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Effective Literacy Programs

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**From Literacy
to Lifelong Learning**

**Literacy and Globalization:
Towards A Learning Society In Africa
Growth Points for Policy and Practice**

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1. ABSTRACT

1. The central argument in this paper is that today's problems cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them. Literacy mobilization has hit a historical moment of uncertainty, a paradox of sorts which calls for bold, new, and strategic set of actions. If we see uncertainties and paradoxes not as good reasons for paralysis and passive regurgitation of our condition, but rather as a precondition for innovation, the need for a different level of strategic action becomes quite clear.
2. The new and bold actions that the field makes at such a juncture would include investing in an understanding of root causes, retrieving signals that may have been missed in earlier efforts but which may be instructive today, building on new echoes and human “cries” of the moment, and creating strong feedback loops from scattered but courageous innovations that persist in spite of the paralysis at macro level.
3. To speak of new directions at policy level means that policy makers must demonstrate that they are not acting in an *ad hoc* manner in responding to a field “under threat”. Rather, they must show, or be assisted to cultivate their comprehension of the paradoxes that are frustrating good intentions, and fault lines that are re-shaping continental plates in our times. We cannot swing up on a rope that is attached only to our own belt. It does not need a weatherman to tell us that literacy **has** lost its political, humanistic leg and is hopping along with difficulty on its one depoliticized leg powered only from narrow globalization imperatives.
4. If literacy is to respond to Africa’s cry in the twenty-first century, it must recover its relationship with the global scale of justice and injustice, of governance and marginalization, and of democracy and human deprivation. It must articulate its vision of the deep structure of things and from that depth, find its purpose in these new and very difficult times. Africa is not only concerned about its marginalization and thereby uncritical assimilation into the existing global order. She is also concerned with injustice IN that global order, and thus her own moral trajectory as she seeks to participate in it. The continent’s struggle clearly articulated in the charters of the African Union is to consolidate and affirm its presence, but also its identity in a world order that has, for centuries worked to compromise it.
5. Thus “learning to be”, and “learning to live together” from an African point of view represents a total struggle for regaining dignity and respect, while contributing new philosophies of human connectedness such as *Ubuntu* into the common global pot. It is from this re-reading of realities that literacy in Africa will find its currency.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

6. This paper seeks to address the issue of literacy and globalization at a level which is not a state-of-the art type of synthesis, but rather, sets some foundations for reconstruction of literacy strategies in the African context.
7. Robert Ulich has written: “We are fumbling around in education because we know so little about the future and do not bother to know enough about the past”. When we do look at the past, seldom do we invest in the rebuilding of the lost contact between the surface and depth of civilization; or in giving some fresh thought as to what general education should be all about. The beautiful and complex tapestry of the overall human significance is often submerged beneath, or hidden behind the often chopped up and atomistic activities of life and professional fields.
8. How we view **Africa** and subsequently how we craft strategies to respond to its needs is our decision. It hinges directly on our convictions about the kind of preferred future we wish for the continent. We can take Africa as the heartbeat of crisis and disasters, the land of endless poverty, or we can proceed with a pragmatic diagnosis and purposeful prognosis to find possible pathways to the future based on the strength of this continent.
9. Many of the underlying causes and processes that might lead to sustainable development are much better understood at the beginning of the twenty first century than they were 50 years ago. Continental formations within Africa such as the formation of the African Union, the infrastructure development program such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the fermenting undercurrent of the African Renaissance, when juxtaposed and infused with global efforts such as the Millennium Development Goals and Dakar EFA goals, do provide us with new grounds on which to stand when we confront existing problems with a future orientation. They must be read always in tandem, not one to the exclusion of the other.
10. In many ways, Africa **has** moved on. Mozambique, Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia are creating new dynamics for recovery in the aftermath of destabilization and civil war. Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation, is again with civilian government, and is playing a wide regional peacekeeping role in many parts of the continent. African approaches to conflict resolution and promotion of healing using traditional African jurisprudence of restorative justice, has shifted continental plates in world thinking.
11. The past two decades have generated many successes in citizen-based resource management, locally controlled peacemaking, rehabilitation of child-soldiers, and the recovery of whole communities following brutal war and calamities such as drought, flood and cyclone. Research at the micro level demonstrates the enormous ingenuity and energy that Africa’s farmers, traders, migrants put into managing and developing their activities.
12. Against all this, stands the **globalization** phenomenon. Globalization is understood as the widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness, and is thus identified with a process of intensifying worldwide economic integration. But this image contrasts sharply with one in which heightened nationalism, reassertion of geo-politics and hegemony, strong state and re-imposition of borders, rather than an opening of borders (such as in Europe) is the norm.
13. Globalization is transforming in very uneven ways, the finance, currency, trade, employment and social systems; as well as modes of living, the formation of societies, and even training policies. It is removing competence from the national context, has redrawn the world economic map, is dismantling institutions of social protection in developing countries,

and is further marginalizing the poor, recasting their deprived condition as a natural collateral damage expected along the path of progress!

14. Underlying these different conceptions are significant methodological disputes about how complex historical and social phenomena such as globalization are best understood and thus responded to. Parallel universes operate by entirely different rules, values and expectations. Literacy must articulate its position taking into account these diverse standpoints.
15. There must be a clearer understanding of the role that **civil society** is playing or should be playing in order to avoid unproductive tensions and to garner optimum use of stakeholders. Like globalization, there is no single way to capture what is meant by civil society.
16. Civil society is rising up and gaining a unique and central role in the implementation of development projects and monitoring of development outcomes. Whether it is viewed as the intermediate realm between the state and the family; as a free association of a group of individuals; as a sphere distinct from the state as well as from the market economy; as a political space inhabited by a variety of civic associations who negotiate, argue, struggle for or against centers of political authority; or as a space for the construction of democratic politics. This acknowledgement alone demands that insights from their literacy work be acknowledged purposively, and channeled into a strategic upward feedback loop into policy and planning.
17. Along with globalization, the notion of information societies and knowledge economies has also emerged. Behind the rhetoric and clichés surrounding these terms, there are distinctive issues and tenets that need to be clarified. Post-industrial societies envisaged in this new “era” are dominated by information, services, and high technology more than by the production of goods. The ‘information revolution’ refers to the dramatic changes taking place during the last half of the 20th century, in which service jobs (ranging from high technology, highly skilled professions to low-skill jobs such as short-order cooks) are more common than jobs in manufacturing or agriculture. The product of skilled professionals is the information or knowledge they provide. It is too early to identify and understand all the ramifications this new kind of society will have for social life.
18. However, there is another information revolution that has greater significance for Africa. It is not a revolution in technology, machinery, techniques, software, or speed, but a revolution in CONCEPTS, and thus the way we think about issues. In other words, what is the MEANING of information, and what is its PURPOSE? How does the existing flood of information actually assist Africa find its bearing not only in a globally competitive, but also in a predatory world system? Which concepts have outlived their usefulness and have to be reframed?
19. We know that while the “T” of Information Technology (IT) is greatly appreciated e.g. in bringing advances to medical research and surgical procedures, computer and information technology **have so far had practically no impact** on the decision whether or not to build a new office building, a school, a hospital, or a prison, or in defining their function. They have had no impact on the decision to perform surgery on a critically sick patient; nor on the decision of the equipment manufacturer concerning which markets to enter and with which products, or on that of a major bank to acquire another bank.
20. What is sometimes needed is to **redefine information**; to explore new ideas and **concepts**, and to give these ideas a meaningful direction, because ultimately, knowledge rests in people rather than in ICTs, databases or services. For Africa and other developing countries, the challenge is how to build on their people’s local knowledge, as concomitant to working with global knowledge and information.

21. It is an irony that the value of the vernacular knowledge is noticed in developing countries only after its recognition and utilization by developed nations. If we begin to rethink some of the fundamentals i.e. that all humans are born with an innate and unique capacity to think, learn and relate. A capacity which is the basic ingredient to the creation of knowledge, then the foundation of knowledge societies has to start with the incubation of knowledge in human minds - a process dependent both on the individual and the external environment.
22. Developing countries need to **recognize, value and capitalize** on their human resources in order to identify the forms of knowledge that work for the poor and promote social equality. Avenues therefore need to be created for knowledge incubation, supplemented by capacity-building and enabling policy frameworks. These will provide opportunities for people to use the power of their local knowledge in conjunction with acquired knowledge to propel their development.
23. “Knowledge societies” should not be confused with “information societies”. **Knowledge societies** contribute to the well-being of individuals and communities; they encompass social, ethical and political dimensions. **Information societies**, on the other hand, are based on technological breakthroughs that risk providing little more than “a mass of indistinct data” for those who do not have the skills to benefit from it. In a perfect knowledge society, **all forms of knowledge are recognized and valued, and benefit** society. It is not a situation in which indigenous African knowledge is ignored and left open to bio-piracy by multinational corporations who patent it at will and recycle their gains back onto the continent at unaffordable prices.
24. A lifelong learning framework needs to encompass and validate in a purposive way formal learning in schools, as well as non-formal learning ranging from structured on-the-job training to informal learning acquired through informal apprenticeships in homes and communities. However, these outcomes require appropriate policy supported by concrete preparation and investment at all levels and loci of the education system. It is no easy task!
25. We are learning the hard way that, though international declarations may come easy, the infrastructure for negotiating and implementing the complex initiatives implied in the declarations are slow to put in place; they require consistent and committed follow-throughs. Attempts at integrating formal and non-formal education, and at implementing lifelong learning have also been far more difficult and complex than anticipated.
26. The degree of fragmentation and biased assumptions that underpin the two systems (formal and non-formal), along with the polarized and partisan camps of professionals aligned to these sectors as they relate to each other, was grossly underestimated and evidently not planned or catered for. Lifelong learning seemed unproblematic until the differential interpretations of what it meant, and the related questions of resource availability for its implementation emerged.
27. We therefore need acute vigilance when we commit to ideas that have a long-term perspective, and patience when we deal with issues that transform human existence. Literacy efforts undertaken today will not yield results tomorrow. Its impact will only show many decades later. We need commitment and mechanisms of accountability that do not change colors whenever the wind blows in new directions.
28. History teaches us that piecemeal literacy work without any concrete mission or vision may not be enough to raise a society out of its post war or cataclysmic moment. Rather, wider goals such as nation-building, societal reconstruction or transformation, moral or political consensus are essential mobilizing tools for successful literacy campaigns.

29. Similarly, the clues to the future cannot be found in the failures and successes of individual village programs per se. Irrespective of whether these programs or projects are initiated by a government department or by a non-governmental organization (NGO), it is the degree to which the initiatives feed back into the national vision that can make the difference in terms of their chances for “going to scale”. If projects are to provide the crucial kick-starts for new directions in policy impetus, governments must consistently demonstrate their willingness to valorize in an on-going manner, the small and big initiatives that are implemented within the national or regional jurisdictions.
30. Borrowing insights from the Nordic model, it is possible for Africa to affirm that the educational requirements of the future are international understanding, linguistic skills, ability to interpret symbols, a spirit of cooperation and participation, flexibility, a holistic approach, the ability to use both sides of the brain, openness, and the motivation to seek constant development and learning. These qualities are not technical nor academic. They are human, rooted in upbringing, family ties, security, self-esteem, and inner strength... Tomorrow’s adult learning must unite intellect and feelings, progress and caring, vision and substance, the ring and the arrow, fusing them to form a creative spiral... (Nordic Council of Ministers, 1995: 8).
31. The arguments of the Nordic Council of Ministers are succinct. The first of these relate to the balance between *universal access to learning and specialized competences*. At a time when all countries are facing the challenges of global competition, of balancing economic and social development, of protecting human rights and the environment, it is clear that growth cannot be defined only in terms of the production of more and more goods. Growth has to be underpinned by ideas that combine an agenda for an expanded provision and development of levels of competence for the entire population, and which target the deepening of knowledge and skills needed to ensure cutting edge competence and renewal.
32. The second relates to the problem of *uncertainty in, and inadequacy of the traditional skills categories*, which together make the case for lifelong learning. The increasing need for an active and fully informed citizenry for democratic participation, coupled with the fluid nature of an internationalized labor market that requires flexible skills and versatile competences, make an urgent and compelling case for lifelong learning.
33. For its part, lifelong learning must:
 - Unify the broader perspective and deeper insight, capacity for action, specialist knowledge and wisdom; in order to broaden the arena and locus of learning beyond the school to the community level.
 - Help combat unemployment partly by improving competitiveness, and partly by re-appropriating the individual citizen’s life span allowing for periods of paid work, education/training, and other activities.
 - Lead to development of new methods and new tools to be applied in the field of adult education. These may include the acquisition of new skills, and the retooling of old roles. Bridges must be built between learning in the classroom and learning in unconventional places.
 - Play a key role in the democratization of knowledge and combating the risk of technocratic dehumanization, the creation of dual societies, and the further deepening of the divide between those who “know and those who don’t”.
34. All these points resonate for Africa. The validation of indigenous knowledge systems as a legitimate knowledge base for literacy and a knowledge society must become a policy issue.
35. If African countries have undertaken massive literacy campaigns before, is it not possible to propose massive post-literacy campaigns with strict conditions e.g. linking social welfare provisions to literacy achievement over a period?

36. Literacy efforts must be thought of as part of a long-term strategy. Short-term evaluation and scary statistics should not put practitioners and policy makers off from this track that requires patience and commitment.
37. The advocacy for literacy should devise flexible and easily adaptable tactics depending on the nature of the challenge.
38. Strategic thinking may involve building new alliances at national and provincial levels, e.g. dialoguing with influential personalities in other sectors e.g. the police, the military etc who are humanistic in their inclinations, to bring them into direct advocacy for literacy. Finally, Africa has been beset by generations of negative prefixes such as “un”-developed, “non”-literate, “il”-literate, “under”-developed. In world politics, we have seen the tensions around the use of the word “Third” as in “Third World” brought out by Sauvy and used by developing countries during the Cold War; versus “Third” as in “hierarchy” which is insisted upon by the western countries when they will not accept the South as an authentic voice. Once the ranking paradigm is established, Africa, Asia and South America become second, third, and fourth “bests”. This political economy of statistics should be deconstructed.
39. In short, to cite John Schaar, the future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating. The paths to the future are not found but made, and in the making, both the maker and the destination are transformed.

3. AFRICA IN THE C21ST: MAKING A CHOICE FOR THE PREFERRED FUTURE

40. In his preface to *Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom* (1954), Robert Ulich writes : “we are fumbling around in education because we know so little about the future and do not bother to know enough about the past”. When we do look at the past, seldom do we invest in rebuilding the lost contact between the surface and the depth of civilization; or in giving some fresh thought as to what general education should be all about. The beautiful and complex tapestry of human significance is often submerged or hidden behind the often chopped up and atomistic activities of life and professional fields. “Nobody”, writes Ulich , “can inspire who does not have deep convictions; [convictions] are the results, but also the feeders of the spirit” (Ulich 1954 :v).
41. How we view **Africa** and subsequently how we craft strategies to respond to its needs is our individual and collective decision. It hinges directly on our convictions about the kind of preferred future we wish for the continent. We can take Africa as the heartbeat of crisis and disasters, the land of endless poverty, or we can proceed with a pragmatic diagnosis and purposeful prognosis to find possible pathways to the future.
42. Frustration is indeed difficult to conceal at the recurrence of problems and failures that appear so crudely on the surface of the continent. The heartfelt tripartite set of core problems of the African post independence period – poverty, hunger and disease – has since mutated into a new pernicious world scale tripartite - power, greed, and ignorance - that has led to widening disparities in the quality of life and to environmental bankruptcy, leaving the bulging problem of poverty dangerously unresolved. World market prices for many of Africa’s raw materials are at an all time low (UNCTAD 2004), and most countries remain dependent on foreign aid, while HIV and AIDS deplete Africa’s next generation.
43. However, many of the underlying causes and processes that might lead to sustainable development are much better understood now than they were 50 years ago. Some of the problems: millennia debt cancellation, human rights and peacemaking, are highly-profiled through international civil society movements, generating hopes for more focused attention, if not solutions (Toumlin & Wisner 2005).
44. The emphasis for “fair” as well as “free” trade in the global economy as evidenced in reports such as that of the *World Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalization* (2004) headed by the presidents of Finland and Tanzania, as well as continental moves within Africa e.g. the formation of the African Union (AU), the infrastructure development program of NEPAD and the fermenting undercurrent of the African Renaissance, provide us with new grounds on which to confront existing problems with a future orientation.
45. Twenty years ago, Africa was free game for briefcase wielding experts from the north pontificating to Africans about their problems and solutions, which seemed “obvious” to them. The ‘culture’ has not yet disappeared, but the terrain for self-diagnosis **has** changed, slowly but for real. Africans are standing up and pinpointing to Europe and the United States the link between the impoverishment of African peasant farmers and their inefficient and unacceptable farm subsidies that make the life of a single cow in the West more valuable in resource terms than that of an African rural farmer.
46. Africa **has** moved on. Mozambique, Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia are creating new dynamics for recovery in the aftermath of destabilization and civil war. Nigeria, Africa’s

most populous nation, is again with civilian government, and is playing a wide regional peacekeeping role in many parts of the continent. African approaches to conflict resolution and promotion of healing using traditional African jurisprudence of restorative justice, has shifted continental plates in world thinking.

47. The Rwanda crisis, the wars of the Great Lakes' region, the self-destruct situation in Somalia, and the genocide in Darfur (western Sudan) continue to challenge us as Africans. But the continent continually displays its tremendous capacity for recovery and transformation. Botswana and Mozambique have both achieved progress against the odds and are today offered as examples of good governance to other parts of the world (Ferraz & Munslow 1999; Samatar 1999).
48. African approaches to conflict resolution and promotion of healing using traditional African jurisprudence of restorative justice, have shifted continental plates in world thinking. For instance, today, *Ubuntu* as an African indigenous philosophy is taken seriously and is incorporated into syllabi of various educational institutions in different parts of the world. Its special significance is derived from the African mores : "I am human because you are human".
49. It is a philosophy that emphasizes human dignity, combining the practices of compassion, kindness, altruism and respect; it is well illustrated for instance in the South African context in the manner in which African people could call for reparation rather than retaliation, adopt a posture of understanding rather than vengeance, and practice *Ubuntu* rather than victimization (Gevisser & Morris 2002: 193). *Ubuntu* embodies the concept of mutual understanding and the active appreciation of the value of human difference. It requires to know others if one is to know oneself, as well as to understand one's and others' place within a multicultural environment (Gevisser & Morris 2002:ibid).
50. The liberation of South Africa and the nascent constitutional democracy has given recognition to the concept of *Ubuntu* as the principal African indigenous world outlook and value system that underpins its nation building effort.
51. The past two decades have generated many successes in citizen-based resource management, locally controlled peacemaking, rehabilitation of child-soldiers, and the recovery of whole communities following brutal war and calamities such as drought, flood and cyclone. Research at the micro level (Toumlin & Guèye 2003) demonstrates the enormous ingenuity and energy that Africa's farmers, traders, migrants put into managing and developing their activities.
52. Africa's stories of promises and successes rarely get into the press, yet this growing body of experience and promise holds the foundation and potential for new social contracts which would deliver informed and unwavering service to the continent.
53. Africa must speak up for its diversity (more than 1000 languages spoken), its size and scope (7000 km wide and 8000 km long) in terms of its ecology, culture, religious beliefs, practices, histories, social and political systems. It must reject the lumping together of a tremendous life force represented by 785 million inhabitants, into a homogeneous 'sub-Saharan Africa', which is but a short step from denying historical depth, and rendering this immense continent into an easy control case for simplistic comparisons with other regions of the world (Reader 1997, Toumlin & Wisner 2005).
54. The real challenge for scholars, policy makers and agencies that support Africa is to balance the pragmatic acknowledgement of problems such as limited resource allocations to literacy efforts, questionable political will, and Africa's position. Hence to recognize the limitations of 'special projects' and 'success story' syndromes that trap interventions into narrow

initiatives. The celebration of "success stories" should not become a pathology, but rather, culminate into strategic learning at policy and political levels.

55. The decision-makers and stakeholders should move boldly towards a strategic validation of the heuristics and wisdom gained from those initiatives as part of a 'national commons'.
56. It is only by working systematically to sift through the bewildering array of village, community or thematic projects that valuable insights can be availed to policy makers for national or regional consideration and incorporation into active policy formulation processes. This is especially possible now that African states are recovering their ground (historically threatened by neo-colonialism, but more recently taken away under the structural adjustment programmes) as the custodian of public policy.

4. GLOBALIZATION THE MIDAS CURSE OR ALADDIN'S 'OPEN SESAME'?

57. In Greek mythology, a king named Midas ruled over the people of Phrygia, an ancient nation in Asia Minor. In return for a favor, the god Dionysus offered to grant Midas a wish. Midas asked that all he touched turn to gold. His wish was granted, but when his touch turned his food, his drink, and even his beloved daughter to gold, he realized that his assumed blessing was in fact a curse. He now had gold without limit, but at the price of life.... (Korten 1999).
58. Globalization is understood as the widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness. McGrew (2005) informs us that within political economy literature, globalization is identified with a process of intensifying worldwide economic integration (globalization as an economic process). This contrasts sharply with the wider social science views in which globalization is much more multi-dimensional, rather than a singular process – as evident across cultural, political ecological, military and social domains. Underlying these different conceptions are significant methodological disputes about how complex historical and social phenomena such as globalization are best studied.
59. Conceptually, globalization is often elided with notions of economic liberalization, internationalization, universalization, westernization or modernization. The emphasis is on thicker or thinner economic interaction and interconnectedness (a rescaling of economic space and relative denationalization). It is marked by patterns of both economic convergence and divergence. Underlying the shifts in economic scale are contemporary informatics technologies and infrastructures of communication transportation. Thus globalization is about **techniques** (technological change and social organization), **economics** (markets and capitalism), and **politics** (ideas, interests and institutions).
60. Citing other skeptical views, McGrew balances this reasoning with positions taken by those observing recent events in the West. In these emerging perspectives, it is regionalization and triadization, i.e. the increasing dominance of the EU, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and East Asia - not globalization that are the dominant trends in contemporary world economy. In the aftermath of September 11th 2001 for instance, there has been talk of 'the end of globalization', 'de-globalization', and the 'post-global age'. The war on global terrorism appeared to presage a world of heightened nationalism, the reassertion of geo-politics and United States' hegemony, the strong state, and the re-imposition of borders rather than an opening of borders as advocates of globalization keep on opining - confirming the suspicion that globalization is no more than 'globaloney' (McGrew 2005).

61. Others argue that globalization needs closer vigilance. David Korten (The Post-Corporate World, 1999) explores the link between globalization, the single world order, and the death of substantive democracy.
62. He argues that in the 1980s, capitalism triumphed over communism. In the 1990s, it triumphed over democracy. For those who grew up “within house” believing that capitalism is the foundation of democracy and market freedom, it has been a rude awakening to realize that under capitalism, democracy is for sale to the highest bidder, and that global mega corporations larger than most states, centrally plan the market. In many African countries, the legacy of the present era of globalization stretches back to the intensive bulldozing of national sovereignty by the World Bank and the IMF steered Structural Adjustment Programs back in the 1980s. As deep doubt was nourished and then cast on the role of nation states, emphases were put simultaneously on the new concept of “marketplace” for the production, distribution and consumption of goods.
63. What we are witnessing in our times is a globalization that is transforming in very uneven ways, finance, currency, trade, employment, social systems, modes of living, the formation of societies, and even training policies. For analysts of the fate of the state, globalization has been credited with removing competence from the national context: the untrammelled global flow of capital increasingly weakens the possibility that a nation state can carry out an economic policy based on national premises. For those who still have memories of human solidarity, globalization has redrawn the world economic map, permanently marginalizing the poor, and recasting their deprived condition as a natural collateral damage expected along the path of progress!
64. In the context of globalization, the true nature of power is not revealed, its changing contours are rarely explored; its goals and targets, rarely identified. Within nation states as is the case almost worldwide, the “silence of the democrats” is most astounding. In this regime of “see no evil, hear no evil”, democratic accountability and vision are replaced by a spacious gloss, doctored by an assortment of marketing and public relations experts and their fellow travelers, the journalists (Pilger 1998:4-5). Instead, the echoes of revolt are sustained by civil society organizations, braving pepper sprays and rubber bullets as they protest against this official silence.
65. Devoid of any social and moral content, what began as “liberal containment” (Pilger 1998:62) gradually evolved into a global strategy of targeting countries with popular governments and nationalist leaders who sought a non-American way for their people. In the case of Samora Machel’s Mozambique, evidence of the targeting is found in the publications of the American conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation’s policy recommendations for the Reagan and incoming Bush I administrations contained in *Mandate for Leadership (Volume III)* (Hanlon 1991).
66. The economic direction of every country would be planned, monitored and controlled in Washington; industries would be deregulated and sold off; public services such as water, health care and education would be diminished. While subsistence agriculture, which has kept human beings alive for thousands of years, would be converted to the production of foreign exchange-earning cash crops. In a strange twist of fate, “tax holidays” and other “incentives” such as sweated labor would be offered to foreign investors (Pilger *ibid.* pp: 63), by poor countries keen indeed to *become* and *remain* attractive to capital increases... Producing a mating dance with globalized capital that seems to follow a routine choreographed by the ideology of neo-liberalism (Marais 1998:119).
67. Other views maintain that globalization is not only an old or unjust phenomenon: it is an outright pernicious one. It is a process driven by market expansion, in which the market has

been more provided for than people and their rights. Markets are neither the first nor the last word in human development. Falk for instance, argues that globalization is creating new threats to human security. Dismantling of institutions of social protection has meant greater insecurity in terms of jobs and incomes. Moreover, pressures for global competitiveness have led countries and employers to adopt more precarious work arrangements. Far from being isolated incidents, financial crises have become increasingly common with the spread and growth of global capital flows (Falk 1999).

68. Of course, some would be quick to point out that globalization opens people's lives to culture and its creativity, but the new culture carried by expanding global markets is disquieting, unbalanced, and heavily weighted in one direction - from the rich to the poor countries. Deregulated capital markets, advances in technology and cheaper transport **have** heightened illicit trade in children, women, weapons, drugs and laundered money. On top of this, globalization has given new characteristics to conflicts through the unfettered trafficking in weapons.
69. Increasing inequalities within and between countries are also attributed to globalization. In fact, it is argued that globalization tends to break down the division between the north and south, east and west into a dual economy system all over the world in which each region or country consists of skyscrapers and shantytowns existing side by side in a new psychic knot.
70. The new global language is English, which prevails in almost 80% of all the websites, yet less than one in 10 people worldwide speak it. Corporations define research agendas and tightly control their findings with patents, leaving poor people in the margins in a proprietary game defined on individualistic and corporatist terms that are largely incompatible with communalist and collective ownership (UNDP 1999).
71. New patent laws not only pay scant attention to the knowledge of indigenous people, but have also facilitated the growth of a burgeoning cadre of biopirates, seeking to patent human and plant lives and turn them into private property. This has gone to the extent that patented terminator technologies are now designed to manufacture sterile hybrid seeds which are replacing indigenous seeds as a strategy for ensuring complete dependency of subsistence farmers on the multinational companies (Le Monde Diplomatique June 1999).
72. David Korten leaves us with an image of a deep moral tension to grapple with in every situation during this era of globalization. He points out that as the 20th century ends, we are pulled back and forth between parallel universes operating by entirely different rules and values. In the one reality, we have the living world, consisting of all essential things to life - air, clean water, soil, trees, communities, places, animals, insects, sunlight and so on. It includes material artifacts such as tools, buildings and machinery.
73. The other universe is a creation of the human mind, with its own logic. It consists of money and the institutions of money - primarily corporations and financial institutions - and has no meaningful existence beyond the confines of our consciousness. Its institutions are designed to collapse unless there is sustained growth in profits, stock prices, output, consumption, trade, investment, and tax receipts. Whatever exists today, more is required tomorrow. Everything, even life - has a price. With time, we have come to imbue money with almost mystical significance
74. The two songs call us to honor their values and serve their imperatives.

5. CIVIL SOCIETY AND GLOBALIZATION

75. In all aspects of social development, civil society is rising up and gaining a unique and central role in the implementation of development projects, and in the monitoring of development outcomes. In relation to state formation, civil society was seen as a “civilized political community” participating within a law-abiding framework. The existence of the rule of law lays the basis and enables the building of “civic partnership”. This understanding was gradually linked with the search for the most appropriate political forms of administration of justice (Williams 2005).
76. Later on civil society was viewed as the intermediate realm between the state and the family. The state was the highest form of organization, and civil society was conducive to the realization of freedom. It was with Gramsci that the idea of the sphere of coercion and domination (represented by the state) was distinguished from the sphere of civil society in which hegemony is maintained through consensual rather than coercive mechanisms. Since then, the shift has been from civil society being associated with the state, to the current one of being juxtaposed to it.
77. Thus, over time, four distinctions in understanding CSOs have emerged:
- a. Civil society as free association of a group of individuals in pursuit of a common aim. Membership is voluntary rather than coerced as in the state,
 - b. Civil society as distinct from the state, though boundaries between the state and non-state may not always be so distinct. It is separate but below the state,
 - c. Civil society as a sphere distinct from the market (non-profit oriented), though business lobby groups working in the interests of big business are hard to classify, as they are themselves not-for-profit even though their clients are profit based.
 - d. Civil society as a political space inhabited by a variety of civic associations who negotiate argue, struggle for or against centers of political authority,
 - e. Civil society as a space for civility and a channel for democracy (the space for the construction of democratic politics (though some civil society may be far from civil as some include fascist and racist groups).
78. The term ‘social movement’ refers to a collection of individuals and groups united on the basis of shared values, interests and identities in the collective pursuit of common political goals. They mobilize and pool resources in order to effect social change. They may include expert groups including academic and research institutes, business lobby, CBOs, consumer groups, religious organizations etc.
79. Some groups are **conformist** (supportive of the status quo), **reformist** (acceptation of the fundamental premises of liberal capitalism whilst admitting that reform is essential as flaws do exit in the present system), **transformative** (seek structural change) or **anarchist** (fragmentation and decapitation of the present system often without alternative vision).
80. In the era of globalization however, civil society has moved beyond national borders due to cross-national linkages and international activities. One way of accounting for the existence of global civil society is:
- by noting the intensity and extensity of interconnectedness between civic associations transcending domestic politics,
 - by noting the existence of issues that are intrinsically trans-national in character, and
 - by noting the nature of trans-national goals that the civic associations share. Here, the idea of a cosmopolitan citizenship is not so far fetched (Williams 2005).

75. The recent increased awareness of the activities of civil society does not mean that they were previously absent from the workings of global political economy. Indeed, the actions of the anti-globalization protesters present a highly visible face of civil society activism in the world economy. Despite their visibility, these actions represent only a small fraction of CSOs' work and their impact on global economic activity. Overall, globalization has generated a conflict among state and non-state actors and prompted a search for regulatory frameworks to lessen the impact of globalizing processes, and devise alternative forms of governance.
76. In terms of educational delivery, the involvement of civil society is very marginal in the formal schooling sector. It is much wider in the non-formal sector. The state has remained in full control of education while society goes along with what is decided rather than motivates these decisions.
77. Despite numerous examples of community participation and innovative approaches in many areas such as literacy and the education of girls and women, the involvement of civil society in African education remains rather scattered and uncoordinated. Many statements in major conferences refer to the new partnerships between the state and civil society organizations (CSOs) or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, given the diversity of service providers, especially in the area of non-formal education, efficient management of the opportunities offered by such partnerships is crucial to the realization of the agreed goals. To be considered in the post Dakar period are the following crucial pointers:
1. Consolidation of political will to build a more inclusive partnership by availing all the related resources to the common cause,
 2. Greater involvement of civil society to address social problems related to educational issues,
 3. Improvement of the understanding of the concept of partnership at all levels,
 4. Establishment of effective mechanisms for coordination of project activities (implemented by CSOs) in order to avoid costly and inefficient disruptions of educational services (UNESCO 2001:65).
78. Literacy today depends for the sustenance of its flame on civil society organizations working in partnership with governments and private sector, shedding light on forgotten public policy issues that have bearings on livelihood, quality of life and poverty reduction.

6. THE INFORMATION SOCIETY, ICT, AND THE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

79. Following the agricultural revolution (18th Century), then industrial revolutions (19th Century), the late 20th and 21st centuries are now posited as marking eras of the "information revolution" that is underpinning the new knowledge economy. Post-industrial societies envisaged in this new "era" are societies dominated by information, services, and high technology more than the production of goods. Advanced industrial societies for instance, see a shift toward an increase in service sectors over manufacturing and production.
80. The 'information revolution' is thus an idiom used to refer to the dramatic changes taking place during the last half of the 20th century in which service jobs (ranging from high technology, highly skilled professions to low-skill jobs like short-order cooks) are more common than jobs in manufacturing or agriculture. The product of skilled professionals is the **information** or **knowledge** they provide. The information revolution itself began with the invention of the integrated circuit or computer chip. Those chips have now revolutionized

the lives of many, running household and industrial appliances, providing calculators, computers, and other electronic devices to control our world.

81. The ramifications that this new kind of society will have for social life cannot yet be identified or assessed. Even the term "post-industrial" belies the fact that we do not yet quite know what will follow industrial societies or the forms they will take. But clearly changes such as the information superhighway permitting people to communicate using computers all around the globe, fax machines, satellite dishes, and cellular phones are changing how families spend their time, the kind of work they do, and many other aspects of urban lives (Drucker undated - *see ref*).

6.1 *From technology to concepts*

82. However, there is another information revolution that has greater significance for Africa, it is not a revolution in technology, machinery, techniques, software, or speed. It is a revolution in CONCEPTS, and thus the way we think about issues. So far, for 50 years, the information revolution has centered on data - their collection, storage, transmission, analysis, and presentation. It has centered on the "T" in IT. What we need to be asking in Africa is: what is the MEANING of information, and what is its PURPOSE? How does the existing flood of information actually assist Africa find its bearing in a globally competitive, but also in a globally predatory world system? Which concepts have outlived their usefulness and have to be reframed?
83. We also know that while the "T" of Information Technology (IT) is greatly appreciated e.g. in bringing advances to medical research and surgical procedures, computer and information technology **have so far had practically no impact** on the decision of whether or not to build a new office building, a school, a hospital, or a prison, or in defining their function. They have had no impact on the decision to perform surgery on a critically sick patient; nor on the decision of the equipment manufacturer concerning which markets to enter and with which products, or on that of a major bank to acquire another bank.
84. For top management or policy level tasks, information technology so far has been a producer of data rather than a producer of knowledge, without realizing that what is sometimes needed is to **redefine information**; to explore new ideas and **concepts**, and to give these ideas a meaningful direction, because ultimately, knowledge rests in people rather than in ICTs, databases or services.
85. Nonetheless, there is a growing consensus that the C21st will witness a quantum leap in the development and exploitation of information technologies with corresponding ramifications for social and economic organization, the environment, culture and the development of a global information infrastructure. In this regard, key issues of concern to policy makers and international organizations have been the extent to which this major transformation has benefited all aspects of society and the ways and means of achieving a truly global knowledge infrastructure.

6.2 *Knowledge rests in people*

86. However, a recent review of the impact and utilization of ICTs worldwide shows that the problem is not simply that there is a lag in the diffusion of these technologies or in accessing the new technologies and services. There are substantial problems in embedding and integrating these capabilities into new policy measures and strategies. Another problem also lies upstream, i.e. in acknowledging that knowledge primarily rests in people rather than in ICTs, databases or services. For Africa and other developing countries, the challenge is how

to build on local knowledge that exists in their people as concomitant to working with global knowledge and information.

87. It is an irony that the value of the vernacular knowledge is noticed in developing countries only after its recognition and utilization by developed nations. Self-imposed barriers need to be removed if countries are to be a part of the growth of the knowledge economy. With the advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the removal of this barrier becomes even more imperative for developing countries because knowledge flows and emerges where it is recognized, enriched and valued. ICTs can make this flow faster.
88. If we begin to rethink some of the fundamentals: i.e. that all humans are born with an innate and unique capacity: the capacity to think, learn and relate, and which is the basic ingredient to the creation of knowledge, then the foundation of knowledge societies has to start with the incubation of knowledge in human minds - a process dependent both on the individual and the external environment.
89. Developing countries need to **recognize, value and capitalize** on their human resource in order to identify the forms of knowledge, which work for the poor and promote social equality. The wealth of knowledge, in turn will create opportunities for developing countries to emerge from dependence of low-cost labor as a source of comparative advantage, increasing productivity and incomes. Avenues therefore need to be created for knowledge incubation, supplemented by capacity-building and enabling policy frameworks. These will provide opportunities for people to use the power of their local knowledge in conjunction with acquired knowledge to propel their development.

6.3 *From information to knowledge society*

90. After the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, there has been fresh international interest in the growth and development paradigm of “knowledge societies”. We are witnessing the emergence of a need for clarification of its aims as a project of society and here, an important distinction needs to be made.
91. According to some recently concluded series of studies (UNESCO 2005), “knowledge societies” should not be confused with “information societies”. **Knowledge societies** contribute to the well-being of individuals and communities, and encompass social, ethical and political dimensions. **Information societies**, on the other hand, are based on technological breakthroughs that risk providing little more than “a mass of indistinct data” for those who do not have the skills to benefit from it.
92. Cultural and linguistic diversities are also central to the development of knowledge societies, e.g. local and traditional knowledge can be invaluable for agriculture and health. This category of knowledge, often found in societies where no written language exists, is particularly vulnerable. With one language estimated to be dying out every two weeks, much of this traditional knowledge is being lost. “Nobody”, state the studies, “should be excluded from knowledge societies, where knowledge is a public good, available to each and every individual,” (UNESCO 2005).
93. However, the transformation of existing societal structures by knowledge, as a core resource for economic growth, for employment, and as a factor of production, constitutes the basis for designating advanced modern society as a “knowledge society.” The transformation of global economies to knowledge economies therefore does not guarantee economic growth with “equity” or respect for diversity either within or between nations.

94. This is because knowledge (in spite of its public good characteristics) becomes a much-valued resource to be possessed and harnessed for its economic benefits. The value accrued to individual users through the availability of information is different, and has the potential to widen the economic and knowledge gap-- as people (picture here traditional holders of medicinal and pharmaceutical knowledge in developing countries), are often not conscious of the global value of what they know or the potential value of absorbing the available information. What would therefore a knowledge society with “equity” look like? In a perfect knowledge society **all forms of knowledge are recognized, valued and benefit** society.

6.4 *LLL in a knowledge economy*

95. From a lifelong learning and skills acquisition perspective, a knowledge-based economy relies primarily on the use of ideas rather than physical abilities, and on the application of technology rather than the transformation of raw materials or the exploitation of cheap labor. Global knowledge economy then transforms the demands for labor market throughout the world. It also places new demands on citizens who need more skills and knowledge to be able to function in their day-to-day lives.
96. Equipping people to deal with these changes requires a change in the organization of education and training. A lifelong learning framework needs to encompass in a purposive way formal learning in schools, non-formal learning ranging from structured on-the-job training to informal learning acquired through informal apprenticeships in homes and communities. The issue of “access whenever needed” then becomes a reality crafted into policy strategies (World Bank 2003).
97. ICT can facilitate learning by doing. It can vastly increase the information resources available to learners, thereby changing the relationship between teachers and students. In Chile and Costa Rica, ICT has helped create a more egalitarian relationship between teacher and learner : learners make more decisions about their work, speak their minds more freely, and receive consultations rather than lectures (World Bank 2003).
98. However, the introduction of computers in the learning environment does not suffice to explain these outcomes. Appropriate policy supported by concrete preparation and investment such as in training of teachers or instructors, provision of qualified technicians and support staff, funding of maintenance costs, access to the internet etc., – all basic requirements taken for granted in the richer countries – is required.
99. ICT has already forced de-centering within formal institutions as distance education and distance learning become increasingly common and available at convenient locations, at user-friendly times of the day, and best of all, at competitive prices. However, these have also brought in close tow challenges at the level of governance, quality assurance, quality monitoring. In many industrialized countries, governments that once focused exclusively on public financing and public provisions of education and training are now trying to create flexible policy and regulatory frameworks that encompass a wider range of institutional actors. These frameworks include legislation and executive orders; arrangements for ensuring coordination across ministries and other institutions involved in education and training activities; and mechanisms for certifying the achievements of learners; monitoring institutional system performance, and promoting learning pathways.
100. It is also recognized that traditional measures of education progress such as enrolment ratios and public spending as a proportion of GDP do not capture important parts of lifelong learning. Similarly, total education spending includes more than just public spending. Traditional indicators also fail to capture learning in the non-formal and informal sectors.

101. National systems need better and clearer benchmarking systems for lifelong learning outcomes. Continuous reform is needed, not only to accelerate the pace of reform but also to deepen the extent to which fundamental transformations of learning are carried out. At the same time reforms that are inflexible and do not take into account the rapid nature of changes will be declared obsolete even before they have seen the light of day.

7. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS ON EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT AND AFRICA'S RENEWAL

102. In Chapter One, the need for putting the picture of Africa upfront to guide whatever actions we take in her name was brought out. In the following sections of this Chapter, close ups of the continental structures and philosophies that underpin the present reconstruction of the African identity, governance and development infrastructure are briefly outlined. The MDGs and Dakar Goals are also introduced as representing international frameworks on which consensus has been reached and to which Africa is actively part.

7.1 *The African Union*

103. The African Union (AU) is the highest governance organ in Africa and is crucial for political mobilization. Founded in July 2002, it is the inter-governmental organization successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The heads of state and of government of the OAU issued the Sirte Declaration on September 9, 1999, calling for the establishment of an African Union. The Sirte Declaration was followed by the Lomé summit (2000), which adopted the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and the Lusaka summit (2001), which adopted the plan for the implementation of the African Union. Modelled after the European Union (but currently with powers closer to the Commonwealth of Nations), its aims are to help promote democracy, human rights and development across Africa, especially by increasing foreign investment through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) program.
104. The establishment of an African Union was undertaken with a view, inter alia, to accelerate the process of integration in the continent to enable it play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing the multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they are by certain negative aspects of globalisation.
105. The African Union is inspired by:
- the continent's aspiration and commitment to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation among the peoples of Africa and African States;
 - its struggles for political independence, human dignity and economic emancipation;
 - contemporary multifaceted challenges that confront the continent and its peoples in the light of the social, economic and political changes taking place in the world;
 - the need to accelerate the process of implementing the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community in order to promote the socio-economic development of Africa and to face more effectively the challenges posed by globalization;
 - the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among our peoples;
 - the acknowledgement that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and thus of the

need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda; and,
the need to promote and protect human and peoples' rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture, and to ensure good governance and the rule of law;

107. The AU has a number of official bodies which are: the Pan-African Parliament located in Midrand, South Africa; the African Commission located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the African Court of Justice; the Executive Council; the Assembly (which is like a cross between the European Council and the United Nations General Assembly); the Permanent Representatives' Committee; the Peace and Security Council; and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council.
108. The African Union has adopted a new anthem, which begins "Let us all unite and celebrate together", and has the chorus "*O sons and daughters of Africa, flesh of the sun and flesh of the sky, Let us make Africa the tree of life*".
109. It is the highest political formation on the continent, and any issue that is endorsed at its level has the possibility of gaining currency and deep respect within the continent.

7.2 **NEPAD**

110. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal. It arose from the mandate given to the five initiating Heads of State (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa) by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to develop an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa. The 37th Summit of the OAU in July 2001 formally adopted the strategic framework document. NEPAD is designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent. Issues such as the escalating **poverty levels**, **underdevelopment** and the continued **marginalization** of Africa needed a new radical intervention to develop a vision that would guarantee Africa's renewal, spearheaded by African leaders.
111. The primary objectives of NEPAD are to eradicate poverty; to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and to accelerate the empowerment of women. NEPAD stresses among other things:
- good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development,
 - African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors of society,
 - anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people,
 - partnership between and amongst African peoples,
 - acceleration of regional and continental integration,
 - building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent,
 - forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world, and
 - ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the Millennium Development Goals and other agreed development goals and targets.
112. NEPAD is a holistic, comprehensive and integrated sustainable development initiative for the revival of Africa that emphasizes among other things, human development with a focus on health, education, science and technology and skills development; and the building and

improving infrastructure, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Energy, Transport, Water and Sanitation.

113. It stresses that Africa must adopt and implement principles of democracy and good political economic and corporate governance, and that the protection of human rights must become properly entrenched in every African country. Effective poverty eradication programs can accelerate the achievement of set African development goals, particularly human development. Poverty is more than just a lack of material things. Poor people are excluded from decision-making and from basic services the state ought to give. It is an urgent matter of basic human rights, social justice and sound economics – as a healthy and skilled workforce is more productive and fulfills its potential with dignity.
114. Both the Millennium Development Goals and the EFA framework for Action provide a sound basis upon which provisions for basic education for children, youth and adults can be made.

7.3 *African Renaissance*

115. Because the very pair of words “African Renaissance” so easily invokes mocking and belittling comparisons with the European Renaissance, some background analysis may help place its relevance to the social reconstruction and affirmation efforts of the continent in the present and future.
116. It has been said that at independence, most of the newly independent national governments of Africa were rightly convinced that they held a responsibility to promote the social, political and economic welfare of their people. To fulfill this obligation, governments took over to a considerable degree the socio-economic planning of their countries which they supervised at national level. It was thought that only in a society where the principal means of production were controlled by the state could socio-economic progress be viable.
117. Hence, during those years, justice and social progress meant socialism. Most African countries tried to set in place strong centralized states with elaborate bureaucratic structures extending from top to bottom, with one political party influencing every sphere of society’s life, etc. These were seen as the requisites for harnessing all energies and resources in order speedily to end Africa’s economic backwardness and solve its formidable ethnic problems (Tusabe, 1999).
118. Nevertheless, after more than four decades of independence, Africa is still largely socially, economically and politically underdeveloped. The only form of development that can be asserted undeniably is underdevelopment. The majority of Africans, live under dictatorships, in poverty in the form of poor health, unemployment, sustained hunger and malnutrition. Today’s environmental decay does not give much hope. Ethnic violence is a living experience in most parts of Africa; military coups have become a traditional phenomena of changing political power; foreign aid projects have collapsed; and there is widespread evidence of large scale corruption in most of Africa’s social, political and economic institutions (Tusabe *ibid*).
119. As Africans seek to find the causes of this, an increasingly common answer to the inquiry is that Africa’s effort at development was built on **wrong foundations**. The strongly centralized structures adopted at independence, with their elaborate bureaucratic structures extending from top to bottom together with centralized economic direction, were doomed to reach an impasse. This was so because any strong regimentation of society’s activities from the top, carries the danger of treating human dignity with disrespect and underestimates the

power of democracy. Indeed, it reduces individuality to a common standard and suffocates the power of human ingenuity.

120. Through rigid laws, the state hampered the development of voluntary social groups and associations, which would have contributed to the development of their communities. In the long run, such restrictive policy has proven detrimental to the entire socio-economic fabric in Africa. It is argued that since Africa's pursuit of progress was built on the wrong foundations, there is a need to rebuild Africa on a new foundation. Hence a need for social reconstruction aiming at decentralizing socio-economic planning and management, and effectively integrating the people into developmental activities through civil society.
121. The African Renaissance therefore presents a conceptual jar holding together the agenda of moral renewal on the continent. Its attention to the "reciprocal other" and its focus on the person and community illustrate a movement to retrieve and preserve unique African cultural and civilization values and make them the basis of a modern society.
122. Knowing that African history has been distorted by colonial powers in their quest for domination of the African continent, the African Renaissance can be seen as a search for a normative ethical concept of the human person as being essential to motivating the functioning of African society.

7.4 *The Millennium Development Goals*

123. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions: income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion, while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights: the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.
124. The goals are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; combat HIV/AIDS; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop global partnership for development.
125. At the World Summit of September 2005 in New York, world leaders committed to adopt and implement by 2006, comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. Such "MDG-based poverty reduction strategies" were a core recommendation of Investing in Development. The UN Millennium Project has worked extensively with countries already engaged in preparing MDG-based poverty reduction strategies.
126. The MDG goals are different in that they are time bound and measurable, are based on global partnerships and stress the responsibility of developing countries for getting their house in order. They are embraced by leadership at the highest levels in both developing and developed countries, civil society and major development institutions. From the literacy point of view, the crucial link is with the MDGs objective of poverty reduction and livelihood questions. Around this, substantial mobilization of political and financial capital is possible if literacy is linked with poverty reduction.
127. Taken together, these frameworks provide for the literacy activist and policy maker alike: legitimate reference points upon which to anchor any mobilization or sustainable policy initiative.

7.5 *The Dakar Goals on Education for All*

128. Education for All (EFA) is a key guiding principle for the provision of education. Importantly it encompasses the provision of educational opportunities for people in all regions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The six Dakar goals aim at:

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

130. In order to reach these EFA Goals, governments should prepare national action plans with the participation of civil society. Greater space should be given to civil society for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. A Global Initiative should be established immediately to mobilize the additional resources needed to achieve EFA; and an authoritative annual monitoring report should be instituted to assess progress towards these goals.

131. From a literacy point of view, the apprehension is to what extent Dakar will not end up like its predecessor, the Jomtien Declaration, whose implementation over the decade leading to Dakar proved catastrophic for the non-formal education sector when "Education for All" became collapsed into "schooling for all".

8. AFRICAN BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

132. Literacy remains the core skill and competence for the building of societies worldwide, especially Africa. Literacy has been at the heart of UNESCO's concerns, and has been ingrained as one of its core mandates. When this is combined with the fact that the right to education is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, followed by a succession of international declarations, statements of commitments and pledges over the past 50 years, literacy should be the least difficult of mandates to execute!

133. The basic agreement at the Jomtien conference on Education For All was to universalise primary education and massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade. The focus in the Declaration was on meeting basic learning needs in order to develop strategies for the twenty first century. The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) went far beyond a renewed commitment to earlier targets set for basic education. It spoke for universal access to education as a fundamental right of all people, for fair and equitable treatment of all learners – infants, children, youth, and adults. It underlined the need for better learning environments, for new partnerships, for improved quality in educational procedures and results, and for more resources as well as improvement in resource utilization. But when the time came for its implementation,

Education for All became “schooling for all”, nearly burying alive the non-formal sector in the process.

134. Today, the EFA movement has once again put literacy high on the agenda among the six Dakar goals by defining it as an essential component of basic quality education. Before that, a world conference was held in Hamburg (1997), focusing on the issue of adult education and literacy. Then as now, literacy was framed within a broader context beyond the original three Rs of the 1960s. In the 1980s and 1990s, debates emerged about what literacy really means, how it is acquired and how it is applied. Literacy as a technical skill was distinguished from literacy as a set of practices defined by social relations and cultural processes.
135. The EFA Declaration introduced the concept of basic learning needs, featuring literacy in a continuum encompassing formal and non-formal education for children, youth and adults. This was buttressed by the ‘four pillars of education’ of the 1996 Delors Report (learning to know, to do, to live together, and to be), which was solidly linked with the notion of lifelong learning.
136. In all these generations of declarations, literacy is portrayed as a key element of lifelong learning in its lived context. By linking such plural definitions of literacy with citizenship, cultural identity, socio-economic development, human rights and equity, these proclamations call for the context sensitive and learner-centred provision of literacy along with the establishment of literate learning environments.
137. Over the five development decades, Africa has witnessed some sparkling successes of literacy campaigns such as those in Tanzania and Mozambique. These experiences show that the way literacy is defined nationally influences the goals, strategies and programs adopted and designed. Its definition also determines how progress and achievements in overcoming illiteracy are monitored and assessed.
138. At Dakar (April 2000), governments, donors, and civil society organizations reaffirmed the global commitment to education for all and pledged to achieve six goals by the year 2015 (World Education Forum, Dakar 2000). Education for all was further endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly as part of the Millennium Development Goals (A/RES/56/326) and as part of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/RES/55/210#17). This resolution emphasized the crucial role of both formal and non-formal education in enabling those living in poverty to take control over their lives. By then, literacy was re-established not only as a component of basic quality education, and as a foundation for lifelong learning, but also as a lifelong process.
139. UNESCO has furthermore recommended several strategies for literacy work at country level with a view to achieving education for all. These include placing literacy at the centre of national education systems and development efforts; giving equal importance to formal and non-formal education modalities; promoting environments supportive of literacy; ensuring community involvement as well as their ownership; building partnerships at all levels; and developing systematic monitoring and assessment supported by research and data collection (UNESCO 2004).
140. So WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?
141. Several facts remain relatively unchanged. One of them is that there are over 800 million adults without literacy competence worldwide. Ten years after Jomtien, the rates of illiteracy have remained generally very high compared to other regions. Women are the worst affected with rates of illiteracy reaching up to 80 or 90 per cent. Of the 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 39 submitted information on the state of literacy in 1999. One third of these had very high literacy rates (over 75 per cent). But another one third had literacy rates of 46 per cent or lower.

142. Resource allocations, both nationally and internationally, remain eschewed in favour of formal education. Approaches to literacy delivery remain fragmented and weakly coordinated. For some reason, literacy retention levels remain quite low, and in some instances, literacy seems to be perceived as irrelevant relative to the costs in terms of time and effort that have to be put into it.
143. Enabling factors to the improvement of the conditions of basic education have been identified at systems level as political will, long term planning, decentralization, integrating and targeting of specific groups such as women and girls. Innovations such as the integration of various forms of education, the use of non-conventional staff, the creation of community schools and experimental approaches to the curriculum, have been the starting point for important developments in the management of education and its effects (UNESCO 2004).
144. But from a mobilization point of view, the wide gap between repeated, underlined, and re-emphasized wordings in international declarations, and disjointed, fragmented action at points of implementation, stands out as a crucial disconnect in the chain. Practitioners and policy makers now realize that though the declarations may have come easy, the infrastructure for negotiating and implementing the complex initiatives implied in the declarations are slow to put in place, if ever at all. Where some of the ideas in the declarations have been inserted into national policies, problems arise at the level of the actual management of the emergent programs.
145. Attempts at integrating formal and non-formal education, and implementing lifelong learning in practice have, for instance, been far more difficult and complex than anticipated. The degree of fragmentation and biased assumptions that underpin the two systems (formal and non-formal), along with the polarised and partisan camps of professionals aligned to these sectors as they relate to each other, was grossly underestimated – and evidently not planned or catered for. Lifelong learning seemed unproblematic until the differential interpretations of its meaning and related questions of resource availability for its implementation emerged. With pressures from the globalization and related market ideology, lifelong learning was soon collapsed – right before our very eyes - into skills training very much akin to the vocational paradigm that was so well registered for its shortcomings decades ago.
146. Over time it became very difficult for policy makers to distinguish the nuanced but profound distinction that existed between the market driven notion of human resources, and the more holistic, developmentally driven notion of the ‘human being’ (as in sustainable human development). In the ensuing contest between competing interpretations of ‘lifelong learning’, the human resource school of thought, well endowed with financial resources, gradually won, and their version quickly permeated the critical spaces of public policy. Human resources soon took precedence over the human being.
147. Taking a step back and looking at the wider patterns, it is possible to discern that in the larger globalizing landscape, the economist logic that drives globalization has not only led to a proliferation of management schools routinely using this jargon of ‘human resource’, but has also been promoting the primacy of total productivity. These two concepts work well in industry and private sector, but are incommensurate with the nature of the challenges facing national and local systems, including rural and cultural development. As this logic took root, human labor began to undergo further and deeper processes of depersonalization and de-socialization.
148. Petrella (1997) captures this situation most aptly when he states that the individual becomes recast as a “corporate asset”, a “human resource” with two consequences. At the first level, human labor at both the individual level (the worker), and at the collective level (groups and categories of workers) is no longer an effective interlocutor in dialogue, negotiations, conflicts and agreements with capital in its individual form (the capitalist) or in its organized form (groups, categories of capitalists). Having become a “resource”, human labor ceased to be a

social subject. Instead, it was to be organized by the “capital-enterprise” and the “economy society” to make the *greatest possible contribution*, at the *least possible cost* to the company.

149. At the second level, stripped of all significance as a social subject, the human resource becomes an object, positioned outside any political, social or cultural context. This new “atom” has no voice in society, has little or no civic, political or cultural rights. Its main, if not only goal is to contribute to the company’s smooth running and further development and profit building. In short, it has become a means whose monetized usage and exchange value is determined by the company’s balance sheet. Positioned at the center of the battle between total productivity and total quality, the human resource is organized, managed, upgraded, downgraded, recycled, and above all, abandoned by the enterprise whenever deemed expedient. Having become a ‘resource’ the working-man no longer has as his alternate, the man of capital. His alternate reference point today is the machine, usually a so-called “intelligent” machine, and intelligent tool, a robot. It is in relation to the tool that his continued presence and or replacement are determined... (Petrella 1997. pp. 21-22).
150. The same problem affected Lifelong Learning (LLL). Started by UNESCO in the late 1960s, LLL drew from the humanistic tradition, and was connected with democracy and self-development. In the 1960s, pressure for expansion of educational opportunities had strong social roots. A more even distribution of investment in education and training would equalize individual earnings. This assumption was important because it linked the economic justification for education reform with social demands for equality of opportunities. It was democratization through education.
151. As the position of UNESCO weakened in the late 1970s into the 1980s, the OECD obtained an increasing influence on education policies, especially in the Western countries. It was to be the beginning of the gradual erosion of the commitment to equality and the total dominance of the economic imperative. The new “lifelong learning” to emerge from this period was based on the neo-liberal conception regarding education as an investment in “human capital” and hence the focus on “human resource development”.
152. The justification for support for adult education was given only in economic terms, and nothing was said regarding issues of social justice. The humanistic and democratic tradition was more or less replaced by a version framed within a new political economic imperative. The current discussions about education accentuate highly developed human capital, and science and technology to support economic restructuring and greater international competitiveness through increased productivity (Korsgaard 1997).
153. New directions mean that policy makers must show that they comprehend these fault lines and what they do to the visions to which they committed their signatures. The clues to the future cannot be found in the failures and successes of individual village programs per se. Irrespective of whether these programs or projects are initiated by a government department or by a non-governmental organization (NGO), it is the degree to which the initiatives feed back into the national vision that can make the difference in terms of their chances for “going to scale”.
154. If projects are to provide the crucial kick-starts for new directions in policy impetus, then governments must consistently demonstrate their willingness to valorize in an on-going manner, the small and big initiatives that are implemented within the national or regional jurisdictions. Governments and the other service providers also need to check that the learning loops within which shared values, insights, challenges, experiences can be traded, are clearly established. In other words, the relationship must become conscious and purposive rather than ad hoc.
155. In pointing out the difference between policy and policy action, Nelson Mandela drew attention to the South African situation. In the foreword to the ***Spirit of the Nation: Reflections on the South Africa’s Educational Ethos*** (Mandela, in Asmal & James 2002), he posited the

struggle against apartheid as one of the great moral struggles of the twentieth century. The subsequent triumph against the apartheid aberration can be seen as a success of humane values; an assertion of the common humanity of a people, and an affirmation of human dignity as a primordial order of things. The country's history enjoins its people and the rest of humanity to find ways of living and working together to create the conditions for realizing the ideals of equality and dignity for all. This approach to nation building has been under girded by a series of institutions created to support the consolidation and ensure the successful implementation of the noble values and related policies.

156. However, as Mandela, echoed by Asmal and James, restates, institutions as a system of elements or rules are **only expressions of democratic intent**. Core social values do not propagate themselves. Adults have to be reminded of those values and children must acquire those values (Mandela *ibid* p: ix-x) in order that appropriate interventions supporting those institutions are generated and structured in an on-going basis. The challenge is therefore to move society from routine injustice to constitutionally ordained justice, to enter boldly into the realm of moral conduct, to accommodate diversity, and embrace the notion of active compassion and reciprocal human caring (Asmal & James 2002). In order to achieve this, the different pieces of the infrastructure must consciously co-create the pathway, constantly reading themselves against the national constitution, against national policies and agreed norms, as well as against citizenship expectations.

9. THE LEARNING CHALLENGE: DRAWING ON INSIGHTS FROM OTHER HISTORIES

157. As we contemplate new futures, sometimes a journey into the past may provide useful insights. Experiences from different parts of the world tell us that education, like technology, is not a mere exterior aid to personal development. It leads to interior transformations of consciousness. Education, at whose core lies literacy, changes the way we perceive, record and transmit information to one another, and across generations. It also changes the way we speak and think, or structure our experience. Literacy therefore holds the key, not only to the alleviation of poverty, but also to the promotion of self-respect and independence. Literacy contains the pin-codes, and education represents the modality for what Jonathan Sacks has called the democratisation of human dignity (Sacks 2002:125).
158. According to Sacks, we need to have a long-term perspective and thus patience when we contemplate dealing with issues that transform human existence. Literacy efforts undertaken today will not yield results the next day. Its impact will only be known many decades later. History from different parts of the world, including from Europe, reminds us that widespread change can best be activated through reading materials.
159. Thus, when we consider how we may inject impetus to the African processes in the C21st, and especially as we acknowledge the nearly cataclysmic situation of Africa as the continent seeks to simultaneously renew itself, it may be useful to look at the way in which literacy has been used in other similar near traumatic crisis situation elsewhere.
160. H.S. Bhola has defined a national literacy campaign as “a mass approach that seeks to make all adult men and women in a nation, literate within a particular time frame”. A campaign suggests urgency and combativeness; sometimes it is the moral equivalent of a war (cited in Graff, 1995:270). Indeed, the idea of a campaign to promote massive and rapid increases in rates of literacy is not unique to the twentieth century. Major and largely successful campaigns to raise levels of literacy have taken place over the past 400 years from the time of the Protestant Reformation: USSR (1919-1939), Vietnam (1945-1977), the People's Republic of China

(1950s-1980s), Burma (1960s-1980s), Brazil (1967-1980), and Tanzania (1971-1981). Only the Cuban literacy campaign took one year or less. The Nicaraguan literacy campaign lasted only about five months.

161. They all share common elements which may be instructive for our purposes.

- o In terms of rationale, large-scale efforts to provide literacy have not been tied to the level of wealth, industrialization, urbanization or democratization of a society, nor to a particular type of political regime. Instead, they have been *related to efforts of centralizing authorities to establish a moral or political consensus*, and over the past 200 years, also *nation building*,
- o They have been part of larger *transformations in societies*. These transformations have attempted to integrate individuals into more comprehensive political or religious communities.
- o They have involved the mobilization of large numbers of learners and teachers by centralizing authorities that have used elements of *both compulsion and social pressure* to propagate a particular doctrine.
- o Campaigns, since the Protestant Reformations of the C16th in Western Europe, have used a variety of media and specially developed materials commonly involving a *special cosmology of symbols, martyrs, and heroes*.
- o They have often been *initiated and sustained by charismatic leaders* and usually depend on a special “strike force” of teachers to disseminate a particular faith or worldview.
- o A belief in the efficacy of literacy and the printed word has been an *article of faith*. Then as now, reformers and idealists, shakers and movers of societies and historical periods have viewed literacy as a means to other ends – whether a more moral society or a more stable political order. No less today than 400 years, individuals have used literacy to attain their own goals.
- o In the twentieth century, particularly during the period from the 1960s, pronouncements about literacy deem it a process of *consciousness-raising and human liberation*. Just as frequently, literacy is affirmed in relation to other goals (even though these may be national development and social order goals defined by elites), not as an end in itself (Graff *ibid*).

162. What distinguishes twentieth century literacy campaigns from earlier educational movements (such as those of Germany, Sweden and Scotland which spanned over 200 years), is the telescoped period of time in which the mobilization occurred, stemming from the fact that political power can be more effectively centralized than in earlier periods.

163. What we learn from these, is that piecemeal literacy without any concrete mission or vision may not be enough to raise a society out of its post war or cataclysmic moment. Rather, wider goals such as nation-building, societal reconstruction or transformation, raising moral or political consensus are essential mobilizing tools in successful literacy campaigns.

164. If the literacy campaigns are split into the earlier campaigns (19th century and back) and then compared with the later campaigns, interesting distinctions also emerge.

9.1 **Earlier Campaigns (19th century and back)**

165. These campaigns were preceded by *more gradual changes* such as the spread of religious doctrine, growth of market economies, rise of bureaucratic and legal organizations, and emergence of national political communities (e.g. Sweden after a series of great wars; and in the US in which competition for souls among various religious denominations is accompanied by a belief in a republican government with its need for an educated citizenry).

166. There was a profound *cataclysmic triggering event or rationale* e.g. a religious reformation (i.e. joined to the grand design of a spiritual renewal of state, society and the individual) or political revolution, the gaining of political independence (anti-Catholicism spurred the movement to educate the populations on principles of Protestantism; while military defeat contributed to renewed emphasis on literacy in Prussia in 1807, France in 1871, and Russia in 1905; the abolition of the serfdom in Russia in 1861 unleashed enormous energies both at the local and at state levels).
167. Linkages that were made by elites of both progressive and conservative leanings between *literacy and the process of modernization* in strengthening the state also gave force to literacy campaigns (sometimes the process of becoming literate is seen in relation to nation building, evangelical Protestantism and technological innovation). Wealth and resource levels have not been a critical factor in shaping the scope and intensity of a war on ignorance. Rather, it is the *political will of national leaders to effect dramatic changes in personal belief: group behaviors and major institutions emerge as the key factors*.
168. In the German case, Luther's dilemma was whether the literacy effort should focus on the young or the old. This dilemma persists up to today. Literacy is seen as a *badge, a sign of initiation and endorsement* into a select group and or larger community. *State direction was the staple*.
169. In Sweden, the unique feature was that *literacy was based on reading but seldom on writing* with a special emphasis on the educational role of the mother in the home. This explains the reason for women's high literacy rate being at par with men.
170. In the US, there was no central government orchestrated policy that brought power and resources of the nation-state, but the impetus was generated by the *competition of the religious denominations*, the proliferation of religious and secular presses, and the exhortation of leading secular and clerical authorities as well as local civic activities. Most activities were organized and directed by the individual states rather than the federal government.
171. Certification ensured status and recognition. For instance in Russia, new recruits who could produce a primary school certificate or demonstrate reading ability had their terms of enlistment reduced. Social compulsion and positive inducements were common in Sweden where once a year every household was gathered to take part in an examination supervised by the local clergy in reading and knowledge of the bible. The adults who failed the examination could be excluded from communion and *denied permission to marry*. In Scotland, and Germany too, the Church had the right to *exclude the grossly ignorant from communion*. Other social pressures included efforts to *shame the illiterates*.
172. Carefully prepared materials were developed to convey prescribed content. Attempts were also made to simplify texts and use mnemonic and heuristic devices. *Pedagogy was by basic drill and repetition with a goal of uncritical internalization of revealed truth or doctrine or unquestioning patriotism*. The experience was that of "training to be trained", socialization in discipline, orderliness and obedience (Graff *ibid*: 274-285).

9.2 *Later Campaigns (in the C20th)*

173. There is common reference to the *creation of the "New Socialist Man"* in a society organized according to the principles of cooperation, egalitarianism, altruism, sacrifice and struggle (the USSR, Nicaragua, Cuba, China, Vietnam, Ethiopia). Despite initial large-scale efforts of both the young and adults, *a narrowing eventually occurs with greater emphasis*

placed on the formal education of the young. Literacy and basic education over time become conflated or confused with state-organized and regulated systems of schooling (274-275).

174. The case of Tanzania reflects a different method and conceptualization of literacy in that literacy *is linked directly with individual consciousness raising and social change* (i.e. the change they want and how to bring it about). In Brazil, “*conscientization*” was overtly the goal of literacy.
175. Overall, the spirit is captured in the Declaration of Persepolis, which states that the goal of literacy is not just the process of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also a contribution to the liberation of man and his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions and aims of society in which man lives. It also stimulates his initiative and participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development (in Graff *ibid* 275-280). These words formed the basis for a number of literacy campaigns (Cuba, Tanzania, Nicaragua, and Guinea Bissau). However, the translation of these goals into outcomes remains very much open ended, and depends on the mechanisms, methods, materials and teachers that are employed in large-scale literacy efforts.
176. National and political will of the power elites and individual charisma of political or revolutionary leaders feature prominently. The symbols attached to these leaders are those of salvation, redemption and recreation of society that had suffered under colonialism.
177. The issue of language of instruction still haunts literacy providers as captured by Gillette who notes the opposition within participating countries in the EWLP to the use of international funds to privilege dominant languages over minority languages in national settings. This raised sensitive cultural and political questions. Only in Tanzania where a neutral language – Kiswahili was used, was the language used positively to cohere the diverse identities into a national identity. The question of language of instruction leads to the question of whose language and values form the medium and content of a literacy campaign.
178. The use of selected primers helped to awaken people to examine their past exploitation and to their role as agents of change in a society now reorganized along radically different principles.
179. In terms of methodology, andragogy is recognized as a new approach to instruction. Andragogy [facilitation approach] stressed an inductive approach which starts with adults own ideas and insights; experiential learning which derives from and relates to the prospects of applying new acquired knowledge and skills, and a variety of techniques and a flexible approach in which it is realized that there is “no magic solution to the problem” (Graff *ibid* : 285-287).
180. The approach Africa needs is a broadly based literacy that connects critical thinking with the skills of critical reading and writing in politics, economics and social relations as well as in a larger cultural sphere, a literacy no longer limited to alphabetical abilities and to a historical basis that is static and acculturative. Critical literacy of course recognizes the significance of common knowledge, but it sees it because of criticism, as changing and transforming, not as inflexible and timeless.
181. It does not separate “skills” from “content”, but strives to link them dynamically. The critical literacy we are seeking must be based not only on a radically revised and more demanding curriculum, but also on an epistemology and theoretical critique that grasps the centrality of ambiguity, complexity and contradiction to literacy and to life itself (Graff 1989: 51) (334).

182. The relation between the “word” and the “world” is crucial because reading the world always precedes reading the word and vice versa. Even the spoken word always flows from our reading of the world. However, more than this, reading of the world is also today circumscribed and acted upon by text that has been written about that same world. This means that literacy should also entail the two levels of reading the world - i.e. as we see it, and as is prescribed by texts written elsewhere and which have forced an image of the world upon us. Critical literacy sways uncomfortably between emancipation and deconstruction, as well as affirms potentials that literacy can bring along.
183. According to Shor, the learners’ diverse cultures, speech and thoughts make up the grounds on which a de-socializing curriculum first plants its feet. The emphasis should therefore be on developing interdisciplinary literacy (integrating reading, writing, critical dialogue, and cooperative learning across the curriculum). Major dangers come from overloading concepts (semantic overload) with expectations that they cannot fulfill.
184. Sharing the understanding that today’s crises in education and literacy are one of historical purpose and meaning, Giroux urges for critique to be more specific. Reconstructing literacies should entail commitment to **historical education**; development of new **perspectives** and **critique** that are specific; a **consciousness** of the sum effort and sacrifice which the present has cost the past and which the future is costing the present; remembrance (acknowledging that while the past is not for dwelling upon, it is a reservoir of experience – both of tragedy and hope – from which we draw in order to act); and imagination (which commands that we recognize the present as history and thus consider the structure, movement, and possibilities in the contemporary world that shows us how we might act to prevent the barbaric and develop the humanistic (Giroux and Kaye 1989).
185. As Africa seeks to maneuver her way through the rapidly changing world, the way in which she records and transmits information will have deep effects on her ability to cope and participate in opportunities that globalization brings about, or to mitigate the negative consequences of globalization. Education then is essential to human dignity, not only for the acquisition of the ability to read and write, but also to apply information and have open access to knowledge.
186. In a democratizing and globalizing world, access to knowledge is the basis of a free society. However, it is also a feature of globalization that huge profits today go to those who have ideas, to owners of concepts, and to those with intellectual and creative skills. Education investment with literacy as its nucleus should therefore be seen within a lifelong perspective.

10. AFFIRMING THE AMAZING SPARKS IN ON-GOING AFRICAN LITERACY PROGRAMS

187. Moving away from history and theory, the MDGs, NEPAD, Dakar goals all acknowledge the existence of acute impact of poverty on human development. Most of these frameworks are rather thin on practical ways to confront this poverty. Yet, somewhere in the attempts to confront poverty from the perspective of education, many interesting cases exist which shed important light on the unique intersection between training in livelihood skills and basic education for illiterate and semi-literate youths and adults. Livelihood skills refer to knowledge, skills, and methods used to obtain food, water, clothing, shelter necessary for survival and well-being whether the economy is subsistence, monetized, or a mixture of both.
188. Important questions that have concerned these initiatives include a key one which is: can effective training in livelihood skills be developed as an add-on to large-scale literacy programs; OR do those programs that add literacy education to usually small-scale livelihood skills provide combinations that are more effective? Studies such as those conducted by the German Adult Education Association (IIZ-DVV) seem to conclude that combinations of livelihood skills training and adult literacy education do help improve poor people's livelihood.
189. This conclusion is drawn from what is termed the "empowerment effect" i.e. that learners acquire enhanced confidence and social resources from literacy training which help them take initiatives to improve their livelihoods. Literacy and numeracy skills also create advantage in the market transactions in the informal economy, and are thus critical for successful entrepreneurship. Thirdly, more productive agricultural and livestock practices result from learning new vocational skills at whose base lies literacy (see for instance Society for the Development of Textile Fibers – SODEFITEX, Senegal). These skills in turn also open up pathways to securing credit (Oxenham et al 2002).
190. In terms of methodology, five very useful program categories for disaggregating implementation approaches on the ground, have been identified:
- i. **Literacy as a pre-requisite or in preparation for training in livelihood** or income generating activities. Here, training in livelihood is the longer term aim, but people are encouraged not to start training in livelihood until they have sufficiently mastered reading, writing and calculating to cope with the livelihood's operating and development requirements. There is a planned progression between the two.
 - ii. **Literacy followed by separate livelihood and income generating activities.** Here, learning literacy is regarded as a self-standing and worthwhile aim in itself and is undertaken first. Thereafter training is offered in either livelihoods or some form of income generating activity. There are no systematic connections between the two components.
 - iii. **Livelihood training or income generating activities leading to literacy.** Here, groups start to develop a business, but realize that they need literacy skills in order to record their incomes, calculate more comprehensively, and read their records. The content of literacy grows out of the livelihood activity.
 - iv. **Livelihood and income generating activity is integrated** i.e. training in livelihood and instruction in literacy and numeracy begin simultaneously, often with the content of the literacy derived from or influenced by the livelihood activity.
 - v. **Literacy and livelihood and income generating activities take place but in parallel and unconnected structure.** There is no systematic connection between them.

191. The 17 cases examined in this extensive report (Oxenham et al, 2002) illustrate the varying degrees of application of the above typologies. A few conclusions that could provide a basis for further discussions are outlined below (the list is not exhaustive):

- A key factor appears to be maintaining interest of participants and adapting the programs to the conditions of the participants. *Question: Who, at the national level is responsible for gauging the “conditions of participants”? How can particular program experience feed into national systems?*
- The studies also point to a second conclusion that people who have completed literacy courses seemed to more confident and willing to take initiatives in developing their livelihoods, or in taking an active interest in the operations of their cooperatives.
- Education and training for very poor adults need to offer very clear, concrete and immediate reasons to justify enrolment and ensure perseverance. In some cases, participants resist enrolment in literacy/numeracy that is not connected to their livelihood concerns! *Comment: This context relevance could be emulated upstream at the level of policy, whether national or provincial levels.*
- Programs that start from livelihoods skills stand a stronger chance of success (as they can demonstrate an immediate reason for learning). *Question: How is the question “Literacy for What” answered at the national level in different countries?*
- Deriving literacy/numeracy content from livelihood skills and integrating it upfront with the livelihood training seems more promising than either the parallel tract approach or using the standard literacy materials to prepare people to train for livelihood.
- Programs that bring together people with a common sense of purpose have better perseverance and completion rates.
- Programs whose objectives and methods are negotiated and well adapted to the needs of the learners seem to be more effective than “cut-and-paste” models that are without context relevance.
- Experience also shows that arranging for both livelihood specialists to work together with literacy instructors is more prudent than relying on literacy instructors to undertake livelihood training.

Some specific illustrative questions from two innovative literacy delivery models

1. Senegal: Women’s Literacy Project (PAPF)- Outsourcing and Partnership Approach:

192. Key features worth discussing in a strategic manner with policy makers at continental level:

- a. Delineation of responsibility between government and NGO provider. Government maintained responsibilities for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, while private sector was given the responsibility for implementation including the setting up of the literacy courses and management of funds
- b. Wide reach – 200,000 beneficiaries over a five-year period (about 40,000 per year). How is PAPF acknowledged nationally and regionally across the continent?
- c. A large percentage of women participants
- d. Over 300 sub-projects were financed with flexibility being exercised in terms of language of instruction and learning, scheduling based on decisions made by the learners themselves
- e. Secondary outreach into existing organizations (service providers, management agencies), partnership with who anchored this initiative and ensured sustainability and contextual embeddedness.

- f. Existence of providers' associations to ensure transparency and build trust, and outsourcing strategies to improve efficiency.
- g. A major criticism has been the absence of **proper monitoring and evaluation system**; and weak feedback loop of information to program managers and policy makers (i.e. upward and lateral transmission of insights, issues, and experiences) (Nordtveit, 2003).

2. Uganda - Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) – FAL.

193. Takes its acronym FAL from the national "Functional Adult Literacy Program" but turns the "L" in the national program from standing for "Literacy" to "Learning". What is the conceptual and operational difference between "Literacy" and "Learning" when it comes to running an integrated program targeting the poor illiterate communities?
- a. The systematic adaptation of national literacy texts to concrete realities of buying and selling as a business by ADRA can be discussed both in terms of adequacy of exiting national level standard texts, as well as the possibility of wider publicity to the adaptation method being used by this particular provider. What are its possibilities when a wider and more diverse group e.g. at national and regional levels is being contemplated?
 - b. The stages used by ADRA are also interesting. Spanning between nine to 12 months, totaling between 250-300 hours, ADRA's first step is the adaptation of texts to concrete situations; followed by instructing learners on how to assess the feasibility of a pilot project with a modest income generating activity; followed lastly, by learners being asked to form solidarity groups based on trust in order to open a bank account into which they pool their saving. Restoration of trust is central to the spirit of rebirth at the heart of the African Renaissance! *How about an overt reference to the African Renaissance?*
 - c. High retention rates in ADRA's FAL can be discussed laterally (i.e. alongside other national or project initiatives) in order to determine what method best ensures retention if a nation wishes to implement long-term literacy campaigns or programs.
 - d. The enormous success of organizational and institutional development competence at grassroots level can also be discussed from the point of view of competency and capacity building and support of local administration authorities working with communities in other areas of development. To what extent can NGO competencies be more comprehensively mined in service of other branches of the national system?
 - e. Is it better to have a literacy first, literacy alongside, literacy integrated with livelihood or a go- it-alone livelihood, and a go-it-alone literacy program?
195. Where does a hugely successful project like Senegal's PAPF and Uganda's ADRA sit in respect to global frameworks like the Millennium Development Goals or the Dakar EFA Goals? How are these organizations and initiatives valorized and acknowledged within these international commitments? Alternatively, are they condemned fragments that cannot be added together and whose efforts are similarly condemned to remain voluntary and incidental flashes of goodness?
196. Are they mentioned in the foreground or are they part of obscure appendices embedded in the amorphous group of stakeholders known as civil society providers, always third in ranking to government and private sector, or are they recognized distinctly as innovative and highly successful providers key to the realization of the MDG and Dakar Goals? Some scholars have stated that discourse is about **who** can speak, **when**, and with **what** authority. The forced inconspicuousness of these courageous and innovative projects parallels

uncomfortably the strategic obscurity that has bedeviled the literacy and adult education domains.

197. Finally, what is the nature of feedback loops that exist at regional and continental levels that can enable Africans to hold mirrors to themselves and take pride in each other? How can Africa ignore the significance of these grounded experiences with confronting poverty, which lies so centrally at the heart of the MDGs, Dakar goals, as well as the requirements of the knowledge society?

11. SOME CONCLUSIONS

198. This paper has emphasized a number of issues. Drawing from Ulich, it stressed that we should not ignore history; rather, we should be prepared to draw from its vaults when we hit cross-roads. When we meet to discuss any activity that has a bearing on Africa, it is important to bring out the vision for the preferred future we want for the continent and let that guide our actions. In spite of its difficulties, Africa has not stood still. Insights from African philosophy have illuminated pathways worldwide in areas such as restorative justice and promotion of healing (e.g. in South Africa).
199. In literacy, it is easy to be overwhelmed by statistics on the ever burgeoning number of illiterates. While this is important to take into account, let it not blind us to sterling work that goes on all around us and that cry out for acknowledgement. Even the globalization cloud may have a silver lining in that it is re-awakening the spirit of solidarity worldwide, creating a groundswell of citizenship action at global proportions, willing to brave confrontations in the name of humanity, dignity and justice. Lessons from literacy campaigns that have taken place in the past centuries can still be drawn to help us put present impasse into a perspective. If Sweden's success in literacy was based on reading, not writing or arithmetic, and we are trying to achieve all the three "R"s at the same time, what does this say to us in terms of learning difficulties and drop out rates?
200. In this concluding section, I draw from David Korten who posited the following question: Suppose you had won the revolution you are talking and dreaming about, suppose your side had won, and you had the kind of society you wanted, *how would you live, personally, in that society?* (Korten *ibid*: 65-66)
201. To answer this question, we can minimally refuse to invite the Midas curse upon our children and ourselves for generations to come by making choices for the preferred future we want for the next generation. However, the test of wisdom will be seen in the manner in which we carefully but creatively articulate ourselves into a future, which is rapidly globalizing.
202. Borrowing insights from the Nordic model, it is possible for Africa to affirm that the educational requirements of the future are international understanding, linguistic skills, ability to interpret symbols, a spirit of cooperation and participation, flexibility, a holistic approach, the ability to use both sides of the brain, openness, and the motivation to seek constant development and learning.
203. These qualities are not technical. They are not even academic. They are human, rooted in upbringing, family ties, security, self-esteem, and inner strength... Tomorrow's adult

learning must unite intellect and feelings, progress and caring, vision and substance, the ring and the arrow, fusing them to form a creative spiral... (Nordic Council of Ministers, 1995: 8)

204. The arguments of the Nordic Council of Ministers are succinct. The first of these relate to the balance between *universal access to learning and specialized competences*. At a time when all countries are facing the challenges of global competition, of balancing economic and social development, of protecting human rights and the environment, it is clear that growth cannot be defined only in terms of the production of more and more goods. Growth has to be underpinned by ideas that combine an agenda for an expanded provision and development of levels of competence for the entire population, and which target the deepening of knowledge, skills needed to ensure cutting edge competence and renewal.
205. The second relates to the problem of *uncertainty in, and inadequacy of the traditional skills categories*, which together, make the case for lifelong learning. Here, the increasing need for an active, and fully informed citizenry necessary for democratic participation, coupled with the fluid nature of an internationalized labor market that requires flexible skills and versatile competences, make an urgent and compelling case for lifelong learning.
206. For its part, lifelong learning must:
- o Unify the broader perspective and deeper insight, capacity for action, specialist knowledge and wisdom. This broadens the arena and locus of learning beyond the school to the community level.
 - o Help combat unemployment partly by improving competitiveness, and partly by re-appropriating the individual citizen's life span allowing for periods of paid work, education/training, and other activities.
 - o Lead to development of new methods and new tools to be applied in the field of adult education. These may include the acquisition of new skills, and the retooling of old roles. Bridges must be built between learning in the classroom and learning in unconventional places.
 - o Play a key role in the democratization of knowledge and combating the risk of technocratic dehumanization, the creation of dual societies, and the further deepening of the divide between those who "know and those who don't".
207. All these points resonate for Africa. More specifically, the validation of indigenous knowledge systems as a legitimate knowledge base upon which literacy builds and contributes to Africa as a knowledge society, must become a policy issue. Literacy efforts need to come clean on this matter.
208. If African countries have undertaken massive literacy campaigns before, is it not possible to propose massive post-literacy campaigns with strict conditions e.g. linking social welfare provisions to literacy achievement over a period ?
209. This paper also calls for a joyful attitude in promoting literacy, and urges a move away from the depressing, stigmatising approaches to literacy of the past several decades.
210. Literacy efforts must be thought of as part of a long-term strategy. Short-term evaluation and scary statistics should not put practitioners and policy makers off from this track that requires patience and commitment.
211. We also have to heed Frederick Douglas's call when he said: "Power concedes nothing without demand." The advocacy for literacy should devise flexible and easily adaptable tactics depending on the nature of the challenge. Defensive driving is often known to be an asset for those who venture out on busy roads!

212. We have to confront the fragmentation of practitioners across the formal / non-formal divide from an ethical, efficiency, public accountability, and human development standpoint.
213. Strategic thinking may involve building new alliances at national and provincial levels, e.g. dialoguing with influential personalities in other sectors e.g. the police, the military etc., who are humanistic in their inclinations, to bring them into direct advocacy for literacy.
214. Finally, Africa has been beset by generations of negative prefixes such as “un”-developed, “non”-literate, “il”-literate, “under”-developed. In world politics, we have seen the tensions around the use of the word “Third” as in “Third World” brought out by Sauvy and used by developing countries during the Cold War, versus “Third” as in “hierarchy” which is insisted upon by the western countries when they will not accept the South as an authentic voice. Once the ranking paradigm is established, the entire continents of Africa, Asia and South America become second, third, and fourth “bests”. This political economy of statistics, replacing but at the same time perpetuating the degrading base laid by colonial anthropology, still leaves much to be deconstructed.
215. We need to pay attention to conceptual distortions from negative descriptors that have been associated with Africa; as well as to the political economy of such descriptors and transvaluations, the scientific and other alibis associated with them, seeking at all times, the tools for either rendering them open to critique, exposing the evil or inadequacy inherent in them, and proposing new concepts to populate the spaces vacated by the obsolete and debunked concepts (Judge 1989).
216. In order to avert stagnation in our field, we should task our strategic sessions with finding new growth points, i.e. discourse-guided practices, sharp lessons, insights, wisdoms or clues which, when taken into account have the potential of triggering positive multipliers in the implementation cycle of literacy.

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