

Who Participates in Non-Formal Secondary Education and Why: Findings from Tanzania and Uganda

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Abstract

This study examined the profiles of learners who participated in non-formal secondary education in four centres in Tanzania and Uganda. The aim was to know who participates in this type of education and the reasons for such participation. A comparative embedded-case study design was used to guide the study. The required sample size was obtained by means of various sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires and focus group discussions. The findings indicate the dominance of learners aged between 21 and 30 coming from middle-income families. The reasons for participation are varied. The commonly mentioned reasons included prospects of higher education, prospects of a 'good' job and promotion.

Keywords: Participation, Adult learning, Non-formal secondary education, Tanzania, Uganda.

Introduction

When an adult joins an adult education programme he or she has a reason for doing so. Gaining an understanding of why adults participate in adult education programmes has engaged various adult educators (Boeren, Nicaise & Baert, 2010; Cross, 1981; Tough, 1968); Rubenson, 1977; Boshier, 1973). Most of these scholars consider that adults participate in adult education programmes because they are motivated by psychological issues in the first place. Recent findings have indicated however that the reasons for participation in adult education are more than motivational issues (Boeren, Nicaise & Baert, 2010; Cross, 1981). What then motivates adults who are in non-formal secondary education centres in Tanzania and Uganda? The overall aim of this study, therefore, was to investigate who participates in non-formal secondary education and the reasons for doing so.

Theoretical framework

There have been endless attempts to explain why adults participate in institutionally organised learning. It seems that no single theory addresses this fully. Rather, there are several models of adult participation. The models¹ include Houle's² model (Houle, 1961), Integrated model (Boeren, Nicaise

¹ For more account of these models or paradigms on adult participation, refer to Cross (1982:109-131), Boeren, Nicaise & Baert (2010:57)

² According to Houle (1961:15-16), there are three categories of adult learners: goal-oriented learners; activity-oriented; and learning-oriented learners.

& Baert (2010); Cross's (1981) Chain-of-Response (COR) model; Anticipated Benefits model (Tough, 1979; 1968); Expectancy-Valence paradigm (Rubenson, 1977); Congruence model (Boshier, 1973) and Force Field Analysis (Miller, 1967).

For the purpose of this study, the models are intended to act as guides to gaining an understanding of adult participation in adult education programmes. Most of the models are largely based on cognitive (psychological) aspects of human development and are greatly influenced by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1970; Cross, 1981). Additionally, the models concentrate on the micro situation without taking into account external or global influences. However, among the models, the integrated model (Boeren, Nicaise & Baert, 2010) seems to be more relevant than the others. It is comprised of two major components – the demand and the supply side. “The central unit on the demand side is the individual, who is influenced by socio-economic and cultural factors, and psychological factors, such as motives, barriers, attitudes, confidence and intentions” (Boeren, Nicaise & Baert, 2010:57).

On the other hand,

The core of the supply side is the educational institution itself, characterised by a series of organisational factors relating to the institution as a whole, such as the number of staff, accessibility, the quality of the system, the level of development of the support services and the extent to which it attracts marginalised groups, and its programmes, such as the composition of class groups, the didactical methods and the admission requirements (Boeren, Nicaise & Baert, 2010:58)

The model has the advantage of considering the institutional, national and global context. This may mean that the reasons offered by participants in adult education programmes should be analysed by relating them to the changes that have been taking place in Tanzania and Uganda (at a local/national level) and the what is happening at the global level.

Methods

This study used an embedded case study design in the sense that multiple cases were used. The plan was to have two institutions (non-formal secondary education centres) from each country (one being a government institution and the other being a private/NGO institution). During fieldwork in Uganda it was learned that no institutions had been established by the government. Therefore, both institutions chosen in Uganda were private. The study aimed to interview all four heads of the institutions. This goal was met, but some of the heads were reluctant and even refused to have their voices recorded. The researcher had to agree not to record the interviews in those cases. Four adult educators were accessed. Thirteen adult educators were accessed through questionnaires, while 78 adult learners were contacted in Uganda and 134 adult learners in Tanzania. The questionnaires were distributed and the responses are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample size

Category	Uganda			Tanzania		
	Govern- ment	NGOs	Total	Govern- ment	NGOs	Total
Heads of Institutions	-	2	2	1	1	2
Adult educators	-	8	8	3	2	5

Adult learners	-	78	78	68	66	134
Total	-	88	88	72	69	141

Findings and discussion

The findings are presented based on the two countries – Tanzania and Uganda. First is Tanzania and later on is Uganda.

Tanzania

This study involved 134 adult learners, 41 percent of whom were males. Female informants constituted 66 percent while 3 percent did not indicate their sex. In this regard, the data presented are based on the number of informants, their education level, employment history and age as supplied in answers in the questionnaire. The majority of informants were unemployed (96 out of 134 informants - 72%). Also, most of the informants were ex-primary school leavers (81 informants-60%). Generally, females (89) outnumbered males in the study. I sought to have gender parity by using stratified sampling but since females outnumber males in non-formal secondary education (as it is for literacy classes), more females responded to the questionnaires distributed. Table 1.2a presents information on the characteristics of the research respondents (adult learners).

Table 1.2a: Educational level, Employment status and sex of informants (adult learners) in both institutions (N=134)

			What is your current educational level?				Total
			Not indicated	Primary	Secondary 'Ordinary'	Secondary 'Advanced'	
What is your sex?	Are you currently working to earn a living?	Yes	2	-	-	-	2
		No	0	2	-	-	2
Female	Are you currently working to earn a living?	Yes	3	11	6	4	24
		No	2	37	22	4	65
Male	Are you currently working to earn a living?	Yes	-	9	1	2	12
		No	-	22	5	2	29
Total			7	81	34	12	134

In Tanzania, females are less represented than males in the formal education system, especially at A' level and beyond. Thanks to efforts to implement Education for All (EFA), there is now near gender parity in primary and secondary (O' level) education (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010:17, 47). Prior to EFA, students' families had been paying fees and other school-related costs that were once paid by the government (as a result of structural adjustments), but after 2002 the government of Tanzania reconsidered the policy of cost sharing by abolishing school fees at primary but not post-primary education level (Brock-Utne, 2006; World Bank, 1999). When it comes to the level of education of the participants, as can be learned from Table 1.1b, the majority of learners (around 60%) indicated that their highest level of education was primary education. What about the age distribution of adult learners who participated in the study? Table 1.2b presents the age groups of adult learners.

Table 1.2b: Age distribution of adult learners at both institutions (N=134)

Age group	Frequency	Percent
Not stated	5	4
16-20 years	46	34
21-25 years	45	34
26-30 years	19	14
31-35 years	11	8
36-40 years	5	4
46 + years	3	2
Total	134	100

It is worth noting that age was a determining factor in including or excluding research respondents. The definition of adult education is not straightforward. Age is an important though not the only attribute of a person who is an adult. Table 1.2b shows that the age groups 16-20 and 21-25 were dominant, accounting for 68 per cent in total. In the face of such evidence, it is safe to say that those who participate in adult learning in non-formal secondary education are young adults.

Some studies on adult literacy programmes have concluded that they tend to target the poor (see for example Lauglo, 2001). What about the respondents in this study? To find out the socio-economic status of these adult learners I asked them to state their families' status in relation to other families in their area. The results are indicated in Table 1.3

Table 1.3: Income status of informants' families

Status	Per cent
Missing	3
We are not rich but we manage to live better than most people	7
We are neither rich nor poor, just average	80
We are poorer than most people in our area	10
Total	100

The table indicates that the majority of informants consider their families neither poor nor rich but just average. If we were to categorise these families in terms of high, middle or lower class, it would seem that the majority come from middle-income families relative to others in their locality. This should contrast with adult literacy programmes.

Furthermore, I collected information on the level of education and employment status of mothers and fathers (parents of informants). Table 1.4 shows the results.

Table 1.4: Parents' educational level

Educational level	Mother		Father	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Not stated	7	5	10	8

Below primary education	12	9	3	2
Completed primary education	60	45	46	34
Completed secondary education ('O' level)	34	25	40	30
Completed secondary education ('A' level)	10	8	19	14
Bachelor Degree	2	1	7	5
Master's degree	1	1	5	4
PhD	2	1	3	2
Never went to school	6	5	1	1
Total	134	100	134	100

The table indicates that 45 percent of mothers and 34 percent of fathers were primary school leavers. The majority of informants' parents were primary or secondary (O' level) leavers. The fact that a large portion of parents (55% of fathers and 36% of mothers) have at least received O' level education indicates that the adult learners have some potential cultural capital. What about parents' employment? This is presented in Table 1.5

Table1.5: Parents' employment Status

Employment	Mother		Father	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Not stated	16	12	27	20
Employee in an embassy	1	1	-	-
Statistician in a government ministry	-	-	1	1
Military	1	1	2	2
Bank employee/cashier	2	2	1	1
Peasant	43	32	37	28
Business person	28	21	23	17
District Administrative secretary	-	-	1	1
Teacher	8	6	8	6
Housewife	15	11	-	-
Social development officer	-	-	1	1
Lecturer	-	-	2	2
Driver	-	-	3	2
Deceased ³	3	2	5	4
Not working due to prolonged illness	-	-	1	1
Nurse	6	5	2	2
God's servant	2	2	1	1
Retired officer	1	1	3	2
Accountant	1	1	2	2
Manager	1	1	2	2

³ This is not an employment status. Informants indicated this to communicate that the parent(s) is not working because she/he is dead.

Librarian	1	1	1	1
Councillor	-	-	1	1
Extension/Veterinary/Agricultural Officer	1	1	1	1
Secretary/clerk	1	1	1	1
Employed by an insurance company	1	1	-	-
Medical doctor	-	-	2	2
Director, Ministry of Health	1	1	-	-
Counsellor	1	1	-	-
Self-employed	-	-	1	1
Water and sewerage service employee	-	-	1	1
Total	134	100	134	100

For a country like Tanzania, where the majority of its people depend on agriculture as an economic activity, it is surprising to see that farming/peasantry as an occupation accounted for about 32 percent and 28 percent of mothers' and fathers' occupation, respectively. Parents who engage in business comprised 21% and 17% of mothers' and fathers' employment, respectively. Almost half of the respondents were seemingly in the formal non-agricultural economic sector, some of them in relatively high-status occupations. This suggests that adult learners who participated in the study mainly came from families which could be classified as middle class in Tanzanian occupational distribution, as shown in the detailed listing of parental occupations in Table 1.5.

Fees are paid to access non-formal secondary education and in some cases it is more costly than public secondary education, and yet adult learners join the centres that were studied. I asked the informants, especially adult learners, about their motivation for 'going back to school'. The responses for going back to school ('a second chance') were as follows:

Some of the responses from adult learners in the questionnaires appear as follows (own translation from Swahili):

TZ1/2/264

- a) First of all I want to further my education in order to be liberated in life
- b) I want to have a secondary education certificate so that I join teacher education
- c) I want to learn in order to be educated and to be more modern

TZ2/2/02

- a) I want to be more educated
- b) I want to have a secondary education certificate
- c) To be employed

TZ1/2/32

- a) The first reason is that I want to be a holder of a certificate of secondary education examination
- b) The second reason is that I want to expand my knowledge and be aware of many things to cope with the current situation
- c) Another reason is to have higher education

TZ1/2/62

- a) To have more education and a certificate that will allow me to study at a higher level of education
- b) It will enable me to be promoted at my place of work
- c) It will lead to an increase in my salary

In tabulated form, the responses are summarised and the results are shown in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Reasons for going back to school (Adult learners, N=134)

Reasons	Yes	No	Total
Missed formal secondary education at my age	11	89	100
To meet some employment challenges	22	78	100
Failed PSLE and could not join form one in a public school	3	97	100
Learn English and be able to communicate well	1	99	100
Work-related reasons, e.g., promotion and professional requirements	5	95	100
To gain knowledge of ICTs and other advances	8	92	100
Family pressure, e.g. my husband persuaded me to come here but I don't know why	3	97	100
Education is important for employment and using technology	10	90	100
Cleaning a certificate for employment and further education	11	89	100
Improve my life and educational achievements	45	55	100
Get and advance my general knowledge	16	84	100
Obtain an 'O' Level certificate	19	81	100
For further education purposes	28	72	100

When asked why adult learners join their institution/classes, adult educators, including the heads of institutions interviewed, answered as follows:

TZ/01/AE 1

There are various reasons why students join our institution. Foremost is affordability. Our prices are cheaper than those of others. Also we have experience of adult education programmes. Another factor is that our adult learners are older and so cannot join formal schools.

TZ/02/AE 2:

You are asking why these learners come here...They join our institution for various reasons depending on the individual. Others come because they have been expelled from the formal education system for various reasons. Some adult learners come here because they want to clean their certificate so that they get the necessary qualifications for further studies. Moreover, there are those who have been forced at their place of work to have CSEE, for example teachers, medical doctors and nurses

TZ/02/HI 1

With the expansion of primary education, it means there is greater demand for secondary education. As part of the solution, the government saw the need for our institution to enrol 50.000 adult learners under the open and distance learning programme. So the reasons, some of which you know, are that some adult learners enrol here due to the lack or shortage of places in government secondary schools, for upgrading and employment purposes and to further their education.

A frequent theme in the interviews is that the learners joined these two institutions either for career or job-related reasons or because they hoped to access further or higher education. Age was also

mentioned as a motivating factor for joining adult learning centres. This is hardly surprising because in the formal education system age is among the decisive criteria for being eligible for a certain level of schooling.

Uganda

As noted earlier, two institutions were involved in this study. Different from Tanzania, in Uganda the institutions studied were privately initiated rather than being a privatised extension of an originally publicly established adult education organisation. The characteristics of adult learners who participated in the study from the two institutions (fictitiously named Banda and Wandegeya) in Uganda are presented in Table 2.1a and Table 2.1b.

Table 2.1a: *Characteristics of respondents (adult learners) at both institutions*

Educational level	Institution	Gender			
		Not stated	Female	Male	Total
Not stated	Wandegeya	0	0	1	1
	Banda	1	7	0	8
	Total	1	7	1	9
Primary	Wandegeya	1	4	1	6
	Banda	1	1	2	4
	Total	2	5	3	10
Secondary O' Level	Wandegeya	0	9	1	10
	Banda	1	18	11	30
	Total	1	27	12	40
Secondary A' Level	Wandegeya	0	1	0	1
	Banda	0	12	6	18
	Total	0	13	6	19
Total		4	52	22	78

Table 1a shows that females outnumbered males in the study. This might be a reflection of the gender difference in enrolment because around 70 to 80 percent of the adult learners in the two institutions visited in Uganda were females. Also, from the table it can be learned that the majority of respondents, 59 in total, had an education level above primary education. It is interesting to note that females were so strongly over-represented in these two adult education centres visited because they were, by a small margin, under-represented in the formal education system in Uganda (see UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)⁴, 2010; UNESCO, 2009:330)⁵.

⁴ The information is available at the institute's

website: http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=8000

⁵ There is an increase in participation in secondary education in Uganda. For example, while UIS indicate secondary participation to be at 21 percent of girls and 22 percent of boys in 2010, UNESCO (2009) indicates that in 2006 17 percent and 15 percent of boys and girls respectively were in secondary schools.

Some studies on the educational background of adult education participants, especially in continuing education programmes, have indicated a relationship between participation and the level of education an adult has. Rinne and Kivinen (1993:123) in their study in Finland found that “higher participation rates in adult education were found among those going on to complete university degrees, and lower rates among those who had only taken more modest vocational qualifications”. Their findings are from a developed country with a reputation for having a well-developed education system. However, what this could mean for Uganda is simply that those adults with some form of educational qualifications in the formal system are likely to participate in non-formal secondary education, which is not surprisingly supported by the findings for Tanzania. After all one should remember that for secondary schooling one normally needs to have completed primary school.

The respondents were asked: *How old are you?* They were also asked to give their marital status (the question was: *Are you married?*) and to state whether or not they were employed. Employment is not a straightforward concept for in most cases those who are in fact earning a living from work in the informal economic sector will nonetheless consider themselves unemployed. To minimise such ambiguity, I asked the question: *Are you currently working to earn a living?* The results are shown in Table 1b.

Table 2.1b: Employment status, marital status and age of adult learners (frequencies)

Marital status	Age	Employment status			Total
		Not stated	Yes	No	
Not stated	Not stated		1		1
	Total		1		1
Yes	Not stated	1	2	1	4
	18-20 years old	0	1	0	1
	21-25years old	0	2	0	2
	26-30 years old	0	4	1	5
	31-35 years old	0	8	0	8
	36-40 years old	0	6	2	8
	41-45 years old	0	3	1	4
	46 + years	0	2	0	2
	Total	1	28	5	34
No	Not stated	0	1	0	1
	18-20 years old	0	4	5	9
	21-25years old	0	7	8	15
	26-30 years old	1	7	8	16
	31-35 years old	0	1	1	2
	Total	1	20	22	43

Table 2.1b shows that the age of adult learners varied considerably. However, the majority of respondents (48 out of 78) were relatively young adults, aged between 18 and 30. About 16 adult learners were over 30. The same table shows that more than half of the respondents were unmarried, suggesting they had less responsibility than someone who is married. However, 42 respondents (7 of whom were unmarried) mentioned having children at school. Therefore, while more than a half the respondents were unmarried, more than a half (42 respondents) also claimed to have children at school, which had implications for the adult social roles these learners have while also attending school. Forty-eight respondents stated that they were working to earn a living. It appears that most respondents had claims on their time other than going to school, partly because of earning a living, and/or partly due to the time involved in raising children.

Adult educators were also accessed. Their educational level, nature of employment and gender are presented in Table 2.2. The table indicates that half of the adult educators were part-timers. Seven out of eight were university graduates. One respondent did not mention his educational level. These sample characteristics may reflect the contrasting nature of educators in non-formal secondary schools as compared to the untrained volunteers in past literacy programmes. In schools like institutions in the present study, the educators were trained and seemingly paid roughly the same as teachers in ordinary schools. However, part-time contracts appear to be common in these institutions.

Table 2.2: Gender, educational level and employment status of adult educators

Employment			Educational level		
			Not stated	Degree	Total
Employed	Gender	Female		2	2
		Male		2	2
		Total		4	4
Part-timer/Contract	Gender	Male	1	3	4
		Total	1	3	4

Does the socio-economic background of adult learners matter?

Some studies on adult literacy programmes have concluded that adult literacy programmes tend to target the poor (see for example Lauglo, 2001). What about the respondents in this study? To find out the socio-economic status of the adult learners who participated in this study I asked them to state their families' status in relation to other families in their area. The results are indicated in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Income status of respondents' families

Status	Per cent
Missing	3
We are not rich but we manage to live better than most people	7
We are neither rich nor poor, just average	80

We are poorer than most people in our area	10
Total	100

The table indicates that the majority of respondents considered their families to be neither poor nor rich but average. If these families are categorised in terms of high, middle or lower class, it would seem that the majority came from middle-income families relative to others in their locality. This contrasts with adult literacy programmes where, as noted earlier, most participants and/or their families are poor.

Table 2.4 indicates that 41 percent of respondents considered their families to be neither poor nor rich but average. If we were to attempt a rough categorisation of “relative” high class, middle class, and lower class, it appears that the majority of the families were middle-income families in relation to other families in their locality. This contrasts with adult literacy programmes which reportedly mainly target the poor.

Table 2.4: Income status of respondents’ families

	Frequency	Per cent
Not stated	10	13
We are among the better-off in this district	5	6
We are not rich but we manage to live well	29	37
We are neither rich nor poor, just average	32	41
We are poorer than most people in our home area	2	3
Total	78	100

I also collected information from the respondents on the level of education of their parents (Table 2.5). The table indicates that 46 per cent of mothers and 26 per cent of fathers were primary school leavers or had less than primary education.

Table 2.5: Parents’ educational level

Educational level	Mother		Father	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Not stated	5	6	4	5
Less than primary education	15	19	9	12
Completed primary education	20	26	10	13
Completed secondary education (‘O’level)	11	14	17	22
Completed secondary education (‘A’level)	8	10	9	12
Bachelor Degree	11	14	22	28
Master’s degree	2	3	4	5
PhD	1	1	0	0
Never went to school	4	5	1	1
Deceased	1	1	2	3
Total	78	100	78	100

The table further shows that most parents had a high education level than primary school, suggesting that the bulk of these learners were relatively “better schooled”. For example, taking the education of the father, if you add the percentages of those with O’ level education and PhDs at least 67 per cent of the learners came from homes where one of the parents had at least completed O’ level. Moreover, in a third of the cases the highest level of parents’ education was a Bachelor’s degree. Thus, the findings suggest that adult learners in the centres visited were children of the “educated middle class” in Uganda.

What about parents’ employment? The parents’ employment is presented in Table 2.6. The table indicates that peasant farming was the leading occupation of most adult learners’ mothers, whereas 15 per cent of fathers were employed in business. The word peasant must be treated with care since it is a diverse category in terms of income, but most peasants in Uganda are subsistence farmers using traditional tools (for example, hand hoes) rather than being involved in mechanised agriculture. In general, the table suggests that parents’ employment covers different types of employment and the categorisations used makes it difficult to identify their socio-economic status more precisely.

Table 2.6: Parents’ employment

Employment	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Not stated	21	27	23	30
Peasant	11	14	13	17
Business person	12	15	10	13
Teacher	5	6	4	5
Lecturer	2	3	-	-
Housewife	-	-	6	8
Deceased	5	6	4	5
Nurse	-	-	4	5
Retired officer	1	1	-	-
Accountant	1	1	-	-
Manager	3	4	1	1
Extension/Veterinary/Agricultural Officer	1	1	1	1
Medical Doctor	1	1	2	3
Self-employed	1	1	-	-
Police officer	3	4	2	3
Carpenter	1	1	2	3
Plumber	1	1	1	1
Office messenger	1	1	-	-
Military officer	-	-	1	1
Lawyer	-	-	1	1
Director	-	-	1	1
Travel agent	-	-	1	1
Secretary/clerk	-	-	1	1
Total	78	100	78	100

Taking into account the families' socio-economic status of the adult learners who participated in the study, most of them had the possibility of joining formal private secondary schools rather than non-formal secondary schools. Thus, I enquired into the reasons why these adult learners had joined the centres that participated in the study. The open-ended question was: *Why are you taking this course at this school/centre rather than in formal, regular, full-time secondary schools?* The responses varied but were thematically grouped and a summary of the respondents' responses are presented in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7: Reasons for joining non-formal secondary education centres and not formal, regular secondary schools(N=78)

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Institutional characteristics (for example no uniform requirements, no punishment, good teaching)	30	70
Earning while learning	22	78
Affordability	15	85
Proximity of the institution to home or place of work	7	93
Flexibility/time convenience and/or shortened learning time	31	69
Employment and life advancement	40	60
Obtain O' and/or A' Level certificate; certificate cleaning; further education	32	68

The table indicates that 30 per cent of adult learners joined the two centres because they were attracted by (or found convenient) some of their characteristics. For example, some adult learners stated that the requirement of putting on a uniform in formal secondary school is a hindrance to attending a formal school, presumably for financial reasons. On the positive side, the acceptable lenience of school discipline and good teaching of the two institutions were attractive to some. About 40 per cent of adult learners indicated employment prospects and general life advancement as reasons for joining their centres. A cross-section of responses is as follows:

UG1/02/015:

- a) Because it is near my workplace

UG1/02/016:

- a) Because it is near my home
- b) I wanted to work as I study

UG1/02/01:

- a) I am doing this course at this centre because my parents cannot afford to pay for me to attend a regular full-time secondary school
- b) Secondly as the older child, my parents want me to stay with my siblings to take care of them while they [parents] are staying in the village.
- c) Studying at this centre gives me time to do housework in the daytime and then in the evening I walk to school

UG2/02/50:

- a) Because it is for adults and I am an adult
- b) Because it caters for my problems

UG2/02/53:

- a) It is convenient for me while I am working

UG2/02/54:

- a) I have to work first

- b) I have other responsibilities to fulfil before coming to school
 - c) It is conducive for me
- UG2/02/55:
- a) The time available for me is in the evening after work, which does not allow me to attend school on a regular full-time basis.

These extracts as well as the findings in Table 2.7 show that many of the reasons adult learners offered relate to expense or the practicality of location and timetabling. Few if any mentioned failing to get into a formal secondary school as a reason for joining the non-formal education centre.

However, financial reasons (either fees or opportunity costs) seem to be quite common. Therefore, the question is why are these adult learners in non-formal schools paying more money than they would have done had they earlier in their lives entered a secondary school? Several answers might be suggested (which, however, were not mentioned by the respondents): a) 'missed the bus' earlier either because they had done too poorly in primary schools, or they started and dropped out of secondary school; b) they did not then have the money to start in the school they could have entered; and c) these adult learners may have entered non-formal centres because in their present life condition the studied centres were the only ones accessible to them.

Conclusion

The questions that the study answered empirically concerned the profiles and reasons of adults who participate in non-formal secondary schools. The findings show that most of the participants in the centres studied were aged between 21 and 30, although some participants belonged to other age groups. The reasons for participation varied: institutional characteristics (for example, no uniform requirements, no punishment, good teaching); earning while learning; affordability; proximity of the institution to home or place of work; flexibility/time convenience and/or shortened learning time; employment and life advancement; obtain O' and/or A' Level certificate; certificate cleaning; and further education. Given the current situation whereby public and private secondary education cannot accommodate all people in need of secondary education and because of adult life circumstances, non-formal secondary education will continue to be an important means of making secondary education available to the masses. This study used four centres in two countries. This number seems small given the nature of comparative studies. A more detailed and comprehensive study could be carried out to map adults' profiles and their reasons for going back to school.

Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges Professor Jon Lauglo of the University of Oslo for close supervision during PhD dissertation writing. It is from this dissertation that most of the information in this article has been extracted. The author also acknowledges the staff and PhD candidates (2008–2012) at the Institute of Educational Research, Faculty of Educational Sciences (University of Oslo, Norway) for their contributions in different forms.

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