



# Lifelong Education and Learning

Julia Preece, CRADALL, UK  
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# Core argument

- Our vision for lifelong learning must ensure south – north dialogue
- Examples from Europe and Southern Africa
- Definitions and contexts to provoke and stimulate discussion



# How global is our vision?

- Definitions of lifelong education and learning vary
- The perceived purpose of lifelong education and learning is different in different contexts
- Lifelong education – provider led (but is based on a particular definition of provider)
- Lifelong learning – learner led (but is based on a particular definition of learner)

# Common values?



- People should engage in continuous learning
- People are learning all the time
- Society is more complex today and people need skills that enable them to cope with society's complexities
- Our learning should be ethical
- Learning implies change and development



# Differences?

- Not all societies experience the same complexities or changes
- Societies are not at the same starting point in relation to educational opportunities
- Societies have different priorities, needs and values

These differences impact on our vision for lifelong education and learning



# Tensions in our vision

- Concepts of competitiveness and individualism Vs equality and social justice
- Emphasis on developing skills and qualifications Vs emphasis on developing critical thinkers and active citizens
- Conformity to the dominant goals and values Vs respect for difference and minorities



# Challenges

- Learning cannot be controlled
- Lifelong learning is at the same time;
  - An ideology (all purposeful learning from cradle to grave: formal, non-formal, informal)
  - A goal (for continuous upskilling or democratic citizenship, transmission of values)
  - A process (the enabling institutional structures and accreditation systems)
- A world committee for lifelong learning must encompass global visions

# 'North' Vs 'South'



- THE GLOBAL SOUTH
- Indigenous values – active citizenship and nation building
  - Privilege the collective, community & spiritual
- Basic education as a foundation for continuous learning
- Harmonising individual interests with community interests



# 'North' Vs 'South'



- THE GLOBAL NORTH

- Westernised values

- Economic competitiveness

- Individualism, neo liberalism

- Survival of the fittest

- Qualifications transferability

- Learning that can be measured and graded



# Policy definitions- Europe

- European Memorandum

- All purposeful activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective

- 4 pillars

- Employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities



# Knowledge and skills

- Contribution to economic and social life
- Individuals are responsible for pursuing their own learning
- New basic skills
  - Digital literacy, foreign languages
  - Social skills – confidence, self direction, risk taking, autonomy
  - Entrepreneurial skills
- Competitive economic relationship

# Policy definitions – Southern Africa

- SADC Technical Committee

- A key purpose of lifelong learning is democratic citizenship, connecting individuals and groups to the structures of social, political and economic activity in both local and global contexts

- Contexts

- HIV/AIDS, uneven basic education, high poverty rates, uneven democracies, indigenous values for community cohesion



# Definition N-S comparisons

- SADC focus
  - Individuals *and groups*
  - Democratic citizenship comes *first*
  - Local *and* global contexts
  - Africa wants to be a mutual player in the wider world
- Core drivers N & S:
  - Economic & social change, demographic trends, educational expansion, rural-urban migration, civil society and political reforms; inequalities;
- are similar but in different order of priority



# Country policy interpretations

- Finland – pre memorandum date

- 1999 policy:

- Enhancement of know-how, regional, national competitiveness
    - Social cohesion, support, development of democratic society
    - Personal development and empowerment

- UK – post memorandum

- 2001 policy

- To secure sustainable economic success

# Country policy interpretations 2

- Botswana

- 1997-2004 Policies and Plans. Goals to be:

- Educated and informed
    - Prosperous, productive and innovative
    - Compassionate, just and caring
    - Open, democratic and accountable
    - Moral and tolerant
    - United and proud

- National qualifications framework, local learning centres, expanded tertiary education system, investment in e-learning and vocational training

# Country policy interpretations 3

## ● Namibia

### ○ 2003 policy. Priorities:

- Economic – employment
  - Social – poverty, gender equality, rehabilitation
  - Environmental – ecological sustainability
  - Political – participatory development and equity
  - Human resource development - capacity building
- Life skills and learning for active citizenship
- ICT and distance education



# Bucking the trend?



- Scotland

- 2003 policy

- Personal fulfilment and enterprise
    - Employability and adaptability
    - Active citizenship and social inclusion

- South Africa

- 1997-2002 policies and papers

- National qualifications framework



# The need to straddle the divide

- Lifelong learning has to cover the whole spectrum of
  - Basic education, secondary education, higher education, out-of-school education, adult education and skills development
- As well as
  - Provide the foundations for lifelong learning through literacy and adult basic education
  - (Aitcheson 2003)



## Avoid the assumption ...

- That basic education is a remedial exercise for the South or the few
- And that:
- Lifelong learning should focus on a league table of excellence, measured as economic success, for the North



# How to embrace a global vision?

- This committee must include a wide range of players – geographically, demographically and politically
- We should be ready to promote a definition of lifelong learning that looks beyond its relationship to economic competitiveness
- We should include in our lifelong learning definition some core values for global living – for example environmental awareness, peace, gender equality, ethical democracy & economic development etc



# How to embrace a global vision 2

- South – North dialogue
- Embrace non formal as well as formal education
- Provide space for marginalised voices
  - Women
  - People with disabilities
  - Ethnic minorities
  - Indigenous peoples