

The Federal Democratic Republic of  
Ethiopia  
Ministry of Education



National Adult Education  
Strategy



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February 2008  
Addis Ababa

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## 1. Introduction

Ethiopia is a country where many nations and nationalities live together in harmony. In 1999 E.C. its population was estimated around 75 million. The country stands second in population among African countries, of which 80% live in the rural areas. According to UNESCO's 2006 publication entitled "Global EFA Monitoring Report," 58.5% of the country's population aged 15 years and above is illiterate.

Education is a key instrument for development; Moreover, every human being has the right to get basic education irrespective of his/her color, religious background and economic status. With respect to this citizens' right to education and the realization of economic and social benefits that emanate from education, a massive movement has been carried out in the country through successive Education Sector Development Programmes (ESDP) launched in line with the Education and Training Policy (ETP).

The main objective of the ETP is to produce trained manpower at different levels that will competently participate in the various economic, political and social undertakings of the country. In order to achieve, this objective, continuous efforts have been made to alleviate the long-standing problems of quality, accessibility, and equity and relevance of the education system.

As a result of the implementation of successive education sector development programs, access to formal schooling has significantly grown from its previous low level. However, the status of adult education has remained low in terms of both accessibility and relevance. Adult education programs

implemented so far have not been geared towards problem solving and not relevant to the day –to-day life of the adult population that is directly involved in production activities. Moreover, failure to integrate the endeavors made by different development ministries and other partners was one of the shortcomings of the sub-sector in question.

In order to alleviate the adult education problems the third ESDP document underscores that like-skill based, work-oriented and community-based adult education programs will be scaled-up. This clearly indicates that adult education is contributing as an integral part of the implementation of different development policies, strategies and packages (agriculture and rural development, industrialization, health and packages related to youth and women) to achieve accelerated and sustained development to end poverty in the country is well recognized.

Therefore, development of a strategy for adult education has become a necessity to expand and strengthen adult education, and thereby to raise the productivity of the society to improve health conditions with easy access and utilization of information.

The focus of adult education is to impart knowledge and skill among the adult and to facilitate conditions for the provision of the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programme. In addition, it enables adult to read and write in order to acquire knowledge and skill in agriculture, health, civics, cultural education etc. This is being implemented in several areas.

For adults and youth who did not get the chance to take part in regular programs, implementation of functional adult basic education is of great importance, in order to accelerate the on going development activities in Ethiopia. Therefore, the strategy for adult education has been developed with active participation of all stakeholders.

The strategy document contains chapters on status and relevance of adult education, strategic directions for accessibility and quality of adult education, as well as management and organization of adult education.

## **2. Current Situation of Adult Education**

Adult education is an educational process directed at raising the knowledge and skills of citizens aged 15 years and above starting from basic reading, writing and computing skills in an organized manner.

Human resource development will take the first priority to take our country out of the current low level of development to an accelerated and sustained development. It is clearly stated in different development policies and strategies that there is a necessity to build the capacity of the economically active human power (the youth and the adult) through education and training in order to increase productivity by proper utilization of land and other material resources. But, adult education is still engaged with problems accumulated through years. These visible problems are presented as follows.

### **2.1 Unsatisfactory level of expansion of adult education**

To secure fair distribution of revenue and to ensure equitable and active participation in politics within the social and economic development of a country, it is necessary to make educational services accessible to society at large.

Regarding the participation rate in the regular programs, encouraging achievements are registered due to the measures taken by the government, especially to guarantee citizen's access to basic education. As far as illiteracy rate is concerned with limited efforts made, it has gone down only to 58.5%.

Adult education programmes carried out by regions in the past years were deficient as far as their continuity and sustainability is concerned, and limited to few regions and areas in their coverage. Most of them were managed without planning, programming, and lack continuity. Because of the limited effort made to increase the accessibility of educational services to the economically active segment of the society (the adult), the illiteracy rate could not go down to the required level. Non-availability of adequate information on the current situation of adult education is another problem to be mentioned.

To enable the adult to competently participate in the country's development efforts it is vital to design an adult education programme, which complies with government development strategies and packages (agricultural and rural development, health, women and youth development packages) and serves as a tool for accelerated and sustained utilization of these development activities.

## **2.2 Inequitable distribution of adult education**

The indicators of equity of education, among others, are the balanced distribution of educational services between urban and rural, men and women and among regions. The existence of equitable growth among regions as well as between rural and urban areas raises self-confidence among citizens and serves as a reliable foundation for the ongoing establishment of democratic system in our country. Growth will not be achieved with the exclusion of about half of the population from the effort to accelerate the country's development. Educating women is educating the family and society; hence, it is a reliable foundation for growth and development.

Despite all the above –mentioned advantages of adult education, only some regions made limited effort the last years, while most regions did not launch the programme at all. Even in the regions that launched the programme, participation of women was found to be extremely low due to erroneous traditional perceptions, inappropriateness of the programme and being fully loaded with work at home. In addition, adults were not given the chance in most places. This discrepancy in participation should be narrowed to reduce the illiteracy rate. We are then expected to work hard more than ever to equally benefit adults and make them contribute for the eradication of poverty and achieve sustainable development.

## **2.3 Low level of Relevance and quality of adult education**

### **2.3.1 In relation to relevance**

Due consideration should be given to quality and relevance of adult education besides its distribution, expansion and participation. Basically adults will be motivated to participate in adult education if the programme is related to their needs and day to day activities, and if they find the education offered applicable to solve their current problems.

Functional literacy enables peasants, pastoralists, women and youth to sustainably utilize knowledge and skill obtained through the different development packages. Also, because they will have access to information, they will be able to search for additional and new skills and utilize what they got to improve their living standard and productivity.

However, because the limited adult education programmes launched in the past years were targeted only to enable adults to read, write and do simple arithmetic without being related to their day-to-day life and development around them, it was impossible to bring about significant change on the participants' livelihood.

### **2.3.2 In relation to quality**

One of the basic inputs for quality education is the availability of competent facilitators (teachers) in the required number.

Since adults have many experiences besides their personal behavior and the status and responsibility given to them in the society, teaching them requires special methodology. However, the recruitment of facilitators for adult education remained inconsistent in the past years, and no system was established for institutionally organized training.

Another issue related to quality of education is inadequate preparation of curricula and publication of books as well as scarcity of textbooks and other teaching aids. Though efforts were made observed to prepare teaching-learning materials, development, publication and dispatch of need-based and relevant educational materials to the users were not done successfully, due to discontinuation of the programmes. Adult education was not also supported by educational mass-media (TV, Radio etc).

Therefore, to provide adults with quality and relevant education (relevant to agricultural and rural development, health, women and youth programs and packages) we bear the responsibility of launching large-scale functional literacy on the basis of existing development packages as well as the needs and Livelihood of adults. This in turn presupposes the need to establish an institutionalized training system that will produce competent facilitators in sufficient number, produce and provide quality educational materials to beneficiaries, employ media such as radio and ICT, etc.

## **2.4 In availability of appropriate organization to lead adult education**

An educational undertaking will be successful if favorable condition is created for the society to discharge its share of responsibility collectively. Following the decentralized administration system all over the country, woredas are responsible for the implementation of development programmes of all sectors, including education. It is believed that the different ministries have been successful in educating and training youth, women and adults based on different extension and development packages they implemented in the past years. There are also indications for efforts and experiences made in regions through governmental and non-governmental organizations in the education sector.

The final goal of all the efforts being made by the different ministries and organizations is to build the capacity of the productive part of the society and there by to make them improve their living and competently participate in the national effort for development. Adult education will also play an instrumental role to disseminate development strategies and packages among the beneficiaries. However, the available limited resources could not be commonly utilized due to problems like unavailability of coordinating and leading organization with duties and responsibilities to coordinate these efforts and lack of focus and awareness among the existing educational managers/leaders.

Since adult education programme could not be implemented by one ministry alone and requires coordinated efforts of all

development organizations and partners, it is indispensable to establish an organization appropriate for adult education with clear duties and responsibilities.

## **2.5 Imbalance resource allocation for adult education**

If an educational system is to be implemented properly and its final target is to be achieved, its basic human, material and financial requirements should be fulfilled. Obviously, budget allocated for the education sector by the government is increasing from time to time. But the corresponding share for adult education has been very low. Personnel assigned at the different levels for the sub sector are very few in number and without appropriate training in the area. Therefore, it is believed that a coordinated and strengthened implementation of adult education requires fair budget and human resource allocation.

### **Significance of the strategy:**

- To enable the education sector play its role as a tool for development by providing educational support for strategies as well as development packages and programs developed for the productive part of the society by the different organizations to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development;
- To implement beneficiaries' need and development package-based educational program in a continuous and

sustainable manner, by integrating adult education programs run by regions with the different development organizations;

- To contribute to the achievement of the Millennium development and education for all goals by reducing illiteracy rate by 50% through launching consistent and comprehensive programme to educate the adult population which plays a direct role in national development;
- To facilitate the launch of a practice-focused adult education programme, which supports the productive part of the society (the adult) by mastering knowledge and skill to competently participate in the national development, and which complies with and serves as a tool for the different development strategies of the government, especially, agricultural, health, women and youth development packages.

## **3. Objectives and Goals of Adult Education Strategy**

### **3.1 General objective**

To establish a well planned, organized and coordinated adult education system that will provide opportunities to youth and adults to access quality and relevant learning programmes to enable them to participate competently in social, economic and political development of Ethiopia.

## **3.2 Strategic Objectives**

1. To build democratic and good-governance culture through expansion of adult education;
2. To bring about a change on social life of the society through expansion of adult education;
3. To ensure sustainable economic development through quality and relevant adult education.

### **3.2.1 Directions for implementation of the strategic objectives**

1. Expanding adult education;
2. Establishing quality and relevant adult education system;
3. Increasing coverage of adult education equitably;
4. Creation of institutional system and capacity for continuous adult education provision.

## **4. Binding Strategic Directions**

### **4.1 Increasing coverage by expanding adult education**

It is the government's main focal direction to build the capacity of the productive force of society, which comes in the front-line in its endeavor to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable

development through education and training. Therefore, achieving a general conscience on the need for the sector should be the primary task in order to expand adult education and to increase its coverage.

#### **4.1.1 Creating awareness on the significance of adult education**

- To achieve full commitment for the success of the programme by reaching to an understanding between Ministries and Bureaux of regional states and woredas, as well as government and non-government organizations relevant to implement functional literacy programmes to bring about a meaningful change among adults in their respective occupations;
- Conduct massive awareness creation and popularization activities at Regional, Woreda and Kebele levels to create common understanding on the contributions of adult education in accelerating development, creating democratic culture, eradicating poverty as well as on its importance to improve individual and societal living standard;
- Develop awareness among implementing bodies, partners and the society by applying different awareness creation and advertisement meanses/methods (Mass-media, printings, conferences, workshops, meeting, etc).



- Increase the coverage by encouraging the society, development agencies, non-government organizations as well as civic societies to implement the programme or give financial and material support for adult education.

#### **4.1.2 Allocating budget and human power required for organized implementation**

Proper allocation as well as economic and effective utilization of budget and human power is necessary for implementation of adult education and expansion of its coverage. The difference in utilizing money for adult education is that the impact is visible in a short period of time.

Therefore:

- Cover shortages and increase money allocated for adult education by increasing budget allocated at the federal, regional and woreda levels (as far as possible), and develop and implement strategies to look for additional resources from other sources;
- Strengthening the effort at different levels to increase support given to the sector, especially from education development partners, and to develop resource generation and utilization strategies with partners and stakeholders;

- Assigning competent human power at all levels of the education sector by considering duties and responsibilities in the implementation of the programme and expanding the coverage;
- Ensuring appropriate and consistent budget flow at federal, regional offices as well as at adult education and training institutions to enable them to accomplish the necessary activities sustainably.
- Building sense of ownership among the society by ensuring its active participation in the establishment and management of adult education centers;
- Utilizing other institutions (farmers training centers, health posts, alternative basic education centers) as adult education centers; so as to wisely use scarce resources.
- Creating favorable condition to use learning centers in the vicinity of residing areas of the society, especially farmers training centers, health posts, alternative basic education centers as learning, recreation and discussion forums.

#### **4.2 Establishing quality and relevant adult education system**

It is necessary to establish quality and relevant education programmes developed based on social, economic and moral conditions/values of the beneficiaries for the achievement of individual, societal and national growth

through adult education. Since quality and relevance of education are directly related to curriculum, teachers' training, educational materials, educational support, etc, fulfilling these inputs is of crucial importance.

#### **4.2.1 Curriculum**

In order to develop practical skills, work-manship, creativity, far-sightedness and democratic culture among the adult through education, due consideration should be given to social and economic developments, while developing/structuring the curriculum. The curriculum should help improve working and life style of adults by strengthening their knowledge, skill and attitude. In general, to make the adult a development-focused and productive citizen, with capabilities of understanding his/her environment, developing democratic culture with readiness for implementation:

- Developing programmes with due consideration of social, economic and pedagogical conditions of the target groups (youth, adults, women and citizens with special needs) and based on beneficiaries needs and problems.
- Including contents in the curricula, that will assist to produce competent citizen who are capable to shoulder social, economic and political responsibilities.
- Design the curriculum with the participation of all stakeholders (Ministries, training institutions, regional states, government and non-government organizations, civic societies and private sector) and following basic

curriculum development procedures. The curriculum should focus on the following areas:

- Vocational oriented adult education;
  - Entrepreneurial programs (attached to skill training);
  - Vocational education and training programmes appropriate to job-creation and additional income generation.
- Adult education centers will serve adults as information centers to get oriented to the changing local, national and international production and market conditions;
  - Adult education will include programmes designed for social groups in special conditions;
  - Development of model curriculum to support the development of teaching-learning materials for citizens with various needs and residing in difficult areas.

#### **4.2.2 Building the capacity of facilitators supervisors and other experts**

One of the indispensable inputs for quality education is availability of competent teachers. As well known, since adults have their status in the society and are owners of rich experiences, teaching them requires special methodology. Competence of facilitators has also great importance for the delivery and effectiveness of adult education. Therefore:

- Raise capacity of program managers, training institutions, facilitators and experts to the required level,
- Establish a system to train facilitators and providing the training in teachers' training institutions.
- Recruit facilitators from the surrounding community who are atleast completers of 10<sup>th</sup> grade and accepted by the community. Adjustments might be made for developing region based criteria depending on particular conditions.
- Provide of need-based training by different teachers' training and agricultural extension training colleges, known for providing adult education, after checking their capacity and work programme;
- Provide capacity building training for supervisors and experts assigned for adult education at federal, regional and woreda levels in higher education institutions;
- Develop a strategy to encourage academicians in universities and training institutions to carry out research in the sub-sector and train experts properly to enable them contribute to strengthen adult education.
- Render budgetary and other support to enable universities and other training institutions to carryout appropriate adult education programmes.

### **4.2.3 Creating favorable and sustainable learning environment by providing adequate educational materials and teaching aids**

Any learning and awareness creation process will be more effective when all necessary inputs are fulfilled. Therefore, fulfillment of educational materials and teaching aids play an important role in keeping quality of education. Therefore:

- Develop teaching –learning and supportive reading materials by regions based on the syllabus and taking into account the life style and needs of adults and their surroundings;
- Let teaching aids and educational materials include contents of learning as well as practical experiences, and design them in such a way that they can be used in and out of class;
- Prepare additional reading materials for new readers by identifying the condition/means to improve their writing and reading skills in order to avoid relapse to illiteracy and develop reading culture;
- Provide village reading centers with books, develop reading culture of the users and strengthen democratic culture by using the centers as cultural and conference places/venues;
- Identify and fulfill the necessary materials to keep adult education running in the community;
- Utilization of alternative basic education schools and farmers' training centers as teaching and reading

centers by providing appropriate reading materials to the centers;

- Supporting adult education centers with radios and ICT to facilitate conditions for the society to have access information and ICT.

#### **4.2.4 Improvement of adult education delivery strategy/methodology and techniques**

- Identification and application of education delivery methods and approaches appropriate for different adult education programs,
- Provision of skill development trainings to enable managers, supervisors and facilitators to manage and facilitate adult learning processes competently by using effective approaches.
- Preparation of training manuals based on adult education delivery methods.
- Preparation (if necessary) of framework for standardization of education levels and certifications.

#### **4.3 Expanding adult education coverage equitably**

- Expansion of basic education for social groups residing in areas susceptible to problems and with no infrastructural development to enable them participates in development programmes competently and with a sense of equality.
  - Develop appropriate educational programmes to peasants in the rural areas and to groups with low income in urban areas.
  - Design programmes for pastoralists, which are friendly to their working and living conditions.
  - Establish functional literacy programmes for women, especially for those with low/no income, which are appropriate for additional income generation.
  - Facilitate learning venues and use delivery methods appropriate to citizens with special needs.
  - Raise participation rate of citizens with special needs, women and pastoralists with different living conditions through development of appropriate education programmes.

#### **4.4 Establishing and capacitating institutions for continuous adult education**

##### **4.4.1 Management and organization of adult education**

Adult education is founded up on the needs of the beneficiaries and requires multi-sectoral activities. Adults will be encouraged to learn, only if they found the programme related to their life, problem-solving and brings about a change in their life style. However, adult education programmes carried out in the past were inconsistent, uncoordinated and hence could not bring the required results. Prevalence of strengthen and coordinated management and organization will enable these limited efforts to be expanded and sustained. Therefore:

- It is necessary to provide the sector with a coordinated management through coordination of relevant ministries for agricultural and rural development, health, women's affairs, youth and sports, labor and social affairs, and thereby organizing adult education in a strengthened and coordinated manner based on the decentralized administration system of the country;
- With membership of the above-mentioned ministries, a national adult education leading/management body will be established at federal level. Its detailed responsibilities will be elaborated with a guideline;
- Demarcation of duties and responsibilities of the federal and regional bodies will be developed in line with the decentralized governmental structure. Also, tangible plans to strengthen and support different adult education programmes will be developed at all levels;
- At regional and woreda levels, adult education management body will have similar composition to the federal body, involving the respective bureaux and offices. However, regions may change the mix based on their real conditions;

- Adult education coordinating body will be structured at all levels (Federal, Region, Woreda) of the education sector, in a strengthened manner.

#### **4.4.2 Establishment of sustainable and effective network and creation of partnership**

- Identification and strengthening of partnerships of government and non-government organizations and agencies currently involved in adult education and those who have the willingness and capacity to work in the sector;
- Carrying out consultative workshops to decide on responsible bodies and responsibilities among the different activities in adult education.
- Organizing discussion forums to share responsibilities accomplish activities in partnership and create awareness on procedures in adult education, and signing of memorandum of understanding (if necessary)
- Establishment of discussion forum to properly utilize existing network for sharing ideas and experiences as well as to develop and look into common programs and processes.
- Organize a discussion forums to accomplish adult education activities in partnership and to discuss on work procedures; preparation of common strategy on distribution of different activities.

- As far as possible, resources from regions, federal and civic societies will be allocated for the common use of adult education programmes run by government and non-government organization.

#### **4.4.3 Establishment of effective monitoring and evaluation system**

- Capacitating Ministry of Education and other stakeholders for monitoring and evaluation of adult education;
- Establishing management information system;
- Establishing participatory monitoring and evaluation system;
- Conduct periodical monitoring and evaluation of program implementation with involvement of stakeholders and partners.
- Ensuring timely dispatch of monitoring and evaluation reports to stakeholders;
- Assuring that monitoring and evaluation processes are accomplished in line with adult education principles.