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Is Post-School Education Adult Education and Training?

The Shape and Size of Post-School Education

Peliwe Lolwana

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LABOUR MARKET
INTELLIGENCE PARTNERSHIP

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Preface

One of the gravest economic challenges facing South Africa is high unemployment, but at the same time, a skills mismatch. The market demand for skilled labour is greater than the number of individuals completing post-school education and training. Prospective employers often complain that the education system does not give individuals the necessary skills to be productive in the workplace, or to start their own enterprises.

Government acknowledges that the unemployment crisis is a systematic problem and cannot be addressed by ad hoc interventions scattered across line departments. With this 'big picture' thinking in mind, DHET aims to create broad and equitable access to a full spectrum of post-school opportunities and lifelong learning encompassing adult education and training, workplace training, the FET college system, artisan and technical training, higher education and innovation.

DHET's ability to create these learning opportunities requires a network of partners to gather and maintain a labour market intelligence system. Such a system can provide analytical insights to support policies and intervention programmes.

In February 2012, therefore, DHET commissioned a HSRC led research consortium to support its capacity to create and maintain a labour market information and intelligence system, guided by the national Delivery Agreement 5. The primary focus is the development of a 'strategic intelligence capability' towards the establishment of 'a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning'. The HSRC coordinated research project is organised in terms of six interlocking research themes, two which focus on labour market information and four which focus on labour market intelligence:

Theme 1. Establishing a foundation for labour market information systems in South Africa

Theme 2. Skills forecasting: the supply and demand model (*a Wits EPU project*)

Theme 3. Studies of selected priority sectors

Theme 4. Reconfiguring the post-schooling sector

Theme 5. Pathways through education and training and into the workplace

Theme 6. Understanding changing artisanal occupational milieus and identities

The consortium made a strategic decision that their research must not duplicate or repeat existing research about the challenges facing South Africa's education and training system and labour markets. Their research must address gaps, promote synergies and explore complementarities.

Hence, as a first step, working papers were commissioned to inform the research agenda for each theme. Although the working papers cover different issues, each has four common dimensions: policy challenges to institutionalise and build a post-school education and training system in South Africa, lessons from seminal national and international research, conceptual frameworks, methodological issues and data challenges raised by this research, and potential research gaps.

One of the HSRC led consortium's goals is to create a living community of practice that researches and debates education, skills and labour market issues. These working papers were presented at a conference in May 2012 to start building such a research network.

The dissemination of these working papers is intended to encourage more individuals to join the research community. We look forward to individuals' comments. They can be emailed to agoldstuck@hsrc.za.za. Welcome to the research community!

Theme 1:	Theme 3:	Theme 4:	Theme 5:	Theme 6:
Establishing a foundation for labour market information system in South Africa	Studies of selected priority sectors	Reconfiguring the post-schooling sector	Pathways through education and training into the workplace	Understanding changing artisanal occupational milieus and identities
Simon McGrath Some international reflections on developing VET indicators	Haroon Bhorat and Morne Oosthuizen Studies of Selected Priority Sectors in the South African Labour Market: A Proposed Research Programme	Andre Kraak Private post-school education in South Africa	Michael Cosser Pathways through education and training and into the labour market	Angelique Wildschut Conceptualising the study of artisans
Phil Toner Establishing a foundation for labour market information systems in South Africa	Peter Jacobs and Tim Hart A critical review of the research on skills development in rural areas	Andre Kraak Differentiation in the post-school sector	Pundy Pillay Pathways through education and training and into the workplace: a concept paper	Jeanne Gamble Models and pathways to institutionalise apprenticeships
Anthony Gewer Developing a framework for institutional planning and monitoring in FET Colleges	Shirin Motala A critical review of research on skills development and labour market demand in the early childhood development sector	Joy Papier et al Contemporary issues in public FET colleges	Sharlene Swartz Navigational capacities for youth employment: A review of research, policies, frameworks and methodologies	
Carmel Marock Developing a framework for understanding SETA performance: Monitoring and evaluating their role in skills planning, steering and enabling a supply within their sector	Theminkosi Twalo A comparative review of skills development in cooperatives	Veronica McKay A critical review on Adult Basic Education (ABET) in South Africa	Fiona Lewis Traffic jams or trees – how are South African youth progressing through the higher education sector? And what lessons can we learn from current studies?	

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Bongiwe Mncwango Towards a demand side firm level survey of labour information in South Africa	Margaret Chitiga and Stewart Development of a national skills forecasting model	Thenjiwe Meyiwa and Nolutho Diko The state of graduate teacher transitions to the labour market	Stephanie Alais Jobs? What jobs? Skills? What skills?An overview of studies examining relationships between education and training and labour markets	
Michael Cosser and Fabian Arendse Education and labour market indicators	Imraan Valodia Conceptualising skills development in the informal sector	Felix Maringe An overview of studies exploring systemic issues related to the South African post-school sector		
Joan Roodt National database sets and research on labour market demand		Peliwe Lolwana Is post-school education adult education and training? The shape and size of post-school education		
Mariette Visser National database sets available for post school sector (supply side)		Michelle Buchler A critical review of research on skills development qualifications structures		
Michael Gastrow Innovation, skills development and South African labour market intelligence		Volker Wedekind Towards responsiveness and employability in the post-school sector		

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the years, there have also been noticeable changes regarding adult education is conceptualised, or in other words what counts as legitimate adult education. In high income-countries adult education tends to span the whole gambit of education, but focusing in particular on tertiary education and vocational education and training. This is a sharp contrast to low-income countries where the mainstay of adult education has been on literacy programmes. The middle income countries, like South Africa, have been caught in the middle, looking up to higher income countries on what adult education has done for these countries, but also steeped in low income conceptions of traditional adult education.

This paper starts tracing the different developments and dynamics of the different discourses that have emerged as adult education. It also presents a brief history on the kind of adult education South Africa has, comparing this with the newly emerging high income countries as well as those that are similar to us. The thesis of this paper is that adult education is post-school education and not primary school education. Therefore, when we think post-school education we have to think adult education. Also, there is an argument that runs through the paper about the relationship of adult education and the economy and development. Finally some areas that need further research are identified in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

There is generally a wide acknowledgement that education for the young is not enough for any nation to meet adequately the socio-economic challenges in the world. Specifically, all nations at the turn of the twenty first century are challenged by the notion of promoting economic prosperity and egalitarian societies. This challenge has become more and more pronounced since the collapse of the Cold war, blurring the boundaries and needs between the developed and underdeveloped states (Sall, 2003). In other words, the need for continuing education seems to be growing in both developing and developed countries as the world's political and economic systems continue to be thrown into doubt by a fast internationalizing world. It can be expected though that those countries experiencing most changes will also experience a greater need to step up their provision for everyone in order to prepare their citizen to deal effectively with a changing world. In South Africa, education for those who have left school has just become topical and many policy developments and interventions are on the cards for the post-school population, and yet there seems to be no common understanding of what exactly this education is all about. Is post-school education and adult education the same or are these concepts that overlap? In other words, can we regard everything that is not offered in school education as adult education? What is it that defines adult education: is it the age or the learning programme?

In order to answer the above question it is necessary first to take a quick tour on how adult education has developed in different parts of the world. We have to understand where adult education is taking place. We have to explore the differences in adult education of low to high income countries. We have to understand why adult education has seemingly fallen off the education agenda in South Africa and in which guise it seems to be reincarnated now in the new dispensation of a new democratic government and again and question these positions. This concept paper seeks to explore these issues in order to illuminate the problem of conceptualising adult education in the 21st century. The position that is taken in this paper is that there is a direct relationship between post-school and adult education, if not the same thing, and that there will be no expanded, diverse and differentiated post-school education without seriously taking a close look at how we conceptualise adult education and training. Further, it is postulated in this paper that the reason why adult education is not thriving is because of the old and archaic ways of thinking about adult education. This paper attempts to give a new way of thinking that indicates that adult education is not one thing and should be seen as a multi-faceted and not so easy to define.

Finally, the paper will attempt to point out the areas of study that need to be investigated in the future in order to understand this seemingly elusive type of education.

ADULT EDUCATION IN PERSPECTIVE

It is Collingwood (1946) who said "all knowledge is historical knowledge We study history in order to see more clearly the situation in which we are called upon to act". In this case then, the history of adult education is very instructive on the state of affairs in adult education. History shows us that the points of departure for different countries, defined by their income, have always been different.

De Moura Castro (2012) argues that there are two seminal points in the history of adult education in the world. According to him the first one was in 1972 when UNESCO assembled a team of wise men to think about lifelong education. This was an attempt to define education as not ending with school education only. From this effort emerged several beliefs and slogans which survived for decades. In 1997 again UNESCO focused its attention on Adult Education. The meeting was in Hamburg, Germany and thousands of participants deliberated on these issues over a number of days. Twenty five years after the first meeting on the same issue, it was clear that very little has come off the previous attempts. The conference itself is chronicled as a tirade of depressing events and

deliberations in the special edition of the Norrag News (1997). This publication captures a state of doom and gloom in the world of adult education in most parts of the world. But is this true?

De Moura Castro (2012) again points us to something very interesting that has happened in the area of adult education which is a product of efforts of people who were never even in the two UNESCO conferences. According to him, governments, academics and NGOs who gathered in these important conferences, failed to implement what they were talking about, but many other processes have been reinvented to make adult education alive. These processes are often not funded in the orthodox ways but they are thriving and come from unexpected sources. Because of the unconventional nature of adult education that tends to exist in many countries, not many countries can account for all the adult education in their countries.

When education takes too long, it becomes adult education. In many countries, especially in middle to low income countries, there is a tendency of high repetition and attrition in school going populations that in some instances even senior secondary education becomes adult education when there are many individuals who cannot complete their school qualifications. After completion of twelve years in education, one is regarded as an adult who can vote and participate in all adult activities and duties. In fact not long ago, few individuals in most societies continued beyond primary education as this was often adequate for accessing elementary and even intermediate level training and jobs. Training and skills development, whether it is in preparation for entry to work or in work, is adult education as it involves adults who are learning. By the same token, higher education is essentially adult education. Adults tend to continue learning in different and often unrecognised ways in their countries, irrespective of what governments pronounce and proclaim. As more education becomes available to many, it has turned out that different countries have focused on different kinds of adult education, and this is mainly determined by the income levels of such countries.

High income – high adult education

There seems to have been a globalization of ideas about adult education in the high-income countries, especially during and after the First World War which brought about major shifts in focus and how adult education is seen in societies. Field (2000) attributes this phenomenon to the 'disruptive' power of the war, which turned the world upside down and resulted in large numbers of men and women who were mobilized for wartime duties that required them to learn a range of new skills during and after the war. The war was also followed by many socio-economic changes, like the slowing down of the economic growth; extension of citizenship rights to the working class, women and immigrants; growing of life expectancies; changing family systems; and many more. The net effect of these changes was the preoccupation with tackling unemployment and as people began to spend more time in their jobs, the meaning of work itself changed and formed a greater part of individuals' identity. As a result, more and more education for adults became in demand as it provided access to new opportunities for the new groups.

The trajectory of adult education development in the United States of America for example, has always been double pronged. On one hand there has always been this focus to enable adults who did not complete higher education successfully to do so. These efforts have been put into a known test called the General Education Development Test or widely known as the GED. The GED is an equivalent of our matric but for adults in the USA. This test has helped many adults who missed out, dropped out of education, and those who had recently made the USA a new home, to be credentialed as educated Americans and thus to be able to participate further in the country and exploit further educational opportunities available in the country (American Council on Education, 2001). The GED is used by mainly adults who have not successfully completed their high school diplomas. Providing broad access to higher education in this country is clearly a public policy goal and yet Longanecker (2007) asserts that this has always not been the case even in the USA. He

provides a useful historical footprint on how the USA higher education system has evolved over the years and what is to follow is a paraphrase of Longanecker's narrative.

What used to be an elitist higher education system inherited from the colonial era, changed radically when the federal government introduced the Merrill Act of 1862, which provided each state with 70 000 acres of land, the proceeds of which were to be dedicated to building a higher education system. This gift gave the states an impetus to develop the great public institutions now known as land Grants universities. The Merrill Act was not designed as an access initiative, but a meritocratic one by extending higher education access to the brightest children of the blue collar workers, as a way of fuelling the industrial and agricultural revolution. The first substantial access-orientation thrust in the American higher education came with the GI Bill (Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944) that followed the World War II. However, Longanecker thinks that this was still an opportunistic effort than an access initiative. The GI Bill was essentially introduced as a 'twofer'¹ strategy to reintroduce large numbers of people back to the workforce. In order to do this it was necessary to upgrade their skills and abilities through enhanced education. The next wave of expanding the American higher education was to occur after the Russian launch of Sputnik. This expansion was also still not focused, but aimed to ensure that the USA had enough intellectual manpower to compete successfully in science and commerce with the communist world, which had just shocked the Americans with its supremacy in space science. According to Longanecker, it was not until the Great Society programmes introduced by President Lyndon in the 1960s that access became a public policy goal in the USA. The Higher Education Act of 1965 consolidated the many efforts from both the federal and States governments that focused on serving all students, rich and poor, in order to create the Great Society America had to be. The greatest American invention in this context has to be the community college, which now serves more than 50% of students who participate in the American higher education (American Association of Colleges, 2006). It is through this evolution in policy and practice that the American higher education has shifted from eclecticism to meritocracy to opportunism and to universalisation, where participation is in the high 80% (CHET, 2011). These shifts has not only made the USA to trail most of the developed world in the share of enrolled students who complete their post-secondary education, but most countries, developed and developing- now are pursuing the American ideal of broad access to higher education. Higher education has become the mainstay of adult education in the USA.

The Community College is one particular institution that can be singled out for increasing participation in higher education in the USA. Almost 50% of all higher education is said to be in the college system and also has the highest participation of non-traditional students in higher (Gallagher, 2006). The post-secondary or the college system of America is viewed by many as the best value in higher education in this country. It has been estimated that students can save close to half the cost of a baccalaureate degree by starting at a 'college' and transferring to a four-year college or university. With low costs, small class sizes and easy –to transfer credit, 'colleges' can be the solution for many disadvantaged adults and communities. The college system attracts a different kind of student: less confident; likely to be a first generation higher education in own family; often financially disadvantaged; often academically weak or with some learning disability; undecided about scholarly pursuit; interested in pursuing vocational education; rural or from disadvantaged urban communities, etc. These students have added a component to higher education participation rates which would never have been part of a traditional higher education system

The little post-school education that took place in the United Kingdom and later in Anglophone countries was seen as supporting an apprenticeship system that was developed during the industrialisation periods of development. During the last part of the last century, there were many young school leavers who were leaving school without qualifications, whilst the apprenticeship system was collapsing. Many of these school leavers were likely to end up in colleges in the hope of gaining qualifications that might lead to employment. This resulted in an expanding college sector,

¹ An American slang referring to something that serves two purposes.

an emergence of various forms of work-based traineeships; and some concerted focus by the United Kingdom government to coordinate and see post-school as an extension of schooling (Young, 2008). The development and expansion of the post-school education in the United Kingdom has primarily replaced many traditional terms like trade, commercial, craft and technical education and has come to be known as further education. Within this new development, in the United Kingdom alone, many nuances can be found in which the different countries in the Kingdom have developed different trajectories. However, the over-riding trend seems to be the massification of the adult education system whereby the college sector has absorbed a larger portion of those who are attending post-school institutions. Garrod & Macfarlane (2009) are of the opinion that this massification of the further education sector has been instrumental in making post-secondary education to cease to be elitist and excluding and in fact has replaced most disparate adult education efforts in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the expansion of higher education in the United Kingdom has come primarily from the non-traditional students (Bathmaker et.al, 2008)

The further education colleges in the UK are now a far cry from the institutions whose mission was mainly to support the apprenticeship system offered by the various industries. For example in addition to the different kinds of vocational education qualifications, Scotland in its further education colleges concentrates on 'access' courses that provide access to higher education for those students who have not met the traditional higher education admission route, as well as foundational degrees where students take the first part of their degrees programme in a college and the second part in a university (Gallagher, 2006). Whilst Scotland seems to be more successful in raising the participation rates for those studying for degree level (50%), similar massification strategies are also observed in England, albeit with a lesser success story (Young, 2008). Whilst access courses² are general in their makeup and pegged at the A levels, providing access to specialist professional courses, foundation degrees on the other hand are often vocational, linking to vocational education degrees in mostly institutions that used to be polytechnics and now are generally known as 'post-1992' institutions. The trend of concentrating on vocational education in foundation degrees in the UK is in stark contrast to the USA trends where there is an initial effort to provide liberal education in junior degrees, and in spite of observed vocationalisation of current community college curriculum, the intention is still to emphasize liberal arts education (Grubb, 2006).

The Germanic and Asian countries on the other hand have developed a long tradition of technical and vocational education at the post school level. In Germanic countries, where technical and vocational education happens at the level of schooling, there is an emphasis on the completion of schooling in the dual system. There are indications that this dual system is declining as youth labour markets are collapsing (Kupfer, 2010). The most pronounced adult education in Germany for example seems to be in the higher education and is vocational.

A country like Korea for example, which is emerging as a high income country, adult education has shifted from an agricultural focus to a manufacturing one, resulting in the collapse of the technical high schools and the expansion of the junior vocational colleges associated with the acquisition of skills for the growing manufacturing sector and also linked to the traditional higher education system. In the meantime schooling has been universalised and therefore stimulating a demand for higher education for adults (Young-Hyun, 2011).

These examples can be found in many high income countries. As school education becomes adult education in lower income countries, in rich nations higher education has become adult education, and often second chance education than a straight continuation from school. This is often reflected in the type of higher education that adults participate in, like distance education, community colleges, training programmes and sometimes in private institutions which are flexible to

² Study skills; Mathematics; Communications and 2 specialist areas

accommodate the needs of adults. Adult education then in industrialized countries became an integral part of modernizing and dealing with industrial development and competitiveness of nations. When finally globalization descended on the world, the use of adult education as an instrument in globalization became almost synonymous with 'globalizing tendencies' of corporate border expansions and competition. Concepts like 'knowledge-based economy'; life-long learning'; 'learning societies' learning organization'; redefinition of vocational education; and the relation between education and work started to surface and dominate the adult education discourse. Industrialization and later globalization can also be seen as being direct cause for the dramatic rise in investment in human resource development through adult education.

Low income –low adult education and training

Just like in the Northern Hemisphere, where adult education gave meaning to major political movements like the National Women Association; the farmers' Alliance; Labor movements, etc; adult education took off because of the expectation countries had after the post-colonial era, to address the issues of development (Ntiri, 2001). Colonisation left Africa with massive backlogs in literacy. Soon after independence, many African countries were confronted with the low literacy rates of extreme levels to even imagine how such underdeveloped counties would progress. Gebremarian (2001) chronicles how country after country, as it realizes the inadequacies of the formal education system it has inherited, was led to a systematic development of the notion of adult education in Africa. Development became the big political movement and adult education took a centre stage during the periods of gaining independence by different countries. International donor agencies also legitimized this politically but giving needed funding. At the same time, African countries seemed to have also embraced the Paulo Freirean philosophy to education, albeit this met with very little success except for a country like Tanzania (Ntiri, 2001; Gebremarian, 2001). Perhaps Paul Freire's adult education approach was particularly appealing to African countries because of the immediate history and experience with oppression. We will soon come back to examine the Tanzanian case.

Gebremarian (2001) notes that African countries approached adult education mainly as state-sponsored literacy campaigns, without involving the people. Ethiopia and Somalia are known to have engaged in the greatest mobilization efforts for organizing literacy. In addition, Ethiopia offered literacy in mother tongue languages. But all these efforts did not actually yield much returns to the economic growth and political reforms of the countries concerned. When the global economic recession fuelled by soaring oil prices of the early 1980s, hit the world, African adult education was hit the hardest. Suddenly, there was not enough donor money to fund adult education and the World Bank's structural adjustments required African countries to cut significantly on education spending. This was also the same time that in general there was economic decline in many African countries. The whole of African education suffered immensely and the relationship of formal education to adult education is aptly sketched out by Gebremarian (2001):

The goal of universal primary education receded during the decade of the 1980s. This meant a retreat from expansion of adult education. Primary education is a means to adult education and is hardly ever an end in itself. (p.98).

The case of Tanzania is worth closer scrutiny as this is the country that made some significant strides in establishing adult education as well as using adult education in its political reforms. This was a country that seriously tried to use adult education as an instrument for social and economic policies. Their program was composed of two different streams: the Academic Upgrading Program (AUP) and the Skills Upgrading Program (SUP). These two streams were closely tied to Nyerere's notion of 'building a society in which all members have equal rights and equal opportunities'. Tanzania was one of the 12 countries in the world, that participated in the UNESCO Experimental Literacy project and therefore literacy gave centrality to agricultural and economic production in Tanzania.

Tanzanian adult education was designed as a measure to curtail rural migration to urban areas. As such, rural training centers were established to train farmers and local leaders; mass education and health campaigns were launched; libraries were established in the rural areas; translated most of the educational materials into Swahili; etc. Primary school teachers were coerced to be adult education teachers. Tanzania was the only African country which was able to have a measured success in implementing the Paulo Freire's approach. This was a very extensive program and yet it could not be maintained for long. Gebremarian (2001) attributes the failure of the Tanzanian program to the poor literacy infrastructure, including scarcity of libraries and bookstores and various kinds of printed media in the rural areas but more than anything else its reliance on compulsion to learners and teachers gave the program most of the negative consequences.

If we go back to the Hamburg adult conference of 1997, we find that the conference had a preoccupation with equity. In other words, the idea of adult education is the one that provides education to the have-nots or illiterates. In this approach then adult education is for the poor who missed altogether the first time. The Hamburg crowd fought for popular education, the sort that Paulo Freire promoted. Their just and justifiable goal is adult literacy. This is the kind of adult education that has caught on in low income countries and still prevails.

There seems to be common threads which typify the problems of implementing adult education in the African continent for example. Firstly, many African countries have been trying to use adult education to engender development and these efforts have been thwarted by the unavailability of adequate resources to support substantive programs. Secondly, democracy in many African countries has been largely limited to forms of government and not a way of responding in a robust and dynamic way to the African problems (Ntiri; 2001; Gebremarian, 2001; Maruatona, 2006; Stewart, 2001). As a result, adult education has remained largely as a service given to the people by government when it can, and not a process where all can determine what their needs are. Thirdly, today's economy requires much, much more than primary education as a basis for skills development. In fact Levy and Murnane (2004) are of the opinion that the introduction of technology shifted the educational requirements in the labour market upwards.

Not many western nations have had to face the same nation-building exercises that some African countries have had to deal with, and yet in some strange ways the agenda of adult education has scarcely addressed this. Also, foreign models of adult education which have appealed to African countries have not been very successful, e.g. Paulo Freire and the National Qualifications Framework. Both Gebremarian (2001) and Stewart (2001) attribute this failure to the incompatibilities of foreign models with African contexts as well as the tendency of African countries to lock in very quickly to one model instead of picking from the best in the world. As it is becoming clearer that many African countries are not meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in as far as basic or primary education, so will the adult education literacy goals become elusive. For example King (2007) advocates for a holistic approach to the African education system, in which primary secondary, tertiary and vocational, can assist in reaching the MDGs. This is true, and yet it is also true that primary education enjoys a particular relationship with adult education. Gebremarian (2001) states that "primary education is a means to adult education and is hardly ever an end in itself". Then African countries have to reconfigure this relationship in a useful way if any inroads are to be made in the future or else adult education will continue to be nothing more than giving primary education to adults. Yet, in spite of all these challenges, if there is something inspiring about thinking about adult education in the African context, it is the fact that adult education is still seen as a means to support social action, development and change. As Gebremarian (2001) aptly puts it:

Yet, there is a fundamental similarity between those who work for democratization of education and those who work for creating accountable governance: both are at least optimistic that Africans can create a better world in which to live" p. 107).

It is clear therefore that a significant way to make adult education work is to figure out how to make it to be supportive of development initiatives in many communities. Development is still by far the largest industry in Africa and governments have to drive this agenda.

SOUTH AFRICA AS A MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRY

The South African experience with adult education has not been dissimilar to the other African countries. From a legacy of massive discrimination, the ANC led government has struggled valiantly to overcome a complex set of constraints and sculpt new contours of adult education. The demands inherited by this new government were too many and coffers were bankrupt³. According to Stewart (2001), in the early 1990s South Africa's 60% adult literacy rate ranked between less- developed and developing countries, despite expenditures of about 7.3% of GDP on education. In the late 1970s, the previous government had initiated an adult education system through the establishment of night schools. These night schools were initially established as means to upgrade teacher qualifications. Soon, the night school system was extended to be the 'completion' of senior secondary education for those who have dropped out or have not been successful in taking the high school exit examinations. School buildings were used and this allowed for a large delivery system, which still persist, albeit in a reduced form, for the senior certificate students, called 'B' candidates. During the 1970s business firms and in particular the large mining companies started to provide adult education on programs registered with the Department of Education. Many of the companies which initiated such programs did so in order to comply with foreign investors' requirements. But as the disinvestment campaigns were pushed forward in the 1980s, companies down-scaled their provision as well. By the 1980s, company sponsored adult education was dwindling and large Non-governmental Organizations that was working in adult education began to take centre stage, like the Bureau of Literacy and Literature; the South African Institute of race relations; Operation Upgrade; Project Literacy and Learn and Teach (Stewart, 2001).

When the new government took over, there was much anticipation that adult education needs were finally going to be addressed. Stewart notes that "the terms of the debate were understandably shaped by the apartheid experience". The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) dominated the debate, especially the mining sector. Adult basic Education (ABE), with an expanded component of training to form ABET became the dominating concept in talking about adult education and just about anything else disappeared from policy and intellectual discussions. In the meantime, the European Union had sponsored a very extensive and expensive project of establishing an Alternative Secondary Education for Adults (ASECA) through the auspices of the South African Council of Higher Education (SACHED). It soon became clear that the perceived needs by the NGOs like SACHED who have been working in the field and had a history of helping students who aspired to get into higher education, was different from the perceived needs of organized labour movement who recognized adult education as being basic literacy. Because of the power and influence of COSATU within the current government, ABET occupied a higher place than any other concept of adult education. The former regime delivered its adult education through a programmatic system operating in night schools. The new government sidelined the night school system and in fact discredited it with everything else that was wrong in adult education and was more inclined to 'campaigns'. However, it is doubtful if there would have been continued success in adult education through night schools in the context of present day crime and violence. But the narrowing of the programme offerings in Adult Education came at the same time with the reduction of institutions in which public adult education could be offered.

³ This is the sense one gets from the initial bureaucrats about the financial state of government when they took over the administration. The new lot seems to have been caught by surprise as they assumed that the country was rich and yet they found out that they were inheriting a bankrupt state.

COSATU continued to play an important political role and mounted aggressive campaigns targeted at its members' needs, including workers' education; political consciousness; etc. the labour movement was also instrumental in pushing for a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), copied from New Zealand, which would link all qualifications in a national system irrespective of the route through which they have been achieved. The National Qualifications Framework was the first education Act to be promulgated by the new government in 1995 and it had and still has a tremendous impact on how the education system was to be transformed. In the NQF, the notion of a nebulous continuing system, not progressing in lock-step, is not accommodated. Institutions have come to be allocated their types and level of provisions and again it is hard to imagine institutions that cross boundaries. Provision has been exclusively conceptualized for credit, and credits take the form of either minute unit standards which do not mean much or very huge combinations of areas of learning to make up a qualification. The NQF system, though centralized and streamlined on paper, promotes a highly decentralized model of provision (Allais, 2010). This has resulted in extreme cases of mistrust of programmes outside the formal system and this is in exact opposite of what the system was set to achieve. Also, demand is mainly dictated by the providers not individuals, communities or industry.

The NQF is often touted as the modern system which other African countries must fashion their systems against, and yet there is so much disquiet in South Africa about its unworkability (Young; 207). The government took a decisive position that both the schools and higher education sectors were not going to subscribe wholesale to this model, but will relate to the NQF. For example, all public institutions do not use unit standards but curriculum based qualifications which relate to the NQF in terms of levels. This left adult education and training programs entirely in the new NQF system. Recently, government has again pulled the formal technical and vocational college system and designed that relate to the NQF, but are made up of unit standards as other vocational education programmes in the NQF. What is essentially left in the NQF as it was originally conceived is the 'theory' of adult education and some training programs. In fact what is actually there as adult education are primarily Department of Education driven courses, which are also copy-cats of school basic education subjects. In the meantime, the Department of education has been periodically engaging in massive campaign on literacy, the latest having been Khari Gude. In theory, South Africa uses the concept of adult education in a much broader sense, but in practice adult education is basic literacy,

South Africa has always been uncertain about where the education needs of its population are. The apartheid era that denied generations of African people education, often informed attempts to remedy this situation. To this end therefore, most efforts have been directed to literacy interventions. Next to basic literacy interventions has been attempts to give adults a school-like qualification, the general Education and certificate and Training (GETC) which was hoped it would enable these adults to access meaningful skills development. Before 1994, government night schools and linked private centres offered the only officially recognised certification in adult basic education in South Africa. This was the Standard 5 adult examinations. In the new dispensation this was widely regarded as unacceptable. Apart from it reflecting apartheid education, it emphasised authoritarian trivial and rote learning and was based on a schooling curriculum. With the introduction of Curriculum 2005, the old Standard 5 official examinations for adults fell away. What ABET certification there was, was then based on unguided assessments by the public adult learning centres (PALCs). The introduction of Curriculum 2005 for school-going learners and the growing status of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) also led to a period of confusion, uncertainties, lack of direction, low motivation and poor quality in many PALCs. It has become clear that adults are increasingly losing ground in having access to meaningful education.

What sets South Africa apart from other middle income countries

South Africa can be described as being quite schizophrenic about adult education and this schizophrenia is partly stemming from its racial apartness. During apartheid, access to education for

Africans was extremely poor. When South Africa emerged from the dark apartheid days, it was clear that there were many citizens who never accessed formal education. This situation was ably chronicled by the Non-Governmental Organisations that worked in the literacy movement as well as institutions of higher learning which were working towards the remedial of this situation. The emergence of unions which had large membership that was illiterate, like in the mining, as strong unions, strengthened the hand of the literacy advocates as the adult education that South Africa needs. The efforts made in school education by the new Department of Education right from the onset, did not seem to shift the perceptions about where adult education needs are as access to and success in school education was improving for all racial groups.

Taking for example a country like Brazil, a country that had similar if not worse illiteracy levels as South Africa, the former started at a very slow pace in its education system and not very good (De Moura Castro, 2012). The economy started to grow very fast whilst education was not growing. It was clear that the formal system of education was not keeping in pace with education and a lot of liberalisation took place to ensure that adults can have the education and training they need and thus participate in the booming economy of the country (De Moura Castro, 2012). It was not only the well-known institutions like the SENAI (Servico Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial or National Service for Industrial Apprenticeship) and SENAC (Servico Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial or National Service for Commercial education) that offers adult education but adult education and training surfaced everywhere for low to high levels of knowledge and skills. But SENAC and SENAI numbers of people who are undergoing training for short and long courses; people with less than seven years of schooling; people between the ages of 16 and 21; people over 40 years of age; the physically challenged; women in general; black, mixed race and indigenous women in particular, as well as women who are heads of household are mind boggling. The numbers of training centres, units, mobile units, etc for this training network are equally boggling (Carnielli et.al, 2007). There seems to be a training revolution in Brazil, which is characterised by a huge network of education and training for adults, and adults are taking it all in.

De Moura Castro (2012) for example reports that in Brazil one can bypass regular schools and take a compact version of a secondary education designed for adults and leading to public examinations. This is similar to the USA's GED test whose outcome is equivalent to a high school completion diploma. There are a number of young people in Brazil who opt to work after finishing school but attend evening classes for their university education. Distance education is booming in Brazil and so are different forms of private education provisions. In the 80s in Brazil there were a lot of unskilled and uneducated people and a lot of differential in pay scales. Then there was an economic growth as well as education growth. The growth of both the economy and education contributed to the closing of the gap as the education produced more skilled workers and the growing economy absorbed increasing numbers in the labour market. As the education system was trying to keep pace with the growth in the economy in Brazil, the economy itself was changing. For example, there has been a major transformation in the agricultural sector in the country, fuelled by scientific research done in value adding processes for this sector. This in turn fuelled a different kind of skills demands. A diverse set of institutions has emerged and these are trying to keeping pace with this growing demand of skills and thus changing the nature of what adult education is, constantly.

Another country that is worth comparing to is Korea. The country struggled to rebuild the nation from the ashes of the Korean War but has made dramatic improvements economically and educationally since then. Once being one of the poorest nations, Korea provides an example to developing countries. Educational development in Korea has always been tied to the economic development. For example, when Korea shifted its industrial base from heavy and chemical industries which were capital-intensive towards semiconductors, digital electronics, and telecommunications which were knowledge-intensive, the country at the same time devised strategies for universalising tertiary education and expanding technical and vocational education (Sang Hoon, 2011; Kim Young-Chu, 2011; Lee Young - Hyun, 2011). The universalising of tertiary education was predicated on an already universalised primary and secondary education system. The

tertiary education system grew at such a rapid pace that within a short space of time it was not only universal but Korea's enrolment rate in higher education is considered as one of the highest in the world. Young-Chu (2011) is of the opinion that the growth of the tertiary education system has been the driving force behind the country's economic growth, leading to industrialisation, and has also raised the consciousness of the public, contributing to the democratisation of the society. In addition, the economic shifts from agriculture to manufacturing required a different kind of technical and vocational education and the bulk of which was located in the tertiary sector in the form of junior colleges. It must be noted that the majority of these junior colleges are privately owned. In addition, subsequent education reforms ensured that these junior colleges would not just remain as technical and vocational education sites of learning, but according to Lee Young -Hyun (2011) the introduction of the concept of lifelong education became the driving force of diversifying provision even in these colleges.

Unlike in Brazil, where it was the improvements in agriculture that was a catalyst in the economic growth and demand of different kinds of skills, in Korea, it was a totally different shift in the economic activities from agriculture to manufacturing that drove the country to a different set of skills requirements. Both countries though did not hesitate to liberalise their education provision and enabled the private sector to come into this space and meet the demand that the state could not meet. In addition, both countries built on the fortunes of earlier decisions about tertiary education. Tertiary education has always been seen as an important part of developing a country and both countries had earlier invested in sending large numbers to be educated overseas even before this there were concerted efforts to expand their own tertiary education systems. The implications of this was that when the education system exploded to deal with the escalating skills development demand, there were many highly educated individuals in these respective countries who could teach in the expanded education system and institutions.

South Africa on the other hand has expanded its secondary education system where 97% of its grade 9 learners progress to the first years of senior secondary schooling. The Ministerial Committee (2008) reports a 20% attrition rate before the writing of the grade 12 examinations. There are therefore high numbers (+ 600 000) who sit for the National Senior Certificate examination and 70% of these pass. Where do they go to as universities absorb about 80 000 students per annum and public FET colleges less than a half? This has led to the CHET study to report an extraordinarily high number of young people not in school, not in employment and not in training (Cloete, 2009). This number in 2009 was 2, 8 million and many believe that this number has increased significantly by 2012. Is the figure given right? How has it been derived? This figure was derived from the statistics collected through secondary data of community surveys on formal education participation. The deduction made is that when individuals are not participating in formal education they are not participating in any other form of education, is flawed. Also, we do not know what has happened since the data was collected to those individuals. The point that is being made here is that even in South Africa, many individuals are engaged with different forms of learning that are not documented anywhere. Adults take short and long courses all over the place for computer literacy, call centre training, insurance brokerage training; shop stewards; hotel functions, retail, distance learning, job specific training like financial management for municipality workers, fire fighting, stenographers, musicians and dancers - the list is long.

The difference between South Africa and other middle income countries is that the size of these adult programmes is smaller and is not growing in South Africa. It is also an underground system of adult education that people prefer to ignore instead of understanding it. It is summarily dismissed as private or informal education⁴. But adult education, in spite of unreliable data, is an enormous enterprise, spreading across regular schools, proprietary institutions, different public bureaucracies,

⁴ Most programmes in the private provider domain are considered to be short courses and short courses and learning that is not formally certificated considered to be informal.

the media and even the internet. It is probably bigger than regular public education. The other difference about South Africa with regards to how the country treats adult education is that this is one aspect of education that is heavily regulated. First, there was an attempt to develop unit standards, learnerships and new qualifications for the training that mostly already existed. These unit standards were largely not taken up by providers. Then there were learnerships which have been ad hoc and not meant to build institutions through constant or repeated provision. Then the upfront requirement for accreditation finally put a nail into the coffin of many providers of most adult education provision. In public spaces all adult education became known as 'fly by night' courses. This has caused a great shrinkage of what is a thriving adult education system in other countries.

Lastly, in South Africa there is no direct relationship between the education that individuals participate in and the labour market. This problem is a result of two factors: the traditional stance of the Anglophone education system that the country inherited, and difficulties in linking education to the labour market demands and about education for adults. Both in Brazil and Korea, there seems to be a level of nimbleness in getting their education to shift and change according to current demands. Also, the two countries used for comparisons here always know where jobs are coming from and have also worked hard to stimulate certain sectors for job growth. When there is job growth it becomes logical that this must be followed by education growth that meets the requirement of the new and expanded economy. South Africa has not capitalised on major projects that in the past have stimulated growth in the economy, to stimulate education growth. We need to know why.

The UNESCO conference in Hamburg started the world on a journey on adult education. The participants in these conferences seem to have been a different crowd that is not informed by the adult education revolution that is taking place all over the world. In South Africa, the same Hamburg crowd seem to dominate the discourse of adult education. This crowd is the one that wants us to believe that adult education is one thing - either about literacy only or are denialists about what is already taking place as adult education in the country.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Now we have to return to answer the initial question we asked at the beginning of this paper: whether adult education is post-school education or not. In this paper we have tried to clarify subsets of this question first. Is adult education an age-related concept? Yes it is, as adult education should be concerned with all learning undertaken by those who are outside of the schooling system, namely those who are not children. It is no coincidence that we consider eighteen year olds to be fit to exercise their rights in many activities that are considered to be passages of right to adulthood, like voting, driving a car, etc. They are adults. Is adult education a phase of learning? Yes, it is as it is only school education that should be considered to be applicable to children. Everything else should be considered to be adult education. Is it a programme thing? Not at all, as adults also want to study everything, general education, vocational education, short courses, work-place learning, etc. Is it an institution thing? Again, not at all. Universities have shown that adults do not have to be ghettoised into special institutions for their learning. Both young adults and old adults can learn in the same institution at the same time or teaching can be delivered in a flexible way to accommodate adult needs. So, anything that is post-school should be considered to be adult education.

What does this position change, or is it merely about semantics? It is important to reconceptualise what adult education is in today's South African society for several reasons. First we need to take a closer look at what the totality of our nation demands of its education system. In this regard our society requires an education and training system that caters for individual, societal and vocational needs. As more and more people complete or almost complete basic education, this society requires

a variety of programmes at school completion, college, university and work-place levels. It requires general and technical and vocational education and training. It requires applied and pure scientific as well as social sciences. It is not one thing that adults require. As a middle income country, this is where we should be putting emphasis in our efforts to educate and develop the skills of adults in this society. Secondly, the expansion of the post-school will happen primarily by focusing on the non-traditional population of society. In other countries these are the students who have made expansion possible. At a glance, the non-traditional students are mainly adults and many of them are atypical of either college or university study, but they are able to access this education because of how it is conceptualised for students like them. Thirdly, adult education will contribute significantly to the differentiation of institutions across the post-school system and within institutional types as adult education includes a concept of general education which in turn provides a bridge to technical and vocational as well as scientific study. Fourthly, a reconceptualisation of adult education provides a defence against separate institutions for adult education and vocational education at the college level. The idea of separate Community education and Training centres, proposed in the Post-School Green paper has no logic as the same institutions will be competing for the same students. Fifthly, when adult education is seen in the way described above, it has more power to facilitate learning progression for adults. For example adults who did not complete their basic education and move to a college to do so, will have a greater chance to get into work-preparation programmes in the same college than students from outside of the institution. This would also minimise the extraneous requirements put on adults for school-like examinations and certification. Sixthly, adult education is the lens through which we can cross boundaries horizontally and vertically and make education and training viable for all citizens.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

There is a lot of work that needs to be done therefore in figuring out the best way to educate adults in this country. There is a lot that we do not know about adult education and its role in post-school education as well as skilling the population for the labour market.

Size and shape of adult education

We actually do not have an account of the size and shape of our adult education. The information we have is that which is collected through the accreditation and registration processes. Many providers and institutions simply do not bother about this reporting requirement as it is cumbersome and it tends to criminalise this sector. We do not know if we have adequate adult education for citizens to continue their education. We do not know the nature of this provision and where it is located. It is difficult to collect such information, but it is critical information that should inform what we plan to do in the post school education system. It is information that is useful to guide post school learners on what is available. It is information that should inform government what to support and what to discourage. It is information that will show us what gaps we have. Finally, it is information that will allow us to have a better handle on the expansion, differentiation and diversity agendas for the reconfigured post-school education system.

Growth in development and education

There are some who strongly believe that the industrialisation that South Africa started in the 70s was halted mid-stream during the State's engagements with anti-apartheid movements. It is true that there is a large part of South Africa that needs to enter in the second wave of industrialisation. Through various ministries in government, there are plans to develop the country and offer services to citizens on a scale that will dramatically change the development contours of the country

Plans are afoot to expand ports, road networks, dams and irrigation, power stations, transmission lines, increase broad band and build in the infrastructure and development project. All these projects will need a range of adult education programmes to develop the skills necessary to engender the projects successfully. The National Health Insurance plan is the most ambitious plan to be experienced in the health sector. Yet, it is not clear yet what the nature of the human resources that this big project will need and whether or not the current education and training regiment will cope with the growth in skills development that is needed. We do not know if the disparate efforts that have emerged to train the health personnel are coherent and meaningful for the 21st century health care system. The manufacturing sector, through the Department of Trade and industry has also put its claim in developing the manufacturing competitiveness. What kinds of education will this need? Finally, who will teach in all these areas of education growth that will soon emerge?

The nature of the not in Employment, Not in Education and not in Training (NEET) group

There is general acceptance that the young people who have been characterised as the NEET group are really a group of young people who have simply dropped out of the face of education and are in fact in limbo with their lives. The NEET concept originated from the United Kingdom where Wolf (2011) has given further light on the UK group. She explains it as a 'churning' group from job to job. Our NEET group is likely to be 'churning' from one Adult Education programme to another. At the point of capturing the 2007 data through the 2007 Community Survey, they are likely to have acquired the level of education asked in the survey. The survey itself might have forced respondents to respond to educational qualifications questions that only depicted formal education as the only education. What we know is that both states of extreme employment and unemployment serve as stimulants to demands for adult education.

A survey that looks at what individuals, who exit the schooling system and are neither in FET Colleges or universities, is actually needed. This study will throw light to the mystery of lifelong learning of individuals who collect a range of certificates that do not seem to take them anywhere as well as individuals who make different attempts in continuing education but come out with very little if anything and individuals who want to access education, but is not available or there are many barriers for them. This should be instructive in the construction of an expanded post-school education system.

The role of government in expanding adult education

The South African government has always professed to intentions to expand adult education provision in the country. Yet the results continue to be dismal. The reduction of literacy is largely generational and there are efforts to improve the schooling system. At best, the government has put up a range of regulatory systems to control the proliferation or curb fly-by nights in adult education. This has resulted in a shrinking adult education system even though the government cannot pronounce on its quality.

Countries that have expanded their education system have done so largely through the adult education system. The focus should be about non-traditional students in universities and colleges; liberalising private institutional provision (as in Korea); allowing a thousand flowers to bloom for all kinds of programmes for adults (e.g. Brazil) or concentrating on the informal vocational sector (as in Ghana). In all these examples, there has been a directed policy intention to increase the education available to adults by government. We are at that stage where we need to know what the government needs to do to create an enabling environment for adult education. In other words, considering the country's skills demand forecast and our knowledge of what the formal public education system produces, what is it that the government must encourage and support in order to meet the skills need? It is always assumed that we need mostly technical and artisanal development. Is this true? If it is, do we have the educational basis to do this in our stock? The outcomes of this

research project would help the government project for a differentiated and diversified post-school education system.

Strengthening institutional capacity for adult education

Whilst private education is kicking and thriving to certain extent, public adult education has been dying, even in FET colleges. It is only in university that adult education has been thriving, but even here the space is small for further expansion. We need to understand what to do with the other institutions in order to strengthen them – both public and private.

Firstly, the quality of teaching is perhaps the most important factor that impacts on quality of outcomes across all education sectors. Universities have an important role to play in improving teacher quality, but this role has been historically neglected when it comes to adult education teachers. This research will include conceptual and literature-based research into adult education, including vocational pedagogy, as well as bringing together existing data on adult education offerings, lecturer qualifications, teacher capacity, prioritized teaching areas, and an analysis of current offerings, to develop focused proposals for capacity-building and long term support. It will also involve the compilation of resources for training.

Secondly, in all adult education provision, there is a range of functions, mostly outside the classroom, that would strengthen the functioning of institutions like a college, that have to be investigated or studied; e.g. student support services, employment liaisons, community liaisons and development, extra-mural activities, IT & communications, recruitment and placements, fund-raising, management and administration, etc. A key focus of this work will be about understanding the best and most strategic ways that adult education can be supported.

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