

THEME: **FOSTERING LIFELONG LEARNING**

Recommended area: Curricular interventions for skills development

TITLE: Promoting Lifelong Learning at Community Learning and Development Centres in Namibia

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ABSTRACT

The Namibian Basic Education Act 3 of 2020 mandates lifelong learning for all citizens to acquire new skills required in a knowledge-based economy. As part of the quantitative research approach, the researchers conducted a survey to determine what skills adult learners and out-of-school youth need. Using the findings, the researchers were able to devise new approaches for developing initiatives to aid people in acquiring these skills in their local communities. A purposive sampling was used to select all participants. The researchers used simple statistical processes such as frequency distribution tables and percentages to analyse the data. Participants indicated the need to learn hydroponics, poultry farming, goat husbandry, tailoring, and baking, among other skills. It is worth noting that the majority of those who participated in the study were females. The study also discovered that community projects require government and private sector support to succeed. Following the findings, all Community Learning and Development Centres (CLDCs) in all regions should be reformed to ensure that skills development is executed effectively in the communities. CLDCs are well-known for serving as focal points for community-based social development initiatives. An established and managed CLDC can be a long-term growth engine and a bridge to improved living conditions.

Keywords: Skills Development, Community Learning and Development Centres.

1. INTRODUCTION

The provision of adult numeracy and literacy skills has been largely successful in Namibia, with adult literacy skills increasing dramatically with a national adult literacy rate at 89% as of the last census as of the 2011 Namibian Population and Housing Census (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2011). While this is an accomplishment, there is an emerging need to empower adults and out-of-school youth with skills development. The Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MOEAC) is restructuring Community Learning and Development Centres (CLDC) to incorporate adult and out-of-school youth skill training and development. This will not only provide people with skills that will enable them to improve their livelihoods, but it will also serve as a response to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone.

2. BACKGROUND

Universal education is highly valued in Namibia, as stated in Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution (GRN, 2005), which stipulates that all people (even adults) have the right to education. Furthermore, the Namibian Basic Education, Act 3 of 2020, stipulates the provision of basic education, as well as technical vocational education and training, in order to provide all citizens with new skills required in a knowledge-based economy. It also calls for opportunities for lifelong learning to be made available to all people, wherever possible, within people's own communities, in order to establish a society where everyone has equal access to possibilities.

In light of this, the Namibian government, through the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, was tasked with establishing a Directorate of Adult Education (DAE) to oversee all adults' educational needs. The Adult Education Directorate was established in September 1992, two years after Namibia attained independence (DAE, 2008). DAE is now in charge of five programmes. The first programme is the Namibian National Literacy Programmes (NLPN), which delivers basic literacy and numeracy stages 1, 2, and 3 to adults who were previously discriminated against or marginalized because of colonial rule (DAE, 2008). The first stage teaches learners how to read and write in their native languages. Stage two is a continuation of the literacy curriculum in their mother tongue, and it is at the intermediate level. Stage three, which corresponds to Grade 4 in formal education, introduces pupils to Basic English for real-world communication (MBEC/UNICEF, 1997). The second programme is the Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) program, which is geared for adults who have completed Stage 3 of the NLPN (MoE, 2006).

The third programme is the Adult Skill Development and Self-Employment (ASDSE), which was launched in 1998 by the Directorate of Adult Education. The ASDSE programme is a response to the needs highlighted by adult learners in NLPN (DABE, 1998; Tonin, Ricoveri, Zaire, 1997). By introducing potential and trained

entrepreneurs to business principles, banking procedures, and job creation, the ASDSE project intends to build institutional capacity, give business management skills, and boost the informal sector (MOE, 2011).

The Family Literacy Project is the fourth programme. According to UNESCO (2008), it is directed at families in order to address the low reading achievement of many pre- and primary school children, as well as parents' lack of confidence in their abilities to help these children. Because parents or guardians are the first and most important teachers of their children, the family literacy method benefits both adults and children (DABE, 2003).

The fifth programme is the Community Learning and Development Centres (CLDCs), which is the focus of this study. The CLDC is best described as a physical location that houses many developmental programs and service providers. CLDCs are designed to be a centre for executing social development programs among communities, and hence they are major points of information, research, and monitoring of community socioeconomic developments (MOE, 2011).

Governments, according to UNESCO, should make non-formal and adult learning and education places and situations broadly available, notably networks of community learning centres (UNESCO, 2016b, p. 52). Adults from a wide range of cultural, economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds benefit from learning activities organized by or held in community learning spaces. Learning and development activities provided by CLDC should be tailored to the requirements and circumstances of the local community.

At present, there are 13 CLDCs in Namibia (see Fig. 1), which are spread out across the country. According to DABE charter (2001, p. 9), CLDCs were established to provide a diverse range of services in an organized and coordinated manner based on community needs, as well as to strengthen community members' capacity to actively engage in future decisions and become active development agents in their communities. CLDC's mission includes informing people and adolescents about services such as literacy, training, libraries, culture, and the arts, as well as chances for adults and youth to use their educational skills to learn more about subjects that interest them and can help them develop. As a result, a CLDC acts as a focal point for members of communities interested in participating in lifelong learning programs. This underscores the critical need to restructure Namibian CLDCs as centres where adults can be taught a variety of skills that will enable them to either create jobs for themselves or be employable by others.

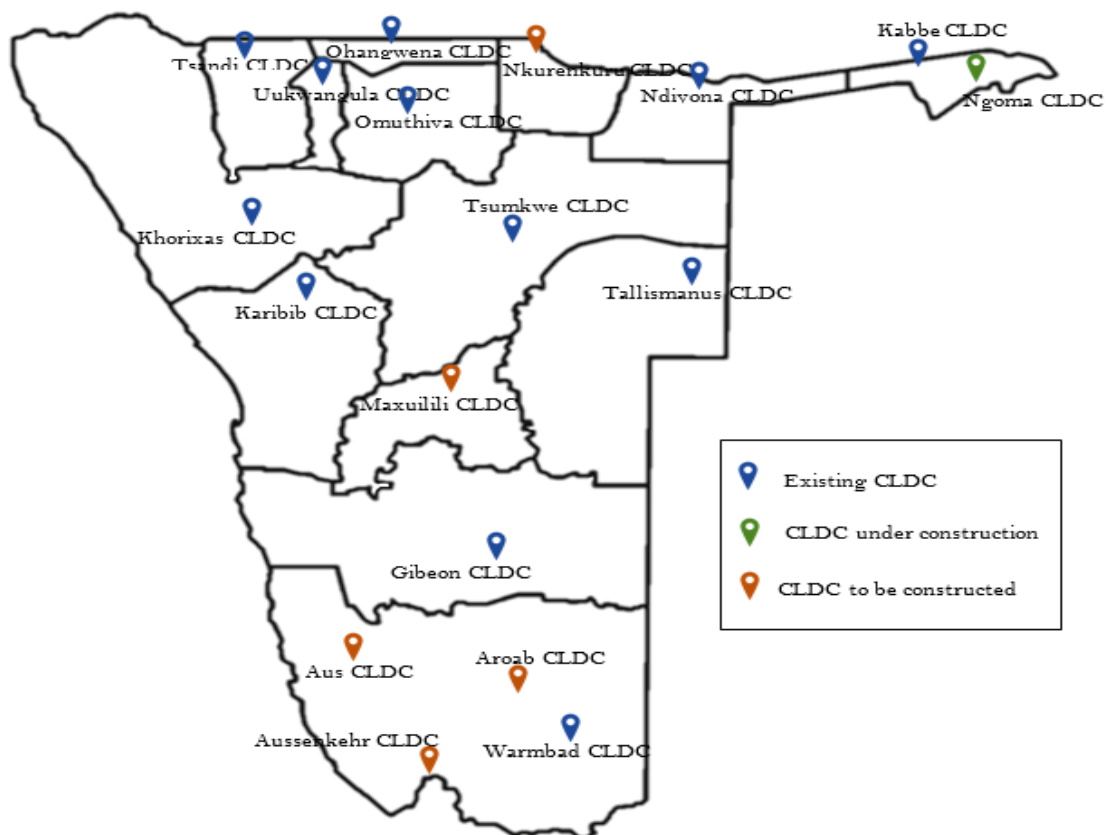


Figure 1: CLDCs in Namibia

Since it is anchored in communities, the CLDC contributes significantly to the unfulfilled goal of Education for All, particularly in terms of providing quality education to disadvantaged and marginalized people (Victorino-Soriano, 2016). Although CLDCs were intended to deliver educational services such as Namibian National Literacy Programmes, Adult Upper Primary Education, and Adult Skill Development and Self-Employment, they have failed to do so (MOE, 2011), as they solely provided library services. Thus, DAE plans to alter the current status quo and restructure the CLDC so that it can serve as the new hub of training activities.

Given that some adults cannot fulfil the entrance criteria for vocational institutions or university entry systems, CLDCs can best serve their training needs and convert them into productive citizens by providing skills training based on the concepts of skills training and development (Kandjengo & Shikalepo, 2020). As a result, the study recommends curricular interventions at CLDCs, i.e., using CLDCs as centres where adults and out-of-school youths can be capacitated and taught in-demand, cutting-edge, and entrepreneurial skills.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach

A quantitative research approach was applied in this investigation. Quantitative research examines the relationship between variables utilizing scientific methods and procedures in order to test objective theories (Check & Schutt, 2012). Questionnaires were used to measure the variables, and the information was numbered and statistically analysed. Given the large number of participants surveyed and the study's goal of evaluating the skills needs of adults and out-of-school adolescents in the country, it was logical to utilize a quantitative technique. According to Daniel (2016), a quantitative research strategy focuses on numbers and figures when collecting and analysing data, therefore it employs statistical data as a tool, saving time and resources.

3.2 Research design

A survey study design was used to obtain information from research participants using a quantitative research approach (Cohen & Manion, 2011). Surveys have a lot of versatility when it comes to representing a broad group of people. Because the study has such a large number of participants, the data acquired provides a better representation of the comparative features of the research's general population.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

A total of 1960 adults and out-of-school youth from 98 constituencies participated in the survey. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Purposive sampling procedures entail the researchers picking a sample of members who, in the researchers' opinion, are appropriate for a specific purpose relating to the study questions (Cohen & Manion, 2011). The researchers examined the participants in the study and identified key informants who are representative of and knowledgeable about the topic under investigation. The age groups of 25-34 and 35-44 years had the most respondents, while the age group of under 15 received the least. The gender representation graph shows that females made up 69 percent of the people interviewed. Rural areas are home to 77 percent of the participants. Participants were either unemployed or working in semi-skilled employment when they were interviewed. As seen in Figure 2, the respondents possess varying levels of education.

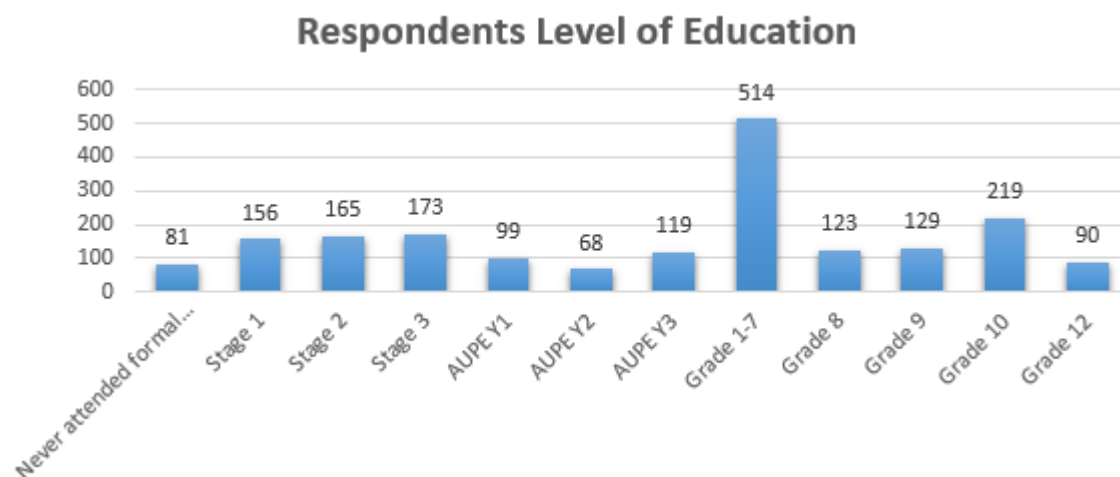


Figure 2: Level of Education

The majority of respondents comprises of those who never attended formal school, those in Stages 1-3, AUPE Years 1-3, and those who passed Grades 1-7. Participants who have completed grades 8-12 account for 29% of the respondents.

3.4 Data collection

When it comes to capturing the skills requirements of the adult community in the country, quantitative research methodologies were applied in this study. Despite the fact that the participants were expected to complete the questionnaires individually, the researchers interviewed them to ensure that they understood it and also to aid those with poor reading and writing skills. A pilot test was done with 24 participants, three from each of the seven districts in the Khomas region, to pre-test the questionnaire's effectiveness and acceptability before it was rolled out to the rest of the regions. After the pre-test, only minor changes were made to the questionnaire. Following that, the questionnaires were sent to the 14 educational regions, along with guidelines or Terms of Reference for conducting the study. Adult Education Officers in each region selected a sample size of 20 respondents per district/constituency. There are 103 districts in the country, however only 98 districts answered, resulting in a total of 1960 respondents. The research approach was deemed appropriate due to the nature of the survey. The major purpose of the study was to gather feedback from adult learners and community members on the unique skills they require in order to give them relevant training.

3.5 Data analysis

The technique used was exploratory data analysis. The data was analyzed using frequency distribution charts and percentages. Following data collection, the researchers counted the number of completed questionnaires. The categories were created using a pre-coded questionnaire. Tables were manually generated in Excel to capture these subject groups. The number of responses to each question was counted and categorized. Creating a frequency distribution is one of the most fundamental ways for understanding the data value of variables. As a consequence, frequency intervals for each category were calculated and converted to percentages. The results were graphed and displayed for presentation.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The next section contains a discussion of the established findings.

4.1 The type of skills training needed by adults and out of school youth.

This theme focuses on the skills training needed by adults and out-of-school kids to improve their economic situation. The responses of the study's participants are depicted in the graph below (see Figure 3). It demonstrates that the majority of rural respondents require abilities in gardening, poultry farming, baking, goat husbandry, and clothes and textile manufacturing. While the majority of respondents in urban areas demand gardening, clothes and textile production, poultry farming, bakery, and electronics abilities. This means that individuals, whether they live in the country or in the city, require the same skill training. They all, for example, expressed a desire for gardening (hydroponic) training (see Figure 3). However, there are noticeable differences; for example, in rural areas, poultry farming is the second most in-demand training, whereas apparel and textiles are in urban areas.

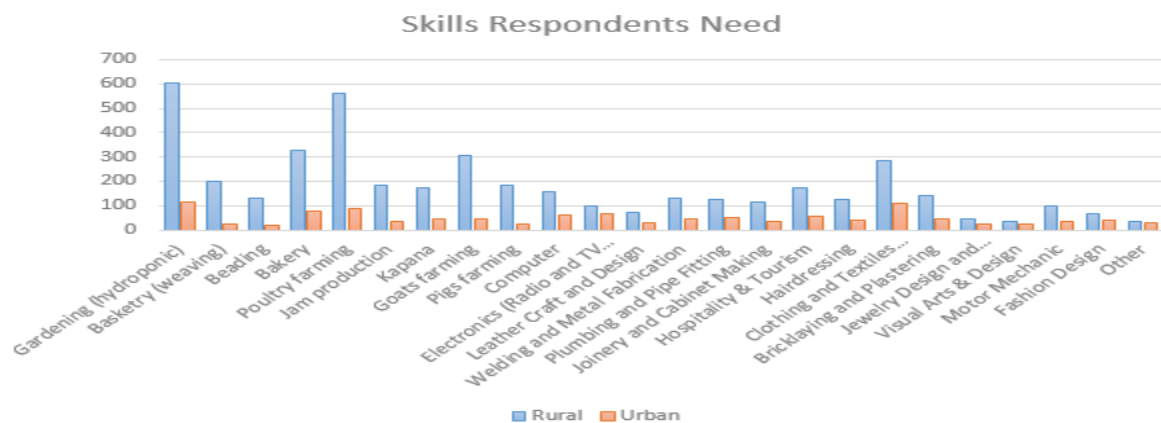


Figure 3: Skills needed by participants

The majority of participants are unskilled in relation to the employment opportunities available in labour markets, making it difficult for them to find work because most jobs require certified personnel (Kandjengo & Shikalepo, 2020). Industrialization, globalization, and technical breakthroughs, according to Kapur (2019), have transformed skills and knowledge into the driving motors of economic prosperity and social development. Visible societal progress has increased awareness of the use of modern, scientific, and innovative ways to many chores and functions, such as hydroponics farming. This merely goes to show why people are willing to be trained in a wide range of skills as skill development takes primacy.

4.2 Training

According to the findings of the study, the majority of the participants had no skills training throughout their lives. Figure 4 shows that only 16% of those polled have received any type of training.



Figure 4: Percentage total distribution of trained versus untrained respondents

The majority of participants were not exposed to training options that would have prepared them for work, putting them at the whim of Good Samaritans who would give them whatever odd tasks were available to make a livelihood (Kandjengo & Shikalepo, 2020). Adults need training and upskilling through CLDCs. In essence, skills training is aiding Namibia's transition into a "knowledge-based economy" (GRN, 2004).

4.3 Projects

According to the research, participants require assistance in launching projects in their areas. In both rural and urban locations, projects including gardening, poultry husbandry, and tailoring are highly demanded (see figure 5).

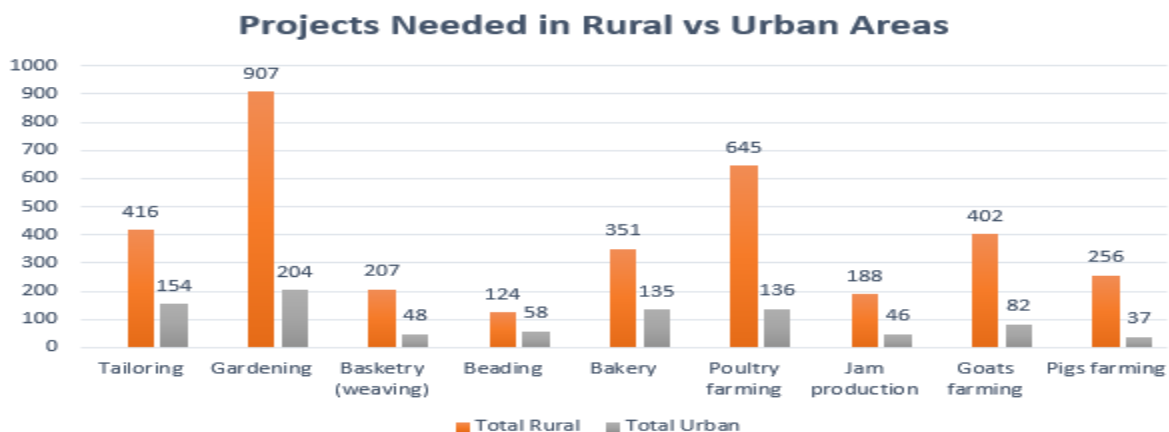


Fig 5: Projects desired in communities

An agricultural project delivers beneficial interventions to jobless individuals by providing them with a chance for food production and opportunity to earn money (Anandajayasekeram, 2004). As a result, the overall outcome of an agricultural project is economic and social emancipation at grassroots level, which eventually boosts the country's wealth.

While the Commonwealth of Learning (COL)-sponsored Girls' Inspire project assists the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture's Khomas Directorate of Education, Arts, and Culture in providing skills training to 2,268 out-of-school youth and people with disabilities from marginalized communities, the articulation of this training to tangible outcomes is critical. Furthermore, expanding the project to include all regions will be extremely useful to recipients around the country.

5. CURRICULAR INTERVENTIONS FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Given that the country's adult literacy rate is expected to rise dramatically from the 89 percent recorded by the National Housing and Population Census in 2011, a shift from basic reading and numeracy to skills development is required. This indicates that unemployed individuals of the community, as well as those with basic literacy and numeracy skills, should have access to relevant skill development opportunities. CLDCs will be used as training centers for fundamental vocational skills by the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture's Directorate of Adult Education. The CLDCs also serve as a central location for people to receive the training they need to start income-generating projects in their communities. Because this group of persons may not meet the acknowledged requisites for admission to post-secondary schools, CLDCs provide possibilities for community members to develop technical skills and support themselves economically.

It is the responsibility of the Directorate of Adult Education to actively engage in the identification of individuals in communities around the country who have feasible income-generating initiatives and to educate them about their business ideas. As a result of this training, adults will acquire skills and knowledge necessary to operate their own entrepreneurial ventures. In the labour market, a smart adult will put their entrepreneurial abilities to work by attaining success in paid employment or by establishing their own sustainable company enterprises, all of which are critical components of economic growth (Shikalepo, 2019). In order for adults to shift their thinking and livelihood away from poverty, unemployment, and being passive members of their communities and toward active participation in the national economy, these types of curricular interventions must be implemented in order for them to reskill, capacitate, and empower themselves.

6. DELIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study concentrated on the skill requirements of Namibians. Adults and out-of-school youth were polled in 98 of the country's 104 constituencies. Participants were chosen based on their willingness and capacity to complete the questionnaire. The quantitative research was carried out through a survey, which contained data collection techniques that included active human contact. Frequency distribution tables and percentages were used to summarize the data.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Given the nature of the research, the researchers created questions that were broad enough to appeal to a diverse group of people. These generic questions, on the other hand, might not be as relevant to all participants as they should be.

8. CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to assess Namibian adults' and out-of-school youth's skill and training needs, as well as to intervene in CLDC activities by providing individuals with skills training and development. The majority of participants responded that they are under-trained in specific skill areas and that they need training in those areas. Furthermore, the research shows that adults and out-of-school adolescents, regardless of location, require training in a range of disciplines, such as hydroponic gardening, poultry farming, clothing and textiles, and others.

This paper claims that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, through the Directorate of Adult Education, should look for external partners to help with skill training and development in order to empower unemployed adults and youth. As a result, the Directorate will be able to assist adults and youth in competing for paid jobs and

launching income-generating activities, allowing them to actively contribute to the country's economic development. Curriculum interventions such as skills training and entrepreneurial training provided by the CLDC will improve the way these centers are organized and administered in the future, while also improving the living situations of adults and out-of-school adolescents. In this context, the Directorate of Adult Education's lifelong learning programs should incorporate skill training and development, ensuring that unemployed adults are prepared to be competitive and active participants in the local, national, and international economies.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

After doing this study, the following recommendations were made, which if followed could result in a more capable adult and out-of-school youth population:

- It is proposed that all Community Learning and Development Centres (CLDCs) across all regions be updated in order to ensure that skills development is carried out efficiently in communities. The CLDC Grant, which is supplied by the Directorate of Adult Education, is currently a meager source of funding for CLDCs. A specified amount of funding was also made available as Seed Cash, allowing CLDCs to produce funds through the utilization of this capital.
- It is also suggested that CLD training course qualifications be linked to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), allowing adults and out-of-school youth to proceed to vocational education and training. As a result, adults and youth will obtain high-quality, up-to-date education, as suggested by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- Since Kunene Region is home to the Himba tribe, which is a marginalized and minority community in Namibia and still engages in nomadic lifestyles to find grazing for their livestock, which is the source of their livelihood, the Directorate for Adult Education may consider obtaining funding to establish more mobile CLDCs in the region, which would benefit both ovaHimba and the region as a whole.
- The Directorate of Adult Education should engage in aggressive outreach training initiatives to guarantee that the skills training given by CLDCs and other organizations reaches isolated regions. This is required since many of the constituency' neighborhoods will most likely be cut off from the CLDCs. Residents' economic activities, as well as their specific training needs and requirements, should be considered while creating the skills training.
- Adult Skills Development for Self Employment (ASDSE) Program of the Directorate offers small loans to adults and out-of-school youth who want to start or expand their own companies. It is critical to guarantee that any participant in CLDC-provided training programs who chooses to receive this financing is allowed to do so. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture is in charge of collecting debts when participants fail to make payments, the bank has placed measures in place to ensure that they meet the standards for loan approval.

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