323,000	26	5,306,506
United Republic of Tanzania	55,155,000	20	5,755,724
Zambia	16,717,000	15	4,814,663
Zimbabwe	15,967,000	13	1,196,082
TOTALS	969,169,000		187,987,854
TOTAL POPULATION		ILLITERATE ADULTS	

The **Sixth International Conference on Adult Education** (CONFINTEA VI), held in Brazil in December 2009, closed with the adoption of the Belém Framework for Action, which recorded the commitments of Member States and presented a strategic guide for the global development of adult learning and education from a lifelong learning perspective. The third *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)*, published in 2016, drew on survey data to evaluate progress made by countries in fulfilling the commitments made in Brazil, while also highlighting some of the contributions adult learning and education can make to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review, in Suwon, Republic of Korea, in October 2017, takes stock of progress made by Member States in the past eight years, looking ahead to *GRALE IV* in 2019. This regional report, one of five produced for the Mid-Term Review in cooperation with the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), examines progress in **sub-Saharan Africa**, exploring the contribution of key policy agreements and frameworks and offering recommendations in advance of CONFINTEA VII in 2021.