

Reflection on Adult Education Policy Development and Implementation in Tanzania since Independence: Emerging Issues and Lessons

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Abstract

This paper intends to reflect on the adult education policy development and implementation in Tanzania since independence in 1961, especially from the period of launching the Arusha Declaration in 1967. This period serves to be a very significant milestone in adult education because of the policies and programmes that were conceived, developed and implemented. The paper is a product of desk study and the reflection is done using a historical approach. In this context, writing using the historical perspective of adult education in Tanzania is important because it enables us to understand the past and how different key players may have acted on the basis of prevailing beliefs and ideologies to influence the present situation and to avoid drawing misleading conclusions. One notable observation is that the absence of an independent unit to coordinate adult education activities at the national level coupled with lack of reliable data and research proven information have greatly affected the present status of adult education sub-sector.

Keywords: *adult education, policy development, programme implementation*

Introduction

The education system in Tanzania is comprised of formal education structure on one hand and adult and non-formal education structure on the other hand. According to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) (2016), the structure of adult and non-formal education covers all those programmes designed and provided to particular groups of children, youths and adults outside the formal education system. Although, it has been particularly misconceived as limited to men and women adults who have never had the opportunity to be in the four walls of a formal classroom (Bhalalusesa, 2006), adult education is a broader

concept than this. Adult education entails any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing aspects from basic literacy to personal fulfillment as a lifelong learning activity. UNESCO (2011) defines adult education as specifically targeting individuals who are regarded as adults by the society to which they belong in order to improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge with the purpose to complete a level of formal education, or to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies in a new field or to refresh or update their knowledge in a particular field. This also includes what may be referred to as *continuing education*, *recurrent education* or *second chance education*. In the context of this paper, adult education will mainly be referred to as programmes related to adult basic and continuing education offered to people aged 19 years and beyond as well as complementary basic education programmes offered to out-of-school children aged 11-18 years (MoEST, 2019). As a whole, the policy and practice of adult education in Tanzania has been evolving in different historical episodes following the political and socio-economic realities of the country. The development has also been influenced by other macro policy reforms at international level of which Tanzania is part of. Five major historical episodes form the basis of analysis, conclusions and recommendations offered in this paper.

The historical episodes

- 1961 – 1967: Setting the foundation
- 1967 – early 1980s: a period of adult education revolution
- Mid 1980s to 1990s: a turning point
- 1990s to 2015: renewed commitment
- 2015 to date: a back-slide?
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It is important to note that although the focus of this paper begins with the time when Tanzania (by that time Tanganyika) gained independence, provision of adult education in Tanzania did not begin with independence. Even in pre-colonial Tanganyika society, the training of producers was acquired on the job through the transmission of family knowledge in terms of agricultural skills through apprenticeship. According to Mlekwa (1990) adult education in the form of schooling was established during the colonial period with the aim of consolidating the administrative infrastructure of colonial state. This was spearheaded by Christian missions so as to facilitate Christian and colonial penetration in Tanganyika. The manpower trained included chiefs, messengers, teachers, medical auxiliaries, junior administrative staffs, artisans and religious functionaries.

1961-1967: Setting the foundation to consolidate the gains of independence

Tanzania gained her independence in 1961. During early years of independence in 1960s the country faced a number of problems which needed immediate solutions. According to Mushi (1990) in the first place, the government inherited an economically poor and illiterate society whereby about 85% of the population (80% of men and 89% of women) was illiterate. Majority of the people were living under poverty, technological backwardness, ignorance, hunger, disease, economic dependence as well as exploitation. Second, about 90% of the population lived in rural areas and were predominantly peasant farmers using traditional methods of farming. Third, children out of school were extremely poor and unhealthy such that the life expectancy was only 37 years and mortality rate was between 200-250 per thousand. All these problems were accepted by most people as the will of God and people believed that independence would bring them to the end. Unfortunately, these grand expectations could not be met because of limited resources at the government's disposal. Education was considered as one possible solution to solve these problems.

Therefore, immediately after independence the government started to take measures to transform her totally inherited educational system to match it with her own new goals, aspirations and concepts of development with the anticipation that education was a key to development.

Among the measures taken was the re-positioning of education outside the normal formal school system for children. Although, formal education for children was considered important in stimulating national development in the crucial aftermath of independence, it could not be relied upon to solve the above mentioned problems. The government felt that it would be unwise to concentrate all efforts on educating children, leaving adults in a state of illiteracy for this would imply delaying the country's development for generations. It was for this reason that, in introducing the First Five Year Development Plan (1964–1969) Nyerere pledged a major commitment to adult education that:

First we must educate adults, our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten or even twenty years to come (United Republic of Tanzania, 1964: xi)

In this era adult education was promoted widely under community education which covered literacy, agricultural extension, rural skills and health education. The government adopted the Fundamental Model promoted by UNDP/UNESCO which restricted the acquisition of reading and writing skills as an end in itself. According to Mushi (2010), literacy teaching was a major activity of the community

development and perhaps the largest single adult education activity in terms of number of participant involved.

This period is considered to be a period which laid the foundation for adult education because tangible activities geared at educating adults could be seen although they were still amorphous in nature since they were organised on a scattered, uncoordinated and limited basis. The period is also considered as a base since it served as a source of ideas for more varied adult education programmes in future years and it set grounds for increased government recognition of the role of adult education in development.

1967 – Early 1980s: Adult education revolution

One of the main tasks which Tanzania had as a newly independent country was to define its political philosophy and specifically chart out the direction where it wanted to go. This was spelt out in 1967 in the famous pronouncement: *The Arusha Declaration*. Tanzania declared that it wanted to build an egalitarian society based on socialist values; a society in which all members have equal rights and equal opportunities. The commitment to build a socialist and self-reliant development required popular participation of the people in the planning and decision making processes of their own development. However, before people could meaningfully participate in controlling their own development, it was imperative to have political education on a massive scale to raise people's level of political consciousness and the very task of making people understand the goals and strategies of socialist development. Adult education was seen as the major tool in achieving the kind of development envisaged in the policy of socialism and self-reliance.

Consequently, major changes occurred in the emphasis, functions and approaches pertaining adult education. The Fundamental Education Model was found inadequate. Following the Teheran Conference for the Ministers of Education in 1965, UNESCO in collaboration with UNDP launched an experimental functional literacy programme between 1967 and 1972 in eleven countries. Tanzania was selected to participate in the experiment, hence embarked on implementing the Work-Oriented Adult Literacy Pilot Programme in the Lake Zone. The aim of this functional literacy model was to find out the most effective means of eliminating illiteracy in these countries. It was believed that there was a positive correlation between literacy and socio-economic development.

The Second Five Year Development Plan was launched in 1969. It had a lot of implications in terms of adult education policy development and implementation. One of these implications is the pronouncement made by Mwalimu Nyerere during the New Year's Eve in 1969 to declare 1970 to be an adult education year. Several

important and notable pronouncements which demonstrated his own personal commitment and political will of his government were made. These included, for example:

(a) *Adult education as tool for change*

As a President, his conception and advocacy for adult education had a great impact on the policies that were formulated and activities that followed thereafter. He had very clear ideas about adult education. He trusted the power of adult education in bringing change and during his New Year speech he clearly stated the three objectives of adult education that:

The importance of adult education both for our country and for every individual cannot be overemphasized. We are poor and backward and too many just accept our present condition as the will of God. The first objective of adult education must be to shake ourselves out of resignation to the kind of life Tanzanian people have lived for centuries past... The second objective is to teach us how to improve our lives. We have to learn how to produce more in our farms and in factories and offices. But learning these skills is not enough. For we can only accomplish things if all members of the nation work together for a common good. The third objective of adult education, therefore, must be to have everyone understand the national policies of Socialism and Self- Reliance (Lema, Omari & Rajani, 2006, p. 86)

(b) *Broad definition of adult education and participants*

Declaring 1970 as an adult education year Mwalimu Nyerere also defined what adult education meant. For him, adult education was a very broad concept which he defined as learning about anything at all that helps us to understand the environment we are living in and the manner in which we can use the environment in order to improve ourselves. He believed that education was not just something that happens in classrooms but even learning from others and from our own experience of past success or failures. There are no limits as to who can participate in adult education. The assumption is that everyone can benefit from some kind of learning.

Adult education applies to every one of us, without exception. We can all learn more. Those who have never been to school, those who have just attended primary school and those who have attended secondary school or university there is still much more that anyone can learn about our work and about areas of knowledge that they are not taught when they were at school (Lema et al, 2006, p. 93).

(c) *Adult education as lifelong process*

For Mwalimu Nyerere, adult education was something that never stops. It was like a hill which climbs to the skies and gives a view over the surrounding countryside and everybody can climb at least some of the way up, so that all of us can gradually extend our vision and learn more of the things that affect our lives, or which can be made to help our lives. Therefore, for him to live was to learn and to learn was to try to live better. As a matter of fact, such speeches by an important person like a President were not only exciting and educational but they proved to be very instrumental in spearheading the development of adult education in Tanzania at that time.

(d) *The national literacy campaign*

This was another major implication of the second development plan. The 15th Biennial Conference of the Ruling Party- Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in September, 1971, directed that illiteracy in Tanzania should be eradicated by the end of 1975. By any standard this was a gigantic undertaking for any country, let alone for a poor and developing country like Tanzania, for it involved more than five and a half million illiterates. The number of known illiterates towards the end of 1971 was estimated to be about 5.9 million, an increase which was largely due to the villagisation programme and more intensive surveys during the course of the campaign. According to Kassam (1978) in mobilising more than 5 million illiterates, TANU played the leading role from the national level right down the ten-cell level. The adult education committee at the regional, district and ward levels under the Ministry of Education carried out the major task of planning and establishing literacy primers and writing materials, recruiting voluntary teachers and organising their training and supervising the centres.

The literacy classes took place at thousands of adult education centres most of which were located at primary schools while many others operated at a wide range of places such as an office, factory, dispensary, church, community hall, backyards of individuals' houses and large shades of trees. These classes were taught by voluntary teachers majority of them being primary school teachers. In some places the learners themselves built their own special shelters for literacy classes. On 12th August 1975, a National Literacy Examination was administered throughout the country. In summary, it was estimated that the national campaign produced a total of 2 million literates. At the end of 1975 the total number of illiterates was estimated to be 3.9 million which constituted 39% of the total population

of Tanzania. In other words, the illiteracy rate in Tanzania was reduced from 67% in 1967 to 39% at the end of 1975 (Kassam, 1978).

Apart from the national literacy campaign other mass campaigns were launched to make people understand government policies and arise awareness of their role in participating in matters related to their own development (Mushi, 2010). The “*To Plan is to Choose*” for instance was introduced in 1969 at the time the government was launching the Second Year Development Plan (1969-1974) to provide people with popular version of the plan so that they could take part effectively in realisation of its targets. “*The Choice is Yours*” in 1970 was launched for the purpose of enabling learners to participate in decision-making and development, while the “*Man Is Health*”. In 1973 emphasized good health habits and hygiene. In all of these campaigns reading, writing and counting were taught, as well as knowledge that could immediately improve lives.

Other provisions within the Second Development Plan (1969 – 1975) in support of adult education included:

- i) Post literacy programmes comprising of subjects like History, Civics, Geography, English and Vocational Skills were developed to provide continuing education for the neo literates.
- ii) All primary schools were made adult education centres to offer agricultural, domestic science crafts, political education and economics. These centres became part and parcel of post literacy programmes in the mid 1970s.
- iii) Rural libraries were established and the goal became to have a library in every village. The reading of rural newspapers was encouraged to reinforce good reading habits and to ensure that modern knowledge of agriculture and health could reach them.
- iv) In 1973 the Prime Minister’s Directive on Workers Education was issued. All institutions were required to have comprehensive plans for workers’ education ranging from literacy to technical education.

In summary, the phenomenal developments that were witnessed in adult education soon after independence and the years that followed particularly during the Second Five Year Development Plan (1969-1975) justifiably constitute nothing short of a revolution in adult education in Tanzania. During this time, Tanzania was recognised in many parts of the world as having made substantial and exciting strides in adult education in terms of the various policies that

were formulated as well as the different programmes and institutions that were prorated, the organisational and administrative structures that were set up and professional adult education cadre that emerged. Tanzania, acquired the reputation of having a strong political commitment to the cause of mass adult education and of having a conviction in the importance of adult education as a means for development. President Nyerere in particular, instilled an understanding into his citizens of the importance of education and their role in the process of implementation through his numerous speeches. He also taught this in some of the literacy programmes. With these initiatives, Tanzania made impressive gains in the field of adult education especially adult literacy in the 1960s and 1970s. The national adult education drive was characterized by high motivation and expectations among the people and the leadership. The campaign led to high rates of adult literacy from 15% in 1961 to 61% in 1975 and 90.4% in 1986 (Kadege, Keregero, Mlekwa & Mushi, 1992).

The 1980s economic crisis: a turning point

Beginning early 1980s, Tanzania experienced an economic crisis as a result of increase in oil prices, the rise of food imports due to extraordinary drought and floods, and the rise in infrastructure costs connected with the break-up of the East African Community. All these led to a series of government measures to address structural problems in the economy.

Under agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Tanzania began the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) of 1986 – 1990 which resulted in reduction of the expenditure in the social sector, affecting mainly education, health, employment and social welfare. As observed by Tomasevski (1995) the aim of structural adjustment was to eliminate uneconomic, ineffective and wasteful programmes. Unfortunately, the initial main targets, however, were social programmes including education. In view of that, the quality of education and health services deteriorated. Maintenance of the impressive array of social services facilities, provided by aid in the 1970s crumbled. Adult education, including adult literacy, was no longer central to development initiatives. The work - oriented post- literacy programmes which were introduced in 1987 to replace the initial post literacy programmes of 1975 with the purpose of promoting functional literacy and preventing neo-literates from relapsing into illiteracy also declined since they faced the same problem of being adversely affected by the above said economic crises. Within the same context, studies conducted in the 1990s (for example, Sumra, 1990, Kadege et al, 1992) found, for example, that majority of adult education classes were no longer functioning, instead they were characterized by high dropout and low retention rate.

Overall, during this phase, the future of adult education was generally unclear. Even efforts to reach the remaining and the emerging illiterate population became a lower priority among national leaders and bureaucrats as they were preoccupied with the issues of economic recovery. According to Mlekwa (1990), it was a period characterised by the following notable features:

- i) Inadequate monetary and logistic support which resulted into failure of adult education committees at various levels to meet as required and failure of various adult educators and coordinators to be fully engaged in the adult education activities;
- ii) Insufficient sensitisation and mobilisation from political leaders for adult education participation and attendance;
- iii) Low morale among facilitators because of non-payment of honoraria and training;
- iv) Low motivation among learners to attend classes because of the generality of the programmes and lack of suitable and appropriate learning materials;
- v) Inadequate support or poor distribution of the required materials and equipment and;
- vi) Other problems including lack of competent personnel to manage them and lack of adequate feedback and follow up of learning.

1990s – 2015: Renewed commitments to meet international targets

Although, the economic crisis of the 1980s adversely affected the education sector, Tanzania continued to be part of the international community. Therefore, it was also logical to abide by and conform to global and international targets and commitments that were pronounced for educational development. The 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand, was undoubtedly instrumental in defining the framework for the provision of basic education. In addition, the Dakar Framework of Action adopted by the World Forum in Dakar in April 2000 also helped to define and shape the reforms in basic education. The framework embodied a revitalised collective commitment to achieve the following EFA targets by 2015. Goal number 3 and 4 were specifically targeting adult education to:

- promote learning and life skills for young people and adults
- increase adult literacy by 50 per cent.

Tanzania is one of the countries that participated in the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 and also committed to the Dakar Framework for Action of 2000, which gave the world and, in particular, African countries a new impetus to provide educational opportunities to all. Tanzania signed and made a commitment to the implementation of EFA goals. Much like other countries, Tanzania was

required to develop national plans of action in order to achieve EFA goals and further enforce their adoption into national policies.

This phase is suitably named as renewed commitment because Education for All as observed by Bhalalusesa (2007) was not something entirely new in Tanzania. Although, the concept is associated with the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the later 2000 Dakar Framework for Action, the mission of achieving education for all has long existed. Examples of such efforts before 1990 include for example, the adult literacy campaign in 1970 and Universal Primary Education Declaration in 1974.

Further, this phase is also termed as renewed commitment because there were efforts by the government to revamp adult education in the country having realised that adult literacy education was not only a human right but also a tool that helps to improve the conditions of life for the participants and their families. The benchmark of such efforts was the introduction of the Integrated Community -Based Adult Education (ICBAE) programme in 1993. Having made commitment to the 1990 Jomtien Conference Framework for Action and having realised that adult literacy classes were fading out, the government of Tanzania decided to modify the prevailing literacy and post - literacy programmes into something new that was responsive to the learners' needs. The programme was based on models developed in a four -year project (1993 – 1997) supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Canadian International Development Authority (CIDA) in four wards. The government's objective was to expand the programme to cover 2348 wards with enrolment of 6.3 million adults by the year 2003. Unlike the previous literacy and post - literacy programmes the design of the ICBAE took on board income-generating projects and these were meant to serve as participants' entry points and as necessary ingredients of literacy. Literacy skills training was, therefore, made an integral part of the projects and was aimed at those who had never had the chance to learn how to read and write, neo-literates and out-of-school youths, especially girls (Bugeke, 1997).

Introduction of ICBAE went concurrently with inclusion of the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) methodology in 1998 with the purpose of combining adult literacy and social change (Bhalalusesa, 2004). The decision to adopt REFLECT methodology in ICBAE learning circles was reached in recognition of the positive impacts in the countries where it was first used, that is Elsalvador, Bangladesh and Uganda. The REFLECT methodology was based on the theory of conscientization, a theory pioneered by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Emphasis is placed on dialogue and action, awareness raising among population and empowerment. The two initiatives were considered to be the best approaches to adult learning, as they were learner-

centred compared to previous top-down approaches. The aim was to demonstrate how literacy could be used at the community level as one tool and a catalyst in the development of local income-generating activities. Nonetheless, as observed by Mushi (2009), although adult learners and the leadership had hoped for significant improvements in socio-economic development, this did not happen. With the exception of the piloted areas, adult education was not functioning in the rest of the project districts. Nonetheless, following the initial success of the ICBAE model, the government officially adopted it as a country's approach to adult literacy.

Still in the effort to find a more effective way to fight illiteracy within a short time, Tanzania adopted the *Yes I Can* literacy programme in 2008 (MoEVT, 2012). The programme's overall objective was to enhance provision of adult literacy in Tanzania through adaptation of the Cuban *Yo si puedo* literacy model. The programme was delivered through radio, television and DVD and VHS recorders and was implemented within the framework of ICBAE.

Another key milestone during this phase was the establishment of a broad Education and Training Policy in 1995 which encompassed the entire education and training sector. Among others, the policy spelt out major objectives related to adult education. Basic education, functional and post-literacy programmes as well as continuing education were seen as constituting essential components of the educational system. The policy called for the need to provide universal non-formal basic education to out-of-school children and youths. Based on the policy, the Directorate of Adult Education within the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training which was reduced into a unit was reinstated with its own budget under basic education. In order to ensure universal adult literacy and the progress so far made, the policy stipulated that national literacy tests should be conducted after every three years and the programmes on the ground should be functional and relevant to the needs of learners.

Apart from the introduction of the ICBAE alternative ways to reduce illiteracy among adults were sought out. One way was for the government to ensure that all school-age children have access to primary education and therefore no one was likely to grow into an adult illiterate. However, in realization that not all children could adequately be served by the formal education system, the government decided to put emphasis on alternative learning as a complement to basic education. The Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) programme was conceived by the government in collaboration with UNICEF in 1997. It started as a pilot project in 1997–2001. The objective was to mainstream school-age children into the formal system after having them complete a three-year course and sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination. Thereafter, they would be free to compete

for selection by secondary schools. The target group in this project was divided into two cohorts. Cohort One comprised 11–13 year olds and Cohort Two comprised 14–18 year old children and youth.

The Evaluation Report of the pilot programme (Galabawa, 2003) showed that the COBET pilot project made a useful overall contribution to improving access to and quality provision of basic education. Since achievement levels observed in COBET were comparable with those in formal primary schools, COBET had proved itself successful. The government decided to scale out the programme nation-wide in 2003. Although, COBET was meant to be a temporary measure with the assumption that it was going to clear off all out – of - school children, a study to evaluate the future utility of COBET gave enough evidence to prove that the programme was there to stay because Net Enrolment Ratio in primary education was not yet 100%. While it went up to 100% in 2006, it dropped to 95.9% in 2009, 94% in 2011 and 87% in 2013 (MoEVT, 2014). This implied that a group of school-age children were still growing into illiterate young adults.

Another evident government effort to revamp adult education during this time was the development of the *AE/NFE Sub-Sector Medium Term Strategy 2003-2007 resulting from the national status report of the adult and non-formal education sub-sector* (Mushi & Bhalalusesa, 2002). The strategy addressed the problem of the large number of children and youths (11-18 year olds) who were out of school (estimated at 2.5 million by that time) and who could not have access to formal schooling mainly because the formal system did not have the built-in capacity and resources to absorb them. It also addressed the problem of increasing levels of illiteracy among the adult population (defined here as being of 19 years of age and above). Addressing these problems was conceived as an important step that could contribute to poverty reduction and to the sustained social and economic development of the country.

The strategy was operationalised and some tangible results were evident. For example, the number of out-of-school children and youths (11 – 18 year olds) was reduced from an estimated 2.5 million to 1.4 million (Bwatwa & Kamwela, 2010). However, the evaluation of the strategy indicated that there were still a number of target groups who were yet to be reached. The findings also showed that the adult illiteracy rate in the country was 27.5, which according to MKUKUTA report was still high to contribute to the country’s poverty reduction and sustained socio-economic development (MKUKUTA report, 2008/09). The government decided to develop a new strategy for the period of 2010/2011 – 2014/15. The strategy aimed at addressing the problem of remaining illiteracy rate among the adult population as well as the remaining out – of - school children and youth.

While these developments were indeed positive indicators of revamping adult education activities in Tanzania, it was observed that more efforts were still needed to formalise adult education activities and mainstream them into the formal education structure including training and payment of adult education facilitators. The adult literacy survey in eight regions in Tanzania Mainland conducted by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in 2014 reported that the illiteracy rate was still high especially in rural areas (22.4%) and there were vivid indications that the country's illiterate population was growing annually as there were low levels of participation and high dropout in adult education programmes (MoEVT, 2014). This situation was perceived as a big obstacle to achieving the national and international agenda especially MKUKUTA II which had set a target of 80% literacy rate by 2015 if progress towards poverty reduction was to be attained.

The present situation: a back-slide?

Analysis of the current situation is based on the latest Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2016/2017 – 2020/2021 (MoEST, 2018). The government of the United Republic of Tanzania normally sets out its vision, overarching policy and strategic objectives for the education sector in a series of five-year or ten-year Education Sector Development Plans (ESDP) and this practice has been in place since 1997. The latest ESDP covers the five-year period from 2016/2017 to 2020/2021, which is aligned with the current National Five-Year Development Plan 2016/2017 – 2020/2021. The main policy directives within the five years have been spelt out as to: *Ensure out-of-school children, illiterate youths and adults and other vulnerable groups can access quality learning opportunities and thus obtain knowledge and vocational skills (MoEST, 2018, p.49).*

Generally speaking, as observed in the current EDSP (MoEST, 2018), Tanzania has been making great efforts to encourage youths and adults to engage in meaningful skills and education programmes to help improve their abilities, which would enable them to increase their livelihoods. Nonetheless, their performance has not been impressive. In COBET, for example, enrolment was steadily declining from 2005 to 2013, but again increased between 2014 and 2016, dropping off again in 2017. In ICBAE and in post-functional literacy programmes reports show that there was a decline in enrolment in life skills, vocational skills and a small rise in extension services courses and basic literacy as well as income generation programmes. Numbers enrolled have dropped dramatically since 2009 from 1.2 million to under 0.4million in 2016 with a further drop to 0.2million in 2017, falling drastically short of needs. In 2017, ICBAE enrolment accounted for just 21% of learners enrolled in 2011, which translates into an average annual decline of 23%. Overall the sector needs a boost in the coming five years.

It is also important to note that following the launching of the recent Education and Training Policy of 2014, Tanzania introduced fee free policy at lower secondary and pre-primary education. The expanded policy came into force at the beginning of 2016 and led to an immediate increase of 38% in pre-primary enrolment. Enrolment for Form One (first year of secondary education) increased by 44.6% as fees were dropped. Therefore, as indicated in the prevailing ESDP, given this mission to universalize basic education in Tanzania, some trade-offs have to be made within the limited available resources.

In what is anticipated as a light at the end of the tunnel, the Institute of Adult Education has developed a Five Year Strategy on National Literacy and Mass Education with a long-term vision to have a literate informed society for improved livelihood and sustainable development. The strategy is envisaged to serve as a road map for different actors to pursue their role towards increased youth and adult literacy rate in the country (IAE, 2018). The strategy awaits operationalisation. This strategy is not clear whether it is a continuation of the government's strategy for the period of 2010/2011 – 2014/15 which aimed at addressing the problem of remaining illiteracy rate among the adult population as well as the remaining out-of-school children and youth. In any case this is a commendable effort which needs full support from the government.

Although, this paper is based on desk study, there is clear indication that there is very little adult education activities coordinated at national level. While recent national statistics (MoEST, 2019, p. 155-172) show that the adult education sub-sector is composed of two main programmes COBET for out-of-school children and ICBAE (basic and post-literacy, vocational training, and non-formal secondary education) for adults aged 19 years and above, the same is not reflected in the 2020/2021 budget speeches from the two mother ministries responsible for education (MoEST and PORALG). In these speeches nothing is mentioned on the anticipated plans and activities to be undertaken in this financial year regarding the sub-sector.

It is only under the Institute of Adult Education where it is reported that the Integrated Programme for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA) will be implemented and strengthened. Currently, the IAE has also been implementing non-formal secondary education programme nation-wide for out-of-school youths and adults. Whereas it is true that the IAE is an arm of the MoEST in so far as matters related to adult education are concerned, it cannot replace the responsibilities of the parent Ministry in terms of policy planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation for the entire country. This creates further doubts on the reported figures about the participation of adult learners in various programmes. as indicated in the Basic

Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST).

Table 1: *Total Number of Participants in Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes by Sex 2019*

SN	Type of Programme	Male	Female	Total
1	COBET (Cohort 1&2)	35,597	28,411	64,008
2	ICBAE (Literacy and Post Literacy programmes)	43,115	57,982	101,007
3	Intergrated Post Primary Education	273	218	491
4	Open and Distance Learning (Form 1-6)	2,368	3,263	5,631
	Grand Total	81,353	89,874	171,518

Source: MoEST, (2019)

Emerging Issues, Lessons and Recommendations

Emerging issues and lessons

Overall, several issues and lessons can be sieved out from this paper.

The contribution of a strong political will

There is no doubt that adult education can do a lot in helping communities to analyse and solve development problems confronting them. However, in the advent of harsh economic realities and insufficient resources and competing priorities realisation and successful implementation of adult education programmes depends for the most part on the voluntary consent of the government in power in the allocation and distribution of resources. This has been demonstrated very clearly in the paper. The 1970s – 1980s period provides important lessons. The Late President Nyerere in particular, endeavoured to instil an understanding into the citizens the importance of adult education in his speeches. Resources were made available to facilitate community mobilisation and advocacy. In Tanzania today, adult education is not accorded the same status. At Ministerial level, adult education used to form an independent department/unit with its own budget-line. This facilitated coordination of the various stakeholders and providers of adult education in the country. Presently, there is no stand-alone adult education policy and adult education continues to be conceived as second best and dissolved under the umbrella of basic education. While this has an added advantage of cutting down administrative costs, it can also lead into some issues of interest to the

sub-sector to go unnoticed. Therefore, as observed by Massawe (2019), even if there is rationale and good will to boost the sub-sector, the absence of stand-alone adult education policy anchored on a clearly defined stand-alone unit/department implies that, adult education priority continues to be lowly accorded.

Policy continuity in the history of adult education development

Consistency and continuity in our local educational policies which are sometimes turned around by macro/global reform policies is another emerging issue in the history of adult education development in Tanzania. As observed in his paper, immediately after independence, the government became very much concerned with ensuring that education was equitably distributed to all segments of the population particularly adults. Mass adult education was promoted to immediately address the prevailing challenges and problems while at the same time furthering literacy and numeracy. However, this was turned around by macro reforms which were increasingly adopted in the mid-1980s. Given that Tanzania is part of the international community, it became logical to abide by and conform to global and international targets and commitments that were pronounced for educational development. The EFA in 1990 and the Dakar Framework of Action in 2000 both helped to define and shape the reforms in basic education. Tanzania was required to develop national plans of action in order to achieve EFA goals and further enforce their adoption into national policies. Tanzania renewed its commitment and efforts to revamp adult education in the country. Today, Tanzania has ratified and endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) whose goal number 4.6 states that:

By 2030, ensure that all youths and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

At micro level mission of the government is to universalize basic education and has started with removing fees and associated costs for basic education. Primary as well as lower secondary education is now free. Therefore, choices have to be made to balance between micro as well macro based commitments. Given the competing priorities and insufficient resources some other potential initiatives, such as strengthening and revamping adult education programmes are bound to suffer and in fact the graph which went up in the 1900 to 2015 has now gone down again. Very few adult learning centres exist and actively run.

Accurate and reliable statistics

Currently, accurate, reliable and timely information on adult education at all levels is not easily attainable. As a whole, not much research has been done

in the area of adult and non-formal education in Tanzania such that precise information about the number of enrolled adults or instructors has been difficult to find in most cases. As observed by Wanyama (2014) different sources give different figures. This, then, creates a doubtful state of inaccurate and unrealistic data on aspects of literacy rate, number of out-of-school children, enrolment figures, learning centres and so on. At this point, it is imperative to note that the last census was done in 2012 which spelt out the level of adult literacy in the country to be 77.8%. Accordingly, the last large scale survey on the status of adult education was conducted in collaboration by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training team way back in 2014. Since then information on adult education in the country is based on basic education statistics with little qualitative analysis of the statistics.

Sustainability of programmes and the influence of external funding

Going through the history of adult education in Tanzania as analysed in this paper, one can clearly note the influence of external funding in different programmes that were initiated and implemented. Immediately, after independence the government adopted the Fundamental Education Model promoted by UNDP/UNESCO, then Functional Literacy Model by UNESCO. The ICBAE programme, for example, was supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Canadian International Development Authority (CIDA). With the assistance from African Development Bank, ICBAE was scaled up in other eight districts in Tanzania. External funding was also evident with the introduction of REFLECT Methodology as well as the *Yes I Can* model of teaching literacy. All these initiatives started as pilot projects with external assistance and have remained on paper as past records.

Recommendations

On the basis of the emerging issues and lessons learnt, the following recommendations are provided:

- i) *Revive commitment and interest in adult education:* The government needs to revive its commitment and interest in adult education especially today so as to meet both the national and international development targets. Fifty years ago adult education was taken as a tool to create awareness and mobilise the mass towards building an egalitarian society based on African socialism and self-reliance philosophy. Today, adult education is still needed and has the potential to transform the country's economy because adults are the key immediate producers and have a significant role to play building a strong self-reliant economy. Despite its declining popularity among

policy makers, adult basic education remains to be a sound investment as it provides a positive reinforcement in the next generation and enhances the productivity and wellbeing of the current adult population. Similar to what Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) once remarked, human resources constitute the ultimate basis of the wealth of a nation's capital and that natural resources are passive factors of production. On the contrary, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources and build social, economic and political organization and carry forward national development.

- ii) *Create reliable database*: Reviving the political will and national commitment has to go concurrently with developing and creating reliable database on education especially adult education. Currently, accurate, reliable and timely information on adult education at all levels is not easily attainable. Evidence-based information can possibly be achieved if research and evaluation on adult education sub-sector is given due weight. There is a need for planning and conducting national literacy tests as previously recommended so as to establish the current literacy rate in the country.
- iii) *Reinstate adult education unit*: Although, it is true that in Tanzania, the management and administration of the formal education system is currently vested mainly under two Ministries- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), still the MoEST remains the most important decision-maker in the sector. It has the legal mandate for policy formulation, coordination, monitoring, setting standards, quality assurance and quality control of the whole education system. Tanzania expects also to build a self-reliant industrial-based economy and totally eliminate poverty among its people by year 2025. One major tool that the country relies on in attaining such aspirations is continuous adult learning and publicity campaigns. Therefore, there is a need for strengthening and reinstating adult education section to become a self-governing unit under basic education with adequate staffing and independent budget line.

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