

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Adult Education in Sweden and Ethiopia: Lessons for Ethiopia in Focus

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the systems of adult education in Sweden and Ethiopia. To this end, qualitative research design was employed and a critical review method was used. Tacit knowledge of the researcher, relevant research literatures, policy documents and monographs were used as sources of data – the data were critically analyzed. The major findings showed that in both Sweden and Ethiopia, adult education was used mainly as a mechanism for promoting the development of civic competence, employability skills and raising environmental awareness. On the other hand, there were differences between the two countries; Sweden has (a) a special non-formal adult education known as popular adult education (folkbildning) which utilizes ‘study circles’, and ‘folk high schools’; (b) a culture of providing formal municipal adult education, and (c) the provision of Swedish for immigrants. Likewise, Ethiopia has also its own peculiar adult education which is known as ‘integrated functional adult education’ that aims at integrating basic literacy skills with livelihoods of adults. Hence, one could safely conclude that despite nation-specific differences, Sweden and Ethiopia consider adult education as an indispensable tool for promoting the development of democratic political culture. Based on the findings and conclusion, it is suggested that the Ethiopian Ministry of Education is advised to consider the use of ‘study circles’ in the provision of integrated functional adult education, and the Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is advised to consider the Swedish experience of labor market training for the unemployed.

Keywords: study circles, municipal adult education, integrated functional adult education

Introduction

Background of the study

The emergence of modern adult education in the 18th century is attributed to three great social processes in Europe, namely the Enlightenment, Industrialization and Democratization. It has got wider international recognition and acceptance after the Second World War, particularly with launching of the First International Conference on Adult Education in Denmark in 1949. The Second International Conference took place in Canada 1960; the 3rd in Japan 1972, the 4th in France in 1985, the 5th in Germany in 1997, and the 6th in Brazil in 2009.

With the rising significance of literacy for socio-economic development, Education for All Goals incorporated the target that countries were to reduce their illiteracy rate by 50% in 2015. Even though the achievement of nations varies from each other, the agenda of fighting illiteracy within the framework of lifelong learning has been included in the Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030).

Adult education has three major purposes, namely, enhancing economic productivity and competitiveness, fostering personal development, and promoting social inclusion and co-

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hesion. The realization of the purposes of adult education necessitates the learning of best practices from other countries that have a well-developed system of adult education.

Sweden is well developed Scandinavian country with slightly more than nine million population has a well developed education system. Its long tradition of modern education is observable from the fact that it launched a compulsory education in the year 1842 (Hallden, 2008: 253). The historical emergence of modern adult education in Sweden goes back to the 18th century. The Swedish popular education was influenced by the thoughts of the Danish educator and philosopher N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783- 1872), who is seen as the father of folk high schools. He developed a fruitful adult education institutions in the 1840s.

However, the Swedish popular education is more characterized by its “study circles” and folk high schools. The former began in the 1800s and they were formally introduced in 1902, whereas the latter were established in 1868 (Gustavsson, 2013:38). Study circles are small groups which comprise usually fewer than twelve members who have common interest to learn a particular subject whereas folk high schools are institutions that provide courses for adult learners. The long term courses offered by folk high schools might cover between 1 to 3 years.

In Sweden, there are a number of providers of adult education. These include (a) municipal adult education which is organized for adults lacking compulsory schooling (9 years of basic education) and/or upper secondary education. This form of adult education was introduced in 1968; (b) education for adults with learning disabilities. This form of adult education shares the same curriculum with municipal adult education, however, the syllabi and time tables are adapted to the needs of adults with disabilities; and (c) Swedish adult education for Immigrants (SFI) which aims at equipping immigrants living in Sweden with the knowledge and skills of the ‘Swedish Language and and Swedish society’ (Hallden, 2008). Moreover, there are other forms of adult education in Sweden like labor market training for adults. Today, adult education is seen as an integral part of lifelong learning in Sweden.

When it comes to Ethiopia, it is worth mentioning that Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic nation. It has currently an estimated 112,991,796 million population (Worldometers, 2019), Its geographical location in the Horn of Africa has played a significant role in the process of nation-building. With regard to this, one could mention the following three historical facts: first, Ethiopia developed early trade relations with the Greek and Roman world; second, Christianity and Islam were introduced to Ethiopia in the 4th and 7th centuries respectively; third, major European super powers strived to control the nation in the era of colonialism, nevertheless, Ethiopia has maintained its independence. The rationale for comparing Sweden and Ethiopia is briefly indicated hereunder:

Firstly, the process of globalization has homogenizing effects even though heterogeneity and disparity among developed and developing countries never disappear in light of global competition. Moreover, countries are increasingly entred into various forms of cooperation and this situation has necessitated as well as enhanced the practice of learning from each other. Secondly, education plays an indispensable role in facilitating sharing of knowledge, skills, and values among various cultures, and it fosters the possibility of technology transfer. Comparing Sweden and Ethiopia - at face value – seems impossible when you consider the socio-economic conditions and the living standards of citizens of both nations. However, in comparison, there is what is known as ‘tertium comparationis’, the third common aspect, which makes comparison possible. In this case, not the whole

social systems are compared, but only the adult education subsector as a common structure prevailing in both nations. Thirdly, comparison is employed not only in education, but also in all disciplines; for instance, social scientists compare federalism, laws, and other structures by taking selected developed and developing countries with the aim to learn from the 'best practices' of each other. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Swedish International Development Agency has been providing support to the Ethiopian education sector for many decades, and this relationship between Sweden and Ethiopia can be seen as a fertile ground for thinking on the possibility of learning from the systems of adult education of both countries. It is on this background that the researcher was interested to undertake this study.

Statement of the Problem

Adult education plays an important role in the socio-economic development of a society, for it gives adults the opportunity to learn life skills and professional competencies to cope up with everchanging demands of the society (Timus, 1996:10). A number of researches were conducted in the broad areas of adult education in Sweden. The Swedish adult education is characterized by the existence of study circles and adult education colleges (folk high schools) as well as in the provision of a program known as Swedish for Immigrants (Gustavsson, 2013:38). Moreover, a study conducted by (Nordvall, 2013: 140) depicted that the Swedish popular education has also global significance in that it has contributed to "the shaping of the global justice movement's social forum in Sweden".

Additionally, Hallden (2008) showed the plurality of providers of adult education in Sweden, namely, municipal adult education, education for adults with learning disabilities, and Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) which aims at equipping immigrants living in Sweden with the knowledge and skills of the 'Swedish Language and and Swedish society'.

Likewise, the status and practices related to adult education practices in Ethiopia were investigated by a number of researchers. One can mention Workneh (2011), who described that adult education practice in Ethiopia, has emphasized the importance of conceptual clarification in the Ethiopian adult education sub-sector. Again, Kenea (2006) critically analyzed the literacy initiatives in Ethiopia under successive Ethiopian governments. In the same vein, Zelalem (2017) conducted an ethnographic study on the profile of literacy facilitators. More recently, Abadi (2018) analyzed in his dissertation at University of Oslo the contribution of integrated functional adult literacy to economic, social, and political empowerment of adult learners by comparing the Amhara and Tigray regions.

Reinhard, Pogrzeba, Townsend, and Pop (2016) conducted a study entitled "A comparative study of cooperative education and integrated learning in Germany, South Africa, and Namibia" and their findings revealed that in Germany there are so many strong companies which work with universities in shaping the curricula for cooperative education as well as in making important decisions as equal partners compared to South Africa and Namibia. Yet, the study indicated that despite differences both South Africa and Namibia are working with Germany to elevate their cooperation with the industry thereby tapping from the experience of Germany.

Nonetheless, to the knowledge of the researcher, there isn't a study conducted on the comparative analysis of adult education in Sweden and Ethiopia. Hence, this research study would contribute to closing the existing research gap.

To this end, the following basic research questions were set:

1. How are the major purposes of adult education in Sweden and Ethiopia described?
2. What are the legal bases of adult education organized in Sweden and Ethiopia?
3. Which institutions provide adult education in Sweden and Ethiopia?
4. What are the major similarities and differences in the systems of adult education of both nations?
5. What could be learnt from the Swedish system of adult education as 'best practices'?

Review of the Related Literature

In this section, relevant policy documents, research findings and related literatures were critically reviewed so as to compare adult education in both countries. Hence, this section presents the concept of adult education, the functions of comparative adult education and provision of adult education in both countries.

The concept of adult education

Adult education was defined differently by a number of scholars at different times. The first widely accepted definition of adult education was the one which was formulated during the international conference on adult education that took place in Nairobi, Kenya in the year 1976. It defined adult education as:

the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level, method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as an apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop the abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior... (UNESCO, 1976:2).

The above definition is quite comprehensive because it encompasses all forms of adult education. However, recent developments in the field of adult education have shown that issues like apprenticeship training are subsumed to technical and vocational education rather than strictly being seen as adult education.

A more widely used definition of adult education was developed during the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education that took place in Hamburg, Germany in the year 1997. It states that adult education:

... is a powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture based on justice (UNESCO, 1997a:1).

This definition has been more widely used today because it underlined the importance of adult education for improving the human conditions. It raises fundamental dimensions of life and discusses issues of vital importance like sustainable development which covers the social, economic and environmental dimensions. The issue of environmental concern has got momentum through time, particularly after the report of the Brundtland Commission in 1987. Moreover, it stresses the importance of adult education for promoting the development of dialogue and the culture of peace based on justice. This is critical in light

of what John Kirkby (1995) calls the three global crises.

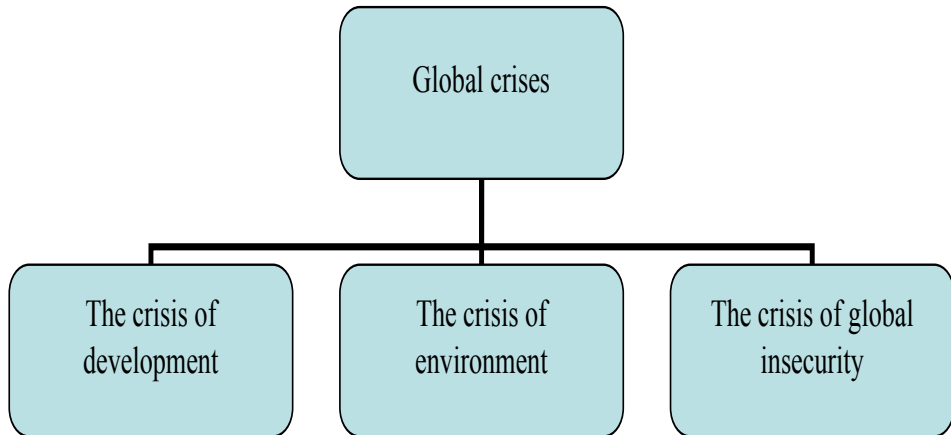


Figure 1: The three global crises identified by John Kirkby 1995

Likewise, Smith (2006) underscores that the process of globalization couldn't resolve its own negative consequences. Hence, adult education is believed to serve as a tool for enhancing the local and global awareness of adults about global crises. It helps people make use of the positive dimensions of globalization and develop mechanisms for minimizing its negative effects.

Comparative adult education

The development of Comparative Adult Education is influenced mainly by the mother discipline Comparative Education, and the series of world adult education conferences organized by UNESCO after the Second World War.

Comparative education emerged in the 19th century. Its historical development covers four stages (Hoerner, 1993):

- **The satge of traveller's tales:** Individuals who travelled to different countries came up with information concerning how those countries were educating their citizens. However, such reports were unsytematic in nature.
- **The stage of educational borrowing:** It started with the work of the French educator Marie Antoine Jullien who in 1817 published his book entitled "Plan and Preliminary View for Work of Comparative education. He asserted that 'comparative analysis of education is useful to improve the social and moral values through education'.
- **The stage of breaking down the barriers:** At this stage, international cooperation was given due emphasis and collection of educational data was conducted by such organizations like International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva and UNESCO in Paris.
- **The stage of the social science perspective:** Today, large scale data analysis and comparison of educational achievements of different nations got more and more international attention. One can mention the practice of Program for International Studentent Assesemt (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science

Study (TIMSS).

Comparative education contributed to the emergence of comparative adult education in that it provided the latter with relevant methods used in comparing adult education systems.

Likewise, the prominent German comparative educator Wolfgang Hoerner (1993) clearly indicated the following functions of comparison which are widely recognized and considered by adult educators:

- (a) Ideographic function that emphasizes the need to consider the economic, political, social and cultural backgrounds of countries before taking ideas, practices or models to improve one's own education system;
- (b) Melioristic function which underscores the idea of learning from the practices of other countries not only to improve one's own education system but also to contribute to the overall improvement of world education system;
- (c) Evolutionary function entails the need to consider world trends in education so as not to remain behind others;
- (d) Experimental function that stresses the importance of trying out innovative educational ideas and practices in a form of pilot activities and to scale them up to be successful and useful.

As mentioned above, the development of Comparative Adult Education has also been influenced by series of world conferences on adult education that took place in Elsinore, Denmark (1949), Montreal, Canada (1960), Tokyo, Japan (1972), Paris, France (1985), Hamburg, Germany (1997) and Belem, Brazil (2009). Even though each world conference on adult education has had its useful contribution, the Hamburg World Conference made more significant contribution to the field of adult education in that it produced two documents; namely, The Hamburg Declaration, and Agenda of the Future.

Thus, developments in the areas of comparative education and adult education have led to the emergence of the young sub-discipline of adult education - 'comparative adult education'.

In 1966, the First International Conference on the Comparative Study of Adult Education took place at Exeter, USA. This is followed by the launching of the first graduate course in Comparative Adult Education at Ontario Institute for the Study of Education in 1967 where the prominent Canadian adult educator Roby Kidd (1915-1982) played a significant role. Today, comparative adult education is provided in many universities across the world, and it is further strengthened through the activities of its professional association, which was initiated by an American adult educator Alexander Charters and Canadian adult educator Roby Kidd and renamed "International Society for Comparative Adult Education" in 1992. With these in mind, both Sweden and Ethiopia have rich adult education experiences.

Adult Education in Sweden

The historical development of adult education in Sweden cannot be adequately explained without the emergence of popular education – folkbildning.

(a) **Popular education**

Popular education in Sweden emerged in the processes of enlightenment, industrialization and democratization. This is understood, for instance, from the work of Petros Goulakis (2016:12), who argues:

Popular education is a culturally determined practice of social communication with roots in the Reformation and the Enlightenment, playing a decisive role in the shaping of the Swedish labor movement in the late 1800s, the history of which is intertwined with democratization and the transformation of Sweden into a highly developed welfare society.

Sweden introduced compulsory school attendance in 1842 (Stanfors, 2000 as cited by Hallden, 253). Despite this relatively long tradition of compulsory schooling, there are always many men and women who haven't completed the nine years of schooling.

(b) **Municipal adult education**

According to OECD (2000: 7) states that the Swedish public education system for adults consists of three major forms of adult education; namely, 'municipal adult education (Komvux), adult education for those with functional disabilities (Särvux), and Swedish for immigrants (SFI)'.

The Swedish Government launched municipal adult education (Komvux) in 1968 for three major reasons.

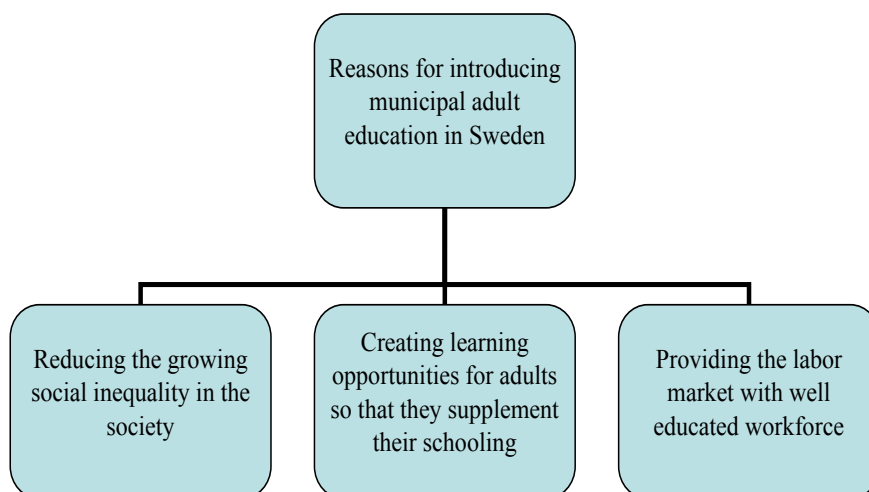


Figure 2: after Swedish Ministry of Education and research, September 2013:1

Adult education is provided through such institutions like study circles and folk high schools in Sweden. The former are typical symbol for Swedish adult education; the latter, was developed based on the Danish model which was initiated by Gruntvig in the 1840s..

Adult Education in Ethiopia

Modern education was introduced to Ethiopia in the year 1908 with the establishment of Menelik II School in Addis Ababa (Bishaw and Lasser, 2012). The beginning of modern education has created opportunity for the introduction of modern adult education

in the country. This is observable from the fact that Emperor Menelik II proclaimed the need to fight illiteracy. Right after repulsing the five-year Italian aggression, Ethiopia has embarked on the reconstruction of public institutions including schools. It is worth mentioning that the first modern adult education institution – Berhaneh Zere New Institute - was established by Emperor Haile-Silassie I in 1948. In the 1950s, Ethiopian students established a literacy providing organization known as “yefidel Serawit” (Army of the Alphabet) and taught thousands of illiterate citizens basic literacy skills. The 1960s witnessed that the illiteracy rate in Ethiopia was by far worse than many African countries as this was confirmed during the Addis Ababa Conference of African Education Ministers in 1961.

A turning point in this regard was the fact that the Imperial Government of Ethiopia requested the United Nations support for literacy initiative. Accordingly, experts from UN specialized agencies like UNESCO, ILO and UNDP came to Ethiopia in 1967 and planned Work-Oriented Literacy Program to be implemented in piloted areas of Ethiopia from 1968-1973. However, the result was disappointing and evaluated as ineffective because of inappropriate medium of literacy instruction for the target groups, lack of adequate literacy experts in the country who could manage data on literacy activities (Kenea, 2006).

The then ongoing turbulent social and political situations led to the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974. The practice of adult education in the country received due attention during the Dergue Regime especially between 1979 and 1989 because of the National Literacy Campaign. Even though the campaign employed about fifteen nationality languages as medium of literacy education and got international recognition, the last phase of the campaign became more of a political rhetoric aimed at quelling the wide spread civil strife against the totalitarian Dergue Regime in different parts of the country (Workneh, 2011). The fall of the Dergue Regime in May 1991 opened new opportunities for adult education, since the country introduced a federal state structure that aimed at addressing the chronic socio-economic, political and cultural conflicts in the country. A new Education and Training Policy was launched in 1994 that intends to address issues of access, equity, relevance and quality of education. Likewise, Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) which is now in its fifth phase was put in place. Until 2005, the EPRDF Government of Ethiopia gave less attention to adult education per se, and employed more widely the term non-formal education.

Research design and methods

In this study, qualitative research design was employed, and document review was used as a method. Prominent scholars of research methods like Best and Kahn (1993) as well as Creswell (2009) confirm that document review enables researchers using qualitative design to analyze diverse and pertinent written documents.

The methods of comparison described in the works of Gorge Bereday (1964), Noah J. Harold and Max Eckstein (1969), and Brian Holmes (1981) have been widely used by comparative adult educators. Comparative education employs diverse approaches. These include the philosophical approach, the social analysis approach, the historical approach, and the scientific approach (Khakpour, 2012:20-22). In this study, the social analysis approach was used to analyze the similarities and differences in the adult education systems of Sweden and Ethiopia by considering the socio-economic and cultural contexts of both nations.

Sources of data were relevant policy documents, research reports and monographs deal-

ing with adult education in Sweden and Ethiopia.

Table 1: Major policy and strategy documents reviewed

s.n.	Swedish national policies and strategies pertinent to adult education	Ethiopian national policies and strategies pertinent to adult education
1.	Swedish Education Act of 2011	Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994)
2.	The Swedish Strategy for Lifelong Learning: A Summary of principles and orientations (2007)	National Adult Education Strategy of 2008
3.	OECD (2000). Thematic Review of Adult Learning: Sweden Background Report	Education Sector Development Program IV and V
4.	Swedish Education Statistics	Education Statistics Annual Abstracts

The data were then analyzed through comparative perspective. Finally, the researcher added his critical reflections by using his personal knowledge, which were jotted down when he was a visiting scholar in Swedish universities; namely at Linköping University in 2015 and at Gothenburg University in December 2018.

The reviewed documents were discussed thematically, interpreted qualitatively and finally the findings were indicated through a comparative perspective.

Results and Discussions

The data obtained from written documents were critically analyzed and discussed by categorizing the issues into themes based on the guiding research questions.

Purpose of adult education

(a) The purpose of adult education in Sweden

The purpose of adult education in Sweden is reducing social inequality, creating opportunities for individuals to supplement their schooling, and providing the labor market with a well educated workforce. Moreover, adult education is believed to be a crucial instrument for social integration in light of growing number of immigrants as well as for enhancing the process of Europeanization as increasing number of citizens of other European nations are living and working in Sweden. In order to promote the social integration of immigrants, municipalities provide “Swedish for Immigrants” (SFI).

(b) The purpose of adult education in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the major purpose of adult education is improving the livelihoods of illiterate and semi-literate adults on the one hand, and enhancing the democratization of the society on the other. In addition, the purpose of adult education in Ethiopia is to promote the realization of the country’s aspiration of becoming a member of Lower Middle Income Countries by 2025.

Also, adult education in Ethiopia is believed to be a necessary tool towards the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Legal bases of adult education

(a) Legal basis of adult education in Sweden

In Sweden, there are two forms of adult education: (1) non-formal adult education which is usually called liberal or popular adult education (Folkbildning), and (2) formal adult education. The former is mainly organized for adults with little formal education,; the latter is organized as municipal adult education (komvux) which was established in 1968, adult education for the intellectually disabled (särsvux) and Swedish for immigrants (sfi) as well as as an advanced vocational education and training (KY) as well as supplementary educational programs. Folkbildning is largely financed through joint tax funding, where the government sets forth overall objectives for the activities

Popular adult education is provided by folk high schools and study associations. The legal bases for non-formal adult education (popular adult education) is the

Decree on Government Subsidies to Folkbildning (1991:977) last revised in 2007, whereas the municipal adult education comes under the Education Act and the Municipal Adult Education Act (2003). Similarly, the Higher Vocational Education Act that entered into force in 2010 serves as legal basis for the provision of advanced vocational and training for adults.

Form of adult education	Umbrella organization	Responsible body
Non-formal adult education /folksbildnin/popular adult education	The Swedish National Council of Adult Education	Ministry of Education
	Study associations: The Swedish Adult Education Association (SAEA)	
	Folk High Schools: The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions	
	The Interest Organization for Popular Movement Folk High Schools (RIO)	
Formal adult education	Swedish National Agency for Vocational Higher Education	Ministry of Education

(b) Legal basis of adult education in Ethiopia

The legal bases of adult education in Ethiopia are the national policies and strategies. The Education and Training Policy of 1994 states that “non-formal education will be provided and integrated with basic education and at all levels of forla education” (MOE, 1994:15). Hence, it is obvious that adult education was not clearly and visibly spelt out in the Education and Training Policy of 1994 as observed by Sandhaas (2009:20). Instead, non-formal education was seen as comprising “adult literacy, non-formal education programmes for out-of-school children and community skills training”.

In relation to the issue of legal basis of adult education in Ethiopia, it is also important to briefly show the division of responsibilities between the federal Ministry of Education and the Regional Education Bureaus. The Ministry of Education provides the curriculum framework, guidelines and technical support to the regions whereas the regional education bureaus develop their own adult education programs within the national curriculum

framework and assist the woredas in the implementation of the programs.

In 2008, the country launched its National Adult Education Strategy which can also serve as visible legal basis for adult education in Ethiopia today.

Providers of adult education

(a) Providers of Adult Education in Sweden

In Sweden, popular adult education is provided by study associations and folk high schools whereas formal adult education is provided by schools and training centers, sometimes in cooperation with study associations. Popular adult education is largely financed through joint tax funding, where the government sets forth overall objectives for the activities whereas formal adult education is financed through state and municipal fundings.

In Sweden, there are diverse providers of adult education. The plural and flexible nature of providers of adult education in Sweden has created ample opportunities for adults to participate in adult educational programs or activities. In a nutshell, one can summarize the Swedish adult education providing institutions as follows:

Providers	Type and function
Municipalities	Basic and upper secondary education for adults (Komvux)
	Adult education for adults with disabilities (Sarvux)
	Swedish for Immigrants (SFI)
Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning	It provides support to municipalities, adult education colleges, and education associations so that they would organize flexible courses for adult learners.
Adult Colleges (folk high schools)	They provide variety of courses for all sections of the society
Work places	Many workplaces in Sweden offer professional development training for the personnel of the organization.
Labor boards and unemployment offices	They offer labor market training for the unemployed.
Universities and institutes of higher education	They provide independent courses and more comprehensive programs for adults.

Figure 3: Adult education providers in Sweden

(b) Providers of adult education in Ethiopia

A number of institutions are providing adult education in Ethiopia. Some of these providers include (Dessu, 2006:202-204; Sandhaas, 2009, Tilahun, 2011):

Line ministries:

Line ministries have their own education and training related departments or units through which they provide diverse forms of adult education. For instance, the following line ministries have long years of experience in providing adult education:

Ministry of Education: It provides Integrated functional adult education program for illiterate and semi-literate adults.

- Ministry of Agriculture: It provides agricultural extension program for farmers.
- Ministry of Health: It provides health extension package for both urban and rural

residents.

- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs: training for workers who want to work abroad, etc.

Local non-governmental organizations:

There are a number of local non-government organizations working in the broad areas of adult and non-formal education in Ethiopia. For example,

- Agri-Service Ethiopia has been providing adult education with the aim to alleviate poverty and marginalization of communities since 1969.
- Rift Valley Children and Women Development Organization (RCWDO) has been implementing integrated rural community development programme in partnership with different international NGOs, targeting poor people who are marginalized since 1993.

Faith-based organizations:

Faith-based organizations in Ethiopia like The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, The Ethiopian Evangelical Church, The Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat, and The Ethiopian Moslems Relief and Development Association have been also carrying out diverse adult education activities like literacy, environmental protection activities, etc.

Embassy-based organizations:

The British Council, the German Cultural Institute and the Italian Cultural Institute are providing cultural literacy through language teaching, films, etc

Professional associations:

Professional associations have been also engaged in diverse activities related to adult education. For instance, the Adult and Non-Formal Education Association in Ethiopia (ANFEAE) provides diverse forms of adult education in the country.

International NGOs:

providing support to adult education in Ethiopia The A Dv International, SIDA. UNESCO: they provide support to the design, implementation and evaluation of adult education programs and projects dult and Non-formal Association in Ethiopia, etc.

Similarities and differences

The document review indicated the existence of similarities and differences between Sweden and Ethiopia with regard to adult education. The similarities between both countries include the existence of plural forms of providers of adult education and the emphasis on the contribution of adult education to the process of democratization.

The major differences are ascribed mainly to socio-economic and cultural differences. The Swedish adult education was highly influenced by the great social processes like the period of Enlightenment, industrialization and democratization over the last 200 years whereas Ethiopia has embarked on the expansion of forms of modern adult education since the first decade of the 20th century. Moreover, Sweden has strong institutions providing adult education like the study associations, folk high schools and municipalities whereas Ethiopia has a unique innovative approach known as integrated functional adult education (IFAE), which emphasizes the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders of adult education in planning, implementation and evaluation of adult education program and that aims at

integrating adult basic literacy with livelihood of adult learners.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this section, the major findings, the conclusion drawn and recommendations forwarded were summarized.

Summary of the major findings

The purpose of the study was to identify the similarities and differences between Sweden and Ethiopia with specific reference to adult education. To achieve this, qualitative approach was employed, and document review was used. The major findings are summarized under five themes as follows:

1. Purpose of adult education

(a) The major purpose of adult education in Sweden

The study revealed that the major purposes of adult education in Sweden were to:

- Reduce social inequality in Swedish society;
- Create opportunities for individuals to supplement their schooling, and
- Provide the labor market with a well educated workforce.
- Enhance social integration in light of growing number of immigrants that came to Sweden.

(b) The major purpose of adult education in Ethiopia

The study disclosed that the major purposes of adult education in Ethiopia were to:

- Equip adults, mainly illiterate and semi-literate ones, with basic knowledge and life skills so that they improve their livelihoods by generating incomes;
- Promote the development of democracy, social justice and the culture of peaceful co-existence.
- Enhancing the country's endeavor to become a Lower Middle Income Countries by 2025.

2. Legal bases of adult education

(a) Legal bases of adult education in Sweden

In Sweden, the legal bases for non-formal adult education (popular adult education) is *The Decree on Government Subsidies to Folkbildning* (1991:977) last revised in 2007, whereas the formal municipal adult education comes under the Education Act and the Municipal Adult Education Act (2003).

Other forms of adult education like vocational education and training comes under the Higher Vocational Education Act that entered into force in 2010.

(b) Legal bases of adult education in Ethiopia

The legal bases of adult education in Ethiopia are the national policies and strategies. Even though there were proclamations, speeches, and directives related to adult education in the country since the first decade of the 20th century, one can see the provision

of legal bases of adult education in real sense of the word with the formulation of the Education and Training Policy in 1994 and its subsequent Education Sector Development Programs in 1997. Yet, the visibility of the legal basis of adult education in Ethiopia has been put in place with the endorsement of the National Adult Education Strategy in February 2008.

3. Providers of adult education

(a) Providers of adult education in Sweden

In Sweden, municipalities, folk high schools, higher education institutions and civic organizations provide diverse forms of adult education.

(b) Providers of adult education in Ethiopia

The study disclosed that the major providers of adult education were line ministries, local and international NGOs, faith-based organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs).

4. Similarities and differences

The document review indicated the existence of similarities and differences between Sweden and Ethiopia with regard to adult education.

i) Similarities

In both nations,

- there are diverse providers of adult education (plurality).
- higher education institutions produce qualified adult educators.
- adult education is seen as a tool for promoting social integration, pluralism and the culture of peace and for reducing social inequality.

ii) Differences

- Sweden has a more developed and well organized system of adult education whose tradition goes back to the 18th century whereas, in Ethiopia, modern adult education began in the 20th century.
- Ethiopia has a unique innovative approach known as integrated functional adult education (IFAE), which emphasizes the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders of adult education in planning, implementation and evaluation of the program.
- In Sweden, adult education is an integral part of lifelong and lifewide learning supported by the policy of European area of lifelong learning. Ethiopia asserts basically that lifelong learning is a guiding principle of its education system; however, it lacks a concrete policy of lifelong learning.
- Sweden belongs to well established democracies in the world and its system of adult education aims at strengthening the democratic political culture as well as the modern knowledge economy whereas Ethiopia is aspiring to develop a democratic political culture; hence, adult education is to serve as an enlightening and modernizing tool.

5. Lessons learned from the comparison

The following lessons have been drawn from this comparison:

(a) The Swedish Government empowers municipalities and related appropriate institu-

tions to promote the provision and development of adult education, and makes the necessary follow-ups and monitoring to ensure accountability of all stakeholders involved in the provision of adult education programs. The Ethiopian Government can learn from the Swedish experience and can strengthen its mechanism for ensuring accountability of providers of adult education.

(b) The strong commitment of the Swedish Government to providing equal educational opportunities for its adults is something that the Ethiopian Government learn from. Even though Ethiopia has embarked on the dramatic expansion of education at all levels almost over the last three decades, still there is little or no adult education for the disabled unlike in Sweden.

(c) In Sweden, there is adult education for Immigrants (SFI). Ethiopia can learn from this experience and might institutionalize the provision of selected Ethiopian languages for immigrants residing in Ethiopia for various reasons.

(d) In Sweden, labor market training is provided for the unemployed. The Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs as well other relevant institutions can strengthen their ongoing efforts by considering the Swedish experience.

Conclusion

Countries of the world have increasingly recognized the benefits of adult education for socio-economic growth, democratization and the culture of peace. The UNESCO-supported international adult education conferences, the Millennium Development Goals and the ongoing UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have contributed to the worldwide growing acceptance and recognition of adult education.

Sweden as one of the well developed European nations, has highly organized system of adult education that aims at reducing social inequality, enhancing social integration and strengthening the process of democratization. Hence, this more egalitarian system of Swedish adult education consists of diverse components that can be contextualized and adapted by Ethiopia.

With increasing number of its population, its aspiration towards democratic political culture and its prevailing diversity, Ethiopia ought to strengthen its system of adult education. The Swedish adult education system offers ample lessons that Ethiopia can use. These include: the use of study circles and the provision of Swedish adult education for Immigrants (SIF). The former encourages the development of social capital of citizens through social communication and enhances the values of peaceful co-existence; the latter, can be a model for organizing selected Ethiopian nationality languages for foreigners residing in Ethiopia for various reasons.

Ethiopia's innovative approach of integrated functional adult education could be used by Sweden as the best practice to provide an integrated training package for immigrants residing in Sweden so that they can learn Swedish Language, Swedish constitutional values, work culture and history together.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings and conclusions drawn, the following suggestions were forwarded:

- (1) The Swedish Embassy and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) are advised to work more closely with the Ethiopian Ministry of Education so as to familiarize Ethiopian adult education experts with the idea of the Swedish adult education.
- (2) The Adult and Non-formal Education Unit of the Ethiopian MOE is advised to organize periodic international conferences on adult education so as to create more opportunity for diverse stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogues and to exchange their research outputs and experiences.
- (3) Ethiopian higher education institutions offering academic adult education programs are advised to integrate the experience of Sweden with regard to the use of adult education as an instrument for democratization.
- (4) The Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MOE) is advised to consider the possibility of establishing 'study circles' as a strategy of delivering integrated functional adult education programs in Ethiopia.
- (5) The Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is advised to consider the experience of Sweden in the provision of labor market training for the unemployed to strengthen its ongoing efforts.

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