African governments are increasingly reviewing and reforming their education systems in order to eliminate illiteracy and ensure equitable access to quality basic education for their populations. Many development partner agencies are committed to assisting these countries in their quest to achieve quality basic education for all. One of the areas in which assistance is most required is that of providing for adults who missed out on basic schooling. In this regard it is widely appreciated that expanded adult education and functional literacy are basic requirements for economic, cultural and social development, and also for ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens to participate in the process of national development. Furthermore, there is also the recognition that local communities have an important role to play in terms of contributing to the development process through use of their traditional local knowledge systems and practices.

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Non Formal Education (ADEA WG-NFE) has provided support to African countries in most of these areas since its inception in 1996. This has been done in most cases by engaging with NFE stakeholders in the countries concerned and using existing structures or encouraging the formation of such structures and networks. Through this process of engagement and formation of Country Working Groups for NFE, much has been achieved in advancing adult basic education. This special edition of the ADEA WG-NFE newsletter is devoted to illustrating such achievements through the example of one of the most successful countries in this area of work.

Burkina Faso is distinguished by a diversity of rich cultures, languages and traditional knowledge systems, but it is burdened by an illiteracy rate of 74%, high levels of unemployment and a stagnating formal education system that is in a state of crisis. As such, a central feature of the country’s Ten Year Basic Education Development Plan (2000-2009) is a strong commitment by the state to non-formal education. The Country NFE Working Group in Burkina Faso is known as the “Association for the Promotion of Non Formal Education (APENF). This group has been given the opportunity to use this edition of the newsletter to highlight projects and activities that show how commitment to NFE is being translated into action, and the role that ADEA is playing in helping to achieve NFE goals. The introduction by A. Byll-Cataria reminds us of the strategic moves APENF is taking to promote and sustain NFE. A. Niamego gives us an overview of APENF’s activities since its inception in 1996, whilst R. Ouedraogo emphasises activities related to implementing restructuring proposals and involvement of local communities. F. Niada reviews the use of REFLECT techniques for empowering local communities and E. Zongo deals with the use of newspapers in local languages to reach newly literate learners. R. Gagliardi, J. Poda, et al. deal with the integration of scientific and traditional knowledge to facilitate ownership of the learning process. P. Lefoka and H. Hildebrand provide a diversion from Burkina Faso by looking at ways in which NFE policy planning could benefit the education system in Lesotho and Ethiopia.

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Since its creation in 1996, APENF (Association for the Promotion of Non-Formal Education) has taken initiatives which have, among other things, led to:

- A better knowledge of the reality of NFE in Burkina Faso;
- The facilitation, at the sub-regional level, of reflections on the major concerns of this sector (for example, taking account of traditional knowledge in basic education programmes);
- Impact analyses of literacy programmes, etc.

On the other hand, the situation of NFE has changed. In fact, in the sub-region, discussions and reflections conducted in Niger, Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso have resulted in the creation of the Karanta Foundation and highlighted a regional, sub-regional strategy for NFE.

In the country itself, a framework of reference (PDDEB: Ten Years Plan for the Development of Basic Education) for all the actors of basic education has emerged from a national dialogue, and a national forum on literacy has resulted in the creation of a national fund for the development of NFE. Some other important elements of this forum are:

- The clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders
- The integration of the gender issue in literacy and training programmes
- The definition of a strategy giving value to NFE achievements, by its use in administrative proceedings
- The revitalisation of the national sub-committees on languages.

These are recommendations which have been validated by the Burkina Faso Government. Besides, during these last few years, such innovations as Non-Formal Basic Education Centres, bilingual schools and community schools have come into existence. This shows that in Burkina Faso, the field of basic education is now changing and its evolution is marked by promising reflections and initiatives (with impacts beyond the national frontiers), as well as by a new definition of the roles and responsibilities of the partners involved, for a quality education.

Therefore, Burkina’s partners for development should actively support this evolution so that, within the framework of a coherent national education for all strategy, they may come to appropriate solutions on the levels of quantity and quality.

It is time for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) to consider how the Working Groups can develop a synergy and be complementary, in order to join the on-going reflections on girls’ and women’s education; teacher training; production of textbooks and didactic materials; development of quantitative and qualitative statistical data; financing of education; NFE, etc. These are the challenges that we have to meet. The ADEA Working Group on Non Formal Education (ADEA WG-NFE), whose philosophy has always been to support local dynamics, is ready to carry on and accompany the efforts made by APENF.

The last discussions within the ADEA Steering Committee insisted on the contributions of the Working Groups to the follow-up of Education For All (EFA) and to the corresponding national action plans, co-ordinated by the concerned country. In Burkina, the socio-economic environment is very favourable, especially with the creation of a Secretariat of State for NFE. At international level, more and more co-operation agencies include NFE in their support strategy to basic education programmes. Thus, the co-operation programmes of the Netherlands, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Austria, France and the SDC in Burkina, all include a NFE component. The opportunity of such a favourable climate should be seized to reinforce the already existing dialogue about NFE, in line with the implementation of PDDEB.
Interview with Anatole Niameogo

Co-ordinator of the Association for the Promotion of Non-Formal Education (APENF) / ADEA Country Working Group on Non Formal Education, Anatole Niameogo is, by training, a teacher. He established the foundation of a national policy for literacy. He also developed NFE through the Basic Non Formal Education Centres (CEBNF). Here, in an interview with Evariste Zongo, a journalist, Anatole apprises us of the background of NFE in Burkina Faso, explains what is at stake in a much criticised education system, and comments on the role and contribution of APENF.

Evariste Zongo: Within what framework is NFE developing in Burkina Faso?

Anatole Niameogo: NFE is developing in the context of considerable under-schooling (40% enrolment rate in 2000), school failures and drop-outs, and even the rejection of education in many localities. In a village in the Seno province in Sahel, about 30 km from Ouagadougou, some parents told us they no longer trusted school because since it was built during Thomas Sankara’s revolution in 1983, none of its students has become a civil servant. On the other hand, young people have been less attracted by agriculture and stock-breeding, and the number of unmarried mothers in the village has tripled. This shows that NFE has many challenges to meet in Burkina Faso to contribute to the increase of education supply, improve its quality of courses and reconcile education with the society.

E.Z: What is the history of APENF and its objectives?

A.N: APENF was created on June 17, 1997 after ten meetings. Three members of the ADEA Working Group on Non-Formal Education attended the first one on December 11, 1996. During these meetings, the fundamental texts of the Association (status and rules of procedures) were written, and later (17 June), the bureau was put in place with a chairman and an honorary chairman, a co-ordinator, a deputy co-ordinator, a general secretary, an assistant general secretary, a treasurer, an assistant treasurer and two auditors. A scientific committee was also established with a consultative role in all technical and scientific questions. APENF was legally approved on July 23, 1999.

The main objective of APENF is the promotion of NFE as it is defined in the Education Law of May 9, 1996 (Chap. II, Article 18): “non-formal education is any education and training activity structured and organised outside school and intended for any person wishing to receive a specific training outside school”. The Association tries to contribute to a closer linkage between education and society, especially by developing literacy and specific technical and vocational training in national languages for better management of economic activities. The Association also attempts to facilitate communication and sharing of information between the ministries in charge of education, non-government organisations (NGOs) and technical and financial partners (TFP) in order to promote NFE thanks to a greater synergy of actions.

E.Z: Your association conducted a state of the art study on NFE in Burkina Faso in 1997: What were your findings?

A.N: Our first extensive activity was a state of the art study on NFE conducted in 1997 in Burkina Faso to ascertain who is doing what, where and how in the field of NFE in our country. Most of the information collected during this nationwide survey is proof that the study was really necessary. It enabled us to identify 400 institutions providing NFE, among which 20% are technical state services and 16% rural associations. The institutions developed between 1923-1997. Their main objective is the social and economic development of the people in the areas of intervention (45 provinces of Burkina). The fields in which they work are: education, health, environment, food security, handicrafts, agriculture, cattle-breeding, home economics and hydraulics. The themes of the other specific technical training sessions (STT) delivered are computer science, journalism, theatre, trade-unionism, crafts, management, reproduction health, domestic science and sewing. The good effects of these STTs are positive change of
attitude, improvement in living conditions, better management of economic activities, income, health, farming techniques and more dynamism of rural organisations.

As for the results, 43,224 persons were trained at the initial literacy stage while 11,283 benefited from basic complementary training and STTs during the 1995-1996 campaign. Twenty seven national languages and three foreign ones (French, English and Arabic) are used as languages of instruction. The teaching modes are diverse and varied. The most used is the lecture. NFE initiators are mostly corporate bodies. Funding allocated to NFE during the 1995-1996 campaign amounted to 5,449 million CFA, of which 89% was used.

E.Z: What impact does NFE have on the education system in Burkina Faso?

A.N: At the level of quantity, NFE increases and reinforces the achievement of basic education for all throughout life. At the level of quality, it contributes to the improvement of formal education, by showing the way forward through innovative practices which have proved successful. For example, four partners comprising one international NGO donor, two national NGOs and a state service, combining their financial, research and implementation efforts, have managed to reduce the school years of primary education and preparation for the examination to enter secondary schools from 6 to 5 years. This was achieved thanks to innovations linked especially to a judicial use of the mother tongue. Bilingual education is gaining ground in Burkina and will undoubtedly witness the return of national languages as the media of learning in formal education, which is recommended in the Ten Years Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB 2000-2009).

Next, NFE does have an impact on development: the impact study of 14 NFE programmes, undertaken after the state of the art study, notes that “on the level of quality, the providers say that all the programmes have generally resulted in the improvement of the living conditions of the people in their intervention area: receptivity to changes, better management of resources and increase of productivity”. This orientation of NFE towards the improvement of learners’ living conditions, explains why in some regions relatively favoured by nature (fertile land for agriculture and stock-breeding), there are parents enrolling in literacy centres while, at the same time, they refuse to send their children to school or merely take them out to send them to the fields or to herding. On the contrary, having stayed in literacy centres, many parents have a more positive attitude towards school for their children.

E.Z: After 4 years, what is your evaluation of APENF’s activities?

A.N: In a report for a Prospective Stock-taking Study (1999) commissioned by ADEA, the assessment of APENF after two years of existence showed that the achievements and “significant openings” identified with the Country Working Group (CWG) are of various kinds. On the one hand, the achievements associated with the “products” and, on the other, the ones related to “processes”. Achievements in terms of “products” (publications, reports, etc.) are tightly linked to activities; those related to “processes” are more about the impact of activities on the
“structuring” of the CWG. CWG members mentioned the importance of the products resulting from activities, but it is mainly in terms of “process as” that the most significant openings were identified. Indeed, the CWG has reached a certain degree of maturity in its functioning. The members have learnt to become acquainted with each other, how to work together and to trust each other. They are aware of the different aspects of the part the CWG can play and have a clearer vision of perspectives and strategies.

**E.Z:** Does the report identify other openings?

**A.N:** There are six “significant openings”- the field of NFE in Burkina Faso is better known, and the dialogue between the various NFE partners is established and in progress. As for the CWG, NFE concepts and strategies are discussed within the group and brought to the attention of other partners. The CWG is a place where its members receive training, and a structure facilitating exchanges and joint activities at the sub-regional and international levels. It will also be noted that through its first activities, the CWG has identified its strengths, its weaknesses, its needs and prospects for the future. The notion of “added value” was central to the idea of creating NFE CWGs. It refers to the advantages the members draw from their participation in CWGs for their current activities in their respective institutions. It also refers to the specific value of such a group in the promotion of NFE if compared to the other existing structures of dialogue and co-ordination in this field.

**E.Z:** What is this added value made of?

**A.N:** The analysis of the “added value” contained in the report concludes that the CWG helps its members improve their activities in the institutions for which they work by, for example, having a better knowledge of the field of NFE. The state-of-art Study, by giving information on the field of NFE (active organisations, target population, teaching methods, links between training activities and other development activities, etc) has enabled the CWG members to know more about the context of their intervention. For example, thanks to the gathered information, some members discovered organisations they had common points with, could identify the most current needs of NFE actors to better design their support activities, etc.

Through activities such as the State of the art Study, the restitution of the PADLOS studies or, more simply, the mutual information on their activities, the CWG members have gained a better knowledge of the existing experiences in Burkina Faso, especially the “best practices”. This is one of the key dimensions of the value the CWG adds to the current activities of its members, and a working line the group intends to develop.

One can also mention a better awareness of sub-regional experiences and international discussions on NFE in other countries (for example, through the exchange visit on the training of members of local assemblies in Senegal or the workshop organised jointly with IJPE). This knowledge can be re-invested by some members in their current activities. The CWG being a special place to develop information and experience exchange, the members appreciate this opportunity to exchange views and discuss ideas with persons belonging to, or having relations with different structures of the education system. The discussions are often more informal and open than in the more formal professional context and facilitate the current activities of the CWG members.

The CWG strengthens its members’ commitments to NFE. As participants of the CWG, members find a “moral” support which encourages them to carry on their activities for the development of NFE. The CWG alleviates their feeling of marginality and reinforces their determination to improve the quality of their activities and make them known. On a more professional and political level, the CWG’s activities and the common experiences put together give members motivation to strengthen the advocacy for NFE. This advocacy serves, in the short and the long run, the interests of the different institutions the members belong to, and thus constitutes an “added value” to the CWG.

**E.Z:** Is it possible to speak of factors favourable to the “production of the added value”?

**A.N:** Yes, indeed. Activities must meet needs felt in common by CWG members. If it is not possible for activities to concern the whole CWG in the same way, they must at least meet the needs of the majority and be recognised as relevant. In the group, this necessitates listening to others, consensus and taking into account everybody’s expectations. Members should, as much as possible, be able to participate in the activities of the CWG. The activities which brought much satisfaction to CWGs are those which involved a great number of its members. The active participa-
Interview with Anatole Nameogo

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Capitalisation of experiences is one of the fundamental mechanisms of the production of the "added value"; it precisely refers to the process by which the CWG membership can reinvest what they have learnt within the CWG's current activities. This capitalisation includes at least three essential stages: the exchange of information, the sharing and implementation of the "lessons learnt". Information exchange also depends on the diversity of structures to which CWG's members belong (if they belong to a wide range of institutions, the diversity of information shared is larger). There is also the position of each member in their respective institution (a higher position means an easier access to more determinant political information); the capacity of CWG to establish links with grass-roots organisations and state decentralised structures; and the mechanisms put in place within the CWGs for information flow (regularity of meetings, written reports, the media, etc.).

The members expect the CWG's to help them learn from the information received, and the experience shared. The use of the "lessons learnt" enables the members to benefit mutually from their respective expertise or to support each other in the innovations they wish to introduce in their work (this idea is conveyed by the members in their plan to follow-up and experiment together some elements of the REFLECT method).

E.Z: How does the CWG function?

A.N: The CWG must be able to give support to its members in their personal, professional and political commitment to NFE. For the members to reinforce their personal commitment to the development of NFE and for them to reinvest this commitment in their current activities, they must be able to work in a climate of confidence - listening to each other, seeking consensus, stability of membership (encouraging members to stay within the group for a long time), ability to welcome new members and to open up to new ideas, transparency of financial procedures and decision-making. The commitment is strengthened if the CWG brings a supplement of legitimacy to its members. The factors of legitimacy (granted by the peers, the state structures, etc.) are especially: support to CWG by the institutions to which its members belong, legitimacy given to CWG by external actors (ADEA, international organisations, etc.), visibility (media, etc.) of CWG activities, the legal status of CWG (since 23 July 1999), and the personal contacts of CWG members and their capacity to mobilise other groups or networks.

E.Z: What are APENF’s ambitions?

A.N: The ambition of any association created for a precise goal is naturally to achieve that goal, as far as possible, in the shortest possible time. Our ambition is and remains the promotion of NFE for sustained human development in Burkina Faso. For this, activities have to be well considered, well planned and well supervised, bringing “added value” to what is already being done in the country for NFE. In other words, our group, which does not want to replace anyone and certainly not to give lessons to anyone, must give an added incentive to the education system. It will do so through its commitment and it being open to more promising innovative experiences than it is to disseminate, suggest or promote.

E.Z: What solutions does APENF propose for the burkinabe education system?

A.N: I do not think we can have any pretension to suggest solutions for the burkinabe education system. And anyway, to whom would we make the suggestions? On the contrary, I believe that with the policy of decentralisation which will lead to the decentralisation of education problems and therefore of their solutions, the option of “have it done” decided by the first national forum on literacy (September 1999), and the creation of a National Fund for the development of non formal education, our working group will play its part in the concert of efforts expected from all actors in the framework of the PDDEB. It remains clear that this must be translated, as in the last four years, into significant openings in NFE, especially as an “added value” brought into the same field.
While NFE’s place is relatively marginal in the development policies of the country’s education system, the excitement it is causing tends to give this form of education some legitimacy. This impetus results from the creation of an ADEA Country Working Group on Non-Formal Education (NFE) and from the Ten years Basic Education Development Plan 2000-2009 which aims, among other goals, at the quantitative and qualitative development of formal and non-formal basic education. It rarely happens that a plan gives such priority to NFE, with clearly stated ambitions to increase literacy rate from 26% to 40%, a serious option in the economic and social development process of the country. The recent creation of the Secretariat of State for NFE and literacy has also given a new impetus to this form of education, and shows the will to strengthen the State’s capacity in this field.

For a long time, NFE had been considered as second-rate education, intended for a specific rural population. Because of the interest taken in this type of education and its contribution to illiteracy reduction, NFE has become a form of education that cannot be ignored for the economic and social development of the country. In the Burkina Faso Education Act, it is defined as “any educational and training activity structured and organised outside school. It is intended for any person wishing to receive a specific training outside school”. As for David Evans, he defines NFE as “any educational activity organised outside the framework of the established formal system, as a separate activity or as an important element of a larger activity intended to serve clients and to reach identified instructional objectives”.

All these definitions tend to legitimise non-formal education as a form of education, which can be a complement to formal education.

THE EVOLUTION OF NFE

Considering the challenge of curtailing illiteracy through a diversity of providers, it is necessary to plan a programme for the development of the NFE sector. What is the planning strategy to be adopted by an African country such as Burkina Faso where the 74% illiteracy rate is one of the highest on the continent? Burkina Faso is still far from the Education For All Literacy objective reaffirmed during the World Education Forum (Dakar 2000). In this country, NFE is developing in a context where the formal education system is in crisis, with many factors favourable to its growth: the demographic boom, the financial and economic crisis accompanied by an increase of unemployment affecting the outputs of the classic education system at higher and higher levels and the weaknesses of the formal education system. The present trends of NFE are a diversified provision of education, the search for new sources of financing, a better quality of teaching and a more efficient management and administration of the education system.

The evolution of NFE in Burkina Faso is marked by a few essential elements:

1) The creation of an ADEA Country Working Group on Non-Formal Education known as the Association for the Promotion of Non-Formal Education (APENF), and the interest many research institutions and universities show in the issues of literacy and national languages;

2) The Ten Years Basic Education Development Plan, a turning point because of the State’s commitment to NFE;

3) A major institutional support through the creation of the Secretariat of State for Non-Formal education and literacy, recommend- ed in the conclusions of the first national forum on literacy (20-24 September 1999).
THREE STAGES OF NFE IN BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso began the struggle against illiteracy immediately after Independence. Since 1960, the struggle has evolved through three main stages (cf. A. Niaméogo, 1996):

1) Following the experiences of catholic and protestant missions, and of the NGOs Frères Des Hommes, the State deeply engaged in literacy and adult training programmes, with the creation of rural schools (1961-1972) and training centres for young farmers. Since the 70’s, different State structures have been charged with the management and development of the national policy. Hence, several initiatives have been introduced: adult evening classes; cultural mutual aid; the UNESCO/Haute Volta project “Equal access to education for women and girls” (1967-1977) designed after the Congress of Teheran on “functional literacy as a source of economic development”.

2) Faced with the important demand for adult basic education (literacy and training), the State set up different structures for the development and management of literacy programmes for NFE, such as: the National Board for Permanent Education (1974-1978); the Department of Functional and Selective Literacy (1978-1983); the National Institute for Adult Literacy and Training (1983), which, since 1987, has become a Direction Générale, after the creation of the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy (MEBA). Designing all the major orientations of literacy programmes, this Direction is in charge of programming and implementing literacy activities. Specific programmes have been conducted: intensive functional literacy activities called “Commando” for 30,000 illiterates during the Popular and Democratic Revolution with 13,700 declared literate at the end of the programme and in the same revolutionary enthusiasm, the “Bantaaré” literacy campaign in 1988 intending to make more than 10,000 women literate, resulted in the effective literacy of 5,261 women. Since the 80’s, with the setting up of the State’s institutions, local associations and basic communities have been more active in implementing and managing NFE programmes. They are now more numerous, and are conducting NFE programmes more or less successfully. They contribute to the increase of literacy levels and mainly to the retention of literacy skills thanks to training and upgrading of skills.

The literacy programmes of the last ten years (1990-1999) have resulted in about 351,000 potentially literate persons in a population where the illiterate population is approximately 74% (i.e. a little more than 7,600,000 persons on the basis of the 1996 general census). To intensify the struggle against illiteracy and for a better integration of the youth, there is need to:

- build and provide equipment for permanent Literacy and Training Centres and/or Non-Formal Basic Education Centres in the 4,000 villages of Burkina;
- recruit and train 4,100 Development Community Animators (DCA);
- produce and distribute 21,300 booklets for learners, 18,000 guides for DCAs during the planning period;
- implement and experiment new functional literacy and qualifying post-literacy curricula, especially in favour of 9-14 year old drop-outs and out-of-school children in the Non-Formal Basic Education Centres;
- implement an efficient literacy and post-literacy programme for young people.

The question asked at the beginning of the 70’s on the necessity of planning NFE or not, is no longer relevant. Nowadays, the question is to know if NFE should be planned and organised as a national system parallel to the formal education system, and how to make it more operational and more efficient. Should it be co-ordinated at the national level with a decentralisation of planning and administration departments at the lower levels (regions, provinces, departments, villages, etc.)? Should NFE be entrusted with individual providers and their sponsoring agencies as the practice is at present? In other words, develop the strategy of having it done by others?
Since NFE is fully a part of the PDDEB, policy-makers want a better organisation, the co-ordination of actors and their synergy to reach the plan’s objectives. Consequently, NFE has to be planned. Yet, it is important to take into account how specific the system is, as its success is also due to the flexible methods in the management of programmes. The NFE sector is relatively poorly equipped, lacking facilities, personnel and financial resources. Investments have to be managed in a rational way. In the past, the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the programmes, for example the Commando and Bantaaré literacy campaigns, were not up to the expected results.

**PLANNING PROCESS AND APPROACH**

Different partners are implementing NFE programmes not without difficulties, because a real co-ordination of activities is lacking. Such a situation characterised by modest planning at the central level results in a duplication of efforts, overlapping of programmes and competition to obtain the rare existing resources.

Three levels of planning can be determined: a national level (macro-economic), a regional level (meso-economic) and the level of programmes (micro-economic). The approach will be at the same time bottom-up and top-down, in line with the objectives of the Ten Years Plan and starting from the number of illiterates in order to quantify the percentage of the population to be targeted under the different forms of education. Concerning literacy campaigns in the mother tongue, for example, the average between completion rates' and enrolments are around 0.45%.

**At national level:**

- first, evaluate education needs by identifying the illiterate target population (from 9 to 50 years old). More than merely quantifying the illiterates, update and make projections of global statistical data of the target-population and its regional distribution;
- update the state of the art study on NFE (1999) which identified a little more than 400 organisations (Government or NGOs) conducting NFE programmes.

**At regional level:**

Dividing the country into twelve educational regions corresponding to the Regional Directions of Basic Education and Literacy, the planner will define the quantitative and qualitative objectives to be reached. At the level of the region, planning will be concerned with:

- drawing up the map of needs (exact situation of illiteracy, literacy demands, coverage or not by the existing programmes) to be met by NFE in the different regions, provinces and departments of the country;
- quantifying the target population for literacy programmes, from the region (Regional Direction of Basic Education and Literacy) to the village, and even down to the smaller division of the town district. To know where it starts from, each village should know who, among its population, are illiterate and who have already been touched by NFE;
- identifying, among the illiterates, the prospective learners to be recruited per province and per programme. Planning should have a detailed quantification of literacy needs in order to distribute them according to the programmes existing in the area;
- evaluating the costs and resources to be mobilised;
- appraising the real capacity of the different regions to undertake a regional planning programme to cover basic education needs. This, taking into account the capacity to design financing and resource mobilisation plans, to develop manuals of procedures and methodologies for regional planning according to a basic manual, and to organise training programmes for the regional staff.

**At the level of programmes:**

Planning will not depart from the classic method of organising programming activities, from sensitisation to implementation. The best-structured programmes benefiting from multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid will be able to design pluri-annual programmes. The mobilisation of resources is not as problematic as it is in the case for very small programmes. The following associations can be mentioned: Tin-tua, Namanegdzanga, Pag-la-yiri (a dynamic women's association in the South-East), the National Federation of Naam groups, the Wend-Yam Federation (in the central highland), etc.

The real problems occur during the implementation stage: most programmes receive funding from abroad and have no control of the flow of their partner's resources. This can endanger the implementation of the plan. So that D. Evans's advice is to leave the programmes funded by private sponsors or local resources.

It seems that the most realistic planning should be flexible, combining a centralised planning (national and regional) and a programme of activ-
ities by NFE providers. Yet, NFE planners may have to face a number of constraints. They include:

- statistics and follow-up of literacy programmes;
- diversity of little known or unknown NFE experiences;
- regional disparities in national coverage of literacy and NFE programmes;
- lack of synergy and co-ordination of the different providers confronted by the diversity of the sources of financing and the quasi-absence of control on the investments in favour of NFE;
- weak capacity (human resources) in NFE.

On the other hand, NFE has some assets. There is the diversity of partners, which may seem a constraint but also proves to be a major asset which can be used: it shows how interested the partners are in the reduction of illiteracy in Burkina. The dynamism of the providers and the learners, the various NFE methods and forms as well as a major institutional support with the creation of the Secretariat of State for Non-Formal Education and Literacy can also be mentioned.

Thus, NFE is an option to increase literacy rates and an essential factor of socio-economic development. Much more than formal education, NFE meets the needs of the population. Consequently, we consider that it has to be taken into account in any planning of the education system. While having a central basis, the planning of NFE must come from the grassroots, from the programmes, and have a regional dimension, for example, the twelve Basic Education and Literacy Regional Directions. All the actors of NFE must be involved in its planning.

Therefore, the obvious signs of the new impetus experienced by non-formal education indicate that a turning point has been reached in the promotion of this form of education. To accompany these prospects, the national structure responsible for literacy programmes (Secretary of the National Literacy Institute) will certainly be re-organised, with new missions centred on: support, follow-up of literacy providers, development of textbooks, quality-control of the non formal system, etc. All these elements are factors favourable to the planning of the system.

As everything cannot be foreseen, the stress must be on the quality, pluri-disciplinarity and flexibility of the programmes. In these respects, NFE, as a complement or replacement to formal training, plays a most important role. Indeed, it allows the acquired skills, usefully reinvested in the world of labour (its target-population is the active range of the population), to produce an impact on the beneficiaries. The training courses and their constant updating are, sometimes, a much more efficient means than the school system to transmit the knowledge and know-how (attitudes and behaviours) required by the world of labour for development.

References


1 Article 18, p 12
2 P. Coombs quoted by D. Evans, p 30
3 Completion rate is calculated on consideration of the learners assessed, which in literacy programmes, does not reflect reality because of the high drop-out rates (a completion rate of 80% may be the result of 12/15 learners assessed in a centre supposed, at the beginning, to admit 30 learners), hence the necessity to calculate from the number originally enrolled.
For several years, considerable efforts have been made by the Association for the Promotion of Non-Formal Education (APENF) to facilitate the sharing of some innovative experiences developed in other countries, especially the approach presented here: the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT).

In Burkina Faso, adult literacy programmes are built essentially on three levels of training: initial literacy, basic complementary training and specific technical training. In spite of efforts made for many decades, quantitative expansion is less and less justified as the quality and relevance of contents have proved weak and are gradually decaying.

The necessity of qualitative innovation is crucial, especially as the poor efficiency of the current programmes is recognised by the Ten Years Plan when it says: “Because the national literacy rate (26%) is very low in spite of regularly increasing enrolments in Permanent Literacy and Training Centres (CPAF), the quality of the teaching delivered in these centres and their ability to adapt to the very diversified needs of an increasingly heterogeneous public is questionable. Consequently, it appears that investments are not productive, as the stages of complementary training and technical training specific to development activities are not always linked”.

Such statements imply that the burkinabe state as well as private actors wishes to see innovations in both formal and non-formal education. The Plan’s objectives are explicit:

“To improve the quality, relevance and efficiency of basic education, to develop coherence and integration between different levels and modalities of education, to promote literacy as well as alternative forms of education, both as factors promoting development and as elements in support of the development of formal basic education.”

If this analysis opens new perspectives for adult literacy at the public level, it is also true that for many years, APENF has made considerable efforts to facilitate the sharing of some innovative experiences developed in other countries, such as the REFLECT approach.

INTRODUCTION OF REFLECT IN BURKINA FASO

In April 1997, several burkinabe institutions participated in the first training of trainers of the REFLECT approach (Dakar, Senegal). In April 1998, the Burkina Faso Working Group on Non-Formal Education (today APENF), in collaboration with the British NGO Action Aid, organised the first presentation of the approach in Burkina Faso. From 1999 to 2000, a group of REFLECT practitioners, the Study and Working Group on Participatory and Plural Learning (GET-UP) initiated two experiments in two provinces of the country, among women’s groups.

Following these experiments and because of the obvious interest shown by several actors, APENF organised an introductory workshop where the innovation of adult literacy programmes in Burkina Faso was discussed. This activity was conducted with the financial support of the Swiss Co-operation for Development.

The methodological approach was mainly based on the deconstruction and analysis of the different pieces which constitute literacy. Reflections dealt with the concern shared...
The REFLECT approach by many actors in functional literacy, namely what literacy, what education, what adult training should be promoted in burkinabe societies nowadays? After this critical analysis, the REFLECT approach was introduced as a credible alternative to remedy the weaknesses and limitations observed during the analysis.

**PERSPECTIVE FOR THE INNOVATION OF PROGRAMMES**

The critical analysis of functional literacy is organised around its deconstruction into multiple pieces of the puzzle in order to better appraise the adequacy/ inadequacy of some pieces, the necessity of changing them, the reasons for doing so, the operating process, etc. In Burkina Faso, the didactic materials (books and booklets) for functional literacy, generally conceived by “experts” and left to be used by the “beneficiaries-consumers”, are old and not adapted to the present concerns of the population. They offer but a limited scope since other media which could facilitate or stimulate learning are not proposed at all.

As for the contents of the literacy programmes, they do not take into account the diversity of interests and concerns of the target-groups. The contents are standardised, identical for all learners and for all development organisations. They are not necessarily adapted to the contexts the learners live in, and do not address the specific needs of some groups, namely, women, stock-breeders, young people, etc. These programmes emphasise reading, writing and numeracy skills, and also insist on technical knowledge without application to immediate concrete activities.

The pedagogical methods used are almost exclusively those of the classic school system. Animators, not sufficiently trained in andragogy, focus on the technical aspects and neglect the characteristics of the adult. Absence of practice or of use of participatory methods (role play, simulation, etc.) does not promote autonomous thinking and initiatives. In fact, as in the classic system, literacy animators teach and learners learn (hierarchy and fixed roles). Yet, to start from the learner and to build useful knowledge with him/her, the animator needs to know him/her in his/her full complexity, abilities and resources.

As for the gender issue in literacy programmes, it is dealt with in mixed centres: “Every year, one of our quantitative objectives is to enrol as many men as women. In some villages, we open centres for women and centres for men!”

If we consider the gender issue as a dimension of development aiming at the reduction of inequalities between groups, more especially between men and women, we should not limit ourselves to purely mechanical and quantitative considerations. This dimension must be present in every element of the literacy strategy in the contents relative to specific women’s needs and addressing inequality issues, in the pedagogical methods which must include instruments to facilitate women’s participation in societies where they do not much express themselves, in the learning materials which must enhance women’s value and their different roles and not only their domestic activities.

As a cross-theme, the gender issue must be present at all stages of the literacy strategy - design, implementation, follow-up of the programme and its impact on the community, animation and teaching.

Follow-up is strictly pedagogical, and is limited to the acquisition of basic skills (writing, reading, numeracy). It does not take into consideration the other skills the learners may have acquired (know-how) as well as their ability to use them in everyday life.

The involvement of the key actors is also considered. Learners participate in the lectures without being involved in the curriculum design and in the follow-up/evaluation. Animators, for lack of pedagogical competencies, prefer passive transmission of knowledge with little participation by learners, to raising critical reflection on issues of orientation, priority, potentiality. Community involvement is limited because of socio-cultural and socio-economic impediments. Development organisations at the grassroots level do not always have a clear idea of the respective parts to be played by the different actors involved in literacy programmes. The same parts are sometimes played by several actors.

Considering these facts, what are the innovative ways forward for adult literacy in Burkina Faso?

**THE REFLECT APPROACH**

REFLECT belongs to a vision of education and development controlled by the population. It is a philosophy or vision of education inspired from Paolo Freire’s works and thoughts, whose major concern was to give power back to the population by an education leading to liberation and awareness. According to P. Freire, education is never neutral: it either liberates or domesticates. The education that domesticates aims at imposing on the learners the norms and values of those who dominate, for example, a political group, men/women, urbans/rurals, etc. Learners are passive, objects of the learning
process. This education is conceived as a product that the learners consume. It shuts them up in a culture of silence since it does not promote their participation in the decisions on their very existence. The education that liberates starts from the knowledge or experiences of the learners, and aims at making them aware of the fact that every individual can—to a certain extent—transform his environment. This type of education does not consist of learners assimilating “ready-made” contents, but in developing with them their ability to think, to analyse and change their daily lives. This is what P. Freire calls the process of ‘making aware’.

REFLECT is a training strategy which facilitates and stimulates learning. Objectives are specific to each learning group or each community. They may change according to the context. They are not standardised, defined in advance or predetermined by the animators. They are about the knowledge to be acquired, but also about the development activities to be implemented within the community and will ultimately improve the living conditions of the people. The contents, defined by the community, refer to a diagnosis undertaken within the community before the opening of the centre, and include practical knowledge. Pedagogical methods put the stress on learning, not on teaching. To learn is to focus on the learners’ concerns and environment in order to develop the content which will be immediately useful to them. The methods are based on tools such as the Active Methodology for Participatory Research (AMPR), which reinforce the involvement of participants and ensure their understanding.

The literacy animator is a facilitator and does not teach. He/she guides the learners in the learning process. He/she is himself/herself in a learning situation and in permanent interaction with the group. Didactic materials are not pre-designed like the booklets and handbooks of functional literacy. But there must be reading materials corresponding to some themes included in the training programme.

The learning materials (AMPR tools) are designed by the learners to stimulate their discussions (village maps, calendars, diagrams, pictures, statuettes, role-plays, audio-visual material, etc.), and result in writing, reading and arithmetic sessions with direct reference to the life of the group. For more advanced groups, there is a series of texts by the learners themselves, which can be published and put in the village libraries. They can also be circulated between several centres. The place of training is not limited to the classroom or the barn. Training may take place on the outside according to the theme dealt with. For example, dealing with the theme of environment from a hill enables a global view of the village and a comparison between its past and present situations.

External evaluations are accompanied by self-evaluation; the learners learn how to appraise their evolution by appreciating their progress and difficulties themselves.

The REFLECT approach is made of 5 major stages tightly linked to each other:

1) The diagnosis of the community - this first stage is absolutely necessary, with the results leading to the identification of priority themes for a given community or for a learning group.

2) The designing of the facilitators’ guide - this manual is a guide for REFLECT. Designed from the results of the community diagnosis, the manual is made of several working units. Each unit corresponds to a general theme (health, environment, etc.) divided into sub-themes. Guiding questions are devised for each theme and sub-theme, in order to propose topics for discussions with the learners; suggestions are also made for reading, writing and arithmetic exercises.

3) The recruitment of facilitators - the REFLECT approach requires many qualities and commitment from the facilitators. Their involvement is different from the “classic animator’s”. When recruiting them, listening capacity and flexibility are the individual qualities given priority. These qualities are not necessarily linked to the level of schooling of the individual. Facilitators must continuously make use of creativity, question the learning group, know how to listen to learners and think with them rather than give “ready-made” answers or explanations. Ideally, facilitators are recruited in the same environment as the learners.

4) Training of facilitators - for the two REFLECT experiments in Burkina Faso, the initial training of facilitators lasted three weeks (full time: 8 hours a day). It dealt with andragogy (knowledge on the adult), the spelling and grammar of the language of learning (moore), the use of AMPR tools, an introduction to the specific themes selected by the communities, the passage from a specific theme to the acquisition of instrumental and practical skills, the management of participatory learning and the gender issue. The training is multidisciplinary, and uses simulations or role-plays to put the facilitators in “real” learning situations. Pedagogical
meetings with facilitators are periodically organised to know and remedy their difficulties. Annual updating is organised.

5) Animation of learning groups - each group is autonomous and designs its own didactic materials. The learning groups organise themselves and determine their own agenda. Prime time is devoted to the activities that the participants decide to initiate in the community and which take place during the training programme. So, the acquisition of contents or discourse by the learners is not the only concern. The stress is also on transferring these skills and knowledge into field actions.

Local follow-up is undertaken by a technical team trained for the task, and preferably uses participatory analysis of learners’ and facilitators’ difficulties. Qualitative evaluation is then more important than assessment (self-evaluation as well). The whole set of acquired skills (theoretical knowledge and competencies) is taken into consideration.

LIMITATIONS OR PRESENT DIFFICULTIES OF THE REFLECT APPROACH:

It would be oversimplification to think that the REFLECT approach only has advantages and no difficulties in its implementation. About the present REFLECT experiments in Burkina Faso (villages of Matte and Tikare), a few limitations or difficulties can already be mentioned:

♦ The search for facilitators able to commit themselves to the group (investment in time, energy, creativity, flexibility, listening).
♦ The development of evaluation indicators to appraise the competencies acquired by the learners (knowledge, attitudes and behaviour) as well as the impact of the approach on communities (use of the acquired knowledge); above all, evaluation should not be restricted to instrumental skills.

♦ The acquisition of the approach by the decentralised Directions of the Ministry of Basic Education who perceive some participatory tools as too complicated for the communities (learners’self-evaluation).
♦ The estimated costs of REFLECT experiments which took place in similar situations to Burkina Faso (quasi-volunteers in Tikaré, financing of development facilities in Matte to the detriment of funding for the process of conception and implementation of the approach).
♦ The negotiation with donors for a flexible budget in order to facilitate the implementation of development actions preferred by the communities when inner resources are not sufficient².

The prospects of this training are to be viewed in relation to the obvious interest the participants took in the REFLECT approach following the critical analysis thus undertaken. Considering the remarks and comments, we realised that the participants had well grasped the assets of, and what is at stake with the Reflect approach, without minimising some difficulties which could be encountered. All of them voiced their wish to have their functional literacy programmes in line with the dynamics of innovation.

A recommendation was addressed to APENF for the association to organise complementary training in the near future and to take measures of technical support in case of experimentation.

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1 « Get-up » meaning stand up, refers to an impulse, a movement, dynamics that have to be raised and supported by more and more individuals.
2 These actions of development must, first, depend on community mobilisation and should not be associated with micro-projects for which external funds will systematically be allocated.
Local Languages And Challenges Facing the BurkinaPress
Evariste Zongo

A journalist and member of ADEA NFE-Country Working Group of Burkina Faso (APENF), Evariste Zongo is the co-ordinator of a programme supporting newspapers written in national languages.

After several education reforms which tried to institute local languages as the media of learning were abandoned, education in local languages is still active. This is essentially true for adult literacy programmes in rural areas. But it is also necessary to provide a literate environment for the newly acquired skills to be maintained and developed.

Evariste Zongo insists on the parts the press can play as far as training, integration and adaptation to national, social and cultural realities are concerned.

In Burkina Faso, about sixty different languages are spoken among a population of ten million inhabitants (10,000,000). The language groups are of different sizes. The most spoken languages are moore (52%), fulfude (11%), jula, bobo (7%), gourounsi languages (lyélé, kassiu, nuni 5.3%), bissa and san (6.9%), gulmancema (4.5%) and dagara.

National languages still prevail in family and social communication, and in trade dealings. But in public administration, French is mostly used. According to Burkina’s constitution, it is the official language. There exists a bill (not yet an act) of law which defines the modalities intended to promote national languages and make them official ones. In fact, administrative documents, official statements, court rulings and official gazettes are written in French. So, this language still has a dominant position in the education system and in the information and communication system. French is valued to the detriment of national languages.

In a study conducted in 1994, Nikièma Norbert, professor at the University of Ouagadougou, reviews the situation of newspapers written in national languages in Burkina Faso from 1967 to 1994. About sixty titles were counted. 32 were no longer published, 15 were published at intervals, 10 were projects and 3 were published more or less regularly. Among the approximately sixty papers counted, only six had a legal status.

Support To Post-Literacy

According to the persons in charge, the main motives for launching a newspaper were support for post-literacy, training and information. The papers were also meant to popularise correct spelling as well as agricultural and cattle-breeding techniques. The main initiators of newspapers in local languages were mostly churches, NGOs implementing development projects and associations. The newspapers counted during the study were mainly intended for literate rural populations. Non professionals - often volunteers - were the animators.

At present, it is possible to speak of a press written in local languages, with 20 newspapers published in 7 languages spoken in Burkina. The most important circulation is 3,500 and the most modest one is 500. 15 are published quarterly and 5 monthly. Newspapers are fairly visible especially in rural areas. They are sold for between 100FCFA and 200 FCFA. There is an annual contribution from the State through subsidies allocated to the private press: the allocation to the whole group of newspapers written in local languages amounts to about 5,000,000 FCFA. This support from the State is modest and does not help remedying the lack of professionalism, the poor delivery system and the high cost of production of the newspapers.

In 1993, the Association of editors and publishers of newspapers writ-
In national languages was developed (AEPJLN). Those responsible for newspapers wanted to create a forum for discussion and promotion of newspapers written in national languages. The association’s goal is to contribute to the promotion of national culture by informing and training the new readers. The newspapers publish information that can be of interest to mainly rural readers: general information, information on on-going training programmes and also projects supported by NGOs etc.

If newspapers written in local languages prevent neo-literates from relapsing into illiteracy, access to newspapers and documents - rare and costly – remains problematic. It is also necessary to create a habit of reading: reading is a process that requires both availability and serenity. Village libraries are not much used and newspapers do not sell well though the need for reading has been expressed by village people. We must also admit that in our present systems, neo-literates have difficulties in writing, decoding and interpreting texts. How then are they going to choose, tackle, read, understand and discern information the way it is delivered?

**PROVIDING A LITERATE ENVIRONMENT**

If the papers written in local languages maintain the skills of neo-literates, the conditions enabling access to documents must also be created: cheaper and reader-friendly newspapers with varied topics, a reliable distribution and delivery system, and modalities to encourage reading. Besides, there is no support to facilitate the acquisition of such publications.

The implementation of non-formal education programmes and especially literacy programmes must pay attention, as a priority, to post-literacy: to the information and continued training of the new reader (enhance community texts by writing them, publish documents, deal with community information, study the traditional knowledge of communities, publish scientific documents, etc.) Some administrative documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, should be written in local languages. Notice boards in local languages should also be made more numerous. All this requires political will.

Trying to remedy the weak output of publications in local languages for which literacy skills are acquired, AEPJLN includes about 20 members which are newspapers published in seven national languages. It has, since 1994, benefited from the technical and financial support of *Œuvre Suisse d’Entraide Ouvrière* (OSEO). It implements a programme with activities related to the training, production and promotion of the Association’s membership. The creation of AEPJLN has improved the layout of the papers, given a better visibility to the press and met the needs of new readers. Thanks to the training programmes, the content has considerably changed. Newspapers in local languages are requested to cover local and national events. The readers, who in some regions, have set up writing and reading committees, show their interest in the newspapers’ content during the assessments. Yet, it needs time for newspapers to play an active part in strengthening democracy, expressing views and taking part in the management of public affairs.

It must be emphasised that the press written in national languages has, these last years, stood up in a social and political context characterised by renewed democracy. For the last ten years, Burkina Faso has been involved in a process of decentralisation, of which one of the finalities is the promotion of local development. The process aims at beneficiaries’ participation in the common management of public affairs and at the improvement of living conditions at the local level. Information, education and communication are central to this process, and the means to be used are, among others, the media and post-literacy documents. The newspapers encourage the neo-literates to send them articles dealing with the difficulties linked to training and literacy programmes. They also include arithmetic problems and topics for essays.

Because they want to facilitate the access of information to the rural population to make them play an active part in the development process, NGOs, rural associations and organisations include information and communication activities in their programmes. The birth of community radios and newspapers written in national languages in several regions of Burkina, (there are about 20 community radios), are part of the partners’ interest in development and in communication for development.

3 Nikiema Norbert, *Situation des journaux en langues nationales au Burkina* (study report), 1994
The main problem of development in Burkina Faso is undoubtedly illiteracy, which affects over 74% of the population, especially women. The rural sector is mostly affected though it remains the main actor in agriculture, stock-breeding and other subsequent activities which constitute the major part of the country’s economy.

Illiteracy, among other things, restricts the receptivity to development issues and challenges and, worse, the access to technical information for communities that often have to settle with hardly viable traditional practices. Consequently, technicality is limited and evils such as infectious diseases, nutrition problems, damage to natural resources etc., prevail.

Yet, training sessions meant to improve living conditions are taking place. But field visits undertaken for many successive years, revealed that these training sessions suffer from resistance because of insufficient ownership. These findings can be largely explained by the fact that the adult learner is dealt with like an object on which knowledge is spread, without taking into account what he knows, who he is, economically and socially. The desires and real motives of adult learners, as well as the knowledge they have built and maintained in their environment to provide for their basic needs and which constitutes their identity, are rarely taken into account in the training process.

A sustainable improvement of human resources needs training courses that facilitate the assimilation of basic scientific concepts and the ownership of technological innovations: hence, the necessity of alternative forms of education. To this end, in February 2000, APENF-Burkina organised an
international seminar, facilitated by an international consultant, Prof. Raul Gagliardi. This seminar gathered scientific experts and various competencies in education, and was concerned about how to educate rural populations to serious problem solving such as infectious diseases, water-borne diseases or viruses caused by insects, nutrition problems, damaged environment, etc.

The seminar recommended an intercultural educational approach that would stem from the range of knowledge built by the communities, and that would expose them to scientific knowledge, with a view to its integration.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE APPROACH**

The advocated intercultural education takes traditional knowledge as the starting point from which to inculcate elementary scientific knowledge to modify attitudes and behaviours. This approach is relevant because it allows viable practices to be preserved. Some practices, resulting from traditional knowledge, are often viable or need to be slightly improved provided one cares to understand them in a scientific way. Hence the needs for the trainer to be, first of all, open to this know-how or he/she will destroy viable practices.

With this approach, one can also preserve the identity of the individual, inculcate the basic scientific knowledge and identify practices socially and economically adapted, and in doing so, facilitate the ownership of scientific knowledge. The knowledge built by the communities is part of their identity, and guides them in their daily lives. A direct transfer of unfamiliar knowledge may upset a cultural identity and self-respect, and give birth to frustrations and a feeling of inferiority to what is being lectured – i.e. to the new knowledge. Everyone knows that all these are obstacles to learning.

To facilitate the ownership of training contents, a better understanding of the learner’s situation is necessary and propositions to solve the problems should stem from it.

The bad assimilation of training contents may result from difficulties or obstacles distinct to the learner. Thus, with an analysis of what the learner knows, it is possible to identify the obstacles to learning, to devise alternatives to overcome these and to facilitate the ownership of new concepts. Understanding scientific concepts is a condition of sustained ownership, and they could be explained more easily if what the learner knows is first analysed. This is all the more interesting, as it has been proved that the adult learner builds his knowledge himself, starting from what is around him and from what he knows.

The main steps to be taken, correspond in terms of activities, to an understanding of the problem; analysis of the populations’ conceptions and identification of obstacles to learning; collection of scientific information on the problem; identification of the structuring concepts and, identification of a strategy adapted to the context.

When preparing a training programme, the first activity should be an understanding of the problem. This is necessary, as in most cases the problems mentioned by rural communities are but their symptoms just as a patient at the doctor’s affirms “I have a headache, I am cold”. Only an in-depth diagnosis undertaken with these communities will point to the real causes at their origin which must be attacked.

In the field of community training, with the understanding of the problem, it is possible to make the diagnosis, to accede to the real needs of the learner and to evaluate the socio-economic background. Thus, the risk of offering training sessions that do not correspond to the expectations and, therefore, will never be valued, is reduced. The role of the technician/trainer is to assist the target group in their own identification of their real problems. The advantage of this method is that it constitutes a form of self-sensitisation to the problem. All this should increase the desire to seek for alternatives.

The learner, especially the adult learner, is not "empty-headed". He
has his stock of knowledge he calls upon in his daily life, which constitutes his identity. Some components of this traditional knowledge deserve to be preserved because they are valuable. Others often reveal ideas and conceptions which can be serious obstacles to the assimilation of the content of a learning activity. The activity of analysis will therefore consist in examining, with the learner, the state of his knowledge on the subject and in evaluating the possible limits and strong points. On the other hand, when identifying the obstacles to learning, the trainer/technician can devise scenarios to overcome them, thus making assimilation easier. This is necessary as it is not possible to acquire a minimum of scientific culture by merely receiving information. It is necessary to understand the basic concepts. Hence, the interest of this analysis which also constitutes a framework for a better understanding of the socio-economic context in order to suggest techniques which can be easily adopted.

On the other hand, the strategy must avoid lectures with modern devices that would not be acknowledged by the beneficiaries. On the contrary, it should stem from the latter’s knowledge, and thus reduce the risk of upsetting viable practices. The strategy must include follow-up/evaluation. This is especially useful as follow-up strengthens training and offers the possibility to judge how the proposed innovations are managed, and to bring, if need be, the necessary improvements.

Considering the difficulties in having some modern techniques vulgarised in the rural world it is necessary to innovate the implementation strategies.

The proposed approach places the target-population on the front stage, by stemming from their knowledge and the realities of their environment, by identifying the factors that are limits to learning, and by bringing the necessary scientific improvement with a view to qualitative training. The objective is to give these populations access to scientific bases in order to improve traditional knowledge and living conditions.

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Burkina Faso school enrolment and literacy rates are among the poorest in the sub-region. In his speech on the state of the nation delivered on 12 April 2001, the Prime Minister observed that enrolment rates are still very low: 41.3% in primary education, 11.14% in secondary education, 1% in tertiary education and 26% in literacy programmes (Sidwaya, 17 April 2001). Behind these figures where urban rates prevail, there hides the reality of the rural areas where the weak performances of formal education are relieved by non-formal education. It is in the rural world that the proportion of uneducated people is the highest: 79% among men and 89% among women.

The data shows how important education and communication problems are when implementing health strategies (Hunt and al., 1994). To address these problems, it is necessary to have information on the level of knowledge of the population, their way of thinking and the specific learning difficulties they experience when faced with a concrete situation such as diarrhoea.

In Burkina Faso, diarrhoeas are the first cause of medical consultation - 56.8% for 0 to 5 year old children, and only 12.8% of women know about diarrhoeas and the oral rehydration therapy (Konaté and al., 1994). This means that sanitation is unknown or not applied, especially in nutrition and the use of water. Yet, the people have other explanations for the disease. Even if their interpretations are mixed because of modern and traditional medicines existing in juxtaposition, a substantial part of the population has but a superficial understanding of the sensitisation messages conveying conceptions which are unfamiliar to them.

Because the development programmes have failed through lack of medical knowledge, and because of problems associated with poverty and underdevelopment, the organisation of teaching programmes especially intended for rural communities is largely justified. The discrimination they have to suffer and the fact that the majority of their members is illiterate and ignorant of any scientific knowledge, are other elements to be taken into consideration.

The system of NFE, often managed by NGOs and development projects, is better adapted to the rural world, to its traditional knowledge and its beliefs, to the teaching of the basic scientific notions which can be used in everyday life. The learners being adults faced with the quest for knowledge must succeed for their own sake to improve their living conditions.

It was within this framework that the international seminar on the teaching of traditional and scientific knowledge for the improvement of the quality of life and sustainable development was organised in February 2000 in Nongana, Burkina Faso. In order to analyse the needs and attitudes of the people in the didactic process, before the seminar took place, APENF, using a questionnaire, collected and analysed their major problems with reference to their traditional knowledge in the main cultural regions of Burkina Faso. This approach which places the population at the centre of the process, starts from the awareness that they are not totally ignorant but possess a stock of knowledge that guides them in their daily lives. The cultural and linguistic diversity proves to be a source of enrichment for traditional knowledge. With a method starting from the knowledge the population has, taking out of it the practices that are viable, the risk of socio-cultural confusion sometimes attributed to formal education is minimised. The synthesis and analysis of the data, both by scientists and various non-formal specialists from several countries, have revealed the conceptions on, and obstacles to the methods
aimed at fighting and preventing diarrhoea.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

After the survey team had been trained, the survey took place from 31 January to 12 February 2000. A questionnaire with 18 items including 3 questions on diarrhoea was administered in six cultural regions of Burkina Faso: the moré-speaking group of Ouahigouya (Yatenga), the julaphone group of Orodara (Kénedougou), the fulaphone group of Dori (Seno), the gulmaphone group of Fada (Gourma), the bissaphone group of Zabré (Boulgou) and the lyéléphjone group of Réo (Sanguié). An appropriate guidebook was used for the training of the survey team.

Four age groups were identified (9-15 year olds, 16-35 year olds, 36-50 year olds, 51-75 year olds) with the same number of men and women by region and by age group. They all belonged to the rural world, and were either illiterate (most of them) or out-of-school, or had been trained in the non-formal system. The questions formulated had been simplified and adapted to the burkinabé rural context. A total of 96 persons (4 per age group and per region) selected at random, gave 397 answers to the 3 questions relative to diarrhoea.

RESULTS

The results were presented by linguistic region.

The 18 item questionnaire collected the vivid knowledge of the people. 397 answers to the 3 questions were obtained. The questions were:

Question A: Next to a barrage, a notice warns that it is not safe to drink this water, but the water looks very pure. Please explain the possible reasons for this warning.

Question B: What would you do if you child had diarrhoea?

Question C: if you think the water in a region is contaminated, what precautions would you take if you had to drink it?

Despite a coverage of the main linguistic regions of Burkina, all the cultural regions were not taken into account.

The answers to the questions show that water, the source of life, has a central position in the cultural universe of the people of all these regions. With the two representations which are found in the answers to question A (water haunted by spirits, 26%, water dirty and toxic, 34%, water source of diseases, 34%), diseases caused by water are attributed to empirical factors and also modern medicine (Question B). Thus, the ignorance of micro-organisms by large parts of the population is an obstacle to the comprehension of the causes of, and the solutions to diseases transmitted by water (Question C). Considering the answers by sex, there is no significant difference between men and women.

If we analyse the answers to question A by region, we can see disparities which we could explain by the cultural context, but even more by various situations and actions (proximity of health services, formal and non-formal education, sensitisation by NGOs and different development projects). Thus, answers focus on advice with 60% among julaphones and 45% among lyéléphones, on toxic dirty water among bissaphones 68% and moréphones 50%, on water containing germs among fulaphones 61.5%. Few answers were able to identify the diseases. The most mentioned were the Guinea worm, diarrhoeas and bilharzias.

By age group, the answers were more specific: the older (51-75 year olds) answer by advice (43%), children (9-15) by toxic and dirty water (52%). The notion of germs was found among the young people (16-35 year olds) with 43% and the adults (36-50) with 41%.

If we examine the answers to question B by region, it appears that pharmacopoeia globally comes in second position with 35%, after health centre with 38%. By cultural region, pharmacopoeia comes first in the moréphone region, 39%, gulmaphone 39% and fulaphone 37%. It is mentioned in parity with health centre among the bissaphones, 38%, and it appears in second position after health cen-
tre among the lyéléphones 30% and the julaphones 23%. On the other hand, in these last two regions, advice is the dominant answer to question A. Rehydrating salts, the present theme of sensitisation, is only perceptible in the morephone 28% and fulaphone 29% zones and among children (9-15 year old) with 17%. Pharmacopoeia appears in first position for the mature (51-75 year olds) with 46%, among the young people (16-35 year olds) with 37% and the children (9-15 year olds) with 31%.

The great disparity in the answers to question C reveals a possible lack of a clear message and approach on this subject, and the gap between traditional beliefs and scientific knowledge. This is how the other solutions (globally 33%) can be justified, followed by filter the water (26%), boil the water (25%).

By region, the morephone zone with 82% has weighed on the great percentage of other answers which go from refusing to drink the water to the need for new wells through asking for the ancestors’ protection to drink the contaminated water. This diversity of answers is similarly visible in the answers by age group where young people (16-35) and adults (36-50) prefer to filter or to boil the water. The use of chlorine is found more often in the answers given by children (9-15) with 15%.

The synthesis of the 397 answers to the 3 questions, shows that in each cultural region and in each age group of the population, there exists a set of specific concepts to interpret the methods intended to fight and prevent diarrhoea. Among the population surveyed, the notion of micro-organism is unknown and it proves difficult to make them accept that clear, transparent water can also contain microbes. Learning about the concept of micro-organisms should transform the problem, shifting from “how to avoid diarrhoeas among children” to “how to destroy pathogenic organisms contained in water” and “how to prevent water from being contaminated”. Thus, the non-formal education system, because it is adapted to the socio-economic context of the community, would preserve traditional knowledge and integrate it into modern knowledge (Gagliardi 1995).

Water-borne diseases like diarrhoeas, if they cannot be avoided, can be contained within acceptable limits (Parent and et al. 1997, Monjour and al 1984). But progress is hindered both by economic obstacles, especially in developing countries like Burkina Faso, and by illiteracy which restrains the expected changes. The International Decade of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 1981-1990, which seemed to integrate the two parameters “development of water resources” and “improvement of sanitary conditions”, beyond the speeches (very useful to sensitise the international community on this subject), has had rather limited results. Nowadays, campaigns against water-borne parasites largely go beyond health operations and are part of global development plans (Tiffen, 1993, Birley, 1991, Oliuver and Le Jalle, 1998), especially education development plans.

Therefore, taking account of information on culture, traditional knowledge on sanitary aspects and the specific learning difficulties of the population belongs to the synergy of actions aiming at a sustainable safe management of water and living conditions by the population.
Unlike most countries of the world, Lesotho does not have a national human resource plan. As a result, people who are interested in formal and non-formal education do so without any form of guidance. The plan is talked about in high powered meetings yet there seems to be nobody prepared to put it in place so that it can be implemented. The plan, however, might need the expertise of guidance and counselling personnel. The Ministry of Education recently established a guidance and counselling department in its National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). However, due to the extent of the need to guide students in schools to choose relevant careers one person in a department cannot do much. For instance, some students go for further studies to choose their area of specialisation in fields for which the country has not established departments. The need to have a national plan properly guided by experts in the relevant areas cannot be over emphasised. Students would be motivated because they would receive proper guidance about the careers that exist in Lesotho as well as the job opportunities.

The Lesotho education system is often presented in the form of a pyramid. Government’s documents, particularly the annual statistical reports compiled by the Ministry of Education, show that due to the nature of the system which is known to be highly examination-oriented, students fail terminal examinations in high numbers at all levels of the education system. The high failure and drop out rates contribute to the broad-based pyramid which sharply narrows at the top. This negative impact of the examination-oriented system adds to the already large number of young people who are for various reasons not in formal school.

Perhaps the question to ask is whether or not the national curriculum challenges the various abilities that students enter the school system with. The National Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education would perhaps argue that one of the goals of basic education is the development of abilities in learners for adaptive and positive behaviour which will enable them to deal effectively with life’s challenges. Yet young people who leave the formal school system do not seem to portray the ability to tackle the demanding problems of everyday life; hence, the existence of NFE facilities outside the school system.

A recently completed national literacy survey study undertaken by the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC), points to a number of factors that contribute to the Lesotho situation whereby large numbers of people are out of school or have never been to school. These include financial constraints aggravated by high levels of poverty, lack of interest on the part of some parents, teenage pregnancy, being employed as herd boys and several others. The most serious implication for having many people out of school is that Lesotho, unlike her African counterparts, has scarce natural resources. As a result, the country has no choice other than to concentrate on human resource development. Yet, as already pointed out, even this major task of developing human resources is constrained by a number of factors.

Studying the Education for All 2000 Assessment report and focusing on non-formal education, it is apparent that Lesotho made efforts intended to address the development of human resources at out of school level. The document shows that the Government of Lesotho committed itself to reducing the rate of literacy by 50% by the year 2000. The document also shows that this commitment required

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enrolling 250,000 illiterate persons within a period of 6 years or at the rate of 40,000 per year. As a result, strategies for promotion of basic education for out of school youth and adults were put in place.

Yet, the recently completed national literacy study by LDTC tends to suggest that more work aimed at reducing the rate of illiteracy still needs to be done. For example, the study found that the rate of basic literacy determined through the study was slightly less than that found fifteen years ago (1985) when the rate was 62% as opposed to the recent findings of 61%. Thus, the LDTC 2000 literacy survey finding suggests a fall by 1%. The rate of functional literacy was found to be 57%. Interestingly, compared to the 1985 study, the rate of functional literacy showed a sharp increase of 11%. This increase might suggest that government, together with her counterparts, committed to the provision of out-of-school education might be reaching more people than it had been 15 years ago. Perhaps the out-of-school programmes cater for the needs of large groups of people as the formal school system cannot cater for their immediate needs.

**LITERACY & PASTORAL ACTIVITIES**

A number of organisations offer a variety of programmes out of the formal school system. These programmes are intended to cater for the needs of various education clienteles. One such clientele is composed of herd-boys. Documentation about this particular group indicates that Lesotho is known for its pastoral activities and that “acquisition of livestock is a symbol of status and wealth, especially to those in the rural areas”. This is because herding cattle in particular is known to be an aspect of culture that prepares boys for adulthood. Yet, as observed by the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) in 1999, the situation of herd-boys has changed dramatically from being a symbol of prestige to that of a symbol of poverty. By implication, provision of relevant education for this group should be of priority for Lesotho. Interestingly however, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with United Nations organisations such as UNICEF, Irish Aid and UNDP, has over the years been making remarkable efforts to provide basic education skills for out-of-school youth, particularly herd-boys. The provision of basic education for this group is a responsibility of LDTC through the services of field based employees. The learners are taught writing, reading and numeracy skills. Another interesting aspect of the basic education provision for herd-boys is that their achievements are celebrated. It is a known fact that the clientele that celebrates national and/or international literacy day more than any other is the herd-boy group. More often than not, such celebrations serve as literacy awareness campaigns. In summary, therefore, it can be argued that these efforts contribute towards the provision of relevant education to one of the most disadvantaged groups in the context of Lesotho. The group can use the knowledge gained for their day to day activities, such as counting their livestock.

**TEENAGE DROP OUT**

A group that has become a national problem and which does not appear to be a priority for basic and functional literacy
providers is that of teenagers who fall pregnant and never return to the formal school system. There has been an observation that teenage girls drop out or get pushed out of the school system due to, among other reasons, teenage pregnancy. One organisation whose proprietor is the Catholic Church has taken it upon itself to have a school for such students. The initial aim is to provide these girls with basic and vocational education skills. It is as a result of this initiative by the Catholic Church that other organisations visit the centre at agreed times to give lectures on relevant areas such as sex education. While this centre may not respond to all the needs for this group in society, it seems reasonable to argue that a good start towards combating one of the major problems in our society has been made. Girls are provided with basic knowledge and skills they can use and disseminate among age mates who are still in the formal school system.

A group similar to that of the teenage girls is that of teenage boys who commit offences and find themselves at juvenile centres. The Lesotho Government has set up a Juvenile Training Centre (JTC) to rehabilitate this group. What is interesting about this centre is that it offers a wide range of courses for a diverse group of clientele which include commercial farming, carpentry, book-keeping, discipline, brick laying as well as cobbling. It would seem that the inmates receive education according to their areas of interests since some of them enter with work experience. Others enter without basic education. On the contrary, girls in the centre referred to earlier, all enter with some basic literacy education knowledge.

**SKILLS FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES**

Lesotho, unlike most of her counterparts in the sub-Saharan region, boasts about the high level of education of girls although there are issues pertinent to the women folk which remain unattended to. These include civic education, laws that are biased towards men, as well as sex education. One of the major criticisms of the formal education system therefore, is the fact that the school curriculum does not seem to be relevant to Lesotho’s needs. This state of affairs might justify the number of non-governmental organisations that have taken it upon themselves to provide education to a diverse group of clientele.

The need for various forms of education was long felt and therefore provided by the said organisations. The forms referred to are literacy, functional literacy as well as vocational education. An interesting development in the area of functional literacy has come as a result of a realisation that diverse groups of people need skills for specific purposes. For example, the Lesotho highlands water project affected the rural mountain dwellers more than those in the urban areas. One of the non-governmental organisations saw, as a critical need, to train the concerned people on critical thinking and reflective practice. The ideas were well received by these people to the extent of assuming prominent positions in high-powered gatherings and discussing issues that concerned the mountain dwellers. Thus, this development is a significant contribution to groups of clients who needed it most. More important, the formal school system does not have the subjects that would offer such skills to young people.

Another interesting example on the provision of education for a purpose is that of a union of retail workers whose responsibility has been to provide such workers with clearly focused training. The training on labour law provided for various groups of retail workers was relevant for the clients when they needed it most. This was clearly an area that the clients could identify with and was therefore relevant to their work situation. A study on the impact of such training conducted in Lesotho revealed that the knowledge gained in the training contributed to the reduction of labour strikes that were a common thing in the early 90s.

Another very delicate group is that of disabled persons. While it is true that the Ministry of Education’s plan emphasises access and provision of special education through training teachers and integrating such children in the normal school system, it would seem that the implementation of such good plans is constrained by availability of finances. This group therefore is catered for by a wide range of non-governmental organisations. This is because very few primary and secondary schools have relevant facilities and human resources personnel trained specifically to take care of the training of these people. Assessment 2000 of the Education for All initiatives document confirms the observation that more efforts are required to put in place proper facilities to cater for people with disabilities. There is need to implement some of the Ministry of Education’s plans. The most critical ones being the introduction of a special education programme for the teacher training college, and the integration of children with disabilities in all schools and at all levels.
The population of Lesotho that is out of the formal school system ends up being a direct responsibility of non-governmental organisations and some government ministries. The services provided by all institutions to a diverse group of learners without proper and approved curriculum means that while these programmes are offered with good will, their credibility stands to be challenged. Besides the curriculum, it is an established fact that provision of basic skills in an out of school situation is constrained by lack of facilities, lack of training personnel and several others. The recently developed policy on non-formal education will probably go a long way towards bringing about consistency in the programmes offered as well as establishing a council of non-formal education. While it is true that there is a large number of institutions, government departments and non-governmental organisations providing a wonderful service in the field of non-formal education it is also true that the programmes are disjointed. There is a need to have a large department within the ministry of Education that would bring together all the organisations and form departments according to the programmes offered. At the moment the programmes offered are subject to scrutiny since there is no curriculum which would among other things show the syllabus, content, as well as the duration of a particular programme. The good work being done by all the stakeholders needs to be planned far more aggressively than is the case now whereby planning and control is the responsibility of individual organisations.

The provision of non-formal education in Lesotho is an extremely important area. The extent of the need is implied in the rate at which people join the out of school organisations that offer relevant programmes. The newly drafted policy document might go a long way towards improving the offering of non-formal education in Lesotho. It can be hoped that the implementation of this policy will help reduce the problems experienced by non-formal education providers. Specifically, both financial and human resources have to be organised in order to reduce duplication and, most importantly, to provide relevant education to specific groups of clientele. It would seem that the future of Lesotho depends on, among other things, offering education for the purpose of Lesotho. The country’s needs are known and therefore the education of its people should be based on life after school.

Lesotho is one of the few countries of the world whose economy was for many years boosted by the labour of mineworkers employed in the republic of South Africa. This benefit is no longer in abundance as was the case in the past. The RSA mines are retrenching the miners in large numbers due to fewer work opportunities. However, new developments point to the fact that the retrenched men through their association of mineworkers receive skills of a vocational nature. Thus, unlike in the past where they were given large sums of money without any skills, this group could invest their money and continue to live normal lives.
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An Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV) project was set up in Ethiopia in 1995 at the invitation of the Ministry of Education (MoE), and a project office was established within the MoE to handle the co-ordination. The first project agreement mentioned state agencies, non-governmental organisations and higher education establishments as potential partners. The intention of the MoE in requesting the IIZ/DVV to carry out an initial three-year project was to reinvigorate non-formal basic education programmes and income generating, practical skills training courses. There was little specific mention of regional and local approaches since education policy had little to say about adult education. The strategy for the education sector from 1994 stated that non-formal education was to play a leading role in meeting society’s educational needs. The launch of the project coincided with the process of political decentralisation, which was accompanied by uncertainties about the changing role of the MoE and its relations with the newly formed regional education authorities, which had small sections devoted to adult or non-formal education.

The project supported regional education authorities in the development of activities, which had been found to have priority in regional studies. For the long-term effective establishment of regional basic education programmes and practical skills training courses, the project identified four key tasks. Recognition was to be given to adult education in education policy in order to provide political and social guarantees. Initial and in-service training of regional and local specialist staff was indispensable for the development of needs-oriented local provision. The production of appropriate situation-based teaching materials and methods needed to be an integral part of the development of provision, and the conditions necessary for the conduct of model activities needed to be created.

Even before the project office was opened, the IIZ/DVV had in late 1994 helped the MoE to design an overall plan for non-formal basic education for adults which would stimulate regional efforts to develop teaching materials in local and regional languages.

In June 1996 a start was made on remedying the lack of political recognition of non-formal adult education through an “implementation strategy for non-formal education” drawn up at a national seminar. The goals laid down in the strategy were the implementation of regional basic education programmes and local revitalisation of practical training at Community Skills Training Centres (CSTC).

In its support for the development of the sector, the IIZ/DVV has so far concentrated on:

- needs assessment and monitoring of various activities
- formulation of regional non-formal education strategies in Oromia and Tigray
- curriculum development and textbook production for non-formal basic education in Amharic, Anuak, Nuer, Oromiffa and Tigrinya
- regional and national initial and continuing training for adult education staff
• introduction of a new diploma course in adult education at Jimma Teachers’ College
• publication of introductory texts about adult education for trainee teachers, and of an English-Amharic glossary of specialist adult education terms
• rehabilitation of Community Skills Training Centres and coordination of practical training courses
• drafting and printing of Amharic handbooks on adult learning, on development of newspapers for new readers and establishment of reading rooms, on organisation of CSTC training courses, on collection of oral literature, and on development of indicators, participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation
• publication of functional reading materials on nutrition and the environment, and of light reading material.

Some of the main challenges facing the creation of relevant non-formal basic education and sustainable conditions for learning in Ethiopia are as follows:

• The various local interests of a social, cultural and commercial nature need to be expressed more freely in the curriculum than in the past, when the curriculum was centralised. This will involve greater attention to issues of gender and to the interests of women. Local consultations on interests, and participatory needs analysis, will make it more likely that problems will be solved as a result.
• A flexible, needs-based combination of various activities, such as literacy, practical training, family planning or health education, will promise improved learning outcomes.
• The development of a sustainable culture of reading should take oral knowledge into account, should contain relevant information, and should have entertainment value.
• The writing of new publications should not be left to professional authors, but learners and other interested persons should be encouraged to play their part.
• There needs to be greater public appreciation of the potential and requirements of needs-based and community-oriented adult education, including the need for suitably trained staff and the role of NGOs working at the grassroots.
• The aim should be quality rather than quantity in the conduct of programmes, with the emphasis placed on improving learners’ lives through basic education.

Drawing on lessons learnt with the hitherto predominantly supply-driven approach, IIZ/DVV Ethiopia endeavours to promote a demand-driven approach by establishing links between basic education and livelihoods. More attention would be given to tailor-made programmes for specific local target groups, acknowledging different contexts and levels of basic education required. For this to be achieved, the formation of local partnership arrangements between education offices, NGOs and communities is being planned. Links to rural development, women’s empowerment, children’s education, agriculture, health and nutrition shall increase the chances for concrete benefits to the learners. Learner-centred approaches such as REFLECT will guarantee active learner involvement from the onset.