

## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Daniel R Tau & S. Tichapondwa Modesto

### ABSTRACT

This concept paper seeks to find answers to two questions, namely:

- a. What is the current status of governance and coordination of lifelong learning in general, and in Botswana in particular?
- b. How can governance and coordination of lifelong learning be systematically promoted?

The motivation to conduct the investigation was prompted by the apparent lack of clear understanding among different countries, and the lack of clear procedures on lifelong learning, a kind of ambivalence of conceptualisation. This has led to the researched discussion on strengthening the governance and coordination of Lifelong Learning/heutagogy in the education. The Article aims to explain the concept and share strategies of strengthening lifelong initiatives globally, but with specific reference to Botswana and other progressive countries. It discusses the concept in a practical manner, given that heutagogy is often ambivalent, and interpreted inadequately in different quarters. The Paper, thus, seeks to bring about convergence of understanding among scholars and practitioners. It gives definitions of allied terms such as *formal* and *non-formal learning* before sharing experiences from selected cases – Norway, Australia, Scotland, East Asia, and China, then Botswana. For the simple reason that in education terms, there is the tendency to talk more than to act, the Article gives motivation for countries to review practice by specifying no less than 13 areas of concern that should be focused on. It is, thus, argued that, conscious practice in those areas, would lead a given country towards the learning society. Discussion is further expanded to explicate the notion of employability, citizenship, assistive ICT, which are also closely linked with lifelong learning. The Paper underscores the all-important aspect of policy that can be used for purposes of governance. It then concludes with the way forward on how to address the perceived ambivalence, turbulence, and crisis of expectation about the potential benefits of lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** Lifelong Learning, informal learning, formal learning, non-formal learning, heutagogy, ambivalence, governance.

### INTRODUCTION

Our focus in today's dialogue has to do with strengthening the governance and coordination of lifelong learning. To assure a sense of direction for the discussion, these two questions are posed to ground our thinking:

- c. What is the current status of governance and coordination of lifelong learning in general, and in Botswana in particular?
- d. How can governance and coordination of lifelong learning be systematically promoted?

Although the interrogatives seem to beg specific answers, to arrive at that will require some background discussion of both a global and generic nature. This is a concept paper, which

spells out the position taken about lifelong learning in the context of Botswana against a dynamic background on international perceptions of lifelong learning, its governance, and coordination. It also includes the author's experience, thus making it of practical significance.

Some keywords that characterise provision of education and learning in global systems are: *ambivalence, ambiguity, risk, contradiction, turbulence, dangers and crisis*. These words depict education today, which is characterised by unequal share of gains and pains in education, both in relation to wealth creation and its distribution. For quite a long time, it has been hypothesized that appropriate education should help the citizens of a country to learn the relevant skills, competencies, and attitudes essential for economic, social and cultural progress.

To arrive at a broader conceptualization of lifelong learning, we ought to recognize that Learning can no longer be divided into a place and time to acquire knowledge (the school), and a place and time to apply the knowledge acquired (the workplace) (Gerhard, 2000). This is because learning can be seen as something that takes place on an on-going basis from our daily interactions with others and with the world around us. It can take the form of *formal learning* or *informal learning*, or self-directed non-formal learning, terms that require explication.

The paper, therefore, covers definition of concepts, lifelong learning and assistive technologies, workplace learning, varieties of lifelong learning, learning how to learn, employability, policy frameworks, and more importantly, trends in other countries, and implications for Botswana.

### **Lifelong Learning and allied definitions**

According to Taylor (1993), the term recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations. Allen Tough (1979) asserts that almost 70% of learning projects in one's life are self-planned as the individual learns along in the school of life, and while acquiring academic credentials. The Department of Education and Science (2000) has defined *Lifelong learning* as the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, competitiveness and employability.

Another definition of lifelong learning is one by UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 2004, spelt out as:

The development of human potential through a continuously supportive process, which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding that they will require through their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments.

The most succinct definition is by Delors (1998), namely, that lifelong learning refers to the continuous acquisition of knowledge, skills, and understandings from the cradle to the grave. The most recently coined term, complementing lifelong learning is *heutagogy*.

*Heutagogy* in Education, is a term coined by Stewart Hase (2000) and Chris Kenyon of Southern Cross University in Australia, and is also called self-determined learning. The basic tenet of the approach states that a learner should be at the centre of his or her own learning, hence, that 'learning' should not be seen as teacher- or curriculum-centric, but learner-centric.

Since the theory was first pronounced in 2000, it has become accepted as a practical proposition with its approach being particularly suitable in e-learning environments. Lifelong Learning/Heutagogy is better understood alongside the definitions of formal learning, non-formal learning, and informal learning.

**Formal learning** is normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic intentional way within a school, academy/college/institute or university. Traditionally, it is undertaken within the four walls of a classroom.

**Informal learning** is the unofficial, unscheduled, impromptu way most of us **learn** to do certain things without somebody teaching us. Learning how to ride a bicycle is a good example. The rider chooses the destination and the route. The cyclist falls, gets hurt, but does not give up until she can ride in a balanced manner.

**Non-formal learning** is a loosely defined term covering various **structured** learning situations, such as work-related upskilling, community-based programmes, literacy initiatives, short courses for non-degree purposes, and conference style seminars, which do not either have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with 'formal learning', but have more structure than that associated with 'informal learning', which typically takes place naturally and spontaneously as part of other activities. These form the three styles (informal, non-formal and formal) of learning recognised and supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (*OECD*).

### Towards the Learning Society

The UNESCO and lifelong learning enthusiasts and advocates, e.g. Sen (2001) (as cited in Ahmed, 2002, p. 22) have underscored the view that Heutagogy leads to a *learning society*. The converging views are summed up thus:

The concept of lifelong learning, leading to a 'learning society,' has been visualised and written about for several decades now. The UNESCO-appointed Faure Committee Report of 1972 entitled *Learning to Be* had made a passionate appeal to all nations of the world to reorganise their educational structures on two basic premises:

**First**, that a learning society is one in which all agencies within a society become providers of education, and

**Second**, that all citizens should be engaged in learning, taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the learning society.

Further impetus to the idea was provided in 1996 with the report by Delors *et al*, *Learning: The Treasure Within*. Pronouncing the four pillars of education in <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>the 21st century to be:

- a. learning to know,
- b. learning to do,
- c. learning to be, and
- d. learning to live together,

The Delors Report laid strong emphasis on renewal of knowledge, skills and learning abilities of individuals to adapt to the new environment. The Report advocated the acquisition of a sound general education, learning throughout life, acting creatively in and on one's own environment, acquiring occupational skills, and also more broadly, being able to face rapid social change and work in teams.

It becomes imperative for us to answer the question:

What do the concept of lifelong learning and the goal of a learning society mean for a community and an individual in the community?

It means providing every individual with the conditions for learning further and learning continuously for improving his/her lot. Depending upon where one is positioned in the ladder of learning, it may mean different things to different individuals, hence the ambivalence, the ambiguity, and contradiction, highlighted in the introductory remarks. This is further clarified thus:

1. For a non-literate, it would mean functional literacy combined with a series of learning programmes that would help him improve his awareness, capability, skills, confidence and participation in development. It would mean acquisition of farming and farm management techniques to a farmer.
2. For a semi-literate, rural woman who has been 'pushed out' from school at the primary education stage, it may mean the facility to learn a new skill that would enable her to enhance the level of living of her family, or it may mean attending a short-term course on gender equity which would give her enough confidence to speak out against injustice.
3. Lifelong education is not something that is intended only for non-literates, neo-literates and dropouts. It is also for the so-called educated members of society. It should provide opportunities for teachers, housewives, truck drivers, social and political activists, local leaders – in fact every member of society to learn, and, where necessary, to unlearn. Hence the importance of engaging members of an organization in non-certificate awarding courses that are work-related. Such upskilling enhances the individual's employability.

### **Life-wide Learning (LWL) and Life-deep Learning (LDL)**

There are two cognate concepts that cannot be excluded from any meaningful discussion of Lifelong learning, and these are life-wide learning and life-deep learning. We can only touch on them briefly in order to strengthen the argument for LLL.

Many theoretical and empirical accounts of learning are not well suited to explain important dimensions of how, where, and why people learn. There is a growing recognition that in order to better understand variation and regularities in human learning and educational accomplishment as it relates to the increasing cultural diversity of society, educators need to further develop, promote, and synthesize theoretical and empirical accounts of learning that highlight developmental, ecological, and cultural dimensions of the process and outcomes. The life-long, life-wide, and life-deep framework provides a broad conceptual framework that accounts for how, where, and why people learn.

LWL is a teaching strategy and an approach to learning and personal development that involves real contexts and authentic settings. The goal is to address different kinds of learning not covered in a traditional classroom, though not in depth. By including LWL with a traditional classroom, students are better equipped to attain whole person development and to develop the lifelong learning skills (Jackson, 2011). Life-wide education is the means by which an institution encourages, supports and recognizes learners' life-wide learning. It is an approach to visualising learning and personal development as a whole of life enterprise.

Life-wide learning adds important detail to the broad pattern of human development we call lifelong learning – all the learning and development one gains as one progresses along the pathway of one's life. Life-wide learning recognizes that most people, no matter what their

age or circumstances, simultaneously inhabit a number of different spaces – like work or education, being a member of a family, being involved in clubs or societies, traveling and taking holidays and looking after their own well-being mentally, physically and spiritually. So the timeframes of lifelong learning and the spaces of life-wide learning will characteristically intermingle, and who we are and who we are becoming are the consequences of this intermingling.

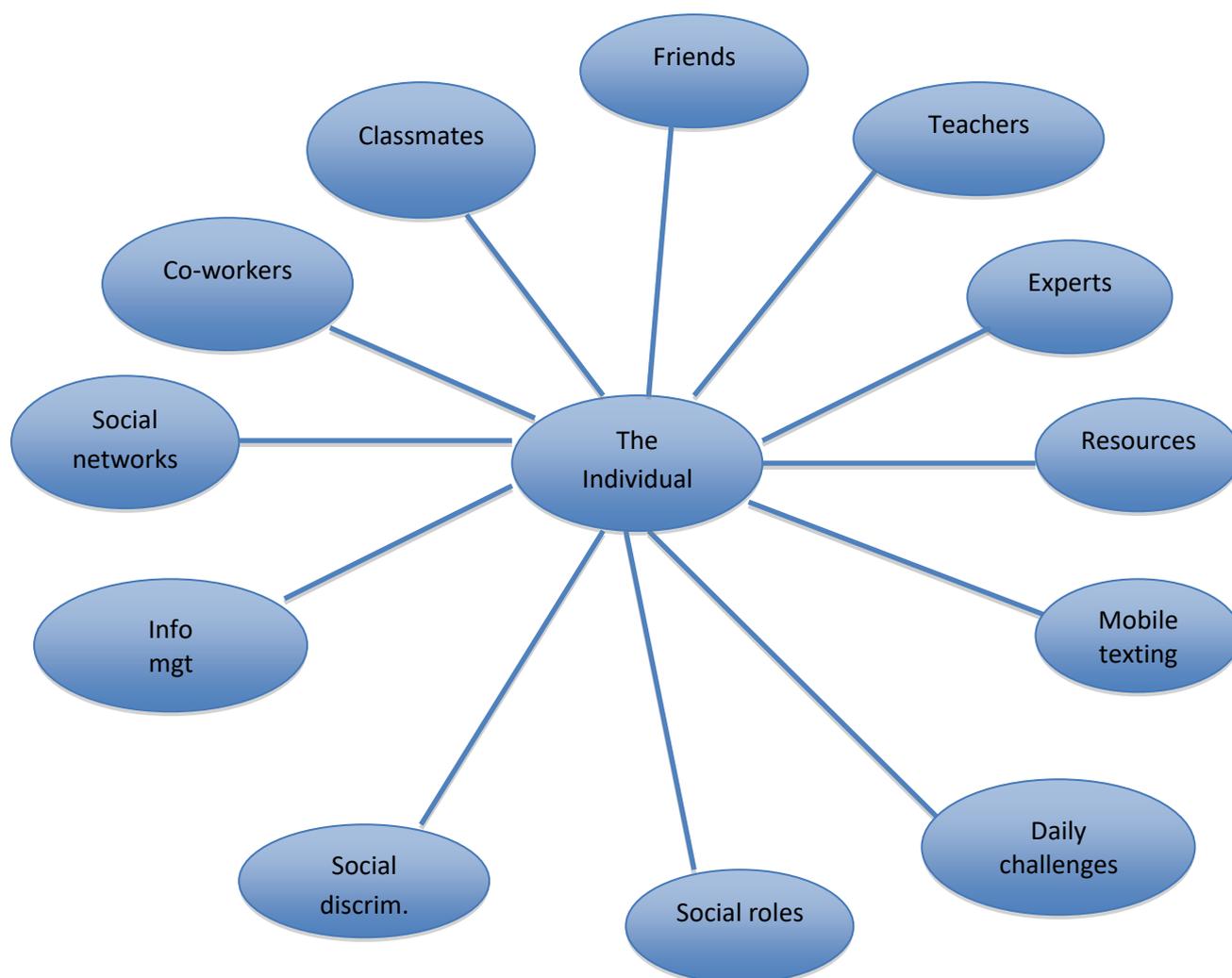
Unlike life-wide learning that does not involve extended thoroughness of learning a phenomenon, deep-learning involves learning of multiple levels of features or representations of the data in a given field. Higher-level features are derived from lower level features to form a hierarchical representation. Thus, LDL is concerned with:

- (1) multiple layers of nonlinear processing units, and
- (2) the supervised or unsupervised learning of feature representations in each layer, with the layers forming a hierarchy from low-level to high-level features

In sum, the conglomeration of LLL, LWL, and LDL contribute to a better understanding of our nuance perception of how education must necessarily move away from formal classroom learning towards a more inclusive learning approach. As Belanger (2015, p. 19 ) has put it,

One defining trend in educational systems in recent years has unquestionably been the growing number of options and specializations that students may pursue, the growing variety of settings they may engage in, and the resultant individualization of students' initial educational pathways.

As we target lifelong learning, this viewpoint means that there is a close interrelationship between formal education, on the other hand, as we have traditionally known it, and LLL, LWL, LDL on the other. Figure 1 below is a simplified representation of the complex web of learning experiences (both formal and informal) to which the individual is exposed in the linear and lateral life 's journey.



**Figure 1: Life-wide, Life-deep, and Lifelong Learning**

The individual is at the center of life's contacts and events, and learning processes. As the individual interacts in various spaces, this results in ongoing learning, some of it informal, some formal, while the other is non-formal. The total experience will vary in terms of depth, width, or linearity. There is a close interrelationship between school learning and learning from the classroom of life, and in the process, the individual continues on the journey of self-definition.

### **Lifelong Learning and Employability**

The International Labour Organization (2005) views employability:

...as portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work, to progress within the enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions.

Learning employability skills and competencies can be during a formal qualification, or post-qualification. Educational institutions should, therefore, infuse employability skills in their

curricula.

On the obverse, employers' perspective of employability is:

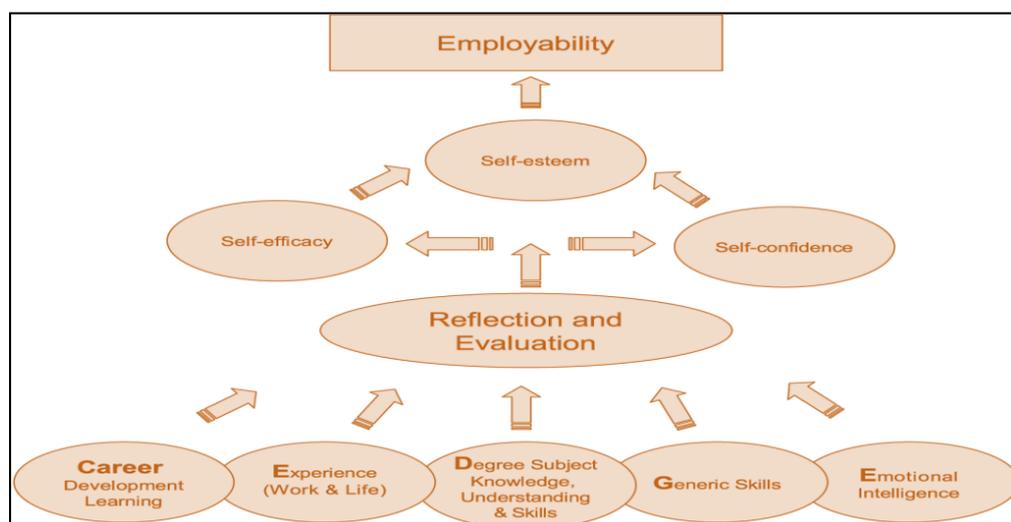
...a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy” (Confederation of British Industry (CBI) , 2009)

The truth today is that holding a degree is no longer enough for career progression. For that reason, the individual has to learn lifelong and coping skills to sustain one's career. These may not lead to the award of a qualification. Hillage and Pollard (1998) propose five elements that one needs to achieve optimum employability, namely:

- Content knowledge;
- Skills about your special area;
- Workplace awareness;
- Workplace experience; and
- Generic skills.

By extension the skills sets include communication skills; logical, analytical and problem solving skills; personality, confidence, and integrity; flexibility and adaptability; innovation and creativity and team spirit (McQuid and Lindsay, 2005).

To sum up our reflections on employability, it is worth noting that much as employability is often discussed in the context of holders of formal qualifications, even those without qualifications need to improve their employability potential by being exposed to structured non-formal experiences. Why, for example, is it that some housemaids last longer on their jobs than their counterparts? Figure 1 illustrates elements of employability.



**Figure 2** *The essential components of employability*

Acquiring and mastery of these skills, requires meticulous balance of informal learning, formal learning, and non-formal learning for which individuals and social groups need to be sensitised,

## Lifelong Learning and Assistive technology

In order to strengthen the governance and coordination of lifelong learning, technology plays a critical role. As technology rapidly changes, individuals must adapt and learn to meet everyday demands in a situation where learning is individually driven (andragogical versus pedagogical). However, throughout life, an individual's functional capacities may also change. Access to informal, formal and non-formal learning opportunities for all is enabled by online courses, some of them free, while others use open education resources. One new (2008 and beyond) expression of lifelong learning is the massive open online courses (MOOCs), in which a teacher or team offers a syllabus and some direction for the participation of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of learners. Most MOOCs do not offer typical "credit" for courses taken, which is why they are interesting and useful examples of lifelong learning/heutagogy (Blaschke, 2012).

## The policy issue and global experiences

A **policy** is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Regarding lifelong learning, a policy at the highest level of the country is essential for governance and coordination. This will be supported by sub policies at lower levels.

Lessons can be learnt from South-East Asian countries regarding the significance of policy in promoting education for all (EFA). Singh (2002) reveals that the Asian Region faces a huge task of meeting the rights to education of 614 million illiterate adolescents and adults and over 60 million out-of-school <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>children. Alone in South Asia there are 429 million adult illiterates and 50 million children in school going age who have had no schooling. The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education held in Hamburg (CONFINTEA V) in 1997 clearly stated that the global challenge of Education for All cannot be tackled without meeting the basic learning needs of adult women and men especially in developing countries, and that policy was critical to regulate effort. The Conference proposed a new vision of adult learning which was not only multi-sectoral and diverse, but which was firmly rooted in a framework of sustainable human development in terms of social justice goals such as democracy, critical citizenship, cultural diversity, social inclusion, human rights, peace and gender equality.

Singh (2002) goes further to share how policies have been developed in the Region, saying that Adult learning policies and programmes in the Asian region have evolved through a number of stages. They began as simple literacy campaigns, but it was soon realised that even where basic literacy skills were acquired individuals could not practise these skills until the entire social group began to use literacy in its day-to-day activities. Societal literacy, in contrast to individual literacy, becomes a necessary reinforcing context for everyone participating in the different dimensions of social life, and motivates people to integrate their learning activities. A basic development in the aim of adult and lifelong learning policies has been, therefore, post-literacy programmes, the creation of literate environments and lifelong learning communities.

An important dimension of policy is sustaining the motivation of learners and thus to be able to fulfil the goals of creating literate environments. Reinforcing this progressive thinking about policies, other scholars (e.g. Daswani, 2002) have made the contribution that knowledge and skills need to be relevant and contextualised in the daily lives of the

individuals and fitted into their developmental activities, and that the policies should take into account: the rural poor and the underprivileged sections of society; out of school children and youth; education of women; education of ethnic groups and minorities; skill training; vocational and technical education; agricultural extension; poverty alleviation; functional literacy; post literacy; health and family planning; co-operative development; industrial training; education of the handicapped; NFE for – ‘second chance education’; citizenship education; value education; entrepreneur education; promotion of national and local languages; continuing education; ICTs and globalisation.

Some innovations have been noted in policy formulation among the Asian countries, referred to above. Daswani (2002) has noted that many countries have successfully ‘handed over’ the responsibility of implementation to the local communities. This has engendered interest not only in the adult learner but also the literate sections of the society.

Community participation is best achieved through the agency of NGOs who work with the grassroots communities. In many countries, NGOs are encouraged to work with or on behalf of the state agencies. Important lessons can, therefore be learnt from the South Asian experience.

### **Lifelong Learning and Citizenship in Europe**

The ETGACE Project (2003), sponsored by the European Commission, aimed at exploring the nature of citizenship in six European countries, “to investigate how people have learned to be active citizens, and what kinds of education and training exist to support this” (p.2). The study sought to clarify what current support (formal, informal, and non-formal) exists to assist people learn to be active citizens. The research was carried out in parallel in United Kingdom, Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Slovenia, and Spain. Researchers defined citizenship as “...a set of rights and obligations...practices describing what a citizen can and should do” (ETGACE, 2003. p. 2). Their head of argument is that learning active citizenship is a strong element of lifelong learning in which the individual demonstrates effectivity/capacity, responsibility, and identity. In this respect, learning citizenship is interactive, and deeply embedded in specific contexts. People learn relevant skills through actively trying to solve a problem or fulfill a mission.

Some of the findings from the study were that:

- There is increasing need for devolution of decision-making by organisations to secure democratic legitimacy for decisions and actions.
- There is need to foster active citizens who have a strong sense of their place, driven by a sense of commitment and responsibility, wherever they function.
- The sense of citizenship is embedded in each individual’s unique life history, and formed through relationships with others.
- The factors, which make individuals active citizens remain constant irrespective of generational differences, but apply to different, or fewer people.
- National differences are shaped by perceptions about citizenship.
- The workplace is a significant location of citizenship activity. Active citizens were seen as active participants in trade unionism, bringing personal vision to the workplace, and using professional expertise.
- The skills and knowledge developed by active citizens in one domain (political, civil society, and private domain) can be transferred into other domains.

The researchers were seized with the philosophy of ‘Europeanisation of active citizenship’ as an aspect of lifelong learning. In their conclusion, they draw attention to globalisation and individualisation of citizenship, meaning that while there are generalizable aspects, there are also individual ones. According to Robertson (1992, 102), globalisation should be seen as “...a two-fold process involving the universalization of particularism, and the particularisation of universalism”.

### **A country’s qualifications framework and lifelong learning**

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a formal system describing qualifications of the education system of a given country. Through the framework, the individual is able to find out about qualifications in the country, and be able to match one’s future learning. The aims of having a qualifications framework are:

- to make education and training systems easier to understand both nationally and internationally;
- to facilitate increased mobility within and between countries;
- to contribute to flexible pathways, and strengthen lifelong learning. NQFs work on the basis of credit points; and
- to provide a better point of reference for recognition of prior learning, a close ally of lifelong learning.

Most importantly, the Norwegian NQF has been opened to include qualifications and competencies that are currently not part of the formal education and training system.

The Ministry appointed a committee with the mandate of studying and submitting proposals for how education offered outside formal curricula can be included in the NQF. The Framework was developed in close consultation with affected stakeholders in the world of work, education and civil society.

The Norwegian initiative is in alignment with the preparation of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) in the European Union; and the preparation of a qualifications framework for higher education in the Bologna Process, comprising 47 European countries (Norwegian NQF, 2014, p. 4).

The phenomenon of lifelong learning is a relative newcomer globally, and in developing countries there are still countries without it. An increasing number of organisations, including employers and learning providers are having their learning credit rated onto the NQF, so it covers more than simply the mainstream qualifications to include lifelong facets such as employability, active citizenship, and literacies. The Norwegian situation is of interest in illustrating how lifelong learning can be incorporated in the mainstream curriculum.

The Norwegian NQF for lifelong learning was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Research as recently as December 2011 (Norwegian NQF, 2014). It is new in the country, and will be under development for a long time.

Similarly, The Scotland’s Framework for Lifelong Learning (SCQF) echoes the same commitment as that of the Norwegian NQF (See <http://scqf.org.uk/> for a more detailed discussion). The SCQF presents two key points arguing how it supports lifelong learning, namely that it can:

- help people of all ages and circumstances get access to appropriate education and training so they can meet their full potential; and
- help employers, learners and the general public to understand the full range of the framework, how qualifications relate to each other, and to other forms of learning, and how different types of qualification can contribute to improving the skills of workers.

The SCQF articulates the significance of the Framework with reference to credit transfer, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), the latter means recognising learning, which has been gained in the past. This could be learning gained through experience, or a more formal learning programme such as a course or a qualification.

In combination, the two examples of how the countries have gone about NQF, serve as examples to institutions, and organisations and countries that aspire to develop their own frameworks.

### **Lifelong Learning for Children and young people**

In discussions about lifelong learning, there often is a misconception that it is all about adult learners who either failed formal schooling or missed out opportunities. Some people also think lifelong learning is all about distance education. The State Library of Queensland Australia (SLQ) articulately addresses this ambivalence. They developed the SLQ Framework premised on this logic:

We have a key role in supporting learning opportunities, complementing formal education systems; facilitating lifelong learning; and expanding the learning capacity of local communities (SLQ: The Framework, p. 1).

They depart from conventional definitions of learning, which is quite a major contribution of their framework, to a better understanding of lifelong learning, by making use of the definition by Jarvis (2004, p.111):

Human learning is a combination of processes, whereby whole persons construct experiences of situations, and transform them into knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, emotions and the senses, and integrate the outcomes into their own biographies.

The SLQ Framework has come up with what it refers to as ‘capacities of the young lifelong learner’, thus:

1. Personal qualities such as self-management, agency, self-efficacy, initiative and entrepreneurship
2. Critical and creative thinking, planning and problem solving
3. Interpersonal skills and the ability to work collaboratively
4. Multiple literacies and communication skills

To foster the capacities, SLQ has these strategies for children and their care givers:

- Providing environments for children, which encourage freedom, fun, laughter, and play.
- Inclusion of all children ensuring a sense of belonging within circles of trust and acceptance
- Applying processes enabling collaboration, involving active partnerships, dialogue and interaction

- Being guided by the core learning principle of challenge, that is, promoting imagination, critical thinking, creative risk-taking, and problem solving
- Promoting immersion in terms of time and space for practice and deep thinking
- Building children's capacity for agency, that is, personal choice, initiative and investigation
- Development of self-awareness, that is, self reflection, self identity and evaluation

These views are meant to be relevant to both formal and non-formal learning, and centralize learner- centredness and agency. A sense of agency allows children and young people to take a more active role in the direction and pace of their own learning, and towards this end, self-efficacy, initiative and enterprise are key attributes.

### **How does Botswana feature in the matrix of lifelong learning?**

Two questions were raised at the outset, and these were to do with: the current status of governance and coordination of lifelong learning in general, and in Botswana in particular; and how governance and coordination of lifelong learning can be systematically promoted. From research evidence and typical cases, cited above, it would appear there is a great deal of practical wisdom that any country would benefit. Though Botswana is still far behind, it has, nevertheless instituted its own inclusive qualifications framework, the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) in 2015. Previously, the country had put in place a sectoral specific framework for vocational qualifications. Additionally, the country has a history of initiatives about lifelong learning, which, informed by the foregoing global instances, can, with time and effort, be congealed into a model.

According to <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/191/Botswana-NONFORMAL-EDUCATION.html>, Botswana Extension College was founded in 1973 as part of the Ministry of Education. In 1978 the Department of Nonformal Education was created and incorporated into the Botswana Extension College. The department used to supplement secondary level education by offering Junior Certificate and Cambridge "O" Level courses via distance learning, a role that has since been taken by the BOCODOL since 2000.

In 1980 literacy programmes began for the then 250,000 men, women, and youths who were illiterate or unable to do simple computations. In the programme's first year, 7,676 individuals enrolled in the four regional districts. The number of participants increased steadily until 1986 when enrollments leveled. One part of the literacy programme was the *Ditiro tsa Ditlhabololo* (Home Economics Course). District adult education officers worked with extension teams and village development committees to create locally-oriented activities.

Brigades Centers are autonomous, community-based, and predominantly rural organizations that provide practical on-the-job training for Botswana youth. Their primary objective is to develop self-reliant individuals. Training is offered in automechanics, agriculture, construction, office studies, carpentry, electrical, drafting, general maintenance, machinery, plumbing, tannery, textiles, and welding. In 1999 there were 37 registered Brigades with 33 actively engaged in training.

Until 1999 graduates of the senior secondary school system were required to perform *Tirelo Setshaba* (National Service) for one year. National Service was designed to provide secondary graduates with opportunities to mature more and to explore possible career

choices. They lived and worked in rural areas and remote places where more than 80 percent of Botswana's population resides. The programme provided educated workers who assisted with government programmes and bridged gaps between urban and rural dwellers, as well as between the educated and uneducated. This model for lifelong learning has since been discontinued.

As recently as April 2015, the Government of Botswana introduced the Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS) (<http://www.botswana.se/News/PRESS-RELEASE-GRADUATE-VOLUNTEER-SCHEME-GVS>). The following Press Release gives insight:

Government has taken a decision to introduce a new Scheme targeting Graduate Youth who are unemployed but are also not in the Internship programme. The Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS) is being introduced to attach young graduates in organisations that have opportunities for volunteer work. It is intended to:

- facilitate skills development and transfer to young graduates,
- contribute to community development
- promote the spirit of volunteerism
- improve resilience of the graduate youth, and
- reduce idle time.

Although there are graduates who enrolled in the programme, there seems to be lack of shared understanding about the objectives of lifelong learning as reported by *The Telegraph* (<http://www.sundaystandard.info/graduates-reject-graduate-volunteer-scheme>).

The new Graduate Volunteer Scheme introduced by Government to attach young graduates on organisations that have opportunities for volunteer work is not welcomed by graduates and politicians.

The students' worries are that the P600 salary cannot sustain their lives especially at a time when the standard of living has risen over the years.

The government failed to analyze that those who are likely to benefit from the program if at all there are any graduates who may want to enroll are those who are living in towns and big villages where organizations are situated.

Graduates who are currently staying at rural areas cannot afford to relocate to cities for the program because the amount that the program offers cannot sustain their rents, transport money, food, utilities and other needs in the cities.

Michel Kinnear an undergraduate at the University of Botswana told *The Telegraph* that it would be better getting that 600 Pula while waiting for a job opportunity at home rather than doing the voluntarily work required of them.

What this amounts to is that the whole idea of volunteerism has not been clearly cascaded. It is neither properly governed nor coordinated.

Botswana's NFE has been influenced by important United Nations international conferences such as the Social Summit (Copenhagen, 1995), Women's conference (Beijing, 1994), The Environment and Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), which set the tempo for various national sectors of development to ensure the attainment of their recommendations. National efforts to provide quality non-formal basic education were also significantly boosted by the publication of the Dakar Framework for Action. In Botswana, Learning is viewed as a lifelong process, which should assist citizens to address their demographic, technical, economic and political circumstances in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Youngman, 2002b). However, the concept is not commonly shared.

### *Examples from education providers*

There have been efforts to promote lifelong learning in the country, although these are rather few and isolated.

- i. There has been effort by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) to promote integration of employability skills with the formal curriculum subjects of universities. The HRDC sponsors research projects, carried out by university lecturers, to establish the current state of affairs about lifelong learning in their institutions. Researchers are expected to come up with recommendations on how to close the identified gaps, based on empirical findings. The reports are yet to be finalised, and ready for dissemination nationwide.
- ii. Following research with the Botswana Police Service and small scale businesses around Gaborone and big villages like Khanye and Molepolole, two demand-driven structured courses were developed. The English for Professional Purposes (EPP) for the police was developed in order to promote the lifelong skills of communication, confidence building, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, incidental to the police profession.  
Regarding research with entrepreneurs, it was established that there was need to offer stand-alone structured courses providing demand-driven knowledge in accordance with individual needs. Among the courses are: Customer care, Business records, Marketing the small business, Business communication, and Staffing (to name a few out of a total of ten). In terms of lifelong learning, the individual courses filled in gaps that had been identified in entrepreneurship. These include customer care, business ethics, self-awareness in business, among others).

This shows that individual players in Botswana (providers of qualifications and workplaces) can co-operate in the support of governance and coordination of lifelong learning, and augment government effort. However, from a critical angle, it would appear that a more convincing approach to lifelong learning is not yet in place for a number of rationalisations.

First, we do not seem to see much stakeholder coordination for purposes of enhancing involvement. In other countries, the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) often has clearest visibility. This is not so in Botswana.

Second, initiatives do not seem to have a clear policy for purposes of governance and coordination, a scenario that might lead to a haphazard approach to lifelong learning.

Third, in the absence of national policy on lifelong learning, it goes without saying that currently there is no legislation to harmonise our approach to lifelong learning.

Fourth, given the last two mentioned points, it is inevitable that organisations and institutions do not have policies in place to regulate lifelong learning, let alone, in some cases, being aware about lifelong learning and its significance to national and international development.

Among other considerations, it will be instructive for key players in the country to have a broader perspective of what lifelong learning entails. The general misconception is that lifelong learning is distance learning, some caricature for adults and young people who failed in formal schooling. To disambiguate this unfortunate perception, the starting point is to

inform, systematically, that lifelong learning is for all, that is, from the least educated to the most highly educated citizen. Table 1 below is illustrative.

**Table 1 Target groups and coverage**

<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<b>Clientele</b>
1. Early childhood	Young children/care givers
2. Non-formal primary education	Primary age children/ adolescents
3. Second chance basic education	Older age adolescents/youth
4. Basic education for children in difficult circumstances	Working children
5. Life long and continuing education	Youth and adults with diverse interests
6. Vocational/income generating skill training	Youth and adults with diverse needs/interests
7. Occupational skill learning/upgrading	Occupational groups
8. Post-literacy/remedial classes	Basic literacy completers/ youth and adults
9. Inclusive learning	People with disabilities and special needs
10. Special learning needs of ethnic and tribal communities	Selected groups with specific needs
11. ICT and distance education-based learning activities	Motivated learners with diverse interests
12. Equivalency with formal education	Diverse groups with specific interests
13. Basic Literacy	Groups of motivated illiterate population

Thus, the country's planning would be guided by these areas, and determine through policies how to respond to the varied NFE imperatives.

### **The way forward**

To address the ambivalence, the turbulence, and crisis of expectation about the potential of Lifelong Learning/Heutagogy (noted at the outset of the discussion), it is noteworthy that many challenges lie ahead of decision-makers and stakeholders dealing with non-formal education worldwide. The largest challenge is the ultimate test of a country's ability to establish an inclusive democracy by meeting the needs of literacy, post-literacy and non-formal education of under-represented groups. In addressing their learning needs, governments need to put into existence affirmative action policies and set up specific programmes. There is a need to earmark funds and redistribute financial and other resources. While it is important to build conceptual frameworks from the bottom up, it is critical that literacy for all - for adults and children - in both formal and non-formal settings be placed at the heart of national education systems. Literacy requires a twin track approach i.e. priority investments in formal schooling combined with literacy and non-formal education.

Insights from the foregoing, in which developments from far afield have been shared, the European Union's case; The Norwegian and Scottish amalgamation of formal and formal practices to promote lifelong learning; the State Library of Queensland (Australia) framework for children; and the South Asian experience of policy development, point to a way forward, that Carlsen and Yang (as cited in Hinzen and Knoll, 2014) have proposed while talking about progress made in China. As the way forward, nations should, therefore, take cognizance of the following.

1. Recognise that formal education is the key to lay the foundation of the capacity to pursue learning throughout life. So, there is need to integrate lifelong learning in formal curricula.
2. Governments should make adult and continuing education an integral part of the lifelong learning systems of their countries.
3. There should be conscious and sustained effort to develop learning communities as a way to promote a shared understanding of the significance of lifelong learning.
4. Modern distance education (as a system) should be advanced alongside with information and communication technology without asking distracting questions. Distance education has brought unprecedented opportunities to lifelong education.
5. To improve governance, there must be formulation of a comprehensive and trans-departmental coordination mechanism. This should be at the highest (government) level, and at organisational level (universities, colleges, and workplaces)
6. Close attention must be paid to social inclusion and meeting the learning needs of disadvantaged groups (the poor, the remote area dwellers, women, prisoners, the physically challenged, and others).
7. Clarify the conceptual understanding of lifelong learning to promote shared understanding.
8. Recognise the learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning through RPL.

## CONCLUSION

The primary objective of the paper was to explore how best to strengthen the governance and coordination of lifelong learning, in general, but specifically to fathom how Botswana could systematically develop systems of its own. By citing initiatives in different countries about lifelong learning, the aggregate position was that lifelong learning/heutagogy is still a new phenomenon in many education systems worldwide. In other countries, it is still non-existent. Development of national qualifications frameworks was confirmed to be pivotal since it serves as a platform to integrate both formal and non-formal learning. The Paper indicated that lifelong learning is wide-ranging, and is not confined to adults only. Emanating from the point of view that lifelong learning includes every step of the individual's lifetime, arguments have been mounted (with reference to illustrative cases) about which educational steps contribute to lifelong learning (the way forward).

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