Youth and Adult Learning and Education in Southern Africa

OVERVIEW OF A FIVE NATION STUDY

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Youth and Adult Learning and Education in Southern Africa

Overview of a five nation study

Presented by John Aitchison

Aims of the research

- Five up to date country reports:

    Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland

- What has happened since CONFINTEA?

- A synthesis report

- Recommendations for ways forward

- Enhanced research resources (documents, templates for data collecting, websites)

How the research was done

- Country researchers

- Host organisations in support

- Local verification workshops

Lesotho

What is youth and adult education?

All education and training (including non-formal education and informal learning) for adults and out-of school youth that is not part of the regular schooling, business, technical and training college and higher education system that children enter about age 6 or 7 and exit from in their mid-teens to early twenties.

Terminology recommendations

Need for internationally recognised standardised terminology., the avoidance of narrow identification of "adult education" with literacy and adult basic education only and the confusing use of the term "non-formal education" for school equivalency education.
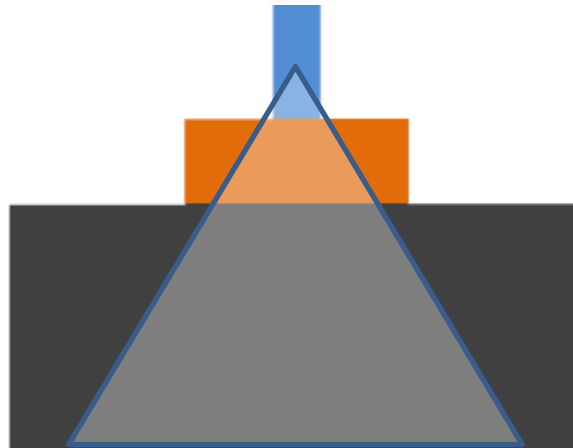
The shapes of education

Post-school

Secondary

Primary

Post-school

Secondary

Primary
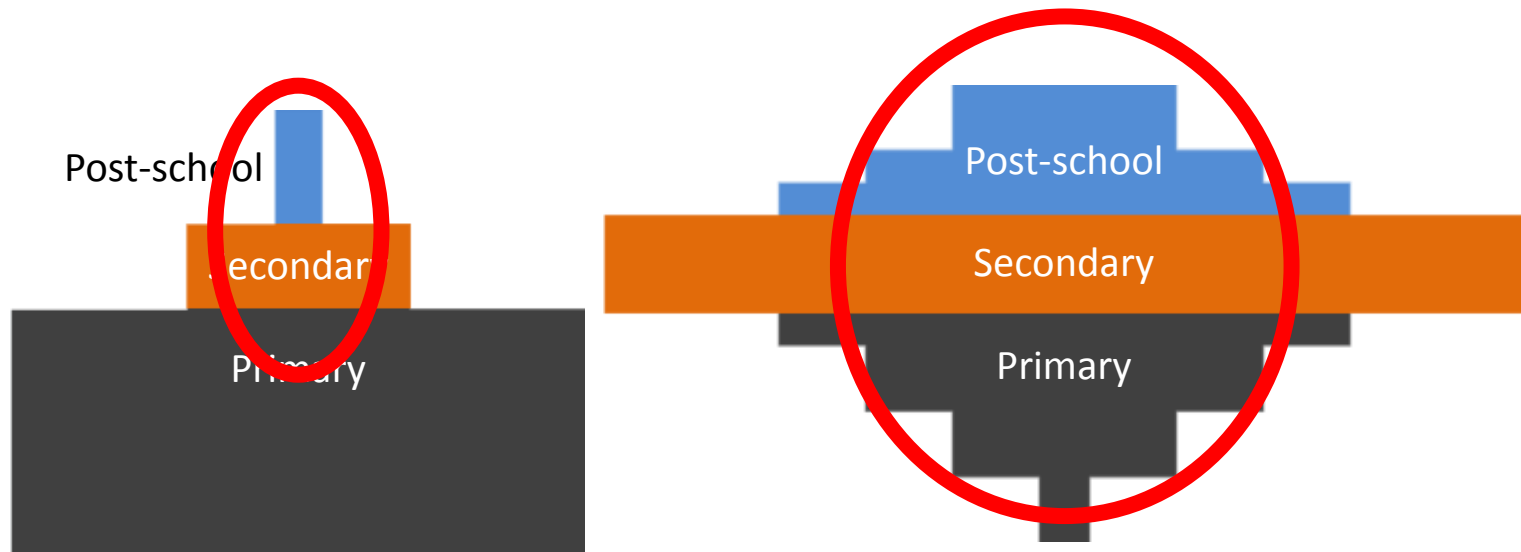
The NEETs

NOT in Employment or Education or Training

Unemployment:
21% to 60%

Adult illiterates:
9,1 million
2,4 youth

Nowhere to go
Namibia: 47 000 school leavers – uptake into VET is 1 500
Swaziland: 7 500 school leavers & 6 500 dropouts –
                                    uptake into VET is 1 000

The data desert

- Poor capacity in (or prioritisation of) data collection, analysis, dissemination, maintenance and updating leads to no data or out of date data. This weakens the capacity for evidence-based monitoring, evaluation and research.
- When research is done it is not capitalised on or updated.
- Problem of financial data
- Lack of big picture analyses

The Regional Context

- Administrative
  - Varying degrees of regionalisation or decentralisation

- Demographic
  - All relatively poor and unequal with young populations

- Economic
  - High levels of unemployment

Regional context (continued)

- Education and Training
  - 2,4 million illiterate youth
  - Low average schooling levels - 1,2 to 7,1 years
  - 1,5 million out-of-school school children (primary)
  - Looming problem of male under education
  - Education takes high proportion national budgets
  - Vocational education and training facilities are totally inadequate.

The study template

- **Policies and legislation, governance an administration**
- **The financing of youth and adult education**
- **Provision: participation and achievement:** Literacy and adult basic education, Adult secondary education, Primary education for marginalised children, Youth education, Continuing education and professional development, Technical and vocational education and training, Skills training
- **Qualifications and Qualifications Authorities:** National Qualifications Frameworks, Quality assurance and Assessment
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Research**
- **Practitioners and professional development**

Conclusions from the findings

- Urgent need to rethink policy around youth and adult learning and education to address the needs of the high percentage of youth that are not in education, employment and training (NEET).

- Issues facing the sector are systemic and endemic - not incidental

Policy stalemate

- Ambiguity – what kind of adult education? Literacy?/NFE?/Vocational?/Life skills?/ Continuing?
- Broad and vague statements (too many actors?)
- No comprehensive and detailed policies
- Draft unratified policies
- Appendages to other policies (Poverty reduction, etc.)
- Weak link youth and adult education policies
- No links to funding

Policy results

- Unclear priorities
- Weak cross ministry links
- Weak or impossible to implement policies
- Unfunded mandates
- Date and evidence have done little to influence policies and plans

The shapes of education

A

B

Post-school

Secondary

Primary

Post-school

Secondary

Primary
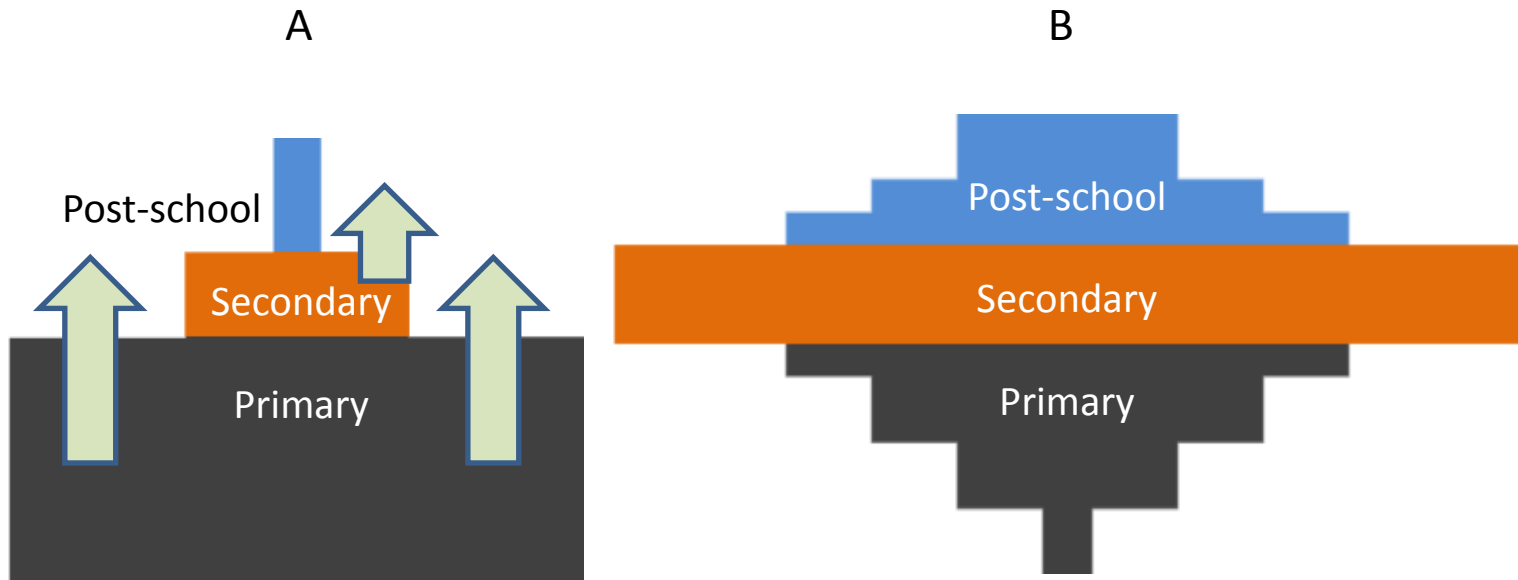
Youth and Adult Education for the **NOW**.
Literacy and basic education as foundation.
But ... where do they go then?

Recommendations

- 45 recommendations

- Congruence with African CONFINTEA VI recommendations of 2008

- Need systematic interventions to deal with systemic and endemic problems

Policy, legislation and governance

3. A **comprehensive** consolidated youth and adult education **policy** for each country

4. More effective **implementation of existing education policies** plus framework reviews

5. Appropriate **coordination mechanisms**

6. Recognition of adult education as an **autonomous sector**

7. **Upgrading** of existing units serving youth and adult education and vocational education and training

8. Better **information access** to policy, regulatory and legal documents and an improved systems for government communication with partners and stakeholders

Awareness and recognition of youth and adult education

9.   Agencies at all levels, including government ministries, involved in youth and adult education need to overtly **identify themselves as such providers** and so deep the understanding of key players and the public of the importance and priority of youth and adult education.

10. A policy document for the sector that reflects all stakeholders' views and recognises the role that youth and adult education can play in economic and social development, poverty reduction, etc. This document should be revised on a regular basis in accordance with consultations and the results of monitoring and evaluation.

11. There is an **annually updated communication plan** for the promotion of the whole youth and adult education sector.

Literacy and Language

12. Overhaul the conceptualisation, curriculum and materials of national literacy

13. Countries must observe international and regional conventions on the elimination of illiteracy including the **Bamako Call to Action**.

14. Re-examine the issue of the language of literacy and adult basic education. Though there are compelling reasons to teach in English or Portuguese there is overwhelming international evidence that mother-tongue as the best medium of instruction in primary and basic education (including helping the subsequent learning and use of an official language).

15. A clear and equitable policy on learning materials in the national languages.

Curriculum

16. Customised curriculums need to be developed that respond effectively to learners' needs, and particularly for youth who have had no or very little formal education or with some education but few vocational skills.

17. Old versions of curriculum implementation guidelines need to be revised, and the implementers need to adapt the practices accordingly.

18. A unified national curriculum for literacy and adult basic education is developed with the participation of all stakeholders.

Data, information and research

19. There is a need for a standardisation of the data required from youth and adult education providers and all providers should be encouraged to develop their own capacity to supply this information.

20. Digitised, internet accessible holdings of reports, research, evaluations and other documentation are needed. There should be a strong commitment to share documentation and materials. A comprehensive, systematic regional web-based database on adult education provision and practice is needed.

21. Governments should work hand-in-hand with universities and other research-based institutes to strengthen or revive research capacity in the field and research findings should inform policy and practice.

Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation

22. Governments should support the development of quality assessment, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms as well as ensure research and data collection.

23. Develop a framework for learning validation in youth and adult education which is **equivalent to the system of formal education**, regardless of where, when and how the learning occurred.

24. Improve existing inspection systems for youth and adult education.

25. Improve evaluation methods and programmes and share results.

26. Evaluate the different programmes and methods used in literacy and adult basic education to verify advantages and disadvantages, and to propose alternatives.

Funding

27. Notwithstanding the current economic-financial situation of the countries, there is an urgent need to increase the percentage of the national budgets allocated to the education and in particular, the adult education and training sector.

28. Funding benchmarks should be developed along with strategies for mobilizing funds (including from international donors).

29. There should be renewed attempts by all sectors to ensure sustainable funding of youth and adult education and the accountable use thereof.

30. Consider, where it has not been implemented, a skills development levy on the private sector to help finance training and entrepreneurship.

Programmes and infrastructure

31. Programme and project duration in rural and income generating community projects should be extended beyond the usual three- or five-year periods to allow for a deeper internalisation and ownership of the initiative by communities and to the greater likelihood of long-term sustainability.

32. Whilst it is recognised that the rebuilding and construction of the formal school infrastructure is a priority, attention is urged to making refurbished and new infrastructure usable for multiple purposes, including youth and adult education.

Qualifications frameworks

33. Effective instruments and systems of recognition, validation and accreditation of all forms of learning, monitoring and evaluation should be established.

34. The establishment of appropriately designed national qualifications framework must be supported to ensure access and recognition of prior learning (formal and non-formal) of adults and the rational comparison of certification and qualifications provided by various providers. More accessible progression routes from one level of skill competence or knowledge acquisition to the next should be developed. However, care must be taken to avoid cumbersome over bureaucratised models.

35. The registration process on existing National Qualifications Frameworks may need to be simplified and special provision (including less onerous criteria) should be made for the small individual organisations.

Practitioners and their development

36. There must be a capacity building plan with identified agents empowered to implement the plan.

37. The conditions of service and status of all adult education personnel, need to be rapidly addressed and harmonised with those of conventional educators and trainers.

36. Action should be taken to develop initial and continuing teacher and educational manager education both by the ministries of education and other organisations.

37. The use of Open and Distance learning and ICT should be encouraged.

38. Universities and research institutions should, working alongside practitioners, provide support.

Out-of-school youth

41.   The advantages of separate programmes for out of school youth should be explored.

42.   NGOs should include youth (both out-of-school and employed) in their programmes.

Mobilisation, cooperation and networking

43. Both government and civil society should make a strong commitment to reform and revitalize youth and adult education, to strengthen its capacity, and develop an action agenda for effective follow up.

44. More networking and exchanges are required to give substance to cooperation in the field of youth and adult education

45. Civil society associations working in the field of youth and adult education should synchronise their awareness raising activities with those of national, provincial and municipal education departments, and with school management and community or neighbourhood members at the local level, to increase their impact and to ensure local contextualisation and adaptation.

Ways forward

- Long term and systemic work needed in the field of adult and youth education.

- A suitable quick action agenda and programme vital, both as a follow up to these studies in the five countries and as an initiator of the longer term programmes.

- A process, including use of the media, to develop more awareness of youth and adult education. [Recommendations 5 and 10]

- An early start to bring these youth and adult education issues to the governments' policy and legislative agenda and to the attention of national budget decision makers. Commitment has to be mobilised. [Recommendations 3 and 5 and 27 to 30]

For Youth and Adult Education:

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