Achieving Lifelong Learning for All: What are the possibilities?

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Commonwealth of Learning, Canada
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
Vancouver, 1987
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 sustainabledevelopment.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

18.5% 7.7% 5.1%

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
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
• 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+

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Flag of Singapore
South Africa

**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
‘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
In Summary …

• 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
Role of Technology: the COL experience
Every $1 invested resulted in $8 worth of income and assets
Content and Web Manager for a Farmer’s Organization

**Facebook content:** 600 different content uploaded  
**YouTube:** 500 videos of farmers field experiences  
**WhatsApp:** 150 organic agriculture based content  
**Trained:** over 1000 farmers

Arogya Mary - school dropout, grandmother, who never knew about the internet before the L3F project
Online learning - Food and Agriculture sector underserved.
A consortium conceptualised by COL, supported by NPTEL
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

**Informal**
- Learner led
- Not evaluated
- Tacit knowledge

**Non Formal**
- Structured
- Not usually evaluated

**Formal**
- Teacher Led
- Sequential
- Evaluated
Lifelong Learning: Integration of Three Approaches

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
Thank you