Achieving Lifelong Learning in the Age of Digitization: What are the possibilities?

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Commonwealth of Learning, Canada
The Commonwealth
54 developed and developing nations around the world
To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use technologies to improve and expand access to education and training
GOAL 4

ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
More at sustainabledvelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal
Plan

Understanding Lifelong Learning
Where are we?
Role of technology: the COL experience
What next?
Understanding Lifelong Learning
From Lifelong ‘Education’ to Lifelong ‘Learning’

- holistic approach to education not limited to age or socio-economic groups
  - Edgar Faure Report

- Learning throughout life

- Learning to know; learning to do, learning to be; learning to live together
  - Delors Report, UNESCO
LIFELONG AND LIFEWIDE LEARNING

16 WAKING HOURS

0-5 K  GR 1-12  UG GRAD  WORK  RETIREMENT

FORMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

INFORMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

(Source: LIFE Center: Stevens, R. Bransford, J. & Stevens, A., 2005)
3 Dimensions of Lifelong Learning

When?
Life phases: from cradle to grave; life-wide

How?
Modality of delivery: formal, non-formal, informal

What?
Learning domains: personal, social, cultural, developmental

Source: UIL, 2014, p. 12
"To widen access to quality education and provide lifelong learning opportunities by leveraging on technology...providing a conducive ...learning environment at ...affordable cost "

Source: http://www.oum.edu.my/?q=node/1
STOU (Thailand) Mission statements

Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University aims to be a world-class open university utilizing a distance education system to provide **lifelong learning for all.**

Source: [http://www.stou.ac.th/Eng/Vision.aspx](http://www.stou.ac.th/Eng/Vision.aspx)
"To enhance access to high quality, affordable and relevant education …and ensure lifelong learning opportunities to face challenges in a knowledge society."

Rise of self-directed learning: boost for Lifelong Learning

- Learning to learn online
- Creating an ecosystem for lifelong learning
- Providing just-in-time training for livelihoods

![Table showing new registered users for different MOOC platforms: Coursera, edX, FutureLearn, and Class Central.]

Where are we?

Lifelong Learning in three countries

Australia
Singapore
South Africa
Australia

**Aim:** Develop skills, upskill and reskill citizens for a dynamic economy

**Focus:** Strong economic and industrial orientation

**Programmes/Mechanisms:**
- National Foundation Skills Strategy (for adults)
- Open Access College

**Challenges:** No comprehensive national policy
Good Practice: AQF & Recognition of Prior Learning

- The AQF a national framework for formal and vocational education and training
- Includes Recognition of Prior Learning
- Review of AQF in 2019 recognized that credit recognition of micro-credentials is a preferred way for promoting lifelong learning
Singapore

**Aim:** To build a competitive economy by investing in Singaporeans to develop their fullest potential throughout life

**Focus:** Skilling and reskilling the workforce

**Programmes/Mechanisms:**
- Government subsidies on training
- Support for career guidance, job searches, placements

**Challenges:** Lack of ownership of government schemes by employers
Good Practice: Incentivising Lifelong Learning

- **S$1 billion**: Annual SkillsFuture funding per year from 2015-2020
- **S$500**: Initial credit per citizen to be used for agency-approved courses
- **90%**: Subsidy for training costs of Singaporeans aged 40+
Aim: To contribute to economic growth and address inequity resulting from apartheid

Focus: Skills development and learner mobility

Programmes/Mechanisms:
• National Policy and Strategy
• NQF
• Khetha: career advice portal

Challenges:
• Tension between learning for social equality vs. economic growth
Good Practice: Open & Distance Learning

‘to meet the challenge of lifelong learning successfully, we need to reorganize the delivery of education and training within an open learning framework.’

African National Congress, 1995: 77
To sum up...

- Countries develop policies/strategies within a visionary framework, but adopt a utilitarian approach
- Strategies: QF, Incentives, ODL
- Lifelong learning is understood differently in different contexts
- More emphasis on formal education and training
- Governments play an active role
- Need for coordination between different ministries & stakeholders
Age of Digitisation
Artificial intelligence
Blended and hybrid course models
Learning analytics
Micro-credentialing
Open educational resources
Quality online learning

Every $1 invested resulted in $8 worth of income and assets
Using Aptus for Financial Literacy

Photo credit: Manndeshi
Online learning - Food and Agriculture sector underserved. A consortium conceptualised by COL, supported by NPTEL
Skilling and re-skilling
China Central Radio and TV University - Open University of China

Radio and TV Model

Source: British Journal of Educational Technology Research on distance education development in China (2010)
Reaching the Bottom Billion

• Use technologies that are appropriate and affordable
• Content designed for delivery in low bandwidth situations
• Open Content in local languages ie. OER
• Social media integration
• Online peer-to-peer interactions supplemented with blended approaches
What Next?
Need for Paradigm Shift
## 1. Integrate formal, informal and non-formal learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Non Formal</th>
<th>Formal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Learner led</td>
<td>• Structured</td>
<td>• Teacher Led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not evaluated</td>
<td>• Not usually evaluated</td>
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<td>• Tacit knowledge</td>
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Heutagogy in Practice

- Nursing, engineering and education professions have found heutagogy to be a credible response to the critical issues that the learners are faced with.
- The University of Western Sydney has implemented the heutagogical approach in its teacher education programme.
- Heutagogical approach in three HEIs in the UK have led to reflective learning with learners demonstrating capacity and capability.

2. Codified (explicit) and Tacit Knowledge

### Explicit Knowledge (know what)
- tangible/visible
- Codified
- Formal & Non formal

### Tacit Knowledge (know how)
- Informal
- personal
- intuitive
- acquired through lived experience/practice

The Hidden Dimension of Lifelong Learning

“The centrality of ..... tacit knowledge to the production and reproduction of society has typically been unrecognized”
3 Ideal Approach towards Lifelong Learning

• Move beyond acquiring skills and competencies and focus on Transformative Learning
• Not just adapting to changing circumstances but acquiring ability to change circumstances
Transformative Learning

“to make our own interpretations rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgements, and feelings of others. ... Transformative learning develops autonomous thinking.”

Mezirow

Outcomes in Lifelong Learning

Typical Approach:
• Acquisition of Skills and Competencies
• Employability and Entrepreneurship

Transformative Approach:
• Empowerment
• Environmental Conservation
• Social Cohesion/Peace
Governments

- Implement and monitor lifelong learning policies with a focus on transformative learning
- Accreditation mechanisms for recognition and mobility
- Promote lifelong learning through indigenous languages and cultures
- ICT infrastructure and governance
- Incentives for lifelong learning
Educational Institutions

• Provide seamless pathways between formal, non-formal, informal learning
• Integrate pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy
• Innovations for recognition and credentialing
• Use ODL, OER and TEL