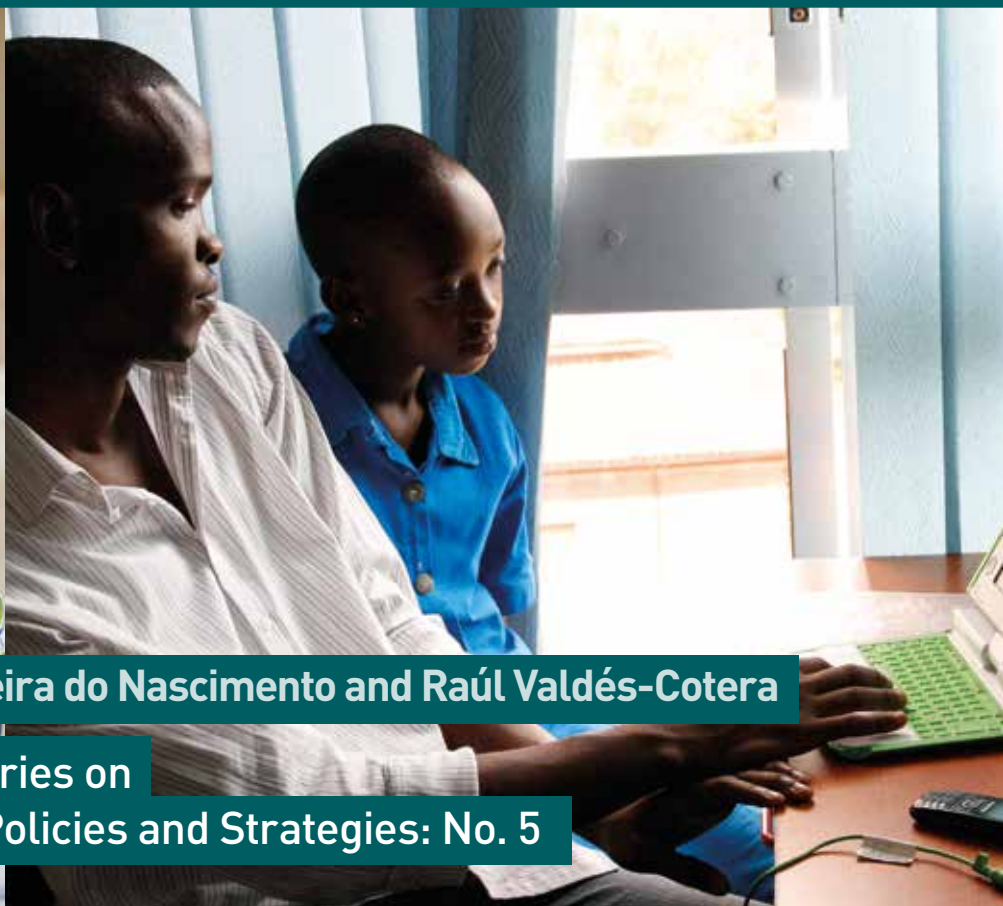




Promoting lifelong learning for all:

The experiences of Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania



Edited by Daniele Vieira do Nascimento and Raúl Valdés-Cotera

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PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL: THE EXPERIENCES OF ETHIOPIA, KENYA, NAMIBIA, RWANDA AND THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

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Fruitful cooperation with all those mentioned above enabled this research to be conducted and helped produce this publication, which we hope will contribute to the advancement of lifelong learning throughout the participating African countries.



Directors of adult education and senior education specialists at the policy dialogue workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 2017

FOREWORD

The African continent has made significant advances in education by embracing the concept of learning throughout life and by putting good practices into action. This has contributed to community empowerment and to an improvement in the living conditions of many people. While, on the one hand, problems such as high illiteracy rates, barriers to educational opportunities, lack of access to education for marginalized groups and weak infrastructure remain a challenge for many African countries, progress has been made in the promotion and implementation of lifelong learning policies and initiatives. The main aim of this report is to showcase the advancements taking place in Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania in order to promote holistic and comprehensive lifelong learning policies. By highlighting the progress being made in these five countries, successful lifelong learning policies and practices can be shared with other African regions in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Cooperation between the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania in developing lifelong learning policies started back in 2010. One result of this collaboration was the publication *Key Issues and Policy Considerations in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Selected African Countries* (Walters et al., 2014), which inaugurated the UIL Publication Series on Lifelong Learning Policies and Strategies. This current publication builds on that previous work and reflects the continued engagement of UIL to strengthen capacities in the five selected countries.

We regard this research and publication as an important step in revisiting lifelong learning policies in Africa, and a resource to inspire and guide policy-makers, practitioners and researchers towards the promotion of learning throughout life. UIL is committed to these efforts, and the insights from this research will inform our future research and capacity-development initiatives across the continent.

David Atchoarena
Director
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The important role played by lifelong learning (LLL) in ensuring sustainable development is captured in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by heads of state, government leaders and high-level UN and civil society representatives in September 2015 as an action plan incorporating three domains: people, planet and prosperity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a significant step forward in positioning education as one of the main drivers in improving health conditions, fostering economic growth, increasing work opportunities, and promoting sustainable consumption and production and environmental protection across the globe.

The SDGs have reinvigorated lifelong learning as a humanistic, rights-based, holistic and sector-wide approach to education, and have been extremely well received. One stand-alone goal in particular has proved very popular: Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims 'to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. By highlighting lifelong learning, SDG 4 brings the role of LLL to the fore of the debate on how to promote and sustain quality education.

African countries have been following this global commitment. The long-standing culture of family and community learning in Africa provides a breeding ground for promoting lifelong learning in diverse settings; collective learning, for instance, is a key success factor. However, although a lot has already been done, and policies have been set up in many countries, there remain a number of pressing challenges in education, such as high rates of illiteracy, a large number of out-of-school children, and insufficient opportunities for skills development.

In line with this, and in order to strengthen the capacities of policy-makers and researchers to develop and implement lifelong learning systems in UNESCO Member States, and in Africa in particular, UIL organized a pilot workshop in 2010 with five selected African countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. This was followed by a research study and the related publication, *Key Issues and Policy Considerations in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Selected Countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia,*

Rwanda and Tanzania, in 2014, which were designed to support these countries in developing policies and strategies on lifelong learning. Based on desk research and interviews with key experts, the study reviewed existing education policies and progress made towards developing lifelong learning systems, and drew up 10 recommendations¹ for further action and reform (Walters et al., 2014).

Walters et al. (ibid.) stressed that the adoption of lifelong learning as an organizing principle in Africa is a long-term commitment, and it must tap into traditional and local wisdom as well as adapt to the modern day. With the aim of building on this promotion of lifelong learning, and tracking relevant actions and reforms undertaken by the five countries, UIL has prepared this report. It compiles good practice from the five countries and shows what strategic actions are being undertaken in line with the recommendations mentioned above – and how these can support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This publication highlights the countries' development and advancements in different lifelong learning approaches, which comprise a range of sectors and forms of learning. Based on our desk research, feedback from each country, and shared material, this report compiles the five countries' successful lifelong learning practices in relation to Walters' 10 policy recommendations (ibid.). Action taken by the five countries over the past few years towards the implementation of the SDGs, and inclusive and gender-responsive lifelong learning policies and programmes in the region, are also summarized.

OBJECTIVES

It is hoped that this report will be used not only to acknowledge the progress made by the five African countries in promoting lifelong learning, but to disseminate successful lifelong learning policies and practices that could be adapted and adopted by other African countries to ultimately achieve the SDGs.

The key objectives of the report are:

- To convey a conceptual understanding of the promotion and implementation of lifelong learning policies and

¹ Recommendations are outlined in Chapter 2 of this report.



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Lifelong learning must tap into traditional and local wisdom as well as adapt to the modern day

strategies in Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

- To showcase the progress made by the countries in promoting lifelong learning and identify opportunities for strengthening lifelong learning.
- To analyse how the initiatives undertaken by the participating countries support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected by UIL with the support of two consultants in three different phases. For the first phase, material was collected through desk research and interviews via Skype with the countries' representatives (e.g. directors and professionals in charge of adult education, and senior adult-education specialists). This allowed UIL an initial insight into the various

initiatives taking place in each country. Based on this material, the first draft of the report was prepared to be shared with the countries. In a second phase, UIL, in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, organized a policy dialogue workshop. Country representatives, policy-makers and researchers from the five selected countries, and UNESCO experts, took part in the workshop from 23 to 24 February 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya, to discuss the status of lifelong learning in these countries and to analyse the first draft of the report. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen the participants' knowledge base and lead to more informed policy-making, as well as to communicate the first draft of the report to the countries' representatives and collect additional data for inclusion in the second draft. Discussions at the workshop focused on lifelong learning policies and initiatives under development at national level, including analysis of any obstacles. Possible approaches to improved access to education – particularly in non-formal settings – and enhanced opportunities for informal learning for citizens of all ages, were also discussed. As a follow-up, and drawing on the results of this workshop, a second draft of the report was presented during the ADEA Triennale, from 14 to 17 March 2017, in Dakar, Senegal, when feedback was also collected from experts attending the event. Finally, in a third phase, further literature reviews and country consultancies were carried out to strengthen and finalize the report, based on the discussions that took place in both Nairobi and Dakar. Published and unpublished materials available in print or online were analysed to help identify good examples of lifelong learning strategies in the five participating countries. These materials included, for instance, policy documents and country reports.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that the study has some limitations. These mainly concern access to information. Although there are several programmes and initiatives taking place in the five countries that fall within the scope of lifelong learning, limited details of these projects are available. Furthermore, representatives of Rwanda were unable to join the workshop and policy discussion in Nairobi – although insight into the country's situation was conveyed by telephone. Finally, time constraints prevented field assessments from being carried out

– this could have provided opportunities to collect more data on lifelong learning practices taking place in the five countries. Nevertheless, these study limitations did not compromise the ultimate quality of the report or impede the development of the study, which should not be taken as an exhaustive compendium but rather as an attempt to showcase good practices of lifelong learning in the selected countries.

CONTENT

This brief introduction is followed by an examination of the theoretical background in *Chapter 1*, where the origin, essence and benefits of lifelong learning in Africa are outlined; research results and discussions in *Chapter 2*, with a showcase of good practices from each country and an overview of their lifelong learning initiatives; and concluding remarks in *Chapter 3*, with suggestions for follow-up actions and collaboration with UIL. *Chapter 3* also provides some ideas on how the process of promoting lifelong learning in African countries can be accelerated. It is important to highlight that one good practice per country was identified by UIL and included in *Chapter 2*. These practices were selected according to the following criteria: target population, potential impact, sustainability and availability of data.



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SDG 4.4 calls for equitable access to technical and vocational skills, and the improvement of vocational curricula

Chapter 1: Origin, essence and benefits of lifelong learning

ORIGIN AND ESSENCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The concept of lifelong learning precedes modern times; in fact, its roots stretch back thousands of years in many cultures. The concept is related to terms such as 'fundamental education', 'continuing education', 'basic education', 'lifelong education' and 'recurrent education'. 'Many ancient institutions of education, from the academics of ancient Greece ... to the medieval religious schools of Europe, the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, promoted scholarship and learning as a way of life' (Carlsen and Haddad, 2013). Learning takes place throughout life and in various situations (ibid.), and everyone learns from birth until the end of their life, even if they never go to school (Torres, 2011). This understanding of learning suggests a continuous process involving lifelong transformation that 'occurs whenever we are conscious and it needs no objective in itself, although it frequently does have a purpose' (Jarvis, 2009, p. 10).

Despite the different uses and understandings of the term 'lifelong learning', since its inception UNESCO has, along with other international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission, played a key role in shaping a strong vision for the concept.

The concept of lifelong learning was internationally recognized following the publication *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* (Faure et al., 1972), which was the first UNESCO report tracing the conceptual development of lifelong education. The authors of the publication argued that learning was not only a lifelong, but a life-wide endeavour that comprised formal, non-formal and informal learning modalities. Lifelong and life-wide learning, maintained the report, promotes personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability. The essential value of Faure's report lies in its democratic egalitarian acknowledgement that education is a right not limited to specific age or socio-economic groups. It emphasized the need for education to be both universal and lifelong and stated the importance of remodelling educational structures in order to accommodate lifelong educational patterns.

Twenty-four years later, with a new economic world scenario, a second landmark report, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors, et al., 1996), also known as the Delors Report, emerged as a remarkably visionary, inspirational and idealistic statement. The report was published in 1996 and supported the removal of the traditional distinction between formal and continuing education. It stressed the concept of a learning society that offers varied learning opportunities and seamless pathways via a nation's education and training system. Here, lifelong learning is considered a preparation for the challenges of a fast-changing world. The report introduced the four pillars of education, namely: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. These pillars are still used as a basic conceptual foundation, e.g. for monitoring frameworks.

For UNESCO, in essence, lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal), which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems that promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals (UIL, n.d.).

There are three main dimensions that together characterize the holistic nature of lifelong learning; these are (1) life phases, (2) modality of delivery, and (3) learning domains (UIL, 2014).

'Life phases' comprise age stages from early childhood to very old age. Lifelong learning is life-wide and for people of all ages, covering learning from cradle to grave. School therefore represents only one component of lifelong learning (Torres, 2011); socio-cognitive development occurs in different phases, and people should be encouraged to continue and sustain their learning throughout their lives. It is especially important to promote the necessity of learning in adulthood and later life to help maintain mental health and flexibility. Therefore, in ageing societies, lifelong learning becomes a core component of prosperity and well-being.



Young students at a primary school in Kenya

'Modality of delivery' relates to the transfer of knowledge and skills in various settings, such as formal, non-formal and informal. It should be noted that the distinction between these three modalities becomes fluid in the contemporary world. 'Formal education' is traditionally perceived as the state-run education system, designed and implemented by the government, and by authorized and recognized public and private institutions. Generally, formal education consists of basic education programmes, tertiary education and some parts of adult education – such as further education programmes that lead to formal certificates (UIS, 2012). Furthermore, formal education encompasses all age groups and a range of programmes that should adjust their content and teaching methodology according to the needs of learners, their backgrounds and their aspirations.

'Non-formal education' is defined as additional, alternative or complementary to formal education within the lifelong

learning pathway of a learner. Non-formal education programmes often show greater flexibility in terms of content and adaptability to the specific needs of learners compared with the formal modality. They are often designed to ensure the right of access to education for all. The duration of non-formal education programmes varies based on the goals of the programme and its intensity. These programmes are typically delivered in the form of training courses or workshops (ibid.).

'Informal learning' is not institutionalized and is consequently less structured. It often takes place outside educational institutions and may include learning activities carried out with family members, in the workplace and in communities, as well as self-directed or socially-directed learning that forms part of daily life (UIL, 2012).

Lifelong learning also implies a wide range of 'learning domains'. They encompass, for instance, personal, social and cultural development. Learning should ultimately lead to physical well-being, community development that enables individuals to become active citizens, and personal and professional development that equips learners to achieve job satisfaction, spiritual wealth and economic security (UIL, 2014).

More recently, the *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action* (for the implementation of SDG 4) has drawn further attention to the concept of lifelong learning and positioned education at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda has reinvigorated interest in lifelong learning with particular regard to SDG 4, which aims 'to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. SDG 4 recognizes that education and lifelong learning can accelerate progress towards the achievement of all the SDGs – it is the result of a two-year consultation process between UNESCO Member States and key stakeholders on the future education agenda, which culminated in the World Education Forum (WEF) held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2015. The outcome document of the WEF was Education 2030, which comprises the Incheon Declaration and the Framework for Action (FFA). The Incheon Declaration expresses the collective commitment of the global education community to SDG 4 and entrusts UNESCO to continue pursuing its mandate to lead and coordinate the global education agenda. The main objective of the FFA is to provide guidance for the implementation of SDG 4. The FFA highlights the relevance of inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning for all through the following: universal access to LLL, especially for vulnerable groups; intersectoral approaches and strong partnerships; provision of multiple and flexible learning pathways and entry points at all ages and at all educational levels; and use of the immense potential of modern learning technologies (information and communication technology has opened up new opportunities for learning, in particular for those previously excluded). This report provides a progress update on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by highlighting the advances made in promoting LLL by each country.

THE BENEFITS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning has numerous benefits, from individual to societal. These include greater social participation, better employment opportunities because of professional courses and training programmes, and the acquisition of skills and qualifications. LLL generates greater equity for women, allowing greater female participation in the workplace and a better quality of childcare. Household administration can become more efficient as a result of lifelong learning through, for example, better financial management. Children's education is enhanced and, at the other end of the age scale, more part-time employment and increased engagement in social activities for the retired are direct benefits of LLL policies (Plewis and Preston, 2001).

Therefore, the benefits of implementing lifelong learning policies and strategies are not limited to knowledge and skills acquisition. Learning throughout life has a positive effect on areas such as health, work opportunities, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development.

Education and learning are pathways to health, particularly in ageing societies (Narushima, 2008). For example, by improving their knowledge and understanding of health matters, learners can better protect themselves from illness, improve their life expectancy, enjoy life more, and increase their levels of physical and mental activity as they age (Kececi and Bulduk, 2012; Plewis and Preston, 2001). Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have yet to experience a demographic transition from higher to lower fertility and mortality rates, which impacts on development. Educating women and girls through lifelong learning programmes can therefore contribute to a much-needed change in the region, as women who are educated are more likely to practise family planning (Pradhan and Canning, 2015).

Lifelong learning also offers a second chance to those who have never been enrolled in, or have dropped out of, the formal education system. With further learning opportunities in adult literacy programmes, higher education, and various non-formal training initiatives, learners can access or supplement the knowledge and skills they have acquired within their families and communities, which can



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A group of women learning in Ethiopia. Lifelong learning generates greater equity and allows for greater female participation in the workplace

lead to further and better employment opportunities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the urgent need to redesign educational systems so that learners can gain the relevant skills for decent employment and successful entrepreneurship (UNESCO, 2016). Moreover, lifelong learning fulfils an important social function, as the ability and capacity of individuals to participate in community and civil life can be considerably enhanced through lifelong learning initiatives (UIL, 2016a).

In the face of limited resources, and given that education for all has yet to be achieved in many countries, lifelong learning is very well placed to supplement formal efforts to reach out to those left behind – contributing to poverty alleviation and promoting more equitable and just societies – as the marginalized are also among the target beneficiaries of these learning opportunities. There are also opportunities to enhance respect for human rights, democratic participation, public accountability, and other ethical behaviour. Lifelong learning can additionally promote racial, ethnic and religious integration and better understanding of other cultures, and can reduce the involvement of young people in crime (ibid.).

In addition to this, the implementation of lifelong learning supports the economic, cultural, social and environmental

dimensions of sustainable development. In fact, lifelong learning can play a crucial role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particularly SDG 4 (United Nations, 2015).

These various benefits have a positive impact on individuals, families, communities, organizations and society (Plewis and Preston, 2001). Individuals can experience advancements in several areas of their lives (e.g. health, employment, social engagement, quality of life) because of lifelong learning. Family members can be encouraged by their peers' educational and learning achievements. Moreover, family members' learning initiatives can support and foment social and cultural capital and initiatives at the community level, which is crucial for economic success (ibid.). Community participation can be increased and local organizations can improve the quality of their information and training. This ultimately contributes to the accumulation of intellectual capital or organizational intelligence as a whole. The wider benefits for society can be achieved through, for example, intergenerational contributions to the economy and civic engagement. While strengthening economic progress and development, it is essential to ensure that all members of society benefit from economic prosperity in order to reduce social inequality.

Chapter 2: Promoting lifelong learning for all in selected African countries

This chapter describes how the five African countries have been promoting lifelong learning for all. The following reports correspond directly to the 10 recommendations provided by the research study *Key Issues and Policy Considerations in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Selected Countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania* (Walters et al., 2014), which addressed shortcomings in lifelong learning in the countries.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Develop a holistic overarching national policy framework to promote lifelong learning for all as well as clear guidelines for its implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Expand access to, and the equity, quality and relevance of formal education by better understanding and responding to the demands for individual, community and societal core skills and competences, and by adopting a competence-based approach to curriculum reform within a lifelong learning framework.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Prioritize the development of adult and non-formal education (ANFE) through recognition of the intimate link between formal education and adult and non-formal sub-systems, and by creating more community learning opportunities (including ANFE schools) and improving the relevance of curricula to meet learners' needs.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Commit to building a learning society, family by family, community by community and district by district, by borrowing from existing traditions of community learning and by converting national policy guidelines into sustainable actions at the local level.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Strengthen the links between formal, non-formal and informal learning through the development and implementation of national and cross-border mechanisms to recognize outcomes of all forms of learning, and by improving national and regional qualification frameworks.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Improve human and financial resources for formal and non-formal education to encourage teacher motivation and infrastructure development.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Promote the use of mass media and information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching and learning as well as for providing information, guidance and counselling for learners of all ages. These media tools should be available through existing telephone helplines, and at community centres, faith-based organizations, civil society organizations and workplaces.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Recognize the importance of research in developing and implementing lifelong learning policies at the regional, national and institutional levels; acknowledge deep shifts in the pedagogical and organizational philosophies and approaches that are needed for lifelong learning to move from rhetoric to sustained action. Encourage relationships among university-based researchers and those who work in government and elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Improve coordination among various stakeholders by establishing and strengthening cross-sectorial collaboration mechanisms among government departments and between governments and NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector. This should happen at national, regional and local levels, and in tandem with decentralization, leading to effective regional and local capacity-building.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

Prioritize lifelong learning in cross-border integration through, for example, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC), and identify coordinating mechanisms such as regional qualification frameworks to enhance mobility and recognition between countries.

Following discussions with government officials from the five participating countries and a review of relevant documentation, it is clear that some of the countries' policies and practices are aligned with the suggested recommendations, although there are some areas that need more work.

Moreover, the information provided in this publication shows the progress made in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by highlighting the increased accessibility and availability of learning opportunities. The selected African countries have, for instance, been working on reducing gender disparity in education (SDG 4.5), integrating rural and vulnerable communities into education, and promoting literacy and numeracy among adults (SDG 4.6), and providing professional training for teachers (SDG 4.c). Therefore, as well as demonstrating SDG 4 implementation, the efforts that the countries have made are in line with the 10 recommendations provided by Walters et al. (ibid.), which aim to establish a solid system of lifelong learning in Africa.

In the sections to follow, relevant practices for the implementation of lifelong learning in each country are described. The goal of this chapter is to present each country's achievements in light of the recommendations. Although the participating countries have followed different paths in the advancement of their educational systems and in developing a lifelong learning approach, this chapter outlines, in the specific context of each country, how lifelong learning for all has been promoted and implemented, and this can serve as a point of reference for other African States.

There is a sub-chapter for each country, which deals with the countries' individual approaches and attempts to define their understanding of the term 'lifelong learning'. This is followed by an overview of LLL initiatives in that country, in order to demonstrate how the principles and values of lifelong learning are reflected in national policies and practices, and how the country is addressing the 10 recommendations provided by UIL in 2014. This section also describes ways in which SDG 4 can be implemented. After this, we briefly look at the evaluation and acknowledgement of LLL achievements in each country. Each sub-chapter ends with a detailed description of an example of good practice for promoting

lifelong learning for all. These case studies are only examples of commendable programmes and the research does not intend them to be an exhaustive assessment, but rather a showcase for effective initiatives that have been implemented.

1. ETHIOPIA

The vision of lifelong learning in Ethiopia is underpinned by the country's ambition to become a middle-income nation by 2025, reduce poverty levels and increase the national literacy rate (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 2015). The Ethiopian Government has succeeded in universalizing primary education and increasing enrolment in secondary education (ibid.), thus contributing to SDG 4.1. However, the quality of that education still requires improvement. The fact that more than 10 million children and young people do not attend school (UIS, n.d.) is still a major challenge for the country. Ethiopia is developing a strategy for lifelong learning with a focus on curriculum and implementation guidelines and has devised strategies to respond to the educational needs of its citizens through various formal, non-formal and informal educational and learning initiatives, which address the existing drawbacks. In addition, the number of universities has grown within the past decade, thus improving access to higher education.

What is lifelong learning in Ethiopia?

Intergenerational learning has always been present in Ethiopia, mainly comprising the transfer of vocational skills from older to younger generations. In this way, lifelong learning approaches have been deeply embedded in the culture and mindset of the people.

In the milestone policy document *Education Sector Development Programme V (ESDP V)* (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 2015), which outlines the development trends and directions for Ethiopian education for 2015–2020, adult and non-formal education are linked to the lifelong learning concept. Thus, the goals of adult and non-formal education in Ethiopia support the creation of a learning society and the provision of lifelong learning that meets 'the diverse learning needs of all and contributes to personal, societal and economic development' (ibid., p. 39). This is consistent with Recommendation 3.²

2 Further references to 'Recommendations' indicate the 10 recommendations provided by Walters et al. (2014).

Adult education is also regarded as an enabling factor that drives progress in terms of sustainable quality education for Ethiopian children and youth. There is a direct positive correlation between parents' education and their children's academic achievements (Gratz et al., 2006; Dubow et al., 2009; Erola et al., 2016). Moreover, *ESDP V* suggests that extra years of education for women contribute significantly to a reduced infant morbidity and mortality rate (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 2015, p. 17).

The research study *Developing a Lifelong Learning System in Ethiopia: Contextual Considerations and Propositions* (Abiy et al., 2014) aimed to explain the understanding and perception of the lifelong learning concept among Ethiopian policy-makers, researchers and practitioners in the field of education. The findings of the study revealed a majority view that lifelong learning should be based in literacy and skill-oriented programmes, as well as in alternative forms of education and training. Furthermore, some interviewees

mentioned that non-formal education should be supported by the government, as this modality provides greater flexibility and greater potential to respond to the continually changing demands of the labour market in comparison with the highly structured formal modality.

In recent years, Ethiopia has succeeded in reforming its curriculum by including lifelong learning principles and incorporating ICTs into teaching and learning at all levels of education. Indeed, a number of policies and plans, as indicated in *Table 1*, were adopted to reinforce a national system of lifelong learning. Nevertheless, despite the widespread practice of learning throughout life, lifelong learning as a comprehensive and holistic system has not been systematized and institutionalized at national level yet. Moreover, issues such as access and equity in education, the introduction of effective recognition mechanisms of prior learning, and the establishment of solid cooperation between various stakeholders, still require attention.

Table 1. Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Ethiopia

Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Ethiopia	Year/Period	Remarks
Special Needs/ Inclusive Education Strategy	2012	Promotes the creation of an inclusive education system that caters for all children, youth and adults with special educational needs and empowers them to participate fully in society.
Education Sector Development Programme V (ESDP V)	2015–2020	Outlines the development trends and directions for Ethiopian general and tertiary education, adult and non-formal education.
A Master Plan for Special Needs/ Inclusive Education in Ethiopia 2016–2025	2016	Determines strategic priorities and actions that must be taken in order to improve inclusion in education under six major pillars: policy-making, administration, human resources, provision of education, research, and finances.

The promotion of lifelong learning in Ethiopia

Overview of initiatives

Lifelong learning strategies are delineated under the *ESDP V*, which deals with general education, higher education, adult and non-formal education, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). *ESDP V* represents a holistic policy framework designed to guide the implementation of educational policies, including lifelong learning, at local and national level. This does much to address Recommendation 1. This policy plan revolves around five pillars: (1) bolstering capacity development for improved management, (2) maintaining the momentum of expanding access to quality basic education, (3) establishing technical and vocational education training institutes in all regions of the country, (4) strengthening tertiary education institutions, and (5) providing lifelong learning to all citizens to enable them to contribute and benefit from economic growth.

General education, consisting of primary and secondary schooling, has improved during the past few decades but still faces considerable challenges relating to human resources, infrastructure, quality and the relevance of the learning process for the needs of students (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 2015). Building on the success of its widened access to, and participation in, primary education, the government – in line with SDG 4.1 – intends to reach universal secondary education by 2020, as well as to revamp educational standards of quality. Following Recommendation 7, the use of ICTs at Ethiopian schools has enhanced both the quality of education and curriculum development; for example, many secondary schools benefit from an education satellite broadcasting programme (*ibid.*).

The main objectives for Ethiopian higher education are to produce competent and competitive graduates, to accelerate research and knowledge transfer at universities, and to support universities in improving community engagement. Universities state their commitment to the promotion of democratic values and fundamental rights, as well as to multiculturalism and social inclusion through study programmes – this addresses both Recommendation 2 and SDG 4.3. A good example of this is Bahir Dar's Learning City

project,³ a close partnership between Bahir Dar University and the local administration, which provides lifelong learning opportunities for inhabitants and thus raises the socio-economic progress of the city. Moreover, equity and access to higher education are boosted through admissions policies that encourage female enrolment, in particular in undergraduate science and technology programmes.

A high rate of illiteracy among the adult population of Ethiopia is one of the main barriers to the successful implementation of lifelong learning systems; national policies therefore concentrate on expanding Integrated Functional Adult Education (IFAE). This two-year government-initiated programme was launched in 2010 and targets citizens aged 15 to 60 who lack reading, writing and arithmetic skills and practical everyday knowledge; subjects include family planning, community health, and hygiene. The new focus of IFAE is to go beyond teaching mother tongue, basic literacy and numeracy skills by integrating learning with practical knowledge and skills in agriculture, health, and civic and cultural education. In view of this, extension workers⁴ from other areas of development take time to expose learners to practical development issues, building on local knowledge. Hence, the Ethiopian Government has been making efforts to achieve SDG 4.6 and improve its population's literacy (including that of a substantial proportion of adults).

Both IFAE and post-IFAE programmes tend to link literacy and numeracy skills to people's livelihoods and to vocational skills training (e.g. in agriculture or handicrafts). On another positive note, the Federal Ministry of Education regularly evaluates the outcomes of adult literacy programmes and identifies barriers to the successful implementation of initiatives. Recommendation 8 explicitly highlights the requirement for research-based evaluation of lifelong learning policies. Furthermore, strategies to enhance adult and non-formal education (ANFE), stipulated in *ESDP V*, stem from a review of the work of the national and regional adult education boards. The challenges that were identified compelled the government to rethink its approach to tackling illiteracy and, in the new phase of ANFE implementation (2015–2020), emphasis is put on the following: improving the quality of ANFE programmes; institutionalizing the ANFE

3 The project is being developed under the scope of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), which is an international policy-oriented network sharing inspiration, know-how and best practices among member cities. Bahir Dar is a GNLC member city.

4 A trained worker paid to give expert or practical field advice.

system at all levels; supporting and motivating women to enrol in ANFE programmes; and expanding IFAE, post-IFAE and continuing education programmes across the country (in particular in emerging regions).

The implementation of strong partnerships between educational institutions, businesses and government has become the core strategy for engaging all relevant stakeholders in coordinating and guiding TVET in Ethiopia. This should modernize TVET and assist Ethiopia in reaching SDG 4.4, which emphasizes equitable access to technical and vocational skills, and the improvement of the vocational curricula.

Due to the fragile situation in some parts of Ethiopia, particularly in areas affected by severe drought, the government trains teachers and leaders of educational institutions to take the correct course of action in emergency and crisis situations, and develops relevant curriculum and learning materials to support this. Special resource centres or clusters are set up and provided with the necessary infrastructure to allow education to continue in the case of an emergency.

As set out in *ESDP V*, the Federal Ministry of Education has identified the cross-sector issues that must be addressed in the key strategic sub-sectors of education. These issues include gender equality, inclusive learning environments, awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention, and environmental protection through ICTs – very much in line with SDG 4.7. The Ministry of Education (2016) also published *A Master Plan for Special Needs/Inclusive Education in Ethiopia 2016–2025* (see *Table 1*), which sets out strategies to improve inclusiveness in education in six main areas: policy-making, administration, human resources, provision of education, research, and finances. Furthermore, a community learning centre (CLC) initiative is to be launched soon, with aims that include the eradication of rural poverty.

In alignment with SDG 4.5, the government has run a mobile literacy programme in collaboration with the German Adult Education Association (DVV), in order to reach out to rural communities. Literacy facilitators engage with nomads who migrate from their homes in search of pasture for their livestock. Another joint venture with DVV is the piloting

of CLCs, which provide resources and opportunities for continuous learning to make communities stronger. Activities include the organization of socio-cultural events, which encourages and supports women's participation and thus strengthens their active role in society.

Acknowledgement of lifelong learning achievements

To develop lifelong learning policies and related practices, it is important to promote official recognition and validation of qualifications, acquired knowledge and skills, regardless of how and where these were learned (UIL, 2012). Ethiopia expanded its national TVET qualifications framework in 2006 to define the value of qualifications, providing a framework of classification and comparability, thus improving recognition and increasing opportunities for those within the TVET system. Following this, the Education Strategy Center was asked to design the Ethiopian National Qualifications Framework (ENQF), which encompasses all formal education sectors: general education, TVET and higher education. As stated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (2008), the main purpose of the ENQF is to introduce nationalized standards of knowledge, skills and competencies, and further ensure the correspondence of qualifications to the needs of society and the requirements of the quality assurance system. The ENQF also aims to ensure that its academic programme adheres to international standards of quality education. It initially addressed the TVET sector, but in 2008 the government set up a special committee to include other types of education. In 2010, the Education Strategy Center started expanding the ENQF to include higher education and, as Adamu (2015) mentions, currently the ENQF comprises 10 levels of qualification, which cover all types of education (general education, TVET, and higher education).

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an important aspect of the ENQF, which advocates the assessment and certification of knowledge and skills however they were acquired (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 2008). However, in practice, the recognition of prior learning is not widespread across the country. As mentioned by Molla (2010), one of the reasons for this is the costly and challenging procedure required for assessing prior learning obtained in non-formal or informal settings.



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Strong partnerships between educational institutions, businesses and government is the core strategy for coordinating and guiding TVET in Ethiopia

The private sector is required to be actively engaged in the development and assessment of occupational standards, as well as share a leadership role with educational institutions in terms of the delivery and quality of TVET. The recognition of skills and competencies is being reviewed in Ethiopia through technical advisory panels and technical expert panels set up for eight priority sectors in TVET, namely agriculture, industry, economic infrastructure, health, hotel and tourism, trade, mining, and labour and social affairs (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 2008).

Advancing Mobile Literacy Learning in Ethiopia: A good practice

Overview: Digital skills play an important role in building a knowledge-based society, as modern technologies have altered the way that people interact with each other, and they have become a major factor in the successful development of a community or country. Taking into consideration the need to support digital literacy promotion in Ethiopia, UNESCO and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, in partnership with Microsoft, launched a pilot digital skills project in 2015: Advancing Mobile Literacy Learning in Ethiopia aims to deliver mobile and tablet devices into adult literacy learning schemes.

Objective: The main goal of the pilot project was to empower local communities, in particular women and young females in one district and three villages from each one of the three Ethiopian regions (Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR), by teaching adult literacy using digital technologies, thus increasing the literacy level and digital competencies of adult community members.

Implementation: Three public higher learning institutions were selected as partners in the pilot project to assist in linking community services with adult learning. Geographical location, the existence of a functional adult education programme, the availability of expertise at the universities, and the existence of a teacher training college were the main criteria required for an institution to be invited to take part in the project. Thus, Debre Berhan University in Amhara, Ambo University in Oromia and Hawassa College of Teacher Education in SNNPR became partnering institutions. Representatives from each institution served as



© Advancing Mobile Literacy Learning in Ethiopia

Advancing Mobile Literacy Learning in Ethiopia promotes the use of technology to enhance literacy skills

contacts, technical assistants, supervisors and coordinators on project practices.

These learning institutions had specific roles in the project. Their main function was to strengthen community engagement for targeted learning, and each district officer identified learners, registered them, and provided orientation sessions for project facilitators. Another core activity was to support the community through its community learning centres, and each university was asked to select three potential CLCs and renovate the premises and facilities for at least one, for immediate educational use. Technical teams were formed to develop literacy lessons for effective mobile learning. Finally, the higher learning institutions conducted

a training gap analysis; they then trained facilitators and school directors to build the skills of literacy facilitators and supervisors for mobile literacy learning.

Outputs: The project has succeeded in linking Ethiopian higher learning institutions to community services. The Networking of Adult Education was established at a national level, and the universities developed a training framework for facilitators and supervisors for the effective application of the technologies that contribute to literacy learning and supervision. In accordance with the curriculum of the IFAE programme, 105 literacy lessons were developed in three national languages: Amharic, Afaan Oromo and Sidamo Afu, with 35 lessons for each language, which address specific thematic areas such as social life, gender equality, environmental protection, civics and ethics, health, agriculture, and income generation.

Lessons learned: Active cooperation and timely communication with partners is a key success factor in carrying out a project. Indeed, the community learning centres in the three selected regions have collaborated closely and have taken practical action to advance the pilot project. There is a huge demand for mobile literacy learning among adult learners in Ethiopia who are willing to undergo training in basic digital skills. The project also revealed that adult learners, without prior orientation, managed to manipulate the basic icons of the laptops within the first hours of the training sessions.

2. KENYA

Kenya recognizes the fundamental aspects of lifelong learning and considers literacy the most significant foundation upon which comprehensive, inclusive and integrated lifelong learning for all young people and adults can be built (Kinara, 2017). The country now endeavours to redouble its efforts to ensure that existing lifelong learning goals and priorities, as well as the SDGs, are achieved. In Kenya, lifelong learning is underpinned by two fundamental policy documents, *Kenya Vision 2030* (2007) and the *Constitution of Kenya* (2010). The latter acknowledges the role of education in generating a literate citizenry capable of engaging in lifelong learning. Through the *Basic Education Act* (Republic of Kenya, 2013),

basic education is presented in Kenya as a constitutional human right. Despite these advancements, Kenya faces challenges in implementing lifelong learning activities; these include funding, stakeholder coordination, and the capacity-building of communities. Nevertheless, the country has responded to these challenges by promoting lifelong learning policies and strategies, including at local level. Indeed, the Kenyan Government has introduced free primary education, considerably increased the number of technical training institutions, expanded university admissions and invested in community learning resource centres (CLRCs).

What is lifelong learning in Kenya?

Lifelong learning is not fully conceptualized in Kenya. Nevertheless, the country is developing legislation and policy frameworks that will help to promote lifelong learning systems. Some education-related policy documents use the term 'lifelong learning' when referring to the holistic development of a person through education and learning activities throughout their life. In line with this, one of the goals stated in *A Policy Framework for Education* (Department of Education, Kenya, 2012), issued under the constitution, is to design a curriculum that successively contributes to the enrichment of a person in knowledge, skills and competencies and consequently to citizens' lifelong learning capacity. The idea of providing access to education for everyone, offering opportunities of continuing education, and encouraging learning among people of all ages, is reflected in the country's strategic plans on basic, tertiary and further education, as well as on youth development and health care. The term lifelong learning is applied by international educational and development organizations operating in Kenya, which raise awareness among local stakeholders of their role in promoting the lifelong learning concept.

Recent initiatives undertaken by the national government have contributed significantly to the integration of ICTs in school practices, supported adult and non-formal education practices, and launched comprehensive educational reform aimed at integrating lifelong learning elements into the curriculum. *Table 2* provides a list of recent policies and plans that have had a positive impact on the national lifelong learning system.

Table 2. Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Kenya

Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Kenya	Year/Period	Remarks
Kenya Vision 2030	2007	Asserts education as the main driving force that will enable Kenya to become a middle-income country; outlines the major requirements for improvement.
Constitution of Kenya	2010	Recognizes education as a constitutional and fundamental right of all citizens.
A Policy Framework for Education	2012	Issued under the constitution; outlines the design of the curriculum and its aims to contribute to the enrichment of a person in knowledge, skills and competencies and consequently to citizens' lifelong learning capacity.
Policy Framework for Nomadic Education in Kenya	2015	Specifies affirmative action policies for enhancing learning opportunities for nomads.

The promotion of lifelong learning in Kenya

Overview of initiatives

The Kenyan Government is committed to providing quality education and lifelong learning for its citizens and therefore adopts relevant policies and strategies aimed at supporting learning opportunities for all, in line with Recommendation 1 (Kinara, 2017). Although policies are lacking in some areas, good practices are also taking place. Some of the strategies put in place in Kenya to promote lifelong learning include: (1) post-literacy as a learning process targeting neoliterates to retain, improve and apply the basic literacy skills acquired; (2) development of literacy provision that is relevant and adaptable to learners' needs and leads to functional and sustainable knowledge, skills and competencies that empower them to continue as lifelong learners (to this end Kenya has adopted a competencies-based curriculum at all levels of

education structure); (3) provision of literacy programmes for women and disadvantaged populations, e.g. refugees, prisoners, internally displaced persons (IDPs), persons with disabilities; (4) creation of multipurpose community learning centres and improvement of access and participation in the full range of adult learning programmes; (5) support for the development of learner-generated materials in various indigenous languages in order to help recognize the value of indigenous cultures, knowledge and methodologies while also adequately developing the teaching of the second language for wider communication; and (6) the development of relevant adult basic education and training curricula, helping to foster a culture of quality, relevant content and professionalism (ibid.).

A number of policies aimed at encouraging children to stay on at school and at decreasing the drop-out rate at primary and secondary schools have been adopted. In 2006, a girls'

empowerment policy was promulgated to allow girls who had dropped out after giving birth to re-enter school. Policies for affirmative action to enhance learning opportunities for nomads were specified in the *Policy Framework for Nomadic Education in Kenya* (Ministry of Education, Kenya, 2015). The framework recognizes that nomadic children should get access to quality education, and that their parents should have the opportunity to learn through adult literacy classes. It identified children, parents and teachers as beneficiaries of the policy implementation and is expected to assist in reaching SDG 4.5. As part of the policy's actions, teachers deployed to nomadic communities are offered in-service training on innovative methodology to conduct classes for nomads. Recent achievements also include free primary education for primary and secondary school children, free secondary day education, and financial assistance for access to higher education through bursaries and loans, which supports SDG 4.1.

Kenya Vision 2030 and the *Constitution of Kenya* depict education as the driving force that will enable Kenya to become a middle-income country, and outline the major requirements for improvement. To address this, the Department of Education (2012) issued an action plan to link the education sector with the constitution and move firmly towards globally competitive quality education and sustainable development.

Early childhood development and education policies target children aged between four and five to nurture strong learners from the very start of their lives and prepare them for school. Children who receive effective education in early childhood are more likely to start school at the proper age and are less likely to drop out. The Ministry of Education analysed the challenges in early childhood education and found that standards and quality were low due to a lack of the infrastructure needed for the holistic development of a child, and to an irrelevant curriculum that focused on cognitive learning and did not apply a learner-centred approach (ibid.). To address this, a semi-autonomous Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council (ESQAC) was set up under the cabinet secretary to monitor standards in education and training offered by all providers across the country. The ESQAC will contribute to the development



Adult learners improve their digital skills at the St Peter Clavers Adult Education Centre in Nairobi

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of the early childhood curriculum by introducing content and methodologies designed to reveal learners' talents and improve children's self-actualization, socialization and environmental engagement, thus supporting SDG 4.2.

It is important to note that the curriculum for early childhood education is not the only area requiring improvement – the curricula at all educational levels are criticized for being too academic and examination oriented, and for not preparing learners for the world of work. Since early 2017, Kenya has been implementing a new basic education curriculum for all levels that will champion competency-based learning to allow academic, vocational and technical talents to be nurtured, including sports, drama, music, etc. This curriculum update echoes Recommendation 2.

Social and educational research is recognized as an effective planning and management tool in the country's development, and hence the government has pledged support to fund research programmes and projects as suggested in Recommendation 8. Such research will cover diverse topics, including education and learning at all levels. There are plans to introduce research as an academic course at educational institutions of all levels and as a professional training course at tertiary institutions to equip teachers with basic research skills.

Among the best practices for the implementation of lifelong learning in Kenya, the community learning resource centres (CLRCs) are a highlight. At the centres learners are

able to interact with various learning materials that meet different demands. Community members are responsible for the provision of physical facilities and materials while the government provides reading materials, furniture and supervision. CLRCs are managed by the directors of adult education and are present in almost all Kenya's districts (Kinara, 2017). For instance, the Hobunaka CLRC in Vihiga County offers literacy tuition for adult learners, which includes resources such as television programmes, while at Tiriki CLRC, also in Vihiga County, cultural artifacts are used as part of cultural heritage preservation and awareness activities. The Getacho CLRC in Kisii County and the Ahero CLRC in Kisumu County provide weaving, tailoring and home economics learning activities. Similarly, income generating activities (IGAs), such as the production of food warmers, are delivered at Vihiga County. The immediate application of skills gained from IGAs ensure that learners remain engaged and interested. In Kenya, IGAs at adult centres also form part of the country's poverty eradication strategy. To promote environmental conservation, the Onywera CLRC in Homa Bay County has developed a tree-planting project disseminating agro-forestry knowledge. Besides educational and poverty alleviation goals, the CLRCs also strive to preserve indigenous culture. Talent academies have also been set up in the centres to focus on artistic education, thus expanding the breadth of learning beyond formal schools (ibid.).

Kenya also promotes collaboration and networking for the enhancement of lifelong learning. In partnership with the Equity Bank Foundation, the Kenyan Directorate of Adult and Continuing Education has set up a financial literacy programme that facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and skills in areas such as management of finances, budgeting, loans and investments (ibid.). The Kenya Primary Education Development Project is another partnership initiative, supported by the Kenyan Government and the World Bank, to reinforce primary school management, boost mathematic competencies in the early grades, and promote evidence-based policy development.

Large-scale adult education and functional literacy programmes are also in place and aim to change the socio-economic role and position of illiterate adults. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted, along with functional literacy,

which emphasizes survival competencies such as first aid. Functional literacy training, along with community group activities, have been taking place in order to disseminate the knowledge and skills needed for agribusiness, entrepreneurship, primary health care, and civic education, among other areas, in order to empower learners socio-economically, enhance the sharing of experiences, and promote ownership (ibid.). As part of the integration of adult learning with income generating initiatives in the country, adult facilitators work with community groups to promote such learning as an integral component of the communities' income-generating activities. These programmes link directly to SDG 4.6.

Although Kenya has made strides in integrating ICT into school practices through the provision of professional ICT training for teachers, ICT infrastructure remains limited at educational institutions across the country. More investment is needed in order to equip Kenya's education sector with ICT tools for learning purposes. For this reason, the government has launched the National Centre for ICT Integration in Education to enhance digital capacity at all levels – which corresponds to Recommendation 7. Localized initiatives include the integration of ICT and catering services at the Orwaki CLRC in Nyamira County, and the E-Learning Centre at St Peters Clavers Adult Education Centre in Nairobi, which focuses on young adults. In addition to this, increased investments in ICT include the procurement of laptops for primary school pupils, the development of digital-based curricula, teacher training, and the construction of computer laboratories in primary schools (ibid.).

Strengthening ICT in Kenya will inevitably lead to more open and distance learning at school, tertiary institutions and other educational sites. Open and distance education has the potential to reach remote communities and thus increase access to education. The development and promotion of open and distance learning programmes has been led by Kenyan universities. For instance, the University of Nairobi operates a Centre for Open and Distance Learning, and the leading agricultural Egerton University runs a College of Open and Distance Learning, while Africa Nazarene University and Moi University have also opened institutes for open and distance learning.



Acknowledgement of lifelong learning achievements

In 2014, the Ministry of Education announced the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) to guarantee the integrity of educational qualifications and to make vital connections between formal and non-formal education, and informal learning. This initiative addresses the requirements of SDG 4.3. The major functions of the NQA are to create a benchmark for education across various disciplines and levels, to provide an overview of the standards of education countrywide, and to assess learning achievements (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2014). Moreover, the NQA is charged with the coordination and supervision of qualification policies, and with designing a framework for accrediting qualifications and evaluating learning outcomes, as well as maintaining a database of national qualifications. The government intends to achieve quality education through the NQA, as well as universal recognition of diplomas and qualifications among educational providers and employers.

The Commission for University Education in Kenya is charged with the recognition and evaluation of diplomas, degrees and postgraduate certificates awarded by foreign higher education institutions. The general requirements for the recognition and validation of such qualifications concern the accredited and recognized status of the institution that issued the diploma or certification, and the ability of the student to meet the minimum entry requirements for the study programme leading to the equivalent degree/qualification in Kenya.

Health Literacy⁵ for Behaviour Change: A good practice

Overview: The Health Literacy for Behaviour Change initiative was implemented as a pilot project in Kibera, a neighbourhood of Nairobi city in Kenya, between September 2014 and December 2016, by the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa in cooperation with the Kenya Ministry of Education and with financial aid from the Government of Azerbaijan. The project was designed to raise awareness of health issues through the delivery of health information to female youth aged between 10 and 19, in a classroom setting.

Objective: The project's primary objective was to design and develop materials for health education courses in Kenya according to the different health literacy levels of the students concerned. The next phase of the project was designed to familiarize teachers with these materials and to equip them with state-of-the-art pedagogical approaches for promoting health literacy.

Implementation: A comprehensive research study was conducted in order to identify the gaps in health literacy among adolescent girls in formal and non-formal schools in Kibera. The research used a socio-ecological model as its guiding framework for analysis; this comprised five categories of factors that influence child development: individual (knowledge, skills, attitudes), interpersonal (families, friends, social networks), organizational (organization/social institutions), community (relationships between organizations), and national policy (national, state, local laws and regulations). Desk reviews and qualitative field assessments were carried out, and interviews with Ministry of Education (MoE) officials, teachers, members of school committees, and students were used to collect data. Both girls and boys participated in the interviews, and the boys' replies were used to shed light on the situation of their female peers. In total, 18 out of 335 schools in Kibera were chosen as research sites for the project, and the selection was based on criteria such as school type (formal or non-formal; primary or secondary), location, and the presence of HIV-positive learners or any other particular groups of students. Mobilization of the participating schools was arranged with the support of the Nairobi County Directorate of Education and the Lang'ata Sub-county Quality Assurance officer in charge of Kibera.

The information gained from this study helped to assess the learning context and determine the positive and negative factors that influenced the learning process and outcomes of girls in Kibera. Moreover, the research identified various agents who have the potential to contribute to the girls' learning, and appropriate strategies were given to them in accordance with their role and possible input. Finally, priority areas for intervention were identified for the promotion of health literacy among female students in formal and non-formal schools in Kibera.

⁵ Literacy here is related to knowledge of health issues or skills for health.

Outputs: The Health Literacy for Behaviour Change project identified a range of health risk indicators that threaten girls. Lack of guidance and counselling at school and home, peer pressure, unsatisfactory sanitation conditions, deprivation of basic needs due to poverty, and insufficient teaching and services on sexual and reproductive health all constitute a major menace to the health of adolescents. Furthermore, drug abuse, along with early pregnancy and gender-based violence, are identified as factors that exacerbate girls' health problems and their social vulnerability.

At school level, it was suggested that life skills were introduced as a compulsory subject to raise awareness of important health issues among adolescents. School leaders were encouraged to foster mentoring schemes for girls to promote the discussion of potential threats to students' health or learning. Additionally, it was suggested that girls should be told where they can find prompt medical or psychological support concerning their sexual and reproductive health.

Based on the findings of the research study, 12 sets of health literacy materials were produced; these were reviewed and approved by Kenya Institute Curriculum Development, the mandated body that validates teaching and learning materials at all levels of education below university. Training was arranged for 30 lead trainers and 195 teachers to improve methodology for health literacy teaching in schools. It is expected that enhanced access to health literacy opportunities will equip girls with the necessary knowledge and competencies and will ultimately improve their academic performance.

Lessons learned: The recommendations derived from the project concern various agents and emphasize the importance of multi-sectoral cooperation for the advancement of girls' learning and health literacy. The partnership between ministries, communities and development agencies must be strengthened to address the improvement of health literacy among girls through a variety of actions, including the provision of educational scholarships, books and uniforms. Moreover, the active involvement of the police and community policing in safeguarding students could reduce youth exposure to violence, including sexual harassment.

3. NAMIBIA

One of Namibia's first priorities after the attainment of independence in 1990 was the provision of access to basic schooling for all citizens in order to expand educational opportunities for black Namibians and to foster vocational and higher education. After independence, the education sector was reformed based on four major goals: equity, access, quality and democracy (Ngatjizeko, 2017). As a consequence, the country witnessed an increase in the number of new schools as well as in the number of literate adults and students benefitting from tertiary education. Nowadays, Namibia has one of the best literacy rates in Africa, and the country's enrolment for both primary and secondary education has been on the increase. Current educational trends in the country align with the *Namibia Vision 2030* policy, which primarily aims to build a learning nation for long-term national development by presenting a clear vision of where the country is, where it wants to go, and over what time-frame (ibid.).

What is lifelong learning in Namibia?

The concept of lifelong learning has long been integrated in Namibia, albeit unofficially. There has always been clear recognition of the significance of learning from early to old age among Namibians, although until independence the term 'lifelong learning' was not commonly understood (Ellis, 1999). From independence, Namibia's Government adopted the concept of lifelong learning and showed great commitment and support for learning in various settings and for different target groups. In 1992, the Namibian Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) confirmed its adherence to the values and principles of lifelong learning in its fundamental policy document, *Towards Education for All*, which claimed:

It is important to stress again that we must all understand that learning continues throughout our lives. Our educators must design and refine strategies that make that possible and satisfying. Learning is more than accumulating little bits of information in formally designated settings during intensive but relatively brief periods (MoEC, 1992, p. 15).

In line with this, Namibia has managed to create a comprehensive and holistic system of lifelong learning. This system is underpinned by inclusive policies, where no citizen is supposed to be deprived of opportunities to learn. As a consequence, the term 'lifelong learning' has become widely spread in Namibian society, and is manifested in the presence of structural divisions specializing in lifelong learning at various educational and governmental organizations. For instance, the Department of Lifelong Learning operates under the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture; the Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning is part of the Namibia University of Science and Technology; and the University of Namibia has established the Department of Lifelong Learning and Community Education, which offers diplomas in lifelong learning and community education for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Namibia is therefore making great strides in the development and implementation of lifelong learning policies and practices, and grasping the diverse dimensions

that the lifelong learning concept represents. Promotion of family and community learning, along with non-formal education support, have been encouraged, together with the improved remuneration of teachers and facilitators and the use of ICTs for teaching and learning. On the other hand, there is still much room for the expansion of efforts in some areas; for example, research into the development and implementation of sound lifelong learning, as well as cross-border partnerships for lifelong learning activities.

In the past couple of years, the country has developed a national policy to promote lifelong learning and provide access to education. The general policy framework on lifelong learning is currently in draft form; however, a number of related policies have been developed and implemented to ensure quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in Namibia (Ngatjizeko, 2017). *Table 3* comprises some examples of these policies.

Table 3. Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Namibia

Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Namibia	Year/Period	Remarks
National Policy on Adult Learning 2003	2002	Envisages continuous support for the National Literacy Programme in Namibia, which has been running since 1992, as well as the promotion of literacy programmes in diverse communities, institutions and workplaces.
Namibia Vision 2030. Policy Framework for Long-Term National Development	2004	Aims to build a learning nation and knowledge-based economy by providing quality education at all levels and leveraging technologies for the advancement of society.
Strategic Plan for the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP)	2005–2020	Addresses the high failure and drop-out rate among pupils, unemployment difficulties and low earning power of the population through a number of education sector initiatives.
Strategic Plan	2012–2017	Aims to transform the entire education sector, focusing on these key themes: teaching and learning, leadership and management, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure, and stakeholder relations.

The promotion of lifelong learning in Namibia

Overview of initiatives

One of the major principles behind lifelong learning strategies in Namibia is the goal of dynamic and sustainable development, achieved through building multi-sectoral partnerships among stakeholders. To transform the country into a globally competitive nation and to increase the well-being of its population, the Government of Namibia emphasizes the need to focus on areas of learning that relate to core themes, including equality, human resource development, health care, knowledge and information, technologies and the environment. Education and lifelong learning are the crucial driving forces towards achieving these national goals.

Namibia Vision 2030 (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2004) foresees an update of policies, curricula and standards for early childhood programmes to ensure that Namibian children aged three to six receive effective relevant education from a very early stage of their lives. For instance, in recent years Namibia has provided free access to pre-primary and primary education. In particular, early childhood support will be strengthened for rural and marginalized communities. These objectives for early childhood education promote SDGs 4.2 and 4.5.

As it is difficult to achieve successful learning outcomes when people lack access to basic needs, Namibia is also increasing its efforts to build efficient infrastructure and to equip schools with drinking water, electricity and sufficient furniture. Moreover, the country intends to provide professional development training for teachers, and secondary school teachers will be required to hold at least a bachelor's degree. The pupil-teacher ratio at primary and secondary level will be reduced to 35:1 and 30:1 respectively. The curricula at all educational levels will put particular focus on health care, mathematics, science and technology as well as entrepreneurship.

The government plans to reach universal literacy by 2030, aligning national goals for literacy with SDG 4.6. The *National Policy on Adult Learning 2003* (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2002) envisages continuous support for the National Literacy Programme in Namibia, which

has been running since 1992, as well as the promotion of literacy programmes in diverse communities, institutions and workplaces. Current primary targets for adult literacy in Namibia address better instruction of the countries' mother tongues in different regions and communities, English and basic numeracy skills among the general population, sustaining further learning and education among adults and enhancing their communication competencies, and creating an information society. Moreover, an important goal of literacy programmes in Namibia is to raise awareness of citizenship and human rights, as well as the responsibility of all citizens to participate in community development.

The Strategic Plan for the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) 2005–2020 (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007) was adopted as a response to the high failure and drop-out rate among pupils, unemployment difficulties and the low earning power of the population. *ETSIP* stipulates an increase in salary level for teachers based on their performance, and bonus payments for teachers working in underserved areas and schools. Furthermore, the issue of equity is addressed in the *ETSIP*; one of the approaches used to tackle it is the introduction of regional quotas for the allocation of places in Grade 11 instead of the former point-score system that only considered candidates' results.

Inspired by the *ETSIP, Strategic Plan 2012–2017* (MEBSC, Namibia, 2005) aimed to transform the entire education sector, focusing on the following key themes: teaching and learning, leadership and management, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure, and stakeholder relations. The plan outlined the need to improve ICT provision and open and distance learning (ODL), which is crucial for Namibia as a rising learning society. In fact, the Government of Namibia has been promoting ODL since 1997 as an alternative form of education and as a means to expand educational opportunities for youth and adults and thus advance the socio-economic development of the country. In 2001, the government set up the Namibia Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNET), which is composed of public educational institutions and provides a platform for members to share resources and expertise, and supports distance learning centres nationwide. Thus, NOLNET coordinates the design of



Namibian school children waiting for their lesson to start

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new e-learning courses, prevents the unnecessary duplication of courses, assures the provision of adequate service support to distance learners, and organizes training in educational digital technologies for staff of the partner institutions.

The Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) initiative is a three-year educational programme, equivalent to upper primary schooling. The key elements of the AUPE curriculum

correspond to that of formal school, but the adult programme also links its topics to daily living, thus equipping adults with indispensable life skills and competencies.

Rural inhabitants are supported through the Village School Programme, run by the government and NGOs. The programme implements community-based learning, using the San language. Another education initiative for

disadvantaged learners comprises programmes and courses offered by the Namibian College of Open Learning (more details can be found at the end of this section), which targets out-of-school youths and adults and provides continuous and tertiary education in various fields of studies. Vocational training centres, coordinated by the Directorate of Vocational Education, provide courses at junior secondary level for people who did not complete primary school education, but who have work experience. Enrolled students can undertake training in construction, motor mechanics, metal-working, electrical engineering and carpentry. It is important to mention that previously the education sector was too focused on job seekers and not on job creators in Namibia. In the past, vocational skills were not valued in the same way as academic skills. To address this, Namibia decided to reinforce the importance of vocational skills in order to ensure that students and citizens, as well as the private sector, engage themselves in TVET initiatives.

Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment (ASDSE) is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Directorate of Adult Education, and the First National Bank of Namibia, and provides a mechanism for beneficial cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination. ASDSE delivers training in business management and entrepreneurial skills to enhance the employability of participants, and offers credit schemes or loans that could empower them to set up their own businesses. These government initiatives have the potential to increase the number of people with relevant professional skills and in decent employment. The main beneficiaries of ASDSE are unemployed citizens over the age of 18 who are trying to launch micro-enterprises. Research recently conducted on the effectiveness of ASDSE from the entrepreneurs' perspective showed that the project had helped a number of participants to generate more revenue and achieve economic independence (Shikukumwa et al., 2016).

Youth education is the focus of the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Services. It promotes youth volunteering and funds projects related to youth health, empowerment, environmental education, exchange programmes for young people, gender equality and rural youth development. The ministry also coordinates the National Youth Service and the

Namibia Youth Credit Scheme, which aim to provide training and other opportunities for young people.

Community learning centres provide premises for continuing educational programmes from a variety of educational providers. These centres are equipped with learning and reading materials to boost literacy, prevent relapse into illiteracy, and ensure self-growth for community members. Additionally, there are a number of NGOs that actively contribute to the provision of literacy and basic adult education along with skills training, whereas private organizations are more involved in skills training and continuing education. Because the government is unable to satisfy demand for lifelong learning programmes due to issues of cost and limited human resources, cooperation with other providers is crucial.

Acknowledgement of lifelong learning achievements

Policies on the recognition of prior learning have been implemented by the Government of Namibia to bridge the gap between various forms of learning and help those who acquired their knowledge and skills in non-formal settings to validate their achievements. Such policies also address historical racial imbalance, where black Namibians did not have an opportunity to study but gained literacy skills and professional experience through non-formal training. In Namibia, basic literacy programmes are linked to the formal education system, allowing learners to create flexible transition pathways to formal school. The country's Recognition of Prior Learning policy provides an assessment framework that applies to vocational training centres (VTCs), community skills development centres (COSDECs), employers and organizations, professional and industry bodies, trade unions and assessment centres to name but a few (Ngatjizeko, 2017).

The training certificates issued by local or international organizations, and the outcomes of industrial internships, workplace development programmes and seminars, can now be evaluated by the National Qualification Authority. The assessment of prior learning is based on benchmarks determined by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which was formalized by the Namibian Cabinet in 1994. The NQF comprises 10 levels that correspond to levels of

difficulty in learning, and in applying the learning outcomes. Each level descriptor provides details on (a) the type of learning skills used while the learning activity takes place, (b) the knowledge gained, (c) how and in which situations the learning could be demonstrated, and (d) the responsibility level that can be taken as a result of the learning. The level descriptors do not consider the number of years spent on learning as an assessment criterion (NQA, n.d.).

Certain educational institutions, such as the Namibian College of Open Learning, have introduced their own strategies and criteria for assessing and recognizing the prior learning experiences of prospective students. Numerous students have benefitted from the institutional evaluation of prior learning and, based on the results of this evaluation, have been admitted to formal studies. This shows that not only can the government advance and facilitate progress in recognizing and validating prior learning, but institutions and organizations might also establish their own centres of recognition of prior learning and promote this opportunity among the public.

The Namibian College of Open Learning: A good practice

Overview: The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) is a state-owned educational institution created by an Act of Parliament in 1997. It specializes in providing learning opportunities for adults and out-of-school youth. This is a flagship institution in continuing education in Namibia, and the majority of its courses are delivered in a blended-learning format through a combination of online and regular classes. Approximately 100 NAMCOL tutorial centres operate in different parts of Namibia.

Objective: The mission of NAMCOL is to reinforce the importance of the widening of access to quality education through open learning, and through making education more affordable for vulnerable and non-traditional groups of learners. NAMCOL endeavours to be a world-class institution of excellence that promotes lifelong learning for all by nurturing professional staff, applying innovative methods of teaching and learning, and sustaining efficient student support services.

Implementation: NAMCOL offers educational programmes at secondary, TVET and higher education levels, which are open to both youth and adults. The courses are designed to encourage self-paced learning, allowing students to benefit from e-learning and face-to-face interaction with a teacher on a weekly basis or during vacation workshops. Learners are equipped with printed learning materials and complement their learning experience with multi-media and digital resources. Secondary education programmes are also offered, aimed at enabling students to complete their basic education and obtain the Junior Secondary Certificate (after successful completion of Grade 10), or finish their upper secondary schooling and receive the Namibia Senior Secondary Curriculum (after Grade 12). In 2004, NAMCOL launched tertiary level programmes for those students who plan to pursue advanced studies after Grade 12.

The alleviation of unemployment in Namibia is the predominant goal of NAMCOL's TVET programmes, which are available in automotive mechanics, plumbing and pipe fitting, welding and metal fabrication, and office administration. Basics of entrepreneurship are included in the curricula of these courses in order to develop relevant skills among students, which could assist them in entering the labour market, setting up their own businesses, and becoming self-employed. The college also plans to run a bachelor's programme in youth development work from 2018, and currently offers certified programmes in local government studies, community-based work with children and youth, early childhood development and pre-primary education.

NAMCOL has a number of regional branch offices and study centres across the country, which support distance students throughout the learning process. The regional offices arrange vacation workshops for enrolled students who are not able to attend weekly meetings with their teachers, to give them an opportunity to meet tutors and get acquainted with other NAMCOL students. A special e-learning platform (www.namcoloer.edu.na) was created to maintain the online provision of tertiary level programmes. Educational video and radio programmes, developed by NAMCOL, are broadcast by local mass media, and the schedules of these programmes are available to learners and the public.

Outputs: The college has succeeded in accommodating thousands of disadvantaged learners and non-traditional students through its academic and skills-oriented programmes. Study materials for various subjects have been developed: course design and implementation take both online and regular classes into consideration. Moreover, NAMCOL provides radio lessons in anger management and dealing with gender-based violence as well as a series of video lessons for Grades 10 and 12 in geography, English, accounting, mathematics, physics and life sciences, which are available on the internet and can be found on the official website of the college and YouTube.

Lessons learned: Expansion and diversification of educational opportunities are crucial strategies for college development, which can lead to a wider range of tertiary education courses. Another major priority for NAMCOL is the fostering of closer integration with conventional schools as well as the establishment of partnerships with other open and distance learning institutions. NAMCOL intends to link up with post-literacy programmes in order to allow adults without any educational qualifications to pursue their studies further. The work of tutorial centres will be regularly monitored and evaluated by NAMCOL to ensure that high-quality support services are in place for enrolled students. Tutors at NAMCOL will be encouraged to undertake professional development programmes to polish their skills in adult learning, pedagogy for vulnerable learners, and the integration of ICTs into study courses. Career guidance will be introduced, and academic counselling for all students will be strengthened. Additionally, it is hoped that mechanisms aimed at boosting family and community engagement with learners' studies will be created.

4. RWANDA

The Government of Rwanda is aiming towards sustainable socio-economic development and excellence in education, making lifelong learning a cornerstone of these efforts. *Rwanda Vision 2020* (MoE, Rwanda, 2012) is a document that provides guidance to help the country overcome its various difficulties, initiate post-genocide reforms, and make Rwanda a competitive middle-income country. Its national agenda for education sets out its goals to improve the literacy

rate, reduce poverty, foster entrepreneurship and support the private sector, and train a competent workforce for its key industries. Much emphasis is placed on digital technologies and open and distance learning programmes, and this should help raise the basic IT literacy of Rwandans and make educational programmes more affordable, accessible, and innovative.

What is lifelong learning in Rwanda?

A formal education system, as we now understand it, emerged in Rwanda at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Rwanda was under increasingly powerful colonial rule. Before the expansion of foreign control, however, Rwandans had their own long-standing learning system. Family learning, for instance, stood in place of traditional schooling, and children and young people were taught relevant professional and life skills by family members. Furthermore, training was also delivered through *amatorero*⁶ schools, which taught metalwork and blacksmithing, basket weaving, military and war skills, and even prosody. *Amatorero* courses aimed not only to equip learners with practical skills, but to acquaint them with traditional and religious rituals and customs. These indigenous schools were spread across villages and could even be found at the now-defunct royal court (Shlenskaya, 2012).

This authentic historical experience of learning created a fertile ground on which to plant the concept of lifelong learning and introduce its principles into contemporary formal and non-formal educational settings. Recently, a number of policies and plans were put in place with these aims: to facilitate workplace learning and support prior learning recognition schemes, to support adult programmes and non-formal education, to facilitate shifts in curriculum design in all sectors of education, and to promote cooperation between different governmental bodies and the public-private sector with the purpose of building a comprehensive lifelong learning system in the country. *Table 4* gives details of a wide range of national policies and plans that have been adopted to boost lifelong learning in Rwanda. It should be mentioned that some areas still require improvement, such as the application of a research-based approach in policy and decision-making, and the expansion of cross-border partnerships in the sphere of lifelong learning.

⁶ *Amatorero*, translated literally, means 'all-night vigils'.

Table 4. Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Rwanda

Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in Rwanda	Year/Period	Remarks
Rwanda Vision 2020	2000 (revised 2012)	Guides the country in overcoming the existing difficulties in various aspects of life, in triggering post-genocide reforms and making Rwanda a competitive middle-income country.
Special Needs Education Policy	2007	Focuses on building positive and stimulating learning environments for people with special needs, with convenient infrastructure and relevant teaching methods.
Nine Years Basic Education Implementation	2008	Promotes cost-effective unconventional methods that could lead to quick wins in the advancement of schooling such as the reduction of core courses, teacher specialization and double shifting, which implies having two sessions of the same class per day.
Higher Education Policy	2008	Aims at widening participation and promoting equality of opportunities, fighting genocide ideology, encouraging the professional development of staff, and supporting conflict resolution through teaching, research and outreach.
Girls' Education Policy	2008	Aims at introducing gender-related reforms by highlighting gender issues in the content of educational programmes and encouraging active community participation in female empowerment.
National School Health Strategic Plan	2013/14–2017/18	Advocates health and sexual education, accelerating research on school health, supporting the development of appropriate life skills among children, and stimulating family and community involvement in health education.
Adult Education Policy	2014	Provides an operationalized institutional framework to support and foster literacy programmes, adult and non-formal education.
TVET Policy	2015	Underscores the need to build a knowledge-based society through vocational and technical training, staff training, provision of adequate infrastructure facilities, evidence-based decision-making when tackling skills shortages, and improvement of horizontal and vertical pathways for students within TVET.
National Policy on Workplace Learning	2015	Supports the development of a sustainable and recognized apprenticeship system in close cooperation with the private sector.
ICT in Education Policy	2016	Stipulates strategies for overcoming difficulties in mainstreaming digital technologies.
National Open, Distance and eLearning Policy	2016	Underlines the shifts in the development of curriculum and learning materials, the promotion of learner support services and quality assurance mechanisms for open and distance programmes.
National Early Childhood Development Policy	2016–2021	Specifies intervention strategies in enhancing parental education, boosting community participation in child protection, and increasing children's readiness to engage with the formal school environment.

The promotion of lifelong learning in Rwanda

Overview of initiatives

Initiatives that support lifelong learning in Rwanda, undertaken by or with the support of the Ministry of Education (MoE), include policies on child and adult education and TVET, cross-sector educational programmes (health, gender, ICT, culture, etc.), family-oriented initiatives, and teacher training, to name just a few.

In recognition of the fact that, during the first years of life, a child's brain undergoes an intensive period of development when their perception of the world and mindset are formed, early childhood support is a priority for the government (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, Republic of Rwanda, 2016). Hence, the *National Early Childhood Development Policy Strategic Plan 2016–2021* was formulated by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion in tandem with a multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary team of different stakeholders. The policy specifies intervention strategies that enhance parental education, boost community participation in child protection, and increase children's readiness to engage with the formal school environment. These initiatives will assist Rwanda in putting SDG 4.2 into practice.

Adult Basic Education is an instructional programme designed to help those who lack the basic literacy skills and competencies needed to fully and successfully engage with society. This programme is also an important step for Rwanda in achieving SDG 4.6. The curriculum of the Adult Basic Education programme includes topics such as combating genocide, gender equality, health care and family planning, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Another government-supported adult education initiative is the Catch-Up Programme, which offers intensive training equivalent to formal primary schooling, to give adult learners the chance to re-enter formal secondary or vocational school (MoE, Rwanda, 2014b).

The major consequences of illiteracy in Rwanda for individuals include: failure to participate independently in social activities that require writing skills, unsatisfactory health conditions, an inability to obtain proper and timely information/guidance to

help prevent accidents, passive engagement with civil society, a higher risk of being manipulated, and a lack of knowledge about rights and responsibilities. The *Adult Education Policy* (ibid.) addresses these challenges and provides an operationalized institutional framework to support/foster literacy programmes and adult and non-formal education in correspondence with SDG 4.6. The key steps in improving national literacy include better access to literacy services and the establishment of solid public-private partnerships that mobilize resources for the expansion and sustainability of educational programmes. Furthermore, to ensure the quality and effectiveness of these initiatives, regular monitoring and evaluation procedures are carried out. The objectives of the *Adult Education Policy* are specified in the *Adult Education Strategic Plan 2014/2015–2018/2019* (MoE, Rwanda, 2014c) and foresee the wide dissemination of approved strategies among stakeholders, the creation of favourable conditions for adults with disabilities, training and mentoring from the business sector, and the establishment of mechanisms that allow adult learners to take part in vocational and technical training.

A revised TVET policy was issued in 2015, and emphasized the need to build a knowledge-based society through vocational and technical training. One of Rwanda's major problems is the lack of a sufficiently skilled workforce, especially among technicians and middle-level managers (MoE, Rwanda, 2015). The revised TVET policy outlines the urgent need for staff training in educational institutions, the provision of adequate infrastructure facilities, evidence-based decision-making when tackling the skills shortage, and improvement of horizontal and vertical pathways for students within TVET – this relates to SDGs 4.3 and 4.c. Moreover, for many years, vocational and technical schools positioned themselves as low-quality institutions for second-chance students, and therefore gained a negative reputation. Consequently, the attraction of TVET should be improved in the eyes of different stakeholders: students, employers, and society in general.

Cross-sector educational initiatives include, for example, education for people with special needs, and are delineated in a separate policy (MoE, Rwanda, 2007) that focuses on building positive and stimulating learning environments with

convenient infrastructure and relevant teaching methods and which is directly linked to SDG 4.5. Since gender disparity has been a pressing problem for Rwanda, the MoE prepared the *Girls' Education Policy* (MoE, Rwanda 2008c), which introduces gender-related reforms by highlighting gender issues in the content of educational programmes and encouraging active community participation in female empowerment. Health education was prioritized in the *National School Health Strategic Plan 2013/14–2017/18* (MoE, Rwanda, 2014a), which advocates health and sexual education and the acceleration of research on school health, supports the development of appropriate life skills among children, and stimulates family and community involvement in health education, thus contributing to SDG 4.a.

Since 2008 the Rwanda MoE has carried out a programme called One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) to supply laptops to primary schools and equip secondary schools with computer labs to enable children to acquire digital skills and use digital technologies in their later learning. As a result, 250,000 laptops were delivered to 764 schools, reaching 10 per cent of pupils at Rwandan primary schools. Computer labs were established in 5 per cent of secondary schools nationwide, and these new labs were used solely for conducting ICT lessons. Previously, technology training for teachers had suffered from a deficit of finances, trainers and infrastructure. Therefore, the programme also tries to equip teachers with the necessary skills for using digital technology in the classroom, since teacher training constitutes an important aspect of LLL. In line with that, the recent *ICT in Education Policy* (MoE, Rwanda, 2016a) examines past challenges and suggests strategies for overcoming difficulties in mainstreaming digital technologies.

As a result of these advancements, the current implementation framework for ICT in education is based on an incremental model comprising four phases to enhance ICT inclusion and usage at all levels of education. The integration of ICT in formal and non-formal education should become a cornerstone of lifelong learning in Rwanda and pave the way towards the expansion of ODL, which plays such a crucial role in improving access to education and its quality. After consultations involving the University of Rwanda and the Commonwealth of Learning, the MoE approved the *National*

Open, Distance and eLearning Policy (2016b), which underlines shifts in the development of curriculum and learning materials, the promotion of learner support services, and quality assurance mechanisms for open and distance programmes.

In addition to this, the Academy of Culture initiative bridges the gap between the educational and cultural sectors by providing an informal platform through which people can learn about the culture of Rwanda, while Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are provided for teachers and learners as part of the country's teacher training activities.

Acknowledgement of lifelong learning achievements

In acknowledgement of the importance of investing in human capital, the Government of Rwanda has set up the Workforce Development Authority (WDA), dedicated to promoting and strengthening vocationally oriented training for Rwandans. The establishment of the WDA was formally approved by the Cabinet on 18 January 2008. The government hopes that 200,000 farm jobs will be created on an annual basis, and WDA is exploring ways to provide employment opportunities for those workers that have the relevant experience but are not able to compete in the labour market due to their uncertified skills (WDA, 2011).

The WDA has mandated the assessment body to evaluate the knowledge, skills and competencies of applicants seeking recognition of their informal learning outcomes, thus contributing to horizontal and vertical mobility; this can occur both within the TVET sector and between TVET and general education, as well as between TVET and higher education, in support of SDG 4.3. The assessment is based on the Rwandan TVET qualification framework, which is also used to assess learning outcomes in the formal education system, and certification depends on the results of assignments given to applicants in a particular field. A person receives a certificate that corresponds to his or her level of competence upon successful completion of the assignments; in case of failure, a test can be retaken. WDA plans to roll out this recognition of prior learning programme to various sectors of work and throughout Rwanda, as well as create a database of workers, including their personal details and qualifications, to help employers contact potential staff.



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Early childhood support is a priority for the Government of Rwanda

Recognition of prior learning is also underpinned by the country's national policy on workplace learning (Government of Rwanda, 2015), which has triggered the development of a sustainable and recognized apprenticeship system in close cooperation with the private sector, as suggested in Recommendation 9. The initiative primarily addresses young graduates, such as school leavers and students in tertiary education, and aims to create a smooth transition from education to the world of work. Learning outcomes from these apprenticeships will be recognized and certified to boost young people's confidence and increase their employability. Furthermore, the government plans to provide incentives for partner organizations to encourage them to accept and actively train young people. On-site supervisors will be offered the opportunity to undergo recognition of prior learning (RPL) to certify their coaching skills, which will consequently increase their professional value in the job market. In addition to this, a National Qualification Framework for Education is currently under development in Rwanda.

Skills Development Project: A good practice

Overview: The Government of Rwanda's success with TVET modernization brought financial aid in the form of a loan from the World Bank; this was used to launch the Skills

Development Project (SDP), which works to improve access to, and the quality of, vocational training. The SDP is a large-scale national initiative that focuses on providing training in priority areas, thus addressing the economic demands of the country: hospitality and tourism, ICT, construction and building services, agriculture, electronics and automotive technology, sustainable energy, water resources, and arts and crafts (WDA, 2011).

Objective: The SDP aims to minimize labour shortages by increasing training opportunities for the most in-demand jobs at national level. Target workforce growth should be achieved by 2020, by training more people in the necessary skills, as well as by providing further training for staff working in key sectors. Ultimately, the impact of the SDP should be realized in increased competition between innovative programmes, solid university-industry cooperation, greater accessibility to vocational training among disadvantaged groups, and the enhanced efficiency of training provision.

Implementation: The WDA, set up by the Government of Rwanda to upgrade the professional skills of its citizens, is responsible for implementing the SDP. There are three components of SDP activities: school-based training, industry-based training and short-term training. As part of the school-based training, eight new curricula in the fields of hospitality

and construction are being piloted at public vocational institutions. Industry-based training is carried out at hotels, and trainees undertake pilot skills-based training modules. Short-term training is provided by various educational and professional organizations in accordance with the terms of the grant regulations. Thus, an organization can apply for funding in order to expand its short-term training offerings in the areas identified as priorities by the WDA. The size of the grant given depends on criteria such as the number of trainees expected to participate, the level of staff involvement to deliver vocational courses and mentor trainees, content, the training schedule, and the availability of equipment and training material.

Outputs: Six vocational institutions from the Western, Eastern and Northern provinces of Rwanda were involved in implementing the new curricula in hospitality and construction. Four hotels became partners of the SDP industry-based training scheme and provided training for 16 trainees (four at each hotel). Over 6,000 young people and 70 TVET institutions have benefitted from short-term vocational training organized within the SDP.

Monitoring and evaluation: In the context of the SDP, monitoring implies the daily assessment of project activities, whereas evaluation examines achievements and impact. There are four levels of descriptors to guide monitoring and evaluation processes; they encompass input (human resources and infrastructure), output (delivery of activities and services), outcomes (prepared trainees) and impact (employment or self-employment of trainees within six months after completion of the training; employers' satisfaction with the SDP graduates). Evaluation is carried out at both the WDA and institutional levels, taking into consideration feedback from trainees, which plays a crucial role and shapes the future of the integrated approach towards training design and provision.

Lessons learned: The bottom-up approach in carrying out the SDP has contributed to the creation of stakeholder ownership of project activities and thus boosted efficiency of project management at participating vocational institutions. Strong links with employers and their active engagement in the design and implementation of the TVET intervention are also considered crucial to the success of the project.

However, the project cannot address all skill shortages at once, and it has been necessary to reduce the list of priority training areas based on an analysis of the economic situation of the country.

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

The *Tanzania Development Vision 2025* (Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1999) set out the country's goal for building a prosperous and well-educated society through diverse educational initiatives. Focus has been placed on the effectiveness of early childhood care and better access to education at all levels. The government has recently introduced free and compulsory primary education nationwide; however, gender inequality – as demonstrated by a lack of accessibility to education and fewer employment opportunities for women – remains a significant hindrance to the eradication of poverty and the fostering of socio-economic development in the United Republic of Tanzania.

What is lifelong learning in the United Republic of Tanzania?

A review of policy documents reveals that the Government of Tanzania has not developed an exact definition for lifelong learning yet. However, the idea of learning throughout life is embedded in national strategies and development plans. The Education and Training Policy 2014 echoes *Vision 2025*, and sets out the government's objective to introduce effective mechanisms for Tanzanians' 'continuous learning', which is regarded as the most important factor in the country's development (MoVET, the United Republic of Tanzania, 2014, p. 5). Here, continuous learning implies progression or growth as a learning outcome, which constitutes one of the major determinants of a lifelong learning approach.

The concepts of formal and non-formal education, and informal learning, are also included in these national policy documents; transitions and pathways between different sectors of the educational system, between school and work, and between work, education and training, are advocated, demonstrating a broader concept of education and training (Levira, 2017). For instance, non-formal education focuses on the expansion of basic education and the raising of

literacy levels among youth and adults through diverse learning initiatives. This prioritization of non-formal training corresponds with Recommendation 3. It is important to note that, previously, strong emphasis on literacy programmes in non-formal education meant that lifelong learning was conflated with adult learning, and this approach impeded the integration of lifelong learning principles into the education system as a whole, and into wider sectors of society. This conceptual interpretation is based on the assumption that a reduction of illiteracy rates would automatically signify acquisition of lifelong learning competencies.

The United Republic of Tanzania is a country with a rapidly and positively changing socio-economic environment, which puts certain demands on the development of the educational sector of the country. The government endeavours to align educational initiatives with the needs and expectations of its citizens by introducing specific reforms aimed at providing quality education, bolstering adult and non-formal training, promoting family and community learning, and improving the remuneration of teachers and facilitators. *Table 5* shows a list of Tanzanian national policies and plans that include lifelong learning elements.

Table 5. Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in the United Republic of Tanzania

Some of the most relevant policies and plans relating to lifelong learning in the United Republic of Tanzania	Year/Period	Remarks
The Tanzania Development Vision 2025	1999	Focuses on building a prosperous and well-educated society through diverse educational initiatives.
National Youth Development Policy	2007	Promotes learning opportunities for youth through flexible non-formal and continuing educational projects realized in cooperation with various stakeholders.
Education Sector Development Programme 2008–2017	2008	Envisages the establishment of links with civil society organizations and the private sector for the provision of high-quality education and training that correspond to the needs of citizens and labour market.
Adult and Non-Formal Education Development Plan 2012/13–2016/17	2012	Stipulates alternative schooling in order to enable out-of-school youth and adults to complete basic education.
Education and Training Policy	2014	Advocates the improvement of access to educational services for all learners.

The promotion of lifelong learning in the United Republic of Tanzania

Overview of initiatives

The United Republic of Tanzania has made recent progress in promoting lifelong learning initiatives. Although most of these initiatives are still in the planning and/or development phase, with no written English documentation (documentation is mostly available in Swahili), some important activities can be outlined here.

Vision 2025, with its goals for lifelong learning, implies that poverty reduction is the paramount goal for the Tanzanian Government, and this is reflected in the majority of educational policies, which are ultimately designed to enhance people's well-being and provide stability and a sense of national unity. Within the Education and Training Policy (MoVET, the United Republic of Tanzania, 2014), special measures are outlined to improve access to educational services for all learners. Furthermore, the *Adult and Non-formal Education Development Plan* (MoVET, the United Republic of Tanzania, 2012) calls for alternative schooling to enable out-of-school youth and adults to complete their basic education. And a 'rapid reintegration' programme urges students who dropped out of school to continue their studies in the formal school system. An increase in the number of young people completing their secondary education is the focus of the *Secondary Education Development Programme*, which introduces an open and distance learning delivery mode to reach learners who cut short their studies at formal school (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Tanzania, n.d.).

The *Education Sector Development Programme 2008–2017* (Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, 2008) advocates the establishment of links with civil society organizations and the private sector for the provision of high-quality education and training that corresponds to the needs of citizens and the labour market. These partnerships are aligned with the *National Youth Development Policy* (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development, Tanzania, 2007), which promotes learning opportunities for youth through flexible non-formal and continuing educational



The Mlandizi Primary School in the United Republic of Tanzania

projects in cooperation with various stakeholders. The objectives for technical and vocational education are aligned with the goal of making the United Republic of Tanzania a middle-income country. The government hopes to see an increase in the number of workers with high- or medium-level skills and a reduction in the percentage of the population with low-level skills, from 80 per cent currently to approximately 55 per cent by 2025 (ibid., p. 22), thereby meeting SDG 4.3 and 4.4 targets.



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Although the Government of Tanzania has not officially set out a holistic lifelong learning model for the nation, both formal and non-formal education have well-defined principles that are linked to lifelong learning, as defined by the *Education Sector Development Programme 2008–2017* (Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, 2008). In terms of access and equity, the key priority is widening participation and outreach in basic and post-basic education among all groups of society, with particular

support for marginalized learners, such as those learners from socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Strategies to reach these objectives concern continuous professional development opportunities for teachers and the introduction of the KAP (knowledge-attitudes-practice) approach, which improves teacher-student interaction; this is particularly important for attracting learners to adult learning programmes, maintaining their studying impetus and leading them to the completion of their education. Implementation

of cost-reduction/compensation/incentive mechanisms for learners experiencing financial difficulties are recommended as an effective means of support and motivation. Alternative and flexible modes of delivery for educational programmes, such as distance learning or part-time courses for adults, are also promoted in the educational system (ibid.).

Educational quality has been improved and is designed to equip learners with skills and competencies relevant to their personal and professional advancement through formal, TVET, adult and non-formal education. A national curriculum-based assessment system tracks learning performance and strengthens remediation measures, which can trigger prompt intervention in cases where students are in danger of dropping out. The delivery of quality education is also largely dependent upon access to good infrastructure, and the quality of teaching and learning materials at educational institutions and in non-formal settings. Therefore, the provision of appropriate infrastructure and learning supplies is considered a priority for raising the educational potential of the country. Adopting UIL's Recommendation 4, on building a learning society, the government recognizes the crucial role of community participation in the learning process, and is promoting ways to mobilize families and communities and raise awareness of their roles and responsibilities in supporting learners' achievements.

The government recognizes that both soft and practical skills are needed to meet the demands of the labour market and contribute to a peaceful, healthy, safe, and environmentally friendly society, thus raising well-being and alleviating poverty nationwide. Greater focus is now placed on science and technology in educational programmes in order to supply a skilled labour force for strategic industries. In addition to this, entrepreneurial skills, self-employment and start-ups are encouraged and promoted within TVET and adult learning programmes. Adult education programmes centre around Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT), in which the curriculum is very flexible, allowing learners to focus more on topics that are of relevance and interest to them (Levira, 2017).

As proposed by UIL under Recommendation 9, the Tanzanian education system aims to clarify roles and responsibilities, as

well as develop effective coordination mechanisms for joint educational initiatives. Moreover, the country requires better financial management mechanisms, as outlined in SDG 4.c, in particular for the non-formal education sector, in which the majority of teachers are from the formal sector and are employed on a part-time basis without being properly remunerated for their extra work. This results in demotivation and a lower quality of teaching. Attempts by the government to improve the pay of teachers in non-formal education echoes Recommendation 6.

In addition, Tanzania is working to improve its literacy rate, encourage out-of-school youth back into education, and improve the livelihoods of its citizens through three major programmes: Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE), Complimentary Basic Education (COBET), and Open and Distance Learning (ODL). This contributes to the achievement of SDG 4.6.

The ICBAE was implemented in 1993 as a response to a drastic decrease in the adult literacy rate. Details on the initiative, which is still active today, are provided at the end of this section.

The majority of non-formal education programmes in Tanzania aim to improve basic literacy and functional skills among the population. For instance, COBET targets out-of-school children and youth by providing them with alternative opportunities to complete their studies. Secondary and higher education participation rates in Tanzania are the lowest among the five countries; therefore, the COBET programme has made a difference for many primary-school-aged children and youth who were out of school or dropped out for various reasons. In this programme, learners are grouped into two 'cohorts' (Cohort I comprises 11 to 13 year olds and Cohort II comprises 14 to 18 year olds). COBET is dependent on a condensed primary school curriculum that is pupil centred. After satisfactory completion of the relevant course content, learners are transferred back to the formal system (ibid.).

Meanwhile, open and distance learning is meant for secondary-school-age children who study away from school with limited face-to-face interaction with teachers. Secondary school access is further enhanced by the Integrated Post

Primary Education (IPPE) programme, which is intended to give a second chance to youth who have dropped out of secondary school. It also supports youth who made it to secondary school but could not secure their place because they could not pay the fees. It is designed to provide integrated knowledge and skills to adolescents, youths and adults (ibid.).

Besides ODL, continuing education incorporates numerous projects such as Integrated Post Primary Education, professional courses offered by the Institute of Adult Education, and the Open University of Tanzania. Continuing education programmes have a wide range of functions from providing basic education to out-of-school learners to professional development training for workers. These programmes make a strong contribution to SDG 4.3.

The country has also been supporting the development of income generating activities (IGAs). These include programmes on furniture making, cattle raising, tailoring, shoe repairing, baking, crocheting, fishing, as well as the running of social centres, women's clinics and hair salons (ibid.). Furthermore, the Seidal Foundation is working with the government to provide civic education linked to income-generating projects and small-scale credit schemes. Learners are encouraged to be analytical problem solvers, to appreciate vocational/technical education, to promote social equity, to be more aware of the surrounding environment, and to start IGAs themselves. Although graduates are not awarded certificates, this does not deter them from aiming for the kind of success that even people with academic qualifications may not achieve (Yang and Valdés-Cotera, 2011).

Another example of the promotion of lifelong learning in Tanzania is the adult literacy programme Yes I Can, which was piloted in Latin American countries and then contextualized and implemented in the United Republic of Tanzania as an educational tool to make learning more accessible to all citizens regardless of their geographical location or socio-economic background. The programme uses pre-recorded lessons delivered through digital mass media, along with textbooks and teaching materials. A variety of literacy-supporting programmes operate countrywide and are designed to enable learners to develop and sustain their

literacy skills. These programmes include the establishment of rural libraries, support for the rural press, and the launch of educational radio and TV shows.

Introduced in the 1970s, rural libraries lost support during the 1990s. Now the country is once again promoting the introduction of libraries in villages, along with mobile libraries, in order to reestablish the initiative. It is trying to develop guidelines for the project, which it considers an important tool for consolidating the learning of youth and adults. Moreover, Tanzania is collaborating with the DVV on the development and expansion of community learning centres⁷. The country intends to prioritize CLCs, with particular focus on the delivery of weekend seminars on subjects such as cooking.

Acknowledgement of lifelong learning achievements

Despite the recognition of quality learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings, the 2014 education and training policy only advises agents 'to put in place a procedure/mechanism and enhance the recognition of knowledge, experience and expertise/skills acquired through the non-formal education system in order to expand opportunities for education advancement' (MoVET, the United Republic of Tanzania, 2014, p. 45). The strategy recognizes non-formal learning achievements and the existing Tanzania Qualifications Framework, which defines levels and equivalent qualifications for TVET and professional education, excluding outcomes reached with non-formal training. Therefore, in order to foster the integration of prior learning into the national education system, there is a need to analyse and review the current Tanzania Qualifications Framework and supplement it with the skills and competencies achieved through non-formal education (Robinson, 2015), thus moving towards SDG 4.3.

The non-formal cluster lacks an effective monitoring and evaluation system that could provide sufficient data to track the implementation progress of non-formal educational programmes. In addition, capacity building programmes for staff involved in monitoring and assessment processes should be introduced to ensure professionalism and accuracy in data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the government must develop a countrywide information system designed to provide transparency and accountability regarding the

⁷ Tanzania has very few CLCs. The government would like to roll them out across the country.

programmes' realization, as well as disseminate the results of the initiatives among all relevant stakeholders. Another important component of the evaluation model for adult education projects is feedback from employers who recruit graduates, as well as from alumni whose suggestions should be taken into consideration for updating the curriculum and teaching methodology.

Tanzanian Integrated Community Based Adult Education: A good practice

Overview: The Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) programme started in 1993 as a four-year guide project designed to develop and pilot learner-centred and community-based learning approaches in literacy and post-literacy classes for adults and out-of-school youths in Tanzania. The programme is still active today.

Objective: The central objective of the programme is to increase equitable access to, and participation in, quality basic education, and enable youth and adults to acquire literacy skills and reach a sustainable proficiency level, and to acquire vocational and life skills in order to improve their livelihoods.

Implementation: The programme has been implemented across all 25 regions of the Tanzanian mainland. Groups of enrolled learners are known as literacy circles and each circle includes one facilitator, who leads the classes, and 30 learners. The learning cycle lasts 18 months. The curriculum is flexible, and each literacy circle addresses key issues in the community, designs learning activities, participates in problem solving, and plans IGAs. The ICBAE adopted the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) approach, through which it links literacy and basic education to the issues of problem solving and socio-economic development. After the completion of this initial six-month course, learners spend the remaining months doing practical work. Upon the completion of the programme learners do not receive a certificate but, with newly acquired literacy, vocational and life skills, they are able to use their knowledge to continue with IGAs.

ICBAE provides a mechanism for implementing IGAs through the provision of a 'revolving loan fund', where the central

fund is replenished as individuals repay their loans (although, here, learners receive the loan as a group).

Outputs: Since its inception, ICBAE has managed to increase access to basic adult education, offering educational opportunities to approximately 14 million youth and adult learners. In addition, the programme has recorded a high percentage of female enrolment.

Monitoring and evaluation: The monitoring of the programme's implementation is conducted through field visits that also involve classroom observation. Field visits are conducted by national adult education officers, district adult education coordinators, and ward education coordinators. In addition, discussions are held with learners in order to get their feedback on the quality of programme implementation. After learners complete the programme there are follow-up visits to observe if their acquired skills are being used in practice.

Lessons learned: Income-generating activities have proved a good incentive for enrolling in the programme, and the provision of adequate teaching-learning materials has improved its quality, as well as enabled facilitators to assess learners through tasks and activities found in the materials. Placing learners at the centre of the learning process has also promoted the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills.

Furthermore, the revolving loan fund enables learners to implement IGAs, which has a direct impact on the ICBAE's sustainability, as the learners return the loan plus interest; this allows the loan to be reallocated for other borrowers. Over the years, the programme has also developed partnerships with governmental, non-governmental and faith-based organizations that support the realization of the programme through a variety of means (e.g. providing lecturers for leading the learning circles).

Challenges remain, however, such as the fact that facilitators do not receive any training, the facilitator-learner ratio is relatively high, the funds available in the revolving loan fund are not sufficient, and it is difficult to keep track of learners' attendance.

Chapter 3: Concluding remarks

In 2014, UIL's publication *Key Issues and Policy Considerations in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Selected African Countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania* proposed policy considerations in the form of 10 recommendations for five African countries. The publication concluded that overall there was a need for the five countries to embrace the concept of lifelong learning, but that the adoption of a lifelong learning system is a process that requires, among other things, long-term commitment. Since the building of lifelong learning systems is about continuity (Walters et al., 2014, p. 48), it is important to analyse the five countries' progress since 2014. In addition to this, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all as one of its goals, with 10 targets – so it is also crucial to analyse how and if these African countries' various initiatives embrace the Agenda in light of SDG 4.

While Ethiopia has been promoting inclusion policies, enrollment in Kenya's universities and in competency-based learning programmes is on the increase. While Namibia's open-and-distance-learning initiatives and national qualifications framework have been promoted and expanded, Rwanda has included gender issues in its policies. In parallel, the United Republic of Tanzania has learned important lessons from and advanced in its integrated community-based adult education project. Taken together, it is evident that, despite still facing many challenges in the education sector, all five countries have worked to support lifelong learning systems as per the recommendations. It is important to highlight that lifelong learning poses a huge opportunity for sub-Saharan Africa, which still experiences low levels of educational attainment and a high number of educationally marginalized communities. Although many challenges remain, the five countries have managed to move forward along the lines of several of the recommendations articulated by UIL in 2014.

Data collected in the course of the study shows that the participating countries managed to promote and implement lifelong learning initiatives by, for example, developing national policies to promote LLL, prioritizing adult and non-formal education, creating community learning opportunities, and promoting IGAs as well as ICTs. While they respond to some of the recommendations provided by UIL, various initiatives identified by the study also relate to the implementation of

SDG 4 by demonstrating progress towards quality and inclusive education for all. In fact, several projects and initiatives already being implemented in the countries provide a good platform for the achievement of several SDG 4 targets.

The report shows that all five countries have advanced in establishing a holistic lifelong learning policy framework, as per Recommendation 1, which embraces all levels of education and varied learning modalities. For instance, inclusive policies concerning learners with special needs and nomad communities have been developed in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda, thus demonstrating the countries' efforts to move towards accessible and equitable education for all, in line with SDG 4.5. All five countries have set education agendas to support future development and make quality education a driving force for achieving their economic and social targets. It is worth stating that in many cases the policies are accompanied by a detailed framework or plan for policy implementation, thus giving concrete directions for policy-makers and practitioners.

Adult education remains one of the top priorities for all five countries, in line with Recommendation 3 and SDG 4.6. The focus of programmes in this domain has shifted from equipping learners with only basic literacy skills to providing functional literacy and skills-based training that could enhance their livelihoods and well-being. Thus, in all cases, the curricula of the adult literacy and post-literacy programmes include vital topics such as health care, family planning, sustainable development, and community engagement, corresponding to Recommendation 2 and contributing to education for sustainable development as set out in SDG 4.7. Moreover, the growing economic development of African countries has created an even greater need for a skilled workforce, and therefore educational initiatives have been expanded to provide a larger breadth of vocational training. There are opportunities for adults in the five countries to undertake skills-based programmes and technical and vocational education (SDG 4.3), and obtain a certificate or diploma that could be officially recognized by employers.

The countries are advancing in the establishment and reinforcement of community learning centres and IGAs, and are creating more community learning opportunities



that value local knowledge and promote the building of a learning society community by community. This adheres to Recommendations 3 and 4 and contributes to effective learning environments (SDG 4.a), which ultimately provide the necessary skills for decent work (SDG 4.4). Kenya has been implementing CLRCs and IGAs offering a vast and diverse range of learning activities in several counties. Similarly, in Namibia, CLCs act as premises for continuing educational programmes. This has had a positive effect on the learning attainments of community members – particularly in rural areas, where such centres are the main source of lifelong learning opportunities.

As per Recommendation 5, there has been some progress in the creation of mandating bodies to assess and validate learning outcomes acquired in various learning formats. The countries have adopted national qualification frameworks that address the requirements of a range of professions and ultimately present a foundation for validating and certifying learning achievements acquired in non-formal or informal contexts. However, the recognition of prior learning requires more planning and promotion in the region.

The participating countries have also progressed in advancing ICTs in accordance with Recommendation 7. For example, Ethiopia has incorporated ICTs into teaching and into adult literacy learning schemes (as detailed in its 'best practice' section), Kenya is providing ICT training for teachers along with the development of digital-based curricula, while Rwanda's *ICT in Education Policy* details strategies on how to overcome difficulties in promoting digital technologies.

Nevertheless, obstacles remain; these include a shortage of equipment at educational institutions and a lack of teaching staff with the skills needed to incorporate ICT techniques into the learning process. Governments recognize these barriers and try to address them by providing technical assistance to schools, tertiary institutions and CLCs, and by training teachers in digital skills and promoting e-learning. This, ultimately, should contribute to an increased number of qualified teachers, in accordance with SDG 4.c.

The process of achieving integrated and holistic lifelong learning systems requires active cooperation between diverse

stakeholders, including government ministries, as well as joint mechanisms of lifelong learning policy and programme coordination among state, public and private organizations. The five countries show some evidence of cooperation between governmental departments and other stakeholders; however, this should be further encouraged, and such cooperation should become a cornerstone of governmental practices, as mentioned in Recommendation 9. Through these combined forces, countries can make a huge leap in the diversification and expansion of lifelong learning opportunities – for instance, by harnessing technologies in education or reaching marginalized communities.

Analyses of policy documents from all the countries along with other data collected also revealed that evidence-based research and cross-border integration are not widely applied when developing policy strategies and frameworks, as proposed by Recommendations 8 and 10 respectively. Similarly, there is room for improvement when it comes to human and financial resources devoted to both formal and non-formal education as outlined in Recommendation 6.

HOW CAN PROGRESS BE ACCELERATED?

Analyses of a country's lifelong learning position should help it to identify where there is room for improvement in terms of developing and/or reinforcing initiatives that encourage the promotion of inclusive and equitable quality education and LLL opportunities. In line with this, the findings of the present study suggest concrete actions that policy-makers could take into account in order to improve lifelong learning policies and strategies.

Based on findings from the five countries, the points below show how implementation of lifelong learning in the participating countries could be accelerated, particularly in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Policies and practices related to lifelong learning should be aligned with the SDGs in order to conform to these global objectives. The suggestions therefore address both current obstacles as well as potential progress that the five selected countries could achieve.

- Although various policies from the selected countries embrace aspects of lifelong learning (LLL), a clear

understanding of what lifelong learning is and the many ways in which it can be implemented is still lacking. Acquainting policy-makers and education stakeholders with the many facets and benefits of lifelong learning will encourage a better understanding of, and therefore more initiatives embodying, the LLL concept.

- More inclusive education policies and implementation guidelines need to be developed. These should focus in particular on the provision of lifelong learning opportunities for people from rural areas, girls and women, learners with special needs, and students with low socio-economic status (i.e. the target beneficiaries of SDG 4.5).
- Evidence-based policy-making practices should be adopted to enable governments to identify any shortcomings in current lifelong learning policies or implementation processes and, consequently, elaborate new strategic approaches to address these issues. Each policy document related to lifelong learning should be accompanied by a detailed assessment of existing challenges, threats and opportunities; this would help to determine the best direction for implementation.
- Governments should expand the development of a national database of formal and non-formal education initiatives and training providers. This would facilitate access to information on lifelong learning programmes and projects and enable potential learners as well as stakeholders to find information on the nature and location of learning programmes, as well as enrolment requirements, recognition of learning outcomes, and opportunities for further work or study. In this context, the database could also serve to support learning providers and popularize the culture of lifelong learning.
- There is a need to strengthen the human and infrastructural capacities of existing lifelong learning programmes; this includes improving schoolteachers' lesson plans and teaching skills, creating a safe school environment, adjusting the curriculum to equip students with the relevant knowledge and competencies, and organizing training for school leaders in order to upgrade their managerial skills.
- Further development of community learning centres and income-generating activities to, for example, stimulate self-employment and promote local businesses is necessary. This calls for more skills-based and entrepreneurial education

that equips learners with the practical knowledge and competencies required by the labour market.

- The potential of ICTs and mobile literacy should be further explored. For countries that encounter difficulties in reaching learners in rural areas, the use of ICTs can help, and, where adult education is not well perceived, exploring innovative ways to reach learners, particularly women, through ICTs could be the answer. Moreover, open and distance learning (ODL) programmes should be developed and expanded. Despite the relatively lower cost of ODL, it is often under-utilized.
- Cross-departmental and cross-ministerial relationships within the government should be strengthened. Lifelong learning encompasses various educational levels and settings, as well as different sectors: collaboration is therefore essential to success. Furthermore, government partnerships with public and private organizations, NGOs, and various associations must be fostered in order to scale up the regional projects conducted by these institutions and to support the dissemination of best practices in lifelong learning at local, regional and national levels. Creating partnerships with private enterprises can support in the enhancement of ICT infrastructure of educational settings, such as the CLCs.
- Internal and external quality assurance systems should be further introduced to provide effective monitoring and evaluation of lifelong learning programmes and projects. Internal quality assurance can be achieved, for example, through self-evaluation reports from teachers and educational institutions. External evaluation could involve visits from relevant evaluation bodies. Monitoring quality is crucial if governments and relevant partners are to identify where progress is being made, the obstacles to successful implementation, and the lessons drawn from implementing specific programmes.
- A research-based approach is needed to chart the development and implementation of lifelong learning in each of the five countries. Governments should involve the research departments of local universities to investigate the most significant issues relating to LLL. For example, when exploring the needs of local communities and the obstacles they face, universities should provide evidence on how existing challenges can be addressed through educational and lifelong learning initiatives.



- A formal communication strategy that raises stakeholder awareness of the benefits of recognition of prior learning (RPL) should be developed. Constructive dialogue between all concerned parties on how to proceed and improve the recognition and validation system will contribute to lifelong learning practices being embraced, broadly disseminated and well publicized.
- POTENTIAL FOR COLLABORATION WITH UIL**
- The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) can support participating countries in further developing, promoting and implementing lifelong learning initiatives. Specifically, UIL could provide:
- clarification of lifelong learning in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
 - research that can guide new initiatives, as well as guidance in monitoring those reforms and support for the development and implementation of inclusive and gender-responsive lifelong learning policies;
 - technical support for developing lifelong learning policies, learning materials and advocacy programmes, as well as training and information exchange;
 - delivery of capacity-building workshops;
 - assistance in organizing national and regional meetings of experts and country representatives in each of the participating countries in order to share best practices and knowledge of lifelong learning;
 - publication of relevant dissemination materials (such as this one) in the form of books, e-journals and newsletters, in particular with hands-on/less bureaucratic information;
 - involvement of the international community to support initiatives that promote lifelong learning, such as TVET, peace education, adult learning and education, literacy and basic skills, and good governance;
 - assistance in establishing an active network of lifelong learning practitioners in the five African countries and beyond, including their counterparts in Asia, in order to share experiences and exchange views on the development of lifelong learning systems;
 - support for the coordination of national and regional programmes mounted by institutions, governments and donor partners to promote efficient use of limited resources.

Appendix: The Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary 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.
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
- 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and African countries, for enrolment in higher education including vocational training and information and communications technology, and technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.
- 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and SIDS.

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This report is an outcome of a project supporting the promotion of lifelong learning for all in selected African countries. The project aims to increase the capacity of policy-makers and researchers to develop national policies and strategies that will establish lifelong learning systems in Africa, ultimately contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This publication showcases the advancements made by five African countries in promoting and implementing lifelong learning as per the recommendations outlined in *Key Issues and Policy Considerations in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Selected African Countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania* (UIL, 2014). This continuous assessment and review of the countries' progress can help monitor the reforms and developments taking place, and can contribute to the sharing of promising practices. The four main sections of the report include an introduction with the background to and methodology of the study; the origin, essence and benefits of lifelong learning; a compendium of good practices in promoting lifelong learning for all; and a conclusion comprising reflections on how progress can be accelerated in the region as well as potential collaboration opportunities with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL).

Attempts to implement lifelong learning concepts in the five African countries has seen mixed results, but advancements are being made. It is hoped that this synthesis report will help foster the exchange of successful practices among the countries and the further development of lifelong learning policies and strategies across the African continent.