



Republic of Namibia

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture

National Policy on Adult Learning

**“ Adult Learning -
a Joy, a Tool, a Right and
a Shared Responsibility”**

July 2003

Preface

One of the great challenges for 21st Century Independent Namibia is the creation of “a learning nation” to use that important phrase in the title of the Report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training of 1999.¹

The Presidential Commission reinforced our 1993 Development Brief for Education Culture and Training, **Towards Education for All*** which stresses the importance of lifelong learning (of which adult learning is a part.) We need lifelong learning, it argued, for fulfilling our new responsibilities at work, for teacher upgrading, for coping with changes in society and technology, and for reacting effectively to HIV and AIDS. **Towards Education for All** also put down this challenge: “Our educators must design and refine strategies that make that (learning throughout our lives) both possible and satisfying.” It is in response to that challenge that this Policy on Adult Learning has been developed.

Indeed, all of us, and especially those of us who are adults, need to be active learners if we are to achieve our vision of liberation from poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease.

Adult learning happens in so many ways and places that one cannot describe it all in one breath. Adult learning is not just formal afternoon or evening sessions for literacy, numeracy or secondary school qualifications, important as these are. It is going on at work as we strive to keep up with the markets and technology. It happens when we turn on the radio, television or computer. We learn from what we read, especially if the reading matter is well chosen. We learn from the

* Ministry Education and Culture Namibia, **Towards Education for All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training**, Gamsberg Macmillan, 1993, pp 11-15

cultural groups, churches and institutions that we belong to, often acquiring essential life skills on the way. Social changes, such as greater equality for women, or respect for the rights of children, can change our whole outlook on life. Almost belong to, often acquiring essential life skills on the way. Social changes, such as greater equality for women, respect of children, can change our whole out look on life. Almost every government Ministry, Office or Agency is keen to impart new knowledge to us. And as citizens we learn much as we take part in the structures, processes and elections that make up our democracy. Clearly, we have much deep learning to do in the process of overcoming HIV and AIDS.

Most important, however, is that we should be aware and recognise that we are part of these processes of adult learning, and that they provide us with the invaluable opportunities to improve our lives at individual, family, community and national levels.

With so many actors in adult learning, **partnerships** are the key to finding synergies, improving quality and spreading information. This Policy therefore commits us to creating National Council on Adult Learning, to bring about the necessary coordination and relationships.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to the Review Team for the Renewal of Adult Learning, which drafted this policy, and for the researchers and group members who assisted them. So clear was the document that it was strongly supported and accepted by Cabinet at its 19th meeting, on 22 July 2003.

I now call for the urgent and committed collaboration of all concerned in its implementation.



John Mutorwa
MINISTER

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Section 1: Introduction

Overview

1. This document presents the *National Policy on Adult Learning* of the Government of the Republic of Namibia. It gives background information on adult learning within the perspective of lifelong learning, and provides the rationale for the introduction of a policy on adult learning. It states the goals of the Policy, and identifies the strategic areas of programme development that the Government will promote in order to meet these goals. It considers the issue of resources and indicates the strategies the Government will promote to ensure adequate resources. It expresses Government's intention to implement and monitor the Policy through the establishment of the National Council on Adult Learning.
2. The public perception of adults as learners usually sees adult learning as simply the provision of basic literacy skills. However, the Report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training makes clear that adults engage in a much wider range of learning activities. These include not only basic education but also activities such as continued education for qualifications by distance study, vocational training, extension programmes for rural development, and listening to the radio. Adult learning takes place in the home, in the community, and in the work-place, as well as in education and training institutions. There is in fact a wide diversity of learning opportunities available to adults, provided by different ministries of the Government, by the parastatals, by the private sector,

and by non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and the churches. For example, the Ministry of Health and Social Services has an extensive programme of public education on HIV/AIDS, the Namdeb Diamond Corporation organises training and development activities for its employees, whilst the Rossing Foundation provides training and materials on community-based natural resource management. Thus the provision of opportunities for adult learning is a multi-sectoral responsibility in which many organisations are involved.

The concept of adult learning

3. For the purpose of this Policy, adult learning is defined as:

The entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities undertaken by adults and out-of-school youth, which result in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to enhance the quality of life.

The Policy therefore covers the full extent of adult learning activities and of providers of opportunities for adult learning.

4. It is useful to consider the variety of adult learning activities in terms of three dimensions:
 - *Formal adult learning* refers to learning that is directed towards formal accreditation and certification. It therefore includes learning activities as diverse as part-time study for a university degree, enrolment for a diploma at a vocational training centre, or taking evening classes at a private college to gain a computing certificate.

- *Non-formal adult learning* means learning that takes place outside the formal system but which nevertheless is organised to achieve particular learning outcomes. It may lead to certification, although the certificates awarded are not always meant for accreditation purposes. Non-formal adult learning includes activities such as farmer training days, skills training for self-employment, refresher courses for teachers, and leadership workshops for community development committees.
 - *Informal adult learning* signifies the learning that results from daily life activities. Informal learning is not structured, except sometimes by the individual learner. It encompasses the processes by which adults acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes from their own experiences and activities, for example, through listening to a radio programme, reading a book, operating a new piece of equipment in the work-place, or attending a community meeting on land reform or water point management.
5. Adult learning is part of the wider concept of lifelong learning, which refers to all learning activities undertaken throughout life, in many different venues. The concept covers the continuum of early childhood development, primary and secondary school, higher education, vocational training, and adult learning. It provides the basis for comprehensive policies for the development of education and training systems. Adult learning is an indispensable component of strategies for lifelong learning.
 6. There are a wide variety of reasons why adults engage in learning activities. Thus there are many different kinds of adult learner. Some adult learners are seeking qualifications, often in order to enhance their job prospects; some are responding to the challenges facing their community,

for example, by organising conservation projects; some are learning to cope with the changes in their life, such as those created by HIV/AIDS; yet others are experiencing the joy of learning in their leisure time, for instance, developing their musical talent in the church choir. This Policy addresses the learning needs of all persons over the age of 16, including out-of-school youth.

Scope of the National Policy on Adult Learning

7. The *National Policy on Adult Learning* provides an overall policy framework for adult learning. The Policy addresses the issues of programme development, resources, co-ordination, policy implementation, and monitoring. It identifies the role of Government within this framework. It recognises the important contribution of the private sector and civil society in the promotion of adult learning, and indicates that the Government wishes to form partnerships with both of these sectors.

Section 2: Rationale for the Policy

Introduction

8. The policy document *'Toward Education for All'* in 1993 elaborated the rationale for lifelong learning, which by definition includes adult learning. The arguments for lifelong learning in this policy document included the provision of opportunities for those who had missed out in the pre-independence education system; the need to upgrade skills in the existing as well as the future labour force; the changing economy makes lifelong a requirement as old jobs disappear and new ones appear; and finally the fact that learning can and should be an intrinsically satisfying activity. The Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999) also placed strong emphasis on the role of adult learning (see paragraph 10 below), and the recent statement of national development priorities in the *Second National Development Plan (NDP2), 2001/2 – 2005/6* (see paragraph 12) contribute to the Government's goals of national development.

National Conference on Adult Education, 1998

9. In 1997 UNESCO held the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V). This landmark conference generated international commitment to the right to education throughout life and to the creation of a learning society. The conference promoted a broad conceptualisation of adult learning, within the perspective of lifelong learn-

ing. It highlighted the fact that adult learning had experienced huge growth in scope and scale across the world because social and economic changes demand that individuals renew their knowledge, skills and values throughout their lives. Above all, it demonstrated that adult learning is not solely a concern of the education sector, but it is an important component of other social and economic sectors, such as health, agriculture, industry, and environmental management. The implications of CONFINTEA V for Namibia were considered in a national conference on adult education held in 1998 with the theme *Adult Learning: The Future for Namibia*. The major outcome of the Conference was the *National Plan of Action for Adult Learning*, which included in its recommendations the proposal for a national policy on adult learning.

Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training, 1999

10. The Report of the Presidential Commission stated that “Namibia should aspire to being ‘A Learning Nation’ in which all citizens have supported opportunities for learning throughout life”. This aspiration clearly encompassed the idea that there should be opportunities for adult learning for all. The Report proposed increased recognition of the scope of adult learning, improved co-ordination, strategies for strengthening adult education organisations, a focus on learning and work, and better utilisation of communications technology. The Commission made a number of recommendations for the development of adult learning in the context of the learning nation, including the recommendation to establish a Council on Adult Learning.

Recent international commitments to adult learning

11. Namibia is a signatory to a number of recent international initiatives that promote adult learning. The World Education Forum in 2000 proclaimed the *Dakar Framework for Action* which set Education for All Goals for the period to 2015. A number of the goals express commitment to adult learning, particularly the following:

EFA Goal III: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

EFA Goal IV: Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

The goals of Education for All have been given priority by the African Union within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Furthermore, the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000 set specific goals for development and poverty reduction by 2015. One of these goals has direct implications for adult learning in that it refers to eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education. But other goals indirectly imply a need for adult learning, such as the health goals, which include halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and other major diseases. The United Nations General Assembly in 2001 adopted a resolution on the U.N. Literacy Decade Towards Education for All (2003-2012) which seeks to promote literacy amongst adults as well as children. There are therefore a number of recent international commitments to adult learning that Namibia has affirmed.

Adult learning and national development priorities, 2002

12. The governments and non-governmental organisations which participated in CONFINTEA V declared that adult learning is a vital element of strategies to achieve sustainable and equitable development. In the *Second National Development Plan (NDP2), 2001/2 – 2005/6* the Government has stated clearly its priorities in the National Development Objectives and National Development Strategies for NDP2. The relevant sections of the Plan show that the education and training of adults and out-of-school youth is an essential component of the approaches required to achieve the Objectives and Strategies. Adult learning therefore has an important role to play in meeting the national development priorities. These priorities can be grouped as follows:

- a) *Economic priorities:* employment creation, economic empowerment, economic growth, and reduced income inequality. Adult learning can support economic policies through programmes such as vocational training for adults and out-of-school youth, work-related training for those in formal employment, skills development for small and medium enterprises, and agricultural extension to raise the productivity of the subsistence sector.
- b) *Social priorities:* poverty reduction, gender equality, rehabilitation, and combating the further spread of HIV/AIDS. Adult learning can promote these social priorities through activities such as literacy and numeracy education, gender awareness training, programmes for adults living with disabilities, and health education on HIV/AIDS.

- c) *Environmental priorities:* environmental management and ecological sustainability. Adult learning can contribute to meeting environmental priorities, for example through awareness raising programmes on conservation issues, and skills development for community-based natural resources management.
- d) *Political priorities:* reduction of regional development inequalities, decentralisation, promotion of participatory development and equity, and promotion of good governance. The provision of adult learning opportunities in previously disadvantaged areas, voter education, community development activities using participatory development methods, and training programmes to strengthen civil society, are examples of how political priorities can be met through adult learning.
- e) *Human Resource Development Priorities:* Central to the achievement of the Government's development plans is the rapid development of the capacities of all citizens through education, training, arts, culture and sport. Adult Learning is an integral part of such personal, economic and social development. Not only does adult learning directly change knowledge, skills, attitude and values, but it also bolsters other parts of the education system, for instance by promoting lifelong learning among teachers and enabling parents to better support the learning of their children.

Therefore the *National Policy on Adult Learning* will assist in building the capacity of adult learning to promote the Government's National Development Objectives and Strategies.

The purposes of the National Policy on Adult Learning

13. The aim of the *National Policy on Adult Learning* is to strengthen and promote the role of adult learning in individual, community, regional and national development.
14. In order to achieve this aim, the Policy has the following specific purposes:
 - a) To promote a broad concept of adult learning as an area of activity that is much wider than literacy and numeracy education for adults.
 - b) To encourage awareness of adult learning as a multi-sectoral activity.
 - c) To promote recognition of the value of adult learning for individuals, the economy and society.
 - d) To give expression to the Constitutional right of all adults to have learning opportunities, and to the Government's obligation to make this right effective.
 - e) To facilitate effective partnerships for adult learning at the following levels:
 - among Government ministries involved in adult learning;
 - among the Government and the parastatal sector and the private sector;
 - among the Government and non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and churches; and
 - Among NGOs and private sector.
 - f) To maximise the utilisation of the resources available for adult learning.

- g) To create appropriate structures that ensure synergies and avail information to stakeholders to benefit the target groups.
- h) To enable the establishment of the National Council on Adult Learning as a statutory body responsible for the promotion, co-ordination, policy implementation and monitoring of adult learning.

Section 3: Adult Learning-The Current Situation

Overview of the current situation of adult learning

15. The provision of adult learning opportunities is made by a wide variety of organisations, which can be grouped as follows: Government departments and publicly-funded educational institutions; parastatal corporations; private companies; private educational and training institutions; and non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and churches.
16. The Government is the major provider of opportunities for adult learning. According to the *Second National Development Plan (NDP2) 2001/2 – 2005/6*, 32 directorates in 18 Ministries, offices and agencies provide programmes which involve adult learning. A significant part of Government's provision is the extensive in-service training for staff guided by the Public Service Training Policy. Furthermore, important programmes are provided by publicly-funded educational institutions, namely the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL), the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), the Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Namibia (UNAM).
17. Parastatal corporations and private sector companies, such as the banks and the mining companies, provide extensive education and training for their own employees, primarily to enhance their work performance. They also provide information and education for customers on their services and products.

18. A growing sector of provision is that of private educational and training institutions which operate on a commercial basis. Some of these institutions are Namibian, whilst some of them are foreign- based organisations. They provide a market response to demands for work-related adult learning by the public. They offer distance learning and face-to-face courses in areas such as computing, business studies and management, some of which are tailor-made for particular clients.
19. Non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations include a major element of adult learning in their social and economic development programmes. In 2002, there were approximately 160 non-governmental organisations and 60 community-based organisations. Many of these organisations provide adult learning activities, covering topics such as basic literacy, life skills, HIV/AIDS, business and vocational skills, environmental management, parental awareness, human rights, alcohol abuse, and civic education. Many churches provide non formal adult learning on topics such as family relationships. Trade Unions provide workers education. Civil society is therefore very actively engaged in adult learning.
20. The full scope and extent of adult learning programmes is documented in the *Directory of Adult Learning Providers* to be published in 2003 by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. The Directory reveals a wide diversity of provision and shows that adult learning activities are taking place on a relatively large scale in the country.
21. There is therefore a wide range of learning opportunities on offer for adults, and there is increasing demand from adults as they respond to the changes taking place in society. Adult learning has become an integral part of

most development programmes. Thus significant progress has been made since Independence in 1990 in the provision and organisation of adult learning.

22. However, there are a number of weaknesses in the current situation. The diverse organisations and personnel engaged in adult learning usually identify their programmes with their own sector, say health or agriculture, and seldom see the common denominator in their work that derives from the shared goal of helping adults to acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes. Hence there is a low level of awareness of the common field of adult learning and of its role in development. Because of this lack of recognition, there is no common vision for adult learning, and there is no overall policy to guide organisational and programme development. Although there are co-ordinating structures for some areas of adult learning, such as small and medium enterprise development or community-based natural resource management, they do not exist in other areas, such as programmes for adults living with disabilities, thus missing opportunities for synergies. Whilst some areas are relatively well provided for, such as adult basic and literacy education, others are underdeveloped, such as consumer education and civic education. The uneven availability of learning opportunities also has a geographical dimension, with rural areas at a disadvantage. Furthermore, although there is extensive activity taking place, there are no measures in place to assure quality and effectiveness, and more public information is needed about opportunities available. The lack of systematic data means that it is not clear if the best use of existing resources is being made, and if there is an adequate level of public and private investment in adult learning. This Policy is the means by which the Government will address these problems.

Section 4: The Goals of Adult Learning

Adult learning for all

23. The aim of the Policy to strengthen and promote the role of adult learning in individual, community and national development means that opportunities for adult learning must be available for all. The Government has been committed since Independence in 1990 to providing educational opportunities for all Namibians. Article 20 (1) of the Constitution states: “All persons shall have the right to education.” The policy implications of this Article were enunciated in 1993 in *Toward Education for All*, and they were reiterated in 1999 in the Report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training. The provision of opportunities for adult learning for all will be supportive of the vision of the *Second National Development Plan* (see paragraph 12), namely: “Sustainable and equitable improvement in the quality of life of all the people in Namibia”.

The goals of adult learning

24. The outcomes of learning by adults have significant benefits both for individuals and society as a whole. In particular, adult learning can contribute to the national development priorities elaborated in Paragraph 20. Thus with the introduction of this Policy, the Government seeks to promote the following goals of adult learning:
- a) Economic growth and development
 - b) Equitable social development and poverty reduction

- c) Sustainable environmental development
- d) Participatory democratic development
- e) Personal development and empowerment

These goals provide the rationale for the development of a comprehensive range of learning opportunities that are accessible to all adults.

Equitable access to adult learning

25. The aim of adult learning for all embodies the equity objective of ensuring that participation is evenly distributed in society. From an international perspective, participation rates in adult learning usually reflect inequalities in the wider society. For example, adults with higher levels of education participate more than those with lower levels of education, those in employment participate more than the unemployed, whilst urban dwellers participate more than rural dwellers. Hence there tend to be patterns of exclusion with regard to disadvantaged social groups, such as the poor, ethnic minorities, and adults living with disabilities. Like other countries, Namibia faces the challenge of ensuring equitable access to adult learning opportunities.
26. In order to meet the objective of equity, the Government will encourage strategies and programme initiatives that focus on the following social groups:
 - Out-of-school youth
 - The unemployed and low-paid workers
 - Marginalised groups, including farmworkers, remote rural dwellers (including San and Ovahimba), dwellers in informal settlements, refugee and resettlement camps, and prison inmates

- Historically disadvantaged communities
- Rural communities
- Adults living with disabilities
- People infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- Older persons (senior citizens)

The National Council on Adult Learning will establish targets, indicators, and monitoring procedures with respect to equitable access.

Section 5: Programme Development

The need for programme development

27. It is necessary to ensure that the diverse learning needs of adults are being met, particularly as these alter in response to the changing demands of social and economic life. To meet the goals of the Policy, there is a need to strengthen, expand, and diversify the opportunities for adult learning. The Government will place special emphasis on promoting the strategic areas of programme development considered below.

HIV/AIDS and adult learning

28. The Government has identified the HIV/AIDS crisis as the foremost challenge facing post-independence Namibian development, and is determined to harness multi-sectoral resources to combat and contain the pandemic. Non-formal and informal adult learning provides an important resource for HIV/AIDS strategies because it can develop the awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours necessary for preventing the disease and for coping with its personal and social effects. Adult-centred learning environments provide opportunities for dialogue and interaction that can address the complex psycho-social issues of behavioural change. Under the leadership of the National AIDS Committee and the National AIDS Multi-Sectoral Co-ordinating Committee, the public sector, parastatals, the private sector, non-governmental and community-based organisations, and the churches, are already engaged in a wide variety of programmes and projects which include adult learning. Information, education and

communication strategies have generated a high level of public awareness, though this has not yet led to sufficient behavioural change. Significant capacity building has been undertaken to train HIV/AIDS educators, counsellors and home-based care providers. However, there is an urgent need to intensify and expand adult learning interventions in order to minimise the spread of HIV/AIDS and support those infected and affected. To this end, the Government expects that all adult learning programmes will include attention to HIV/AIDS prevention and management.

Adult literacy and basic education

29. The National Literacy Programme, which began in 1992, contributed, together with improved school attendance, to increasing the adult literacy rate to 80% by 2000. Universal adult literacy remains a high priority as the foundation of the learning nation. The Government is committed to implementing the United Nations Literacy Decade, and to meeting the Education for All Goal of 'achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women.' To meet the adult literacy rate target of 90% by 2015 will require strengthening the curriculum and organisation of the National Literacy Programme, and the development of regional enrolment targets based on 2001 census data. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture will lead a National Coalition for Literacy to mobilise support and coordinate the efforts of all interested parties. The curriculum will be decentralised, so that although the skills and competencies remain the same, the topic and content of materials will be localised. The initial target will be 20% developed locally, 20% regionally and 60% nationally, with more of the materials in the local languages. A cadre will be developed within the Directorate of Adult Ba-

sic Education at district level to provide training for literacy promoters within the National Literacy Programme and other organisations. Most literacy promoters will be on short contracts but where possible some will be offered longer term contracts or permanent posts if they have the necessary qualifications. The Government will also seek partnerships with parastatal corporations and private companies to promote adult literacy. It will encourage non-governmental organisations to provide adult literacy programmes, especially for disadvantaged social groups. It will also encourage Community Development Committees and Councillors to take local responsibility for literacy.

30. The envisaged expansion of the Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) programme is an important response to learner demand for higher levels of basic education beyond literacy. The Government will develop suitable materials within the AUPE programme, including open and distance learning materials and make them available to other adult education providers.

Work-related adult learning

31. The Government's economic strategy is to increase employment opportunities through human resource development and sustained economic growth, and to promote the development of self-employment and the informal sector. Work-related adult learning can support this strategy in a number of ways. These include vocational training for unemployed adults and out-of-school youth, work-related training for adults in formal sector employment, and skills development for small and medium enterprises, especially in the informal sector.

32. Namibia's vocational education and training (VET) system is currently undergoing a major transformation, with organisational, funding and curriculum reform. The Namibia Qualification Authority (NQA) has been established to assure quality, for example, through the accreditation of training institutions. The NQA has responsibility for the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is designed to ensure that qualifications are recognised by learners, employers, and education and training institutions. The Namibia Training Authority is currently being set up to promote and fund vocational education and training, which will include general education components, such as literacy, Mathematics, Science, English and Creative Design, alongside various technical and vocational subjects. A notable outcome of this transformation is that the focus of VET is being expanded from pre-employment training for school-leavers to include the provision of training opportunities for existing workers and for unemployed adults and out-of-school youth. A significant increase in access to training opportunities is envisaged, through more diverse modes of delivery and a broader range of providers (including the private sector as well as the public sector). It is important to ensure that adults and out-of-school youth benefit fully from the current changes taking place. For example, adults can benefit from the provisions in the NQF to recognise prior learning by accrediting competencies learnt outside the formal system, and to include sub-divisions for adult basic education in Level 1 of the framework. Also, the National Council on Adult Learning can provide specialist advice to the Namibia Qualifications Authority on the registration and accreditation of training institutions for adults.

Adult learning and life skills

33. The Government is committed to the Education for All Goal of ensuring that the learning needs of all people are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. The life skill learning needs of adults and out-of-school youth include topics such as population, sexual health, nutrition, environmental health, substance abuse, and environmental conservation. These needs can be met through extension programmes, public education campaigns, and information, education and communication programmes, as well as through infusion in the materials of adult basic and literacy education. Acquisition of these skills can play an important part in meeting development goals. Adult learning on these topics is currently provided by a wide variety of Government departments, and by non-governmental and community-based organisations. However, there is no comprehensive information available on participation, access, topic coverage, articulation between providers, and quality of learning outcomes. The National Council on Adult Learning shall commission a review of life skills provision for adults, including adult learners with special needs, and out-of-school youth for presentation to the National Education for All Forum and follow-up action, by the Council, on the advice of the Forum.

Adult learning for active citizenship

34. One of Government's priorities is the promotion of participatory development and good governance through empowering people to contribute to national development and to engage in democratic processes. Adult

learning provides a powerful tool for encouraging active citizenship. The Government is committed to promoting strategies of community participation in socio-economic development. It recognises that such participation requires not only new modes of organisation, such as Community Development Committees and Communal Area Conservancies, but also the acquisition by community members of new knowledge, skills and attitudes. The Government will therefore encourage departments to use participatory learning and action methodologies (such as participatory rural appraisal and popular theatre) wherever possible. It will also support non-governmental organisations in programmes for strengthening civil society and promoting human rights, which are essential components of good governance. In relation to the formal processes of democracy, the Government will strengthen the voter education programme of the Electoral Commission of Namibia, and support civic and voter education programmes by non-governmental organisations.

Information and communication technologies, the mass media, and open and distance learning for adults

35. For Namibia to become a learning nation it is vital to develop all possible approaches to enabling adults to learn where, when, and at whatever pace they wish. The Government therefore aims to make it possible for adults at all levels of education to have opportunities to learn through computer-based information and communication technologies (ICTs), through the mass media, and through the organised provision of open and distance learning facilities and programmes. The Government will encourage public, parastatal and private institutions which own and control such media and facilities to maximise their contribution to formal, non-formal, and informal adult learning. Where appropriate, public funds will be made

available to such bodies to make this possible. Public and parastatal bodies will be encouraged to make their facilities and resources available for these purposes as part of their public service commitment.

36. In today's world computer literacy is an essential skill alongside reading and writing. Computer literacy should therefore be an integral part of adult learning provision. All institutions providing formal adult learning courses will be expected to include computer literacy in their curricula as soon as possible, and to ensure computer access for their students. The International Computer Driving Licence will be made a requirement for all senior civil servants through the Department of Public Service Management. At the same time, and as a matter of urgency, the Government will ensure access to computers and connectivity in all publicly-funded multipurpose learning centres with the help of Schoolnet. Every effort will be made to take advantage of rapidly evolving technology for adult learning purposes, including broad band Internet connectivity, satellite access, and distributed CD-ROMs and DVDs. Government will encourage the ICT industry as well as parastatal bodies to contribute to expanded access to computers for adult learning, especially in rural areas.
37. Newspapers, radio and television are important sources of adult learning. However, to date very limited use has been made in Namibia of the mass media for adult learning. This important resource is therefore under-utilised. The Government will establish a specialist educational broadcasting unit in collaboration with the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. It will have responsibility not only to support the formal learning of adults and children, but also to collaborate in non-formal adult programmes, such as rural radio forums and radio learning campaigns. The unit will work with other Directorates in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Information and Broadcasting to produce integrated media support for information, education and communication programmes. The Government will also promote the development of newspaper supplements to support public education campaigns. The National Council on Adult Learning will encourage media professionals and adult learning professionals to work together and to share resources and facilities.

38. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the courses provided by open and distance learning approaches by NAMCOL, NIED, the Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Namibia. The open and distance learning programmes of these four publicly-funded institutions will be expanded to ensure that as many adults and out-of-school youth as possible are provided with opportunities to continue their education as, when and where they wish. This expansion will include the further development of NOLNET (see Paragraph 49). Special emphasis will be put on ensuring that these programmes include vocational and professional courses that are relevant to Namibia's economic development. The National Council on Adult Learning will promote collaborative arrangements with foreign-based educational institutions in order to diversify the range of learning options.

Promotion of a culture of reading

39. Education and examination authorities regularly comment on the low level of reading among Namibians. The Government will therefore launch a *reading promotion campaign*, which will be a public-private partnership aimed at developing a culture of reading among both adults and children. The campaign will use the media, festivals, and shows to highlight the value of reading. Libraries will be increased and expanded, especially in

disadvantaged communities, programmes of family literacy will be introduced, and World Book Day will be celebrated annually on 23 April.

Information, guidance and counselling for adult learners

40. In order for adults to benefit as much as possible from the variety of learning opportunities available, it is necessary that they have ready access to information, guidance and counselling which can support them in terms of access and motivation. A key role of multipurpose learning centres (see Paragraph 48 below) is to provide the physical and human resources that can supply appropriate information, guidance and counselling at the community level. The Government also has plans for the expansion of community libraries, which likewise constitute valuable venues for information, guidance and counselling. The National Council on Adult Learning will have responsibility for ensuring that electronic and paper-based information, such as the *Directory of Adult Learning Providers*, is widely available. The Council will also be responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided to enable adult learning personnel to be effective in their information, guidance and counselling role. Social mobilisation campaigns that promote adult learning are an important means for informing and motivating the public, and the Council will take over the responsibility for the national co-ordination of Adult Learners' Week, held annually in the first week of September.

Research, evaluation and innovation

41. The development of adult learning activities that meet the criteria of access, equity, quality, relevance and efficiency is enhanced by applied information-gathering and analysis in the form of research, needs assessments,

and evaluation. Indeed, the ongoing implementation of such studies should be part of the organisational culture of adult learning providers. However, although a number of studies have been undertaken since 1990, they have been relatively restricted in their scope. One constraint has been the lack of trained personnel able to design and carry out various kinds of research. In order to overcome this constraint, the Government will support the development of the Department of Adult and Non Formal Education, University of Namibia, as the lead agency for research training in this field. It is expected that such training will give special attention to applied research (including needs assessments and action research) and evaluation that can meet the practical information needs of adult learning organisations.

42. The National Council on Adult Learning will have a significant role to play in promoting research, and in the dissemination of research findings. Its goal will be to improve the quality of adult learning activities and to encourage a philosophy of reflective practice in adult learning organisations. It is important too that encouragement is given to experimentation and new approaches, such as the development of learning communities. The Council will use the Adult Learning Promotion Fund to encourage innovation and good practice in adult learning, as well as to promote applied research and evaluation.

Conclusion

43. This section has considered important areas of programme development which must be undertaken if the goals of the Policy are to be met. The envisaged expansion and diversification of adult learning opportunities requires that the most efficient use is made of existing financial, physical and human resources, and that additional resources are mobilised where necessary.

Section 6: Resources for Adult Learning

The benefits of investment in adult learning

44. Investment in adult learning leads to significant public and private benefits. Some of the most important impacts of investment are as follows. In terms of economic returns, adult learning enables the acquisition of knowledge and skills which enhance livelihoods, employability, and productivity. For example, adults may acquire new skills in the application of agricultural techniques or in the use of computers in the work-place, and they may acquire knowledge about credit facilities or how to market their products. In terms of social returns, adult learning enables more active citizenship, greater equality for women, better environmental management. In particular, it contributes to improved family health, including with respect to HIV/AIDS. A major contribution to social development is the intergenerational effect of educated adults contributing to the education of their children, influencing positively both attendance and achievement. Private benefits (such as increased productivity and higher profits) accrue to employers who invest in human capital, and to individual learners who develop the competencies necessary for improved participation in economic activity and who are empowered through the development of greater self-esteem and self-confidence. There is a growing consensus in bodies such as the World Bank and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that investment in adult learning generates important economic and social returns. One of the purposes of the Policy is therefore to maximise the resources available for adult learning.

Financing adult learning

45. There are many modes of financing adult learning. In Namibia, adult learning is funded through Government departments, international development agencies, parastatal corporations, private sector companies, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, and individual learners and their families. The 32 Directorates in 18 Ministries, offices and agencies (see Paragraph 16), spend money on adult learning in a wide variety of development programmes. This level of public sector expenditure is significant though it has never been calculated because of its dispersed nature. International development agencies have contributed to the Government's adult learning programmes. The parastatal sector invests in adult learning, particularly with respect to training and development of employees. The same is true for private sector companies, whose level of investment has been increased by the obligations under the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act of 1998 to produce employment equity plans and to provide training opportunities for employees in previously disadvantaged groups. The Training Levy to be administered by the National Training Authority will provide an important new source of funding for work-related adult learning, including not only specific vocational skills but also the generic skills required across all work-places (including business and entrepreneurial skills, and key general education competencies). Non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations provide extensive adult learning activities within their social and economic development programmes. Their funding, with a few exceptions, is project funding through international development agencies, which poses problems of sustainability.

46. Adult learning is also supported through voluntary and in-kind contributions resulting from a sense of social responsibility. Individual learners and their families contribute to the cost of their own learning through fees for formal courses. Some individual learners are able to obtain educational loans, whilst civil servants can make guaranteed instalment payments deducted at source from their salaries.
47. At present, there is no organised data on the nature, extent, targeting, adequacy and efficiency of spending on adult learning within and outside the public sector, nor any cost-benefit analysis of current expenditure. Nevertheless, it is evident that sustained funding of adult learning at an appropriate level of investment across the sectors is a major policy challenge. The Government will therefore, as a matter of priority, task the National Council on Adult Learning to commission a study on the financing of adult learning to provide a situation analysis and to recommend funding modalities for the future, taking into account best practice internationally.

The shared use of facilities

48. It is important that opportunities to learn are available at the places and times which are convenient for adults and out-of-school youth, who have multiple responsibilities in their families, communities, and work-places. The needs and situations of learners can best be met through multi-purpose learning centres, where adults and youth can undertake face-to-face learning, distance learning, or self-directed learning, as well as access guidance and counselling, library resources, and information and communication technologies. In principle, multi-purpose learning centres should

be characterised by a high degree of local involvement and by their responsiveness to local learning needs, by availability during evenings, weekends and holidays, as well as daytime, and by accessibility to all, including people living with disabilities. Some centres are purpose-built but many share facilities built for other purposes, such as schools or libraries. The shared use of facilities is therefore a vital strategy for the maximisation of resources available for adult learning.

49. A model initiative is the establishment of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNET) in 2001 by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation, NAMCOL, the Polytechnic of Namibia, and the University of Namibia. The partners seek to develop open and distance learning, and to collaborate in service provision, particularly with respect to a network of shared facilities. NOLNET has enabled the upgrading of existing centres to specified minimum standards. There is now a network of 47 multi-purpose learning centres where open and distance learning students can access library resources, computers and other study facilities. In order to facilitate the development of the network, a number of policy decisions have been taken by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture on issues such as remuneration of teachers as part-time tutors, tariffs for use of its facilities by outside bodies, and collection and administration of user fees. The Government is committed to supporting NOLNET in the optimal utilisation of facilities.
50. The concept of the multi-purpose learning centre can also be illustrated by the Community Learning and Development Centres which the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture has developed in 11 of the 13

administrative regions since 2000. The centres offer not only programmes of the Directorate of Adult Basic Education but also provide a venue for activities by other ministries (such as health programmes) and by non-governmental organisations (such as legal awareness programmes). They also provide access to communication services, such as photocopiers, fax machines, and the Internet. The centres are to be found in a variety of locations, including local authority buildings, teachers' resource centres, and schools. These centres provide a good model of the multi-purpose learning centre. The Government plans to extend the number of Community Learning and Development Centres and to ensure that appropriate operational regulations are in place, for example, on responsibility for costs and on the collection and use of service charges.

51. There are many other examples of multi-purpose learning centres, such as community libraries, community skills development centres, agricultural extension centres, non-governmental organisation centres, cultural centres, community halls, and church centres. These facilities constitute an essential resource for adult learning. In order to extend the principle of the shared use of facilities, the Government, when launching this Policy, will issue a Memorandum from the Office of the Prime Minister to the effect that any existing building belonging to Central or Local Government may be used as a multi-purpose learning centre, subject to its suitability and formal agreement on administrative and financial arrangements by the authorities concerned. The Government will also ensure that all new public institutions for education and training will be designed to incorporate a multi-purpose learning centre, provided that one does not already exist in the vicinity. The Government will also encourage the owners of private buildings (such as churches or company training centres) to enable their shared use as multi-purpose learning centres.

Human resources for the development of adult learning programmes

52. A large number of personnel, both full-time and part-time, are involved in the provision of adult learning. They have a variety of roles, including community mobilisation, teaching, counselling, programme and materials development, research and evaluation, and administration. For those who have been trained, their training has normally focused on the content of their sectoral specialisation, such as health or agriculture. Very few personnel have received adequate training in the generic skills of how to mobilise communities and how to develop adult-centred learning environments and materials. However, since 1999, the Department of Adult and Non Formal Education of the University of Namibia has offered professional training at diploma, degree, and post-graduate levels, and since 1997 NAMCOL has offered the Certificate in Education for Development. These programmes train participants in the theories, principles, methodologies and contexts of adult learning, providing generic training for personnel from different sectoral and organisational backgrounds. The programmes constitute the basis for professional development within the field of adult learning. However, they confront problems of curriculum relevance, employer recognition, staffing and so forth that hinder their full development. The Government will therefore task the National Council for Adult Learning to undertake a comprehensive review of professional training needs and the adequacy of existing training programmes in order to produce a human resources development strategy for adult learning personnel. In addition to programmes leading to formal qualifications in adult education, the council should seek to ensure that specific needs of adult learning staff can be met through short in-service courses and programmes.

Section 7: Co-ordination, Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The National Council on Adult Learning

53. Adult learning in Namibia is characterised by its diversity in terms of contents, methods, participants, levels, and providers. It is multi-sectoral, involving different ministries within Government, as well as parastatals, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations. The promotion of adult learning for all therefore poses a challenge of co-ordination, policy implementation and monitoring. To meet this challenge, the Government will establish the National Council on Adult Learning, within the terms of Section 67(2) of the Education Act, 2001 (Act No. 16 of 2001), through promulgation of a regulation. The role of the Council will be to promote and co-ordinate adult learning, and to advise Government and other stakeholders on matters pertaining to adult learning. The Council will be comprised of nine persons knowledgeable about and committed to adult learning. It will be serviced by a dedicated Secretariat of full-time professional staff appointed by the Public Service Commission.

Powers and functions of the Council

54. The Council shall be responsible for the promotion and co-ordination of adult learning, policy development and implementation, and the maintenance of standards in the provision of adult learning. The Council shall:

- a) formulate and review policy on adult learning and advise Government accordingly;
- b) develop mechanisms for policy implementation;
- c) monitor policy implementation;
- d) undertake strategic planning for the development of adult learning;
- e) advise Government and other stakeholders on the funding needs of adult learning;
- f) liaise with public, parastatal, private sector, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, churches, and Regional Education Councils, on matters relating to the overall development of adult learning;
- g) establish and maintain a data base of adult learning providers and disseminate such information;
- h) promote co-ordination amongst the providers of adult learning;
- i) advise the Namibia Qualifications Authority and the Minister responsible for basic education on the registration and accreditation of private adult learning institutions;
- j) establish targets, indicators and monitoring procedures with respect to equitable access to adult learning opportunities;
- k) encourage the implementation of quality assurance procedures in adult learning programmes, and the establishment of standards of good practice;
- l) encourage innovation in adult learning;
- m) promote research on adult learning, and disseminate research findings;
- n) develop and disseminate a code of professional ethics for adult learning organisations and personnel;

- o) investigate complaints from members of the public with regard to organisations offering adult learning programmes, and seek appropriate solutions acceptable to the parties involved;
- p) promote professional development programmes for adult learning personnel;
- q) undertake advocacy through public information and social mobilisation activities that will promote greater recognition and appreciation of the value of adult learning, including the national co-ordination of Adult Learners' Week;
- r) develop guidelines and administer accordingly the Adult Learning Promotion Fund (see Paragraph 59);
- s) facilitate Namibia's involvement in technical committees, professional meetings, and other initiatives on adult learning of SADC, the African Union, the Association of standing or experience or expertise in the field of adult learning.
- t) advise government and other stakeholders on any other matter related to adult learning.

Membership of the Council

55. The Council shall consist of the following members, appointed for a three year term (renewable):
- a) the chairperson;
 - b) the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for basic education (or his/her representative);

- c) the Director of Human Resource Development in the Office of the Prime Minister;
 - d) six persons of standing or experienced or expertise in the field of adult learning.
56. The Minister responsible for basic education shall appoint the Chairperson of the Council. The members under b) and c) are ex officio. For the members under d), nominations to the Council shall be solicited in the public media, and nominees interviewed by a panel appointed by the Minister for the purpose. On the recommendation of the panel and taking due regard for gender balance, the Minister shall appoint the six members.
57. The Council shall meet at least three times in a year, and shall determine its own procedures.

Secretariat to the Council

58. The Council will have a full-time professional Secretariat. In consultation with the Council, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for basic education shall recommend to the Public Service Commission the appointment of personnel to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will include an Executive Secretary, at a level not lower than Director, and such other professional and support staff as may be required to carry out its functions. In the first instance, there will be two other professional staff. The Senior Research Officer will have responsibility for the development of performance indicators, the compilation and analysis of statistics, the promotion of quality assurance measures, accreditation reviews, and the promotion, execution, and dissemination of relevant research, evaluation, and

needs assessments. The Senior Information and Mobilisation Officer will have responsibility for the Council's web-site and publications (including the *Directory of Adult Learning Providers*), for media publicity, and for social mobilisation campaigns that promote adult learning (including Adult Learners' Week).

Funding and reporting

59. The funds of the Council shall consist of:
- a) Moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the Council through the budget of the Ministry responsible for basic education;
 - b) Grants and donations that the Council may receive;
 - c) Income that the Council may receive from the sale of publications or fees for the provision of services;
 - d) Other monies accruing to the Council; and
 - e) The Adult Learning Promotion Fund.
60. The Council shall submit an annual financial plan to the Minister and follow approved financial regulations. The Council shall within a period of six months after the end of the financial year submit to the Minister responsible for basic education a comprehensive Annual Report on the operations of the Council during that year, including the audited accounts. The Annual Report shall be presented to Parliament by the Minister within three months of receipt from the Council.
61. Eligible members shall be paid out of the funds of the Council such remuneration and allowances as the Minister may from time to time determine.

The Adult Learning Promotion Fund

62. The Council shall administer the Adult Learning Promotion Fund. The Fund will make grants with the following objectives:
- a) To support specified activities of organisations which promote adult learning.
 - b) To promote innovation and good practice in adult learning.
 - c) To promote applied research and evaluation.
 - d) To support local initiatives which encourage greater recognition and participation with respect to adult learning.
 - e) To award annual prizes to outstanding adult learners, adult learning personnel, adult learning programmes, and research studies.

Monies for the Fund shall be provided through a line item in the budget of the Council, and through specified grants and donations. A report on the activities supported by the Fund and the audited accounts shall be part of the Council's Annual Report.