

The Contribution of President Nyerere to the Development of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Tanzania and Globally

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Abstract

This keynote presentation looked at Julius Kambarage Nyerere with changing lenses on his impact on adult education in Tanzania at his time being the President of the country, and his important influences on the global adult education movement at this time and even beyond. Having my own biographical lens on it started from a University seminar in 1972 on Nyerere and Ujamaa in Tanzania, followed by work for my doctoral comparative dissertation on Adult Education and Development in Tanzania. During that time I had joined the Institute of Adult Education for the evaluation of the mass campaign Chakula Ni Uhai. In 1976 Nyerere gave the keynote speech on Adult Education and Development to the first World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) founded after CONFINTEA III in Tokyo. ICAE by now is a global movement which has just been invited to contribute to the UNESCO Futures of Education initiative.

Introduction

Nyerere was born in 1922 as the son of a chief. He spent his early years living in rural areas, went to a missionary school and then for studies at Makerere College in Uganda. After that he worked as a teacher in Tabora before he continued for his Master studies to the University of Edinburgh. When he came back his political interest had grown and he joined the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) which successfully gained independence, but stayed within the Commonwealth. He became the first President of what later was known as the United Republic of Tanzania, after Tanganyika merged with the island of Zanzibar.

As a German, I should not forget to mention that the British colonial period had a predecessor. That was *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika (German-East-Africa)* and part of the imperialistic endeavors of our emperor system to get a share of the land and people, resources and power which were in competition with the Belgians, Dutch, French, Italians, Portuguese and Spaniards in many parts of Africa and indeed around the globe. (Rodney, 1972) Latest researches sum up the death toll of the *Maji-Maji-War* at the level of 300.000 people. The

current wave and debate between many Governments and Museums of giving back robbed objects from the cultural heritage of the colonized countries reminds us every day of those disasters, and the need to remember and learn for the future.

The political, social, cultural and educational ideas of Nyerere had a great impact on the developments in Tanzania. He declared and disseminated predominantly through speeches held at a variety of occasions, which were written, collected and published in three volumes as *Freedom and Unity* (1967), *Freedom and Socialism* (1968), and *Freedom and Development* (1973). Many smaller publications followed later including *Education Never Ends. The 1969 and 1970 New Years` Eve Addresses to the Nation* disseminated through the National Adult Education Association of Tanzania (Nyerere, 1975). The Adult Education Year in 1970 - this is why we now celebrate the 50 years.

Julius Nyerere was called *Mwalimu* (the Swahili word for teacher) by his people - even in his years in politics. When he died in 1999 he was remembered by Peter Mayo for “his lifelong commitment to Christian-Socialist principles”. (Mayo, 2001)

My way to Nyerere

Let me start with some biographical reflections on my early professional years. I came across his writings during a seminar at the University of Cologne in 1972 which was titled *Nyerere and Ujamaa in Tanzania*. In the next semester it was *Kaunda and Humanism in Zambia*. Following on the student’s rebellion we were eager to understand more what was going on in other parts of the world. We had demonstrated against all the inhumanities of the war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. We wanted to learn from education reforms and revolutions in China and other countries and continents. Not much was known about African nations and people beyond the colonial disasters which were still not over for the Portuguese interventions in Angola, Cap Verde, Guinea-Bissau or Mozambique, and as it turned out even longer for Apartheid in South Africa. We therefore appreciated the discourse on independent and more unique ways forward like in Tanzania.

In 1974 I moved on to the University of Heidelberg for my doctoral dissertation on *Adult Education and Development in Tanzania*. Heidelberg had a center for comparative studies in education with a special focus on Africa. The research scholarship covered field work and study trips. I thus came to Tanzania for the first time in 1974 and participated in the

international conference on *Adult Education and Development* with so many highly interesting presentations from so many countries. A field trip took the conference participants to Mwanza at Lake Victoria to observe the Tanzanian site of UNESCO Experimental World Literacy Program which later inspired the national literacy campaign.

I took the opportunity to prepare for a longer stay and in 1975 the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) in Dar es Salaam hosted me as an associate in the Research and Planning Department which at the time was deeply engaged with the evaluation of the *Chakula ni Uhai (Food is Life)* campaign. I was fortunate that the Head of the Department, Bertram A.P. Mahai, supported me much to understand the concept and methodology and enabled the necessary travels to all the provinces and regional IAE centres which were involved in the evaluation. We later wrote articles together such as *Chakula ni Uhai – A Radio Study Group Campaign in Mass Adult Education*. He also invited me to a discussion in IAE where I could present a paper on *Some Considerations on Adult Education within the Concept of Lifelong Learning in Tanzania* (Hinzen, 1975).

During that period I also had the opportunity to participate in 1975 in the UNESCO *Seminar on Comparative Structures of Adult Education in Developing Countries* which took place in Kikuyu, Kenya. Renowned colleagues from the international scenery came like John Lowe, Budd Hall and David Macharia. It helped me to understand the importance of structures for adult education as a sub-sector of the education system, and why adult education institutions need support through related policy, legislation and financing. It also prepared the way to engage with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg who invited us to co-ordinate a study on *Education for Liberation and Development. The Tanzanian Experience* (Hinzen, Hundsdörfer 1979) to which so many well-known colleagues from Tanzania like Bwatwa, Chale, Ishumi, Kassam, Maliyamkono, Malya, Mbunda, Mlekwa and Mmari, together with their international colleagues like von Freyhold, Mbilinyi, Mitschke-Collande and Swantz contributed. The book appeared in the UIL series on educational reforms, and was widely distributed through a joint publication with Evans Brothers. If wanted by conference participants - a PDF could be sent.

I joined DVV International in 1977 for a project on development education and global learning. From 1978 on I moved into the co-ordination of projects in Africa, including Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia. It also meant two other important roles within the institutional management as Deputy Director of DVV International and as Editor of the

journal *Adult Education and Development*. It was a pleasure to be able to publish articles coming from Freire and Nyerere, Mhaiki, Hall and Kidd, Bhasin, Duke, Kassam, Ramdas or Rogers. I stayed full-time with DVV International till 2015 with ever changing roles a Director of Headquarters or of Country Offices for Sierra Leone or Hungary, or at the end in the Regional Office for South and Southeast Asia in Lao PDR.

My assumption is that my personal, professional and political life would have been very different without meeting Nyerere and his speeches and writings as milestones and signals on adult education within lifelong learning much beyond Tanzania.

Julius Nyerere on Education

Even before his more systematic and comprehensive writings on education statements can be found which called for the importance of adult education, like in the 1964 Development Plan:

First we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten or even twenty years. The attitudes of the adults on the other hand have an impact now. The people must understand the plans for the development of this country; they must be able to participate in the changes which are necessary. Only if they are willing and able to do this will this plan succeed.” (United Republic of Tanzania, 1964)

We could identify five speeches which comprise most aspects of what we may call the pedagogy of Nyerere, and they were all included in *The Tanzanian Experience*:

- In 1967 he spelt out *Education for Self-Reliance* as the first Post-Arusha policy directive on education. TANU had decided to develop self-reliant Ujamaa villages as an approach of rural socialism, and education for this self-reliance was a precondition. All schools should have gardens in which pupils and teachers grow what they need. The numbers of primary school years were extended and they should enable school leavers to go for work and lead a meaningful life.
- New Year’s Eve addresses to the nation for 1969 and 1970 were later merged and published together as *Education Never Ends*. In 1970 was the inauguration of the first university in Tanzania and Nyerere used this as the opportunity to speak on the *Relevance and Dar es Salaam University* which carries a major function and social responsibility in the advancement and transmission of knowledge. It built however on

the foundations of the University College of Dar es Salaam as part of the East African University.

- In 1974 he spoke on *Our Education Must be for Liberation* during the opening of an international seminar on *Education and Training and Alternatives in Education in African Countries* which was jointly organized by the Dag Hammarskjold Organization and the Institute of Development Studies in Dar es Salaam.
- In 1976 he addressed the participants of the ICAE World Assembly held at the University of Dar es Salaam with another milestone speech on *Adult Education and Development*. Here he stated that “the first function of adult education is to inspire both a desire for change, and an understanding that change is possible.”

Education Never Ends

1970 had been declared by TANU and the Tanzanian Government as *Adult Education Year*. Nyerere therefore took the opportunity to speak about this twice in the New Year Eve Speeches of 1969 and 1970. At first as a sort of announcement, and a year later to report and encourage further efforts:

For, as I said last year, adult education is something which never stops. Whatever level of education we have reached, we can go on; there is always something new to learn. And if we have not begun to learn about the modern world, we can begin now. (Nyerere 1975, p. 8)

If we look at some of the discourses today and the paradigm shift valuing lifelong, lifewide and lifedep aspects of learning and education, then one could be surprised to read in *Education Never Ends*: “What was important, and what is still valuable, is that education in our traditional societies was part of life, not something separate, which a person took part in for just a short period in his lifetime.”

Further on the text defined as the three stages of education:

- “Yet it is still true that the first education anyone ever gets is from his parents and his brothers and sisters, as he grows from infancy into childhood.”
- “Second, there is formal education at school. Unfortunately, we are still not able to provide a place in school for every Tanzanian child...”

- “Adult education is the third stage, and it can cover many of the subjects learned at school for those who never had the opportunity. It applies to every one of us, without exception. We can all learn more.”

Education Never Ends manages the challenge to advocate for all three aspects - lifelong, lifewide, and lifedep – at the same time it spells out objectives for adult education, and throughout comes back to welcome statements and methods like “learning by doing” or “learning from experience”.

As a final quotation from this *Education Never Ends*:

- “For I repeat, education is something that all of us should continue to acquire from the time we are born until the time we die. This is important both for individuals and for our country as a whole.”

UNESCO and ICAE

The head of the Tanzanian delegation to the UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education CONFINTEA III in Tokyo 1972 was Paul Mhaiki. He may be called a major architect of the development of adult education as a country-wide system. Together with Budd Hall he co-authored *The integration of adult education in Tanzania* (Mhaiki & Hall, 1972) His career included being Director of IAE, Principal of Kivukoni College and he headed the Adult Education Department in the Ministry. Later on Paul Mhaiki became Director of Adult Education and Rural Development in UNESCO Headquarter in Paris, and from there he moved on to become the Tanzanian Ambassador to UNESCO.

At the time Mhaiki worked closely with Roby Kidd from Canada, author of the famous book *How Adults Learn*, Hellmuth Dolff from Germany, Director General of DVV, and Paul Bertelson from the Adult Education Section at UNESCO. Together they not only influenced the outcomes of CONFINTEA III, but they also used the meeting as a platform to discuss the need for a global civil society representation as a new organization not in competition but complementary to UNESCO depending on member states and thereby governments more strongly. The process went quickly: ICAE was founded in 1973, Roby Kidd became the Secretary General, Paul Mhaiki Vice-President for Africa, and Hellmuth Dolff hosted the first

ICAE Executive Council meeting in the local Volkshochschule (vhs, folk high school) in the city of Cologne.

The First World Assembly of ICAE was 1976 in Dar es Salaam and turned out to a be milestone event with President Nyerere giving the keynote address on *Adult Education and Development*. Even today it is an inspiring document to read with so many relevant arguments and suggestions covering aspects like scope, methods and organization.

So if adult education is to contribute to development, it must be part of life – integrated with life and inseparable from it. It is not something which can be put into a box and taken out for certain periods of the day or week – or certain periods of life. And it cannot be imposed: every learner is ultimately a volunteer, because however much teaching he is given; only he can learn. Nyerere became the first ICAE Honorary President. The whole conference is very well documented as *Adult learning: A design for action* (Hall & Kidd, p. 1978).

A short note on UNESCO Education Reports and the ICAE contributions should help to appreciate and understand the attempts to re-thinking education when turning points in history require re-orientation:

- 1972 Edgar Faure, former Education Minister of France, and his commission came up with *Learning to be. The world of education today and tomorrow*.
- 1995 Jacques Delors, former EU President and his commission titled *Learning the treasure within*. ICAE was invited to contribute and sent the submission *Adult education and lifelong learning: Issues, concerns and recommendations* (ICAE, 1994).
- 2021 Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, and her commission are planning to present their report on *Learning to Become. The futures of education* at the UNESCO General Conference in November this year. ICAE contributed a position paper on *Adult learning and education – because the future cannot wait* (ICAE, 2020).

All these reports have a lifelong learning perspective. They are historical products of their time. All look at the diversity of knowledge, competencies and skills as well as attitudes, behaviors and values. However, the importance of adult education has not been expressed as clearly and strongly in the Faure and Delors Reports – compared to the writings

of Nyerere. It is to be hoped that the ICAE intervention this time bears more fruits for a better future of adult learning and education.

CONFINTEA

We provided evidence about the strong position Tanzania had in CONFINTEA III in 1972. The latest one was CONFINTEA VI in 2009 in Brazil which came up with the *Belém Framework for Action (BFA)* which stated: “Lifelong learning ‘from cradle to grave’ is a philosophy, a conceptual framework and an organizing principle of all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values; it is all encompassing and integral to the vision of a knowledge-based society... “. (UIL, 2010)

The BFA covers these five areas specifically: “policy, governance, financing, participation, quality”. In respect to financing the BFA is “seeking investment of at least 6% of GNP in education with an increasing share of resources allocated to ALE”. Whereas I could not find robust data on this, the 4th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) provides figures for those participating countries of less than 2% of the share for ALE of the public spending on ALE. (UIL, 2019a)

It should serve as a reminder of what Nyerere argued for at the ICAE World Assembly:

All this means that adult education has to be given a priority within the overall development and recurrent revenue allocations of governments or other institutions. And what priority it obtains is perhaps one of the most political decisions a government will take. For if adult education is properly carried out, and therefore effective, it is the most potent force there can be for developing a free people who will insist upon determining their own future... (Nyerere 1975, p.54)

The next CONFINTEA is just around the corner. The Mid-term in 2017 concluded in its report *CONFINTEA VII - Adult Learning and Education and the 2030 Agenda* that it will be important to strengthen ALE in the implementation of the SDG. All countries were invited to submit national reports which are now analyzed in the context of the 5th GRALE specifically looking at active citizenship education and participation. Soon there will be the chance to share information and deepen the discourse during the virtual CONFINTEA VII Eastern and

Southern Africa Sub-Regional Consultation in June. A year later in 2022 there will be CONFINTEA VII in Morocco.

Education 2030 Agenda

The Government of Tanzania signed the SDG together with 193 countries of the UN family. It can be argued that education, learning and training for youth and adults are components in each of the 17 goals which from another perspective are a prerequisite for their successful implementation (Schweighöfer, 2019).

Goal 4 of the SDG reads: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. This seems a broad enough goal for all education systems globally. I recall that in preparation for the World Education Forum in Incheon 2015 we had argued for a second “ensure” in front of “lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Ensure seems more than promote.

However, there are two more very important clauses in SDG 4 Education:

- “Make learning spaces and environments for non-formal and adult learning and education widely available, including networks of community learning centres and spaces and provision for access to IT resources as essential elements of lifelong learning.
- Provide learners of both sexes and of all ages with opportunities to acquire, throughout life, the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are needed to build peaceful, healthy and sustainable societies.” (UNESCO, 2015a)

There are certain monitoring mechanisms that report progress on achievements in respect to the SDG. It may be a challenge to find out where Tanzania stands in 2021, less than 10 years away from 2030.

The *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE)* was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 2015. (UNESCO 2015b) The BFA had called for a revision of 1976 document which at the time had really captured the essentials of an emerging field.

RALE incorporated and integrated what CONFINTEA and the SDG had said in respect to ALE and CLC: "... creating or strengthening appropriate institutional structures, like community learning centres, for delivering adult learning and education and encouraging adults to use these as hubs for individual learning as well as community development." (<https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/unesco-recommendation>)

We appreciate that there is another paradigm shift coming: From a human right to education that too often was mis-understood as a right to schooling or literacy only to a human right to lifelong learning. Within this we need to more emphasise on adults as they are the largest group of society and adulthood is the longest time in life. We therefore have to advocate a strong component of ALE in lifelong learning equally important for each individual as for society as a whole.

On closing with my personal and professional lens I am thankful that I could continuously for almost four decades, work for DVV International in headquarters, country and regional offices which included Tanzanian adult education as an important partner. Additionally and globally serving as ICAE Vice President and Member of the CONFINTEA VI Consultative Group it was the period during which the Belem Framework for Action, the Education 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Education emerged. Even today all these experiences impact my University teaching and research in comparative adult learning and education.

Following a public tender we got involved in the *Feasibility Study. Assessment of relevance, feasibility and potential sustainability of an intervention of DVV International in Tanzania.* (Hinzen, Weber 2019) By now the Country Office has been opened and the Regional Office for Eastern Africa has moved from Addis Ababa to Dar es Salaam. I was particularly pleased to see that the new Regional Director, Frauke Heinze, has already taken up the challenges to define together with her partners in Tanzania a route along the ALESBA (Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach) which has been piloted in neighboring countries in the past years. We found it timely to write a chapter for the commemorative book prepared by Tanzanian colleagues and called it *Tanzanian and German Cooperation in Adult Learning and Education for Development: A Historical Legacy of 50 Years Told Through the Roles of Programmes, Personalities and DVV International.* (Heinze & Hinzen, 2021)

Proverbs and slogans

We have seen that adult education and lifelong learning have deep roots in the life and traditions of people in most or even all parts of the world. During my professional moves across the world I started to collect proverbs and slogans which were somehow related to our field. These are some of them:

- In Germany we have *Learning from the cradle to the stretcher*
- In Tanzania I met Nyerere's *Education Never Ends*
- The European Union used *It is never too late to learn* for a policy document
- In Moldova I was told *One learns all life, and still is ignorant*
- And the Mende in Sierra Leone convinced me on an even longer perspective as *Learning starts in the womb and ends in the tomb.*

A final note

The International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame held an Induction Ceremony on December 4, 2008 in which Julius Nyerere and Paulo Freire received the status of posthumous honors. (<https://www.halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/>)

There can be no doubt that both of them deserve this recognition. Both enriched the field of adult education and lifelong learning tremendously.

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