

THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF THE ART OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE)

National Report of the Republic of the Fiji Islands

by

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A National Report on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Fiji

I. General Overview

Education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, this function is specifically focussed on formal Education as prescribed in the Act. Nevertheless Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) whose core function is Education, Training and Learning align themselves to the Ministry of Education, because there is no Non formal Education Sector or Department in Government.

10years ago, a lot of work had been done by the NGOS and government representatives through the initiative of the Ministry of Youth and Sport to set up a Non-formal Education Department. It lacked the political will and all our work and time fell through.

Most NGOS are aligned to Government Ministries according to their core functions. For example, one of the largest and powerful NGOs in Fiji is called the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) it is aligned to the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Housing, though it promotes community education and training to a large extent as well.

The Military coup of 6th December 2006 followed by the rule of the Interim Regime till this day is restricting the work of NGOs. It is hoped that the promised General election in 2009, would bring changes for the better in the area of ALE..

According to the Bureau of Statistics the total population of Fiji is 835,230 and the percentage of Adult population is 48% (FCOSS). The Ministry of Youth put the youth population at 25% of the total population of Fiji. As for gender it is estimated that there are 50% Males and 50% females.

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing

Legislative and policy frameworks of ALE

There has been no Legislative policy for ALE per se. Hence , there is no priority for ALE in Fiji.

Adults are those above the age of 25years up to 60 years, which is the age of retirement from paid employment in Fiji. These are viewed collectively as members of the community who are in need of government assistance in terms of capacity building through training, learning and education in order to become productive and contributing members of their respective families and themselves through paid and gainful employment. From this perspective, government ministries assist the communities through their respective core functions.

The Ministry of Youth looks after young people from the age of 15 to 25 years; however, there would be overlaps here, because older youth would be classified as adults depending on their situation. To be quite frank human development in Fiji is community-based and dictated by the peoples' socio-economic situation. For example, urban and rural communities; village dwellers (Fijian) and settlement farming dwellers (Indo-Fijian); squatters communities; employed and unemployed; the poor and the not so poor; the sick and the healthy, etc. Hence the lines Ministry of the foregoing are the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development and Public Utilities; Provincial Development and Multi-ethnic Affairs; Labour. Industrial relations and Tourism; Agriculture; Women Social Welfare and Housing; Health and Education.

A National Summit for all stakeholders is convened annually by Government to determine the focal areas of Development which are then articulated into policy and implementation strategies.

The main development challenges in Fiji are the recognition of the role of Non-formal Education and ALE and its implementation at government Ministerial level.

At present all policies relating to socio-economic activity have an indirect impact on ALE.

1.1. Financing of ALE

1.2.1 Whilst it is true that financing is often provided through a variety of channels, there is no budget allocated neither to adult education within the education sector nor to other Public sectors.

From the Government perspective budget is not allocated to Adult Development , Education or Learning specifically, but is impacted through other means/activities, such as Poverty alleviation; Urban and Rural Development; Provincial and District Development; Tertiary Institutions;etc

1.2.2 There is foreign bilateral/multilateral donor investments that has indirect impact on ALE but are Areas/activities-based through varieties of Projects. The actual amount cannot be obtained or even determined.

1.2.3 Civil society do support ALE through religious institutions, unions, NGOs and even Tertiary Institutions.

1.2.4. Learners'/individuals' contributions to ALE is there but minimal and cannot be obtained or even determined.

1.2.5 There are specific direct and indirect financial incentives to support ALE , but are programmes-specific

2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

2.1. Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks

2.1.1. The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) is coordinating the activities of CSO and NGOs in Fiji. 90% of the ALE related activity is provided by the CSOs with a very wide range of participation by the community and good achievements. For instance, FCOSS is active in such areas as, prevention of drugs and substance abuse, strengthening of the family, Social

Leadership, NGO management, Child Care , Training in Care for the Elderly, Financial Literacy, Project Management, Mental Health, prevention of suicide, democracy and governance, promoting rural women's' initiative, development and education. Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Lifelong Learning.

2.1.2. The Table 1 below list and describe the ALE related programmes in Fiji:

2.1.3.

Table 1

Programme (name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below):			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below):			c) Target group/s	d) Progra mme cost	e) Fundi source
	Public/ State	CSO/ NGO	Private	General competencies	Technical skills	Knowledge generation, innovation			
FCOSS Coordinating & Networking Body		•		•	•	•	Community	N/A	Donor agence funding
National Council of Women in Fiji	•	•		•	•	•	Women	N/A	Donor agence
National Forum for Prevention of						•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Govern

Drugs and substances abuse									
Promoting Rural Women's Initiative Development and Education		•		•	•	•	<i>Women</i>	N/A	Donor agency funding
Family and Population Activities Centre.		•		•	•	•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agency funding
National Volunteer Centre		•		•	•	•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Fiji Ministry Social Welfare
Training of Volunteers		•		•	•	•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agency funding
Civil Society Forum on Education		•				•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agency funding

Adult, Community and District Council of Social Services Rural		•		•		•	•	<i>Adult and Community</i>	N/A	Donor agencie funding
Suicide Prevention Network for Poverty Eradication Network		•					•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agencie funding
Social Leadership Training Institute		•		•		•	•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agencie funding
Urban District Council of Social		•		•		•	•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agencie funding

Services									
People's Forum on Social Housing		•				•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agency funding
Rural and Independent		•				•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agency funding
Advocacy Through Collaboration and Engagement		•				•	<i>Community</i>	N/A	Donor agency funding
School-based Parental Education		•				•	<i>Adult</i>	N/A	Govern
National Youth Service Scheme	•			•	•	•	<i>Youth</i>	<i>\$1million over a 3year period</i>	Govern

- 2.1.4. The link between formal and non-formal approaches is academic with the former significantly outshining the latter,
- 2.1.5. There is no specific certification and national award that leads to a qualification in ALE.

2.2. Participation in ALE

The participation of ALE in Fiji is fairly obscure for the reason given in the foregoing. It is difficult to assess or measure it, as it is not focal point or group.

- a) Participation rate cannot be provided as we do not focus on the Adult Population.
- b) Participation, in specific programmes (possible examples for programmes has become the domain of FCOSS e.g. literacy/numeracy programmes; health (including HIV prevention) programmes; income generating skills training; programmes addressing special learning needs (e.g. prisoners, migrants, disabled); technical skill training (including ICTs)). Refer to Table 1

- 2.2.1. The census of 2007 gives a 40% participation rate. What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on non-participation and groups that are difficult to reach? Please give main results in terms of who the excluded are, why they are being excluded and what kind of support can be given.

2.3. Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes

- 2.3.1. We do not assess the learning outcomes of ALE programmes because they are not specific
- 2.3.2. What tools and mechanisms are used to monitor and evaluate programmes to ensure good quality?
- 2.3.3. there are no legislation or policies in ALE.
- 2.3.4. The benchmarks in relation to outcomes of ALE are lumped together with community based activities, unless of course we refer to those who study in the formal sectors.

2.4. Adult educators/facilitators' status and training

This section attempts to show the areas of community development that impacts ALE, but this hardly qualifies for the requirement and key initiatives and changes in this regard since the 1997 (CONFINTEA V).

2.4.1. A Certificate in Non-formal Education or equivalent is considered adequate. However, in terms of specific skills in TVET a formal Trade Certificate or Diploma is available for facilitators. Trade Tests are always available for trade practitioners continuing/ in-service training measures.

2.4.2. Adult education is not considered as a specific profession. However, there are higher education institutions like the University of the South Pacific that provides such qualification as the Certificate in Non –formal Education and Degrees in Technology. The Fiji Institute of Technology provides all types of Certificate for Trade and Commercial programmes for employment and teaching students and adults..

2.4.3. It is not possible to indicate the proportion of adult educators/facilitators in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel in Fiji because they are not comparable.

2.4.4. ALE are generally delivered voluntarily in the community development context.

3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice

3.1. Research studies in the field of adult learning

3.1.1. The Fiji Institute of Technology through the Learning Centre conducted a Training Need Assessment of rural Communities in the 14 Provinces of Fiji in 2006.

3.1.2. The Fiji Institute of Technology with its outreach Training and education Programme and its distance Learning Unit was to address the needs of the adults and out of school youth in the Communities.

- 3.1.3. Participants wanted to learn practical skills that would enable them to earn for their living. Men wanted to learn basic machine repair and the women flower arrangement, cooking, small business and family education
- 3.1.4. It is our hope that as the Fiji Institute of Technology addresses the Community needs the process might instigate government to formalise the move towards ALE in terms of policies and practices

3.2. Innovations and examples of good practice

No specific programmes in ALE have been developed since 1997 (CONFINTEA V).

- 3.2.1. There is no specific Policy formulation, financing, teaching/learning methods?
- 3.2.2. Mobilization of learners, involvement of learners in programme design, emergence of learners as partners are all community -based?

4. Adult Literacy

- 4.1. Literacy is the ability to read, write and use the skill in communicating. No connection to the 1997 (CONFINTEA V)
- 4.2. New policies have been adopted and implemented in the workplace and tertiary institutions.
- 4.3. Communication Skills Programmes at the Fiji Institute of Technology at three levels : elementary intermediate and Advance. Workplace initiatives in government Ministries.
- 4.4. Much importance is placed on women in development or any other form activity to ensure parity.
- 4.5. As there are no policies put in place it is very difficult to ascertain what progress had been achieved.

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and future perspectives for ALE

- 5.1 This is very important area which needs to be formally recognised and supported by the government and CSO should be given the charge. It should not be institutionalised into a government as it is at present, Even for the last 50 years not much has happened. Most of the work has been done by FCOSS and its member organizations.
- 5.2 A more emphatic externally generated approach to be made to the Fiji Government to set up ALE. Then only we can align to the principal expectations of CONFINTEA VI .
- 5.3 Hence, as long as Fiji continues to focus on community-based approach in all forms of human development, it would be difficult to address policies and practices in adult education and adult learning.

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