

International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries



**International Institute on Ageing
United Nations - Malta (INIA)**

International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries

Volume 2, No. 1, 2017

Special Issue

Learning in Later Life

<https://www.inia.org.mt/journal/issue>

<https://www.inia.org.mt/>

Copyright

The *International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries* is published under the auspices of the International Institute on Ageing, United Nations - Malta, Electronic Press.

All Authors retain the copyright of their articles. The publishers will keep this document online on the Internet - or its possible replacement - for a considerable time from the date of publication barring exceptional circumstances. The online availability of the document implies a permanent permission for anyone to read, to download, to print out single copies for your own use and to use it unchanged for any non-commercial research and educational purpose. Subsequent transfers of copyright cannot revoke this permission. All other uses of the document are conditional on the consent of the copyright owner. The publisher has taken technical and administrative measures to assure authenticity, security and accessibility. According to intellectual property law, the author has the right to be mentioned when his/her work is accessed as described above and to be protected against infringement.

The views and opinions expressed in this journal are not those of the Editor-in-Chief or members of the International Editorial Board, but are those of individual contributors.

International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries

Editor-in-chief

Marvin Formosa, *International Institute on Ageing, United Nations - Malta & Department of Gerontology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta*

Deputy Editor

Rosette Farrugia-Bonello, *International Institute on Ageing, United Nations - Malta*

Guest Editor

Brian Findsen, *University of Waikato, New Zealand*

International Editorial Panel

Harrison Bloom, *Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, USA.*

Nikolai Botev, *UNFPA, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.*

Christopher Cabalza, *School of Medicine, St. Paul University, The Philippines.*

Elly M. de Heus, *Age Concern International, Luxor, Egypt.*

Raja Gopal Dhar Chakraborti, *Calcutta University, Kolkata, India.*

Muhammed Fouad Ibrahim, *Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt.*

Tengku Aizan Hamid, *Universiti Putra, Malaysia.*

Boris Gilca, *UNFPA, Chisinau, Moldova.*

Yesim Gokce Kutsal, *Geriatric Society, Ankara, Turkey.*

Radhouane Gouiaa, *Policlinique CNSS, Sfax, Tunisia.*

Gerald Koh, *National University of Singapore.*

Tomas Kucera, *Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.*

Benson Kwemoy Kamary, *Tongmyong University, Busan, South Korea.*

Gulnara A. Minnigaleeva, *Senior Resource Centre, Bashkortostan, Russia.*

Freire Nato, *Brazilian Geriatrics & Gerontology Society, Belem, Brasil.*

Emem Omokaro, *The Dave Omokaro Foundation, Abuja, Nigeria.*

Jacqueline Parkes, *University of Northampton, UK.*

Pedro Paulo Marin, *Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, Santiago, Chile.*

Clara Maria Pereira Perez, *Social Security Institute, Uruguay.*

Brigit Pianosi, *Huntington University, Ontario, Canada.*

Oscar Sandino, *UNFPA, New York, USA.*

Alexandre Sidorenko, *International Policy on Ageing, Vienna, Austria.*

Poot Ix-Chel Xunan, *National Council on Ageing, Belize.*

Asghar Zaidi, *University of Southampton, UK.*

Book Review Editor

Sailesh Mishra, *Silver Innings Group, India*

Contents

Editorial	1
<i>Brian Findsen</i>	
Articles	
Later life learning in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa: A contextual analysis	4
<i>Akpovire Oduaran</i>	
Education for older adults in Tanzania: Trends, issues and concerns	19
<i>Mpoki J. Mwaikokesya and Philemon A.K. Mushi</i>	
Good Living and the education of older adults	28
<i>José Alberto Yuni and Claudio Ariel Urbanos</i>	
On 'Learning for Leisure' and the margins of mainstream education: A critical review of the University of the Third Ageing Movement in Malaysia	41
<i>Ibrahim Rahimah, Zakaria Noor Syamilah, Hamid Tengku Aizan and Chai Sen Tyng</i>	
Long-Term Care of older persons in India: Learning to deal with challenges	59
<i>Ilango Ponnuswami and Rangasamy Rajasekaran</i>	
Book reviews	
Pachana, N.A. (2016). <i>Ageing: A very short introduction</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, (152 pages) ISBN 978-01-987-253-29	72
<i>Reviewed by Banu Cangoz and Yesim Gokce Kutsal</i>	
Gawande, A. (2014). <i>Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end</i> . New York: Henry Hold and Company, (282 pages) ISBN: 978-1-62779-055	74
<i>Reviewed by Elaine M. Eliopoulos</i>	

Editorial

Brian Findsen¹

This special issue of the International Journal of Ageing in Developing Countries (IJADC) focusses on learning in later life (also known as educational gerontology). As guest editor for this issue, I am hopeful that this divergent compilation of articles will provide the stimulus for further insights into what is happening in developing countries for older people in respective societies. Over the last decade there has been much more attention given to how learning and education can provide the basis for more 'active ageing' and 'successful' lives. Both learning and living are inextricably connected. This issue expands on some of these emergent perspectives.

A recent publication co-edited by Marvin Formosa and myself entitled *International perspectives on older adult education: Research, policies and practice* (2016) was an attempt to map the kinds of learning that seniors in different parts of the globe were undertaking under particular conditions, many of which were detrimental to active learning. From the 42 countries/regions included in this volume, there were a significant number from continents where even basic necessities of life could not be taken for granted. Correspondingly, the dearth of basic education/literacy with and for older people was a fairly major theme. In particular, unsurprisingly, Africa, Asia and Latin America were prominent in these narratives. The realisation that very different material, cultural and social conditions in developing countries represented in this book were tangibly impacting upon learning opportunities was a prime motivation for the construction of this special issue of the IJADC.

This volume of five articles provides additional insights into what is happening (or, indeed, cannot currently happen) in several different locations. Deliberately, this journal issue has authors from diverse regions within Africa (2), Asia (2) and Latin America (1). These articles are not considered 'representative' of the regions but do interrogate how older people are positioned with regard to policy and practices in specific locations. Further, they provide analysis of how ageing and learning are inter-connected; usually, seniors in nations struggle to gain their share of resources so that provision of older adult education is really scant. Nevertheless, older people through their own initiatives are capable of developing 'really useful knowledge' to meet their diverse learning needs in later adulthood.

¹ University of Waikato, Faculty of Education, New Zealand. (bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz)

The special issue begins with an invigorating look into the lives of older people from two Argentinian authors, José Yuni and Claudio Urbano, who examine the notion of “Good Living-Living Well” in Latin American thinking. This concept is very different from prevailing Eurocentric conceptions of gerontology imposed via colonization. The authors explain how the adoption of this notion allows for a critical re-examination of meanings, policies, and gerontological practices amid the politics of Latin America. These existing gerontological traditions are culturally and historically-bound. A serious consideration of ancestral visions of the world allows for challenging individualistic frameworks of thinking and doing, largely emergent from early patterns of dominance. Hence, these authors provide some principles of “critical intercultural gerontology” connected to the concept of “Good Living” derived from indigenous peoples. In this way, the education of older adults may be viewed in a different light and the possibilities for new positive practices develop.

Following the Latin American example, this issue introduces two African studies. Learning remains a major national resource of immense value in the contexts of individual, community and national development in most African countries. In the first of these two African articles, Akpovire Oduaran has selected three countries for comparative analysis - Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa. He investigates the policy context for learning in later life in each of the three countries before examining structures, programmes, participation, achievements and challenges. As is the case in many countries, the policy context is largely framed in terms of ‘active ageing’ and ‘lifelong learning’ with insufficient intersection and is found lacking. He makes recommendations that may assist in the effective implementation of educational programmes for older people to enhance learning in later life.

In the second African example the focus of the article by Philomen Mushi and Mpoki Mwaikokesya is on the learning landscape in Tanzania where the authors argue that the challenges in meeting the educational and learning goals for older adults seem to be extremely acute. As for both developing and developed nations, the dominant discourse for training and educational programmes for older people has been closely aligned to the demands of the labour market even though the reality of most seniors’ lives in Tanzania resides outside this framework. This article traces the trends, issues and concerns in the provision of education for older adults in Tanzania. It assesses both the needs for such education, and the institutional responses which have been in place in an effort to ensure the effective provision of education and learning opportunities for older adults.

In the final two articles, the geographical attention switches to Asia where authors take very different approaches. In the case of Malaysia, Rahimah Ibrahim, Noor Syamilah Zakaria, Tengku Aizan Hamid and Sen Tyng Chai analyse the adoption of the concept of the University of the Third Age (U3A), emanating originally from a European context, into the cultural milieu of this South-East Asian country. In a bid to recognise the benefits of learning as a positive engagement in later life, the University of the Third Age (U3A) as an institution of lifelong learning for older adults was adopted in this knowledge-based economy in partial response to an increase in the ageing population. The authors use two case studies of U3A associations in Malaysia to highlight the complexities of transferring a model from abroad to

the local context. Their review outlines the structure and practices of these two U3A associations, notes the differences between U3A associations in Malaysia with those of developed countries, and highlights the issues and challenges faced by U3A as an institution in Malaysia. They argue that lifelong learning for older adults has lagged behind in the philosophy, framework and funding structure despite the imperatives of lifelong learning in national policy discourse. While the character of U3As globally can be very different, in general there is a strong emphasis on learning as a leisure activity for older adults. Indeed, this is the case in Malaysia. Unsurprisingly, this domain of learning has remained outside the education system that focuses on human capital development and financial return of investment. The authors point out that an age-stratified education system, coupled with stereotyping of ageing, has compressed the time and space for learning in later life, relegating it to the margins to be part of social welfare. They explain that financial unsustainability and competition for limited government funding has made life difficult for practitioners at a micro level. At a societal level, a shortage of skilled personnel, course-related member attrition and cultural ideas about late-life learning have negated the expansion and replication of U3A associations in Malaysia.

The final article by Ilango Ponnuswami and R. Rajasekaran from India addresses a very important global issue: long-term care for frail older adults and the role of education in facilitating changes in attitudes and supportive practices. In this geographical location, the numbers of people in this category is currently immense and likely to continue to grow. This escalation of numbers of older people needing long-term care has major implications for the economy, cultural and health-related resources. While current services of elder care can include residential care, private home care, day-care centres, governmental geriatric care, "old age" homes and those provided by Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), the majority of care is undertaken by family members. This approach is in accord with powerful cultural expectations that the young will care for the old in a familial context. In this developing country, the availability of alternatives is restricted by a lack of affordability. The authors argue for a nation-wide stocktake of existing provision, involving all relevant stakeholders. In addition, they point to the need for greater awareness of how education can positively contribute to increased understanding of the nation's needs, of the professionalization of long-term care and of socio-cultural and economic challenges to effect significant change.

The above articles point to the simultaneous promise and challenges of promoting greater provision of older adult education in these three continents. While the invigoration of public policy is an imperative in all locations, the reality is that change cannot occur without the understanding and co-operation of older people themselves. It continues to be important for the education of older adults to receive its proper slice of the education pie but this cannot be the major determining factor for progress to be made. The challenges for practitioners are significant and in developing countries these are exacerbated by insufficient material resources; yet hope is still latent in the considerable 'people-power' in developing nations that can be marshalled from diverse stakeholders to work together for 'really useful knowledge' to be developed and shared so that learning can meet diverse needs of elders.

Later life learning in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa: A contextual analysis

Akpovire Oduaran¹

Abstract. Learning will continue to remain a major national resource of immense value in the contexts of individual, community and national development in most African countries for a long time to come. For that reason, denying any segment of the population the right to learn at any point in time during their lifespan, would not only be a controversial issue but one that needs continuing visiting. Therefore, this paper aims to explore selected dimensions of learning in later life in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa from the perspective of a contextual analysis. The analysis reveals some elements of similarity in policy frameworks adopted in the three countries, but with noticeable differences in terms of established structures, programmes, participation, achievements and challenges. Based on this observation, some recommendations are made that might be useful in working towards maximal and effective programme designs and implementation strategies that could help in enhancing later life learning.

Keywords: adults, adult literacy, contextual analysis, learning, later life learning, sustainable development, Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa.

Introduction

Learning in later life in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa has a very long, vast and rich history that can possibly defile any deep and scholarly treatment in one single paper. Focusing on the most recent advances that have been made in the area from late the 1990s is therefore desirable. This is especially so because valuable data relating to the subject might have been lost largely from two decades of over specialized research and scholarship in adult and non-formal education in the three countries (Omolewa, 1987, 2006). The phrase over-specialized research and scholarship is used because there is evidence in the literature to suggest that scholars in the field have been preoccupied with issues relating to adult literacy and numeracy, open and distance learning, continuing professional development, community education and development, women's and girls' education and adult vocational development to mention just but a few. That is not to say that other issues relating to the economics, history,

¹ Faculty of Education and Training North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, South Africa.
(akopovire.oduaran@nwu.ac.za)

sociology and psychology of adult learning are of less importance (Bown, 1977, 2000; Boshier, 2006). The fact remains that any attempt to explore the vast field of learning in later life in general, can only lead one into the challenge of interrogating a critical mass of information that must have been evolving from about 1640, for example when the first European explorers arrived on the coastal region of Nigeria and initiated Western type education to the present (Omolewa, 1987). Yet, the terms of our commissioning certainly do not allow us such a luxury. Therefore, this paper is limited to selecting for a possible contextual analysis some major aspects of learning in later life in the three countries. The choice of the three countries was made because of my own direct personal and professional practice and experience. The aim is to describe how learning in later years has been conceptualized, structured and implemented with the hope that we can derive some useful lessons that are capable of informing transformations such that this often neglected and under-valued domain in the education system remains a major contributor to building the knowledge economy that is urgently needed on the African continent.

Learning, at whatever stage of life, is planned and implemented as a major national resource (Lengrand, 1975; Bown, 2000; Martin, 2001, 2006). This reality is attested to by the huge investments the three countries make in education annually prior to and after the introduction of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1960, Botswana in 1966 and South Africa in 1994. All three countries use the English language as the official language of communication, but their experiences and contexts may differ in some ways. For example, the introduction of democratic rule occurred at different times, and whilst Nigeria and Botswana were former British colonies and therefore introduced into their curricular heavy doses of the British educational system until they underwent reforms, South Africa had a mixture of the Dutch educational system and later some elements of the British system. Also, prior to the enacting of democratic rule in South Africa in 1994, the apartheid government ensured that Afrikaans was imposed as the main official language of instruction and indeed communication. So, the South African educational system had a much more mixed experience in terms of factors influencing its design and implementation, than has been the case with either Nigeria or Botswana. Nigeria's population is estimated to be about 260 million people which almost doubles the population of Botswana and South Africa put together. That implies that the costs of providing open-access to learning for all, can differ significantly from what prevails in Botswana and South Africa. Whilst educational reforms needed and implemented in Botswana and Nigeria aimed at adding and dropping what they inherited from the British colonial legacy, this is not quite the case with South Africa's experience which was much more of an educational 'pot-pourri'. While Botswana and Nigeria were admitted into membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) much earlier following upon their independence, South Africa had its admission after 1994. For that reason, the extent to which UNESCO's agreements, memoranda and communiqués might have influenced learning in later life in all three countries should differ in length of exposure and expected impacts.

Whereas Nigeria has the largest market because of the size of its population, South Africa with its long history of apartheid governance features a more endowed economic infrastructural system that is needed for growing and modernizing its economy. Botswana, with its smaller

population and closeness to South Africa and much more stable political system, has managed since 1969 to plan and implement much more modern and well-regulated economic infrastructure and system (Ministry of Education and Skills Development, 2008). But this paper is really not about a detailed analysis of the ways in which the socio-economic and political systems of the three countries differ as such. I have gone this length to briefly highlight these differences in so far as they can possibly influence the nature or contents, policies and actual implementation of programmes of learning in the three countries. That being the case, this analysis will feature programmes and practices of learning in later life in contexts and attempt to discuss, thereafter, the major ways in which they are similar or dissimilar. In particular, learnings from the experiences of the three countries are highlighted. The contextual analysis is foregrounded by the nature of learning in later years in a changing world and in particular, the radical social change driven by globalization and the remarkable near revolution in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs') both of which have been embraced as part of the daily experience of seniors in all three countries. As rightly observed by Peter (1999), globalization and ICTs' have not only influenced daily living, but, predominantly, the management and delivery of all major social policies. Since issues in the provision of learning can no longer be studied in a vacuum, it will be necessary in this paper to explore briefly relevant external and internal influences.

Common Grounds

As members of UNESCO, Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa have embraced the 1990 popular declaration known as 'Education for All' (hereinafter, EFA). In 1990, UNESCO organized a world conference on education in Jomtien, Thailand. Both Botswana and Nigeria were represented and were signatory to that declaration. Unfortunately, South Africa was not then a member as democratic rule had not been introduced but as soon as it became a democratically governed nation in 1994, it embraced lifelong learning as the cornerstone of its educational policy and framework. That implies that South Africa also adopted EFA. For this reason, it is necessary to premise our discourse on how EFA has partly influenced the design and implementation of learning in later life in all three countries. By learning in later life, one is referring to all learning programmes and processes designed and implemented for Botswana, Nigerians and South Africans who are or have exceeded 50 years of age. These learning programmes could be formal, non-formal and informal in nature and are aimed at making available the critical mass of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, aptitudes and interests that could enhance the people's individual, community and national development in some specific ways (Bown, 2000).

Adopting this concept and description of learning in later life does imply an attempt to paint on a rather large canvass which could turn out to be complicated. This is the main reason this paper has been limited only to programmes in literacy and numeracy, women's capacity building, open and distance learning and continuing professional development. Even so, it must be noted that the choice of 50 years was deliberate as it is possible that adult persons in all three countries, could have elected to enrol in numerous formal education programmes that have been conspicuously left out in our selection of programmes. Another limitation here is that the documentation of activities in the selected programmes is not necessarily strongly

supported in the presentation of data. What this means, therefore, is that this paper is an approximation of the true reflection of what has occurred or is occurring. The value of this discourse comes out in highlighting major experiences in the three countries and the component implications they have for many other African and developing countries. Then issues are raised that point the way forward for further studies by scholars in the area of adult and lifelong learning.

Problem Statement

The UNESCO 2010 EFA Global report on Reaching for the Marginalised, there were 153 million adults globally who lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills needed in everyday living (UNESCO, 2010). UNESCO (2010) suggested that whereas Botswana had achieved an adult literacy rate of 83 per cent as at 2007 with a projection of 87 per cent by 2015, it harboured close to 211, 010 adult illiterates with 50 per cent of them being females. That was the situation that Maruatona (2003) had drawn attention to in the mid-term review of adult learning in Botswana. For Nigeria, the adult literacy rate stood at 72 per cent as at 2007 with a projection of 79 per cent by 2015. South Africa, on the other hand, has recorded an adult literacy rate of 88 per cent as at 2007 with a projection of 91 per cent by the year 2015. The emphasis placed on adult literacy in all countries can be justified by the fact that it remains the foundation for structured and relatively unstructured learning in later life. The advances made in the three countries might have been outcomes of the many years of investment in adult basic education and literacy as the foundation for learning in later life and the global action to open the doors of learning for all, beginning, perhaps, with the 'Education For all' (EFA) project.

'Education for All' and thereafter

The 1990 Jomtien, Thailand 'World Conference on Education' was revolutionary in some ways. Indeed, as soon as the declaration popularly tagged as 'Education for All' was made, many pundits were quick to see it as a tall order and impossible in terms of sustained quality and relevance (Kearney, 2001). From whichever perspectives, EFA was viewed, it became apparent that both rich and poor countries needed to appreciate and adopt it as a necessity for moving rapidly forward towards cultivating the knowledge economy and society that was needed for the 21st century. To make better meaning of this discourse, it should be remembered, as pointed out by Kearney (2001:11), that EFA affirmed the following fundamental premises, essentially:

- the recognition of the basic human aspirations and needs of people everywhere;
- the grave dangers caused by injustice, poverty, disease, violence and social exclusion in terms of satisfying these needs;
- the obligations of each and every society towards its citizens which recall the foundations of good governance;
- the bonds created between people and their communities in terms of their rights and duties, which are enhanced by solid education.

It was on this basis of the affirmation above, that member nations of UNESCO further identified the six EFA targets of:

1. Expanding early childhood education.
2. Providing universal access to primary education.
3. Improving learning achievements.
4. Reducing adult illiteracy.
5. Providing life skills.
6. Creating an awareness of the social values which underpin sustainable development via sound citizenship.

It should be observed that the last four targets have direct bearing on the design and implementation of learning in later life, especially as they relate to the programmes selected for our discussion. Meaningful and relevant as these affirmations and targets appear to be, it would be observed that many member states, including Botswana and Nigeria and even lately, South Africa, have had some difficulties in attaining them. For example, Nigeria has experienced serious debt burden, uncontrolled population growth, increased migration, inflation, unemployment, decline in the provision of infrastructures, environmental degradation and the abuse of children, women and girls' rights to some extent. The Botswana economy has been hard hit by decline in the exportation of beef to the European Union and the problematic decline in the demand for diamonds, the two pillars of its economy. And South Africa has not fared much better as it battles unemployment and decline in demands for diamonds, platinum and gold in the global markets. What these experiences imply is that even though the three countries might have had valuable intentions in providing relevant and sustainable programmes for learning in later life, the problematic economic challenges and other socio-economic and political issues they constantly have to grapple with have meant that they significantly determine how much to invest in which segments of education. The experience in many cases is that adult education is the first to be hard-hit when there are intense financial difficulties. The implications for seniors is that they would be denied needed access to learning.

Whatever advances that Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa might have made in making allowances for learning in later life could have been partly influenced by external forces probably led by UNESCO's consistent drive for the recognition of the role education plays in social development. Such dominant UNESCO efforts are easily indicated in its commissioning monumental educational task teams and conferences. For example, the 1996 'International Task Force on Education in the XX1st Century - Learning: The treasure within' - that was chaired by Jacques Delors (Delors, 1998), President of the European Commission, the 'Fifth International Conference on Adult Education' held in Hamburg, Germany in 1997, the 'World Conference on Higher Education' held in France in 1998, and the '2000 EFA 2000 Assessment' conference convened by UNESCO in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000. Since then, there have been numerous major world conferences on Education organized by UNESCO to draw attention to the urgent need to open the doors of learning to all within member-states. It is reasonable, then, that we review what has happened to learning in later life in Botswana, Nigeria and

South Africa against the background of the rapid drive towards enhancing the ability of their citizens as participants in the emergent knowledge economics and societies of the 21st century.

The objectives

This paper has been structured to explore briefly and using illustrative cases the historical antecedents of learning in later life in the three countries selected for this purpose, the theoretical frameworks, the existing contexts and challenges and mitigations. Based on this exploration, some conclusions can be made. By exploring these issues listed above, it is hoped that some preliminary light could be shed on the subject, gaps in knowledge identified and propositions made as to how scholarship in this area could be extended for the benefit of other African countries and developing countries that might be in the same position as the three countries selected for analysis.

Brief historical antecedents

In African society, it is part of traditional life that after the day's work, adults organise themselves into series of learning processes under the moonlight. The adults, for example, engage themselves in the acquisition of knowledge that might lead to the development of the community with the traditional head facilitating the process that was in many instances intellectual. Babs Fafunwa quoted in Omolewa (1981:20) observed that "if by intellect we mean the ability to integrate experience and if by intellectualisation we mean the ability to reason abstractly, traditional African education provided a forum for intellectual growth and development". This intellectual growth and development was not limited to any segment of traditional African society. Learning in later life in traditional Africa responded to the general quest for harmonious co-existence, peace and improved quality of life. The destiny of every African was generally accepted by all as an important issue for the society, and it was in response to this belief that steps were taken to ensure that lifelong learning responded adequately to the need for everyone to ascertain and attain their locus in the spiritual realm (Omolewa, 2006, Preece 2009, Amutabi & Okech, 2009). Within this non-formal provision, learning was broad-based, effective, enjoyable, challenging and equitable from the preliminary stage until old age and beyond (Omolewa, 2006). In essence, the foundation of lifelong learning practices and programme was reflective of the challenges facing the people at that time and even now. Lifelong learning placed strong emphasis on individual personal development and fulfilment as a pre-requisite for community and societal development and was comprehensive in the sense that it was directed at the spiritual, cultural, social, economic, and political development of the individual and their communities. For example, Africans were required to specialise in a profession, vocation or trade to which they directed their time, energy and resources for their own and community development, as was the case before the introduction of Western type education.

Contextual analysis

Botswana has its Vision 2016 official document that features lifelong learning as the bedrock of its educational provision and included the major principles of lifelong learning in its national education policy that was revised and approved by Parliament in April, 1994. Botswana could be described as an epitome of stability and rapid socio-economic transformation, guided by meticulously implemented, monitored and regularly evaluated national development plans and policies (Republic of Botswana, 2008; Botswana Review of Commercial Industry, 2007, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 2003). On its part, Nigeria has chosen to express its own vision and mission for lifelong learning within the philosophical objectives of her education policy. Firstly, the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly stated that every citizen has a right to equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the development initiatives of the country without any form of discrimination (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979). Deriving from that Constitution is the National Policy on Education (1977) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1977). The policy re-emphasized the fact that no citizen is discriminated against on any grounds, and consequently, both official legal frameworks laid down the provision for pursuing learning in later life in Nigeria.

Like Botswana, Nigeria has a National Policy on Education (1977) that has continued to revamp its educational provision to ensure that the doors to learning are opened to and for all. In fact, the fundamental guiding principle of Nigeria's Policy on Education is the right to learn, and adult and lifelong learning are clearly highlighted as 'uncontestable' expectations in the design and implementation of national education. Consequent upon the enacting of Nigeria's Constitution and the National Policy on Education, programmes in adult literacy, and in particular, those targeting women's literacy and capacity building for national development, educational mobilization programmes like the Mass Mobilization for Social Empowerment and Reconstruction have been structured and implemented to meet the needs of all, including those of citizens aged 50+ years (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1992). It was partly with a view to promoting learning in later life that Nigeria has established structures like the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, the National Commission for Nomadic Education, the Universal Basic Education Commission and the National Commission for Women. These structures are all having official links down to the state and local governments in Nigeria, and the idea is to ensure that all comply with the need to open the doors of learning to all. In addition, there are structures like the National Open University of Nigeria, Federal Universities Departments of Adult Education, Centres for Continuing Education, and Women's Education Units in all states' Ministries of Education and in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, that have been designed to provide specialized programmes designed to meet the learning needs of all, including seniors (Oduaran & Okukpon, 1997). At the core of these offers are literacy, numeracy, vocational and technical skills.

At the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education held in Paris, South Africa made it clearly known that lifelong learning was the key element in renovating its educational system (UNESCO, 2000). To that effect, everything that was conceived in providing education to adults was within the framework of lifelong learning. So then, in all three countries, there are visions and missions of lifelong learning, but implementation is a different matter altogether,

and that is why a paper in this direction with a clear focus on analysis is very timely, especially because the literature on the subject remains weak, thin and largely ignored. With regards to adult basic education within which literacy and numeracy is the bedrock, South Africa made significant strides through the dedicated implementation of the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign. South Africa launched its mass literacy campaign appropriately tagged as The Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign in February, 2008. Kha Ri Gude which is Tshivenda phrase for “Let us learn” has been planned to ensure that between 14th April, 2008 and the end of 2012, South Africa is totally rid of its burden of 4.7 million adult illiterates (Department of Basic Education, 2008; Kha Ri Gude, 2006; Mckay, 2015).

The design and implementation of the campaign that was informed by ‘Education for All’ (EFA) Goal 4 (UNESCO 2000), The Bill of Rights (chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996), the United Nations Convention in the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UN 2007) as ratified by South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) turned out to be a continuum of Grades 1 to 9 of formal schooling. It meant therefore that adult citizens could enrol in formal education programmes using the medium of non-formal education and still obtain the highest educational qualifications possible. In a major way, then, the campaign was in line with the expectations of a lifelong learning framework. By the end of the campaign in 2015, it was said to have reached its target of 4.7 million adults. Mckay (2015) has reported that the UN has been instrumental to improving the levels of education of the poor, creating jobs for volunteer facilitators and responding adequately to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2015 before the benchmark of 2015. For those reasons and based on the fact that the campaign assessment procedures, according to Ovortrup and Keiding (2015), included globally acceptable portfolios with diagnostic and accountability functions, the national initiative aimed mainly but not exclusively at adults was successful and remains a model for other developing countries.

Other than adult literacy programmes, South Africa’s remarkable vision is to keep the doors of learning open for all South Africans with regard to higher education and training institutions (hereafter HEI’s) and even employers of labour, which strive to adopt to changing experiences challenges and situations in the society and workplace. This intention partly responds to the commitment contained in the South African Higher Education Policy, (Department of Basic Education, 2008) to the effect that the education system would open its doors in the spirit of lifelong learning, to workers and professionals. Although workers may not fit appropriately into our characterization of later life, it is rewarding to know that there are no known age limitations for those who want to remain professionals after 60 years. For that reason, therefore, the kind of offers reported by Walters, Witbooi and Abrahams (2015) featuring librarians’ juggling their work and studies and in which the adult student workers are allowed ten days (80 hours) per annum for all class and tutorial attendance and ten days (80 hours) study time for assessment activities, with each year reflecting the desire to provide learning at the later stage of life. To a large extent, provision for learning in later years in South Africa seems to respond to the seeming global drive to widen access to learning by distant and on-line modes. In addition to widening principles, the introduction of flexibility, active learning experiences, participation, the social media interactive, collaboration learning, self-regulatory learning, responsive curricular designs, implementation and assessment have been

widely suggested by Zimmerman (2002); Lai & Chong (2007); McLoughlin & Lee (2010); Green, Woldoko, Foskey & Brooks (2013) and Gordon (2014) as remarkable in the case of South Africa.

It has been observed that learning in later life has been designed to partly address the racially induced inequality and poverty that are legacies of the apartheid system of government which was repudiated in 1994 (Adato, Carter & May, 2006; Zeelen, Rampedi & Van der Linden, 2014). One very interesting aspect of learning in later life in South Africa is the emphasis placed on community education directed at enhancing community development (Zeelen, Rampedi & Van der Linden, 2014). There are no age restrictions in this regard. In fact, community education and community development promote the notion that the older you are, the more knowledgeable you become with regards to cultural history and traditions that are very valuable to South African communities. Non-credential based learning in later life extends beyond community education and development to adult health education as HIV and AIDS continue to affect especially poor citizens (Human Science Research Council, 2014) and there are worrying levels of crime, violence, unemployment and xenophobia (Cox & John, 2014). Like other South Africans, adult South Africans, particularly those disadvantaged by apartheid, reportedly face and continue to grapple with stress at what Cox & John (2014) describe as 'exceptionally high levels', (pp. 303-318). Learning related to reducing stress, violence, crime health, unemployment and xenophobia are clearly located in Mezirow's (1991, 1998) formulated transformative learning theory. This kind of learning is designed to help adult learners make meaning of their life experiences using new frames of reference to develop across the later segment of life-span development. Although Mezirow's theory has been critiqued for failing to pay adequate attention to context and culture (Merriam, 2004), the cognitive processes it was alleged to have over emphasized are probably desirable in post-apartheid South Africa. South Africa needs so much deconstruction and reconstruction of learning activities to effectively proceed. South Africa is in dire need of absolute reconciliation, peace and unity and transformative learning for social action is desirable.

Discussion

Botswana has made progress in implementing relevant policies and legislations governing the provision of adult learning and education. The Vision 2016 Policy (Republic of Botswana-Ministry of Education, 1997) document complements other policies such as the Revised National Policy on Education, National Development Plan 9 (2003-2009), and the Millennium Development Goals. Whilst Vision 2016 Policy spelled out a number of strategies for the development of critical sectors such as the education system, the economy, communities and culture by the year 2016, the National Development Plan 9 identified lifelong learning as a critical component of a national human resource development strategy. It gives an overview of the national educational policy framework (Republic of Botswana-Ministry of Education, 2008: 5). On the other hand, the 1997 National Policy on Vocational Education and Training (Republic of Botswana-Ministry of Education, 1997) is an integral part of the overall strategy to respond effectively to the adult vocational and technical learning and other educational needs of the country (Maruatona, 2003). And then, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) highlighted adult learning and education-related objectives aimed at the achievement

of universal access to education, the improvement of relevance and quality in adult basic education and reduction of gender disparity by 2015. As in Nigeria, where national programmes such as the national industrial skills, training, women's and girls' vocational skills training and apprenticeships in mechanical, electrical, plumbing and masonry skills are made available to all who might want to learn, adult vocational education is provided in Botswana. Programmes are designed to improve the skills of Botswana through structured work-based learning in response to the skill needs of industries and small-scale businesses, and although adults covered in this analysis may not fully qualify for enrolment in such programmes, the door to learning is opened to all who wish to acquire vocational skills, including older adults.

Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa have extension programmes that are provided by national government structures, Non-Governmental Organizations as well as Community Based Organizations. Some of the programmes are in the area of agriculture, cooperatives, consumers' enlightenment and public health education programmes which are open to seniors. In some instances, seniors are both learners and facilitators where their experiences, educational background and training qualify them to play the relevant roles. Continuing professional development in all three countries receives significant attention as it enables adults at whatever age to improve on the initial learning they might have received. For that purpose, the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) at the University of Botswana, the former Botswana Agriculture College (University of Agriculture) and most public universities in Nigeria and South Africa, are indeed private providers, the latter two being the main providers. They offer a number of continuing professional development courses leading to the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees in business management and entrepreneurial skills. Seniors most often simply enrol in the programmes just for the purpose of enlightenment. By far the most significant learning programme offered to adults willing to learn in later life in the three countries is adult basic education. Interestingly, whilst Botswana has achieved more than a 90 per cent literacy rate, making it one of the most literate nations in Africa, Nigeria and South Africa, it also have engaged successfully in actions aimed at eradicating illiteracy from their shores. Apart from this significant achievement, Botswana has been actively engaged in the diversification of adult basic education programmes and reviewed the curricula used to make learning opportunities more relevant.

Challenges and mitigations

While the three countries have made considerable progress in terms of achieving the goals expressed in their relevant policies, there are also some challenges. The challenge of securing enough national resources for the provision of more programmes remains, and that of recognizing and accrediting programmes in indigenous knowledge system has not been properly addressed in Botswana and Nigeria. Adult basic education in the South African context is equivalent to National Qualifications Framework level 1, and to some extent Level 2. As in Nigeria, adult basic education in South Africa fits into the General Education and Training (GET) component of the continuum depicted in the structure below.

OQF against 10-level NQF and other QFs

Level 10	Doctoral Degree		HEQF	National Skills Certificates	National Occupational Certificates	
Level 9	Master's Degree					
Level 8	Postgraduate Diploma Professional Qualifications					
Level 7	Bachelor Degree Advanced Diploma					
Level 6	Diploma Advanced Certificate					
Level 5	Higher Certificate	Advanced National Certificate (Vocational)	GFETQF			Incl subject / unit certificates
Level 4	National Senior Certificate (Grade 12)	Adult National Senior Certificate National Certificate (Vocational) 4				
Level 3		Units of learning to be accumulated National Certificate (Vocational) 3				
Level 2		National Certificate (Vocational) 2				
Level 1	General Education & Training Certificate (Grade 9)	Adult Basic Certificate of Education				

Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/bekkerd1/intro-fo-qcto>. Accessed on 12 April 2017

It is arranged in such a way that it takes place not just in the urban and rural, farm and special training centres but also in occupational, work-based training and improving programmes such as the ones catered for by the Education, Training and Development Practices/Sector Education and Training Authorities (ETDP/SETAs). In this case, NGOs, civil based organizations and like-minded organizations have developed programmes that target South Africans to benefit maximally from what they do. This means that adult basic education may not end at the level intended, but becomes a necessary entry point into the formal education system affording the individual who enrol in it an opportunity to move on to the highest level of education possible.

All three countries must strive to reverse the duplication of policies and actions as failure to do so would be unproductive. Again, whilst Botswana has properly aligned its relevant policies, Nigeria and South Africa still have to come up to that level. For example, Nigeria has far too many government structures that seem to be struggling to reach out to women as predicated in the policies and actions of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education vis-à-vis those of the National Commission for Nomadic Education. Fortunately, the three countries have aligned properly their continuing professional development programmes as indicated in the establishment of professions-based regulatory bodies like the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in the case of

South Africa and the Nigerian Medical Council. A skills shortage also constraints growth and employment creation in the three countries. Personnel within adult basic education would have to ensure that they monitor effectively its contribution to the quantity and quality of the initiatives aimed at stimulating enterprises and business.

Conclusion

The three countries studied have designed and implemented remarkable programmes for enhancing learning in later life. It is noted that significant achievements have been made in terms of participation. The caveat to this paper comes out clearly in not having been able to hold interviews with seniors in an attempt to use their narratives to inform the conclusions that can be reached in terms of impacts on their lives. It would have been valuable to reflect in the discourse their enjoyment of the programmes offered, their frustrations and the propositions that they can make towards enhancing the efforts being made to provide better learning in later life. Modernisation and the profound entrance of digital technology have almost completely eradicated the value and strong influence of non-formal learning structures and curricula in the three countries. For example, retired Africans and grandparents, in particular, play very significant roles in care-giving to those trying to cope with the scourge of the HIV and AIDS epidemic or even those caring for children orphaned by HIV and AIDS. For the effective provision and management of such services by the seniors, it is imperative to require sufficient quantity and quality of public health education curricula. Moreover, it is not just in the case of adversity that that the seniors become valuable. Grandparents in the three countries do provide care programmes for their grandchildren in and out of school. This is especially so where grandchildren's parents are working and therefore cannot cope effectively with the responsibility for raising the young ones. For this service, grandparents would normally need enhanced grand parenting skills (Bown, 2000). Unfortunately, social transfers like the ones depicted above have not been properly indicated in the available literature in Africa, and this is a major limitation. Be that as it may, this paper has provided insights into the nature and content of learning in later life in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa with particular reference to policies and structures. It has been pointed out that in spite of the achievements recorded so far, there are challenges that still need to be addressed adequately in order to arrive at the stage that is sufficiently comparable to the situation in more developed countries.

References

- Adato, M., Carter, M.R., & May, J. (2006). Exploring poverty traps and social exclusion in South Africa using qualitative and quantitative data. *Journal of Development Studies*, 42 (0), 226-247.
- Amutabi, M.N., & Oketch, M.O. (2009). *Studies in lifelong learning in Africa: From ethnic traditions to technological innovations*. Ceredigion: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Boshier, R.W. (2006). Widening access by bringing education home. In A. Oduaran and H.S. Bhola (Eds.), *Widening Access to Education as Social Justice: Essays in Honor of Michael Omolewa*. (pp.23-43). Dorchet, The Netherlands: Springer; Paris: UNESCO; Hamburg: UIE.

- Botswana Review. (2007). *Botswana Review of Commerce and Industry (27th Edition)*. Gaborone: B&T Directories.
- Bown, L. (1977). *Life-long learning-prescription for progress*. Inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Lagos, Tuesday, 20th December, pp.7-11.
- Bown, L. (2000). Lifelong learning: Ideas and achievements at the threshold of the twenty-first century. *Compare*, 30 (3), 341-351.
- Cox, A.J., & John, V.M. (2014). Transformative learning in post-apartheid South Africa: Disruption, dilemma and direction. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 66 (4), 303-318.
- Delors, J. (1998). *Learning: The treasure within*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Department of Basic Education. (2008). *South Africa literacy campaign*. Cape Town: Ministry of Education.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1992). *Blueprint on Family Support Programme (FSP)*. Lagos: Government Printers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1979). *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Section 19 (i). Lagos: Government Printer.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1977). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: Government Printers.
- Gordon, N. (2014). *Flexible pedagogies: Technology enhanced learning*. *The Higher Education Academy*. Accessed on 6 January 2017 from: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/flexible-learning/flexiblepedagogies/tech-enhanced-learning/main-report.
- Green, N., Woldoko, B., Foskey, R., & Brooks, M., (2013). Social media-enabled learning and the curriculum in Australian higher education: a literature review. *Deltub Monograph Series, DEHub Innovation in Distance Education*, Australia: University of New England.
- Human Sciences Research Council. (2014). *South African National HIV prevalence, incidence and behaviour survey, 2012*. Cape Town: HRSC Press.
- Kha Ri Gude, (2016). *Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign from 2008 to 2016*. Available on: <http://www.kharigude.co.za/index.php/literacy-in-south-africa>. Accessed on 24/9/16.#
- Kearney, M-L. (2001). Adult education from Jomtien, via Hamburg and Paris, to Dakar. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 7 (1), 10-18.
- Lengrand, P. (1975). *An introduction to lifelong education*. London: Croom-Helm.
- Lai, M.L., & Chong, M.M. (2007). Professional students' technology readiness, prior computing experience and acceptance of an e-learning system. *Malaysian Accounting Review*, 6 (1), 85-99.
- Martin, I. (2006). In whose interest? Interrogating the metamorphosis of adult education, In A. Antikainen, P. Harinen, & CA. Torres (Eds), *From the margins: Adult education, work and civil society* (pp. 11-26). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Martin, I. (2001). What is Lifelong learning for: Earning, yawning or yearning? *Adult Learning*, 12 (2), 90-103.
- Maruatona, T.L. (2003). *CONFINTEA V Mid-term review: Status and future prospects of adult learning, Botswana country report, 2003*. Gaborone: University of Botswana.
- Mckay, V. (2015). Measuring and monitoring in the South African Kha Ri Gude mass literacy campaign. *International Review of Education*, 61 (3), 365-397.

- McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. J. (2010). Personalized and self-regulated learning in the web 2.0 era: International examples of innovative pedagogy using social software. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 26 (1), 28-43.
- Merriam, S. (2004). The changing landscape of adult learning theory. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith (Eds.), *Review of adult learning and literacy: Connecting research, policy, and practice* (pp. 199-220). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mezirow, J. (1998). Transformative learning and social action: A response to Inglis. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 49 (1), 70-72.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. (2003). *National Development Plan IX 2003/04-2008/09*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Ministry of Education and Skills Development. (2008). Botswana Country Report to CONFITEA VI. Gaborone: Ministry of Education and Skills Development. Botswana National Commission for UNESCO. *Population Reference Bureau* (2001). Washington, DC: UNESCO.
- Oduaran, A.B., & Okukpon, L.A. (1997). *Building women's capacity for national development in Nigeria*. *Convergence*, XXX (1), 60-69.
- Omolewa, M. (2006). *Cross over unto the other side: The mission of adult education*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Omolewa, M. (1987). *Education through the rear-view mirror. Inaugural Lecture*, University of Ibadan. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Omolewa, M. (1981). *The modern practice of adult education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Evan Brothers.
- Ovortrup, A., & Keiding, B. (2015). Portfolio assessment: production and reduction of complexity assessment and evaluation. *Higher Education*, 40 (3), 407-419.
- Peter, S. (1999). *The Globalization of higher education*. Milton Keynes: SRHE/OU.
- Preece, J. (2009). *Lifelong learning and development: A southern perspective*. London: Continuum Studies in Educational Research.
- Republic of Botswana. (2008). *CONFITEA VI Report*. Gaborone: Botswana National Commission to UNESCO.
- Republic of Botswana. (1997). *Vision 2016: Towards prosperity for all*. Gaborone: Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). Act 108 of 1996: Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 378 (17678). Cape Town: Government of South Africa.
- United Nations. (2007). *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved on 5 January 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=259>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), (2000). *The Dakar framework for action. Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments, Adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April. Including six regional frameworks for action*. Paris: UNESCO.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), (2010). *EFA global monitoring Report: Reaching the marginalized*. Paris: UNESCO & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Walters, S., Witbooi, S. & Abrahams, M. 2015. Keeping the doors of learning open for adult student-workers within Higher Education, in *The Adult Learner, Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education*. Paper developed as part of the SAQA-University of the Western Cape Research Partnership for the research Lifelong Learning and National Qualifications Frameworks.
- Zeelen, J., Rampedi, M., & Van der Linden, J. (2014). Grounding adult education research in rural areas: Reflection on the development of a research program at the University of Limpopo in South Africa. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 64, (1), 20-28.
- Zimmerman, B.J. (2002). *Becoming a self-regulated learner: an overview: Theory into Practice*, 41 (2), 64-70.

Education for older adults in Tanzania: Trends, issues and concerns

Mpoki J. Mwaikokesya¹ and Philemon A. K. Mushi²

Abstract. Globally, education for older adults has become one of the key issues in educational policy debates in recent years due to the need to meet the lifelong learning imperatives. Given this trend, many countries have made conscious efforts to create educational opportunities for older adults that would ensure that their learning needs are met so that they are fully engaged in community as active citizen even during their retirement age and beyond. The challenges in meeting the educational and learning goals for older adults, however, seem to be extremely acute for developing nations like Tanzania, than it is the case for the developed nations. Reluctance in supporting education for older adults in some countries has sometimes been associated with the fact that in most cases, the rationale for provision of education and training has always been based on the demands in the labour market, of which, the majority of educational and training programmes for older adults do not fit. This article traces the trends, issues and concerns in the provision of education for older adults in Tanzania. It assesses both the needs for such education, and the institutional responses which have been in place in an effort to ensure the effective provision of education and learning opportunities for older adults.

Keywords: older adults, education, learning, Tanzania, Africa.

Introduction

For many years since 1970s, Tanzania has offered adult and community educational opportunities for adults. In recent years however, given the emergence of factors such as increased life challenges and complexity, and shifts in demography, the need to cater for education for older adults, has become increasingly urgent. However, comparatively, the ageing population in developing countries such as Tanzania has been cited to be relatively low compared to demographics of older adults in the developed countries (Longworth &

¹ School of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. (mwaiko_mjd@yahoo.com)

² Educational Foundations Management and Lifelong Learning, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. (pakmushi@yahoo.com)

Davies, 1996). This article traces the trends, the need, and the adequacy of policy responses towards education for older adults in Tanzania. It particularly assesses the key factors and trends which have influenced the provision of educational and learning opportunities for adults in Tanzania, thereby delineating critical issues and concerns.

The concept, significance and contexts for provision of education for older adults

Scholars such as Roberson and Merriam (2005), Ford and Orel (2005), and Findsen and Formosa (2011) analysed issues and concerns about education for older adults from the context of developed countries. Only few scholarly works in the education for older adults seem to exist in the context of developing world such as Tanzania, including Oppong (2006) and Dayton & Ainsworth (2002). Scholarly works such as that of Findsen (2005), and that of Ford and Orel (2005), analysed the importance and the need for the education for older adults, arguing for the necessity of recognizing its significance because older adults play a critical role as partners as clients, teachers, volunteers and professionals in the education process. The arguments on the importance of education for older adults suggest the need for creation of a vibrant system that offers a range of learning opportunities for them, so as to promote the lifelong learning agenda. It is argued further that, supporting learning opportunities for older people is crucial because of the need for using their knowledge, experiences and competences that could eventually enable the achievement of active participatory lives through education (Friebe & Schmidt-Hertha 2013).

Findsen and Formosa (2011) underlined the need for addressing issues concerning education for older adults, arguing that, in recent years almost all countries have experienced unprecedented demographic shifts to an extent that the period has been referred to as the 'age of ageing'. They further project that by 2050, 22 per cent of the world's population will be aged. Meanwhile, Kalache, Barreto and Keller (2005) observed that over 60 per cent of the current aged population is living in developing countries, with this number projected to increase by 75 and 85 per cent in the years 2025 and 2050 respectively. As stated earlier, the drive towards widening participation of older adults in education and learning is based on a growing importance of lifelong learning arising from the emergence of global forces and needs necessitating learning throughout life. The major concerns in this context have been a country's ability to devise policies and strategies that would recognize the importance to create educational opportunities and institutions catering for older adult education. Some authors such as Nabalambaa and Chikoko (2011), however, have noted the absence of policy at the international level, arguing that while the Millennium Development Goals provide specific targets for children, youth and women, the goals do not refer to older people as a specific group. Nabalambaa and Chikoko (2011) concluded that ageing has not been given adequate attention even in the MDG agenda, which is the overarching framework for international development priorities.

Meanwhile, the education for older adults has been cited as exceptionally crucial within the context of Africa. As argued by Charlton and Rose (2001), within the context of Africa, education for older adults is critically important because most Africans enter old age after a lifetime characterized by social and economic problems emanating from poverty and

deprivation, poor access to health care and a diet that is usually inadequate in quantity and quality. According to them, despite the fact that adults in those countries face those problems, most social, economic and educational interventions in African countries are directed primarily toward children and young adults. Similarly, education for older adults within the context of Africa seems to be exceptionally important due to peculiar social problem and situations in which most adults are implicated. It is illustrated further that in recent years, the AIDS epidemic had been rising dramatically in sub-Saharan Africa, and the mortality of prime-aged adults and older people have been adversely affected by the death of prime-aged adults (Barnett & Blaikie 1992, cited in Dayton and Ainsworth, 2002). Barnett and Blaikie , explained further that older adults are more likely to be affected by AIDS deaths, because in many instances they find themselves in households with no prime-aged adult and some of them are left with the duty of caring for young and parentless children. It is against this background therefore that the education for older adults seems to be exceptionally crucial in the context of Sub-Saharan African countries such as Tanzania.

Education for older people is also thought to be central because older people play a key role in African family welfare, and the majority of families would not survive without the contribution of older people (Stanley, 2008). It is further believed that across the continent, many extended families have been relying on older adults as a source of support. Meanwhile, Friebe and Schmidt-Hertha (2013) argued for the importance of adult education at a higher age because it is likely to preserve autonomy, and encourage social participation in later life. It is argued further that education for older adults is crucial because an ageing population is often linked with a decrease in social adaptability, and consequently, educational activities of older people, both at individual and societal levels, should be encouraged. Paradoxically however, Stanley (2008) noted that despite the indispensable contribution of older adults, many of them in Africa experience many problems including deepening poverty, discrimination, violence and abuse, and are unable to access their entitlements such as social welfare benefits, income support, community care, and health services. It was further observed that since many older people live in rural areas in Africa, where there are fewer services, the older adults often experience economic exclusion, and are often denied employment and access to social and economic services and encounter social exclusion due to age discrimination.

Education for older adults in the Tanzanian educational system

As stated earlier, Tanzania has been offering some educational opportunities to its adult population. The provision of educational opportunities in the country however, has been characterized by several features, some of which can serve as a limitation to effective older adult teaching and learning. For example, even though, scholars such as Aspin, Chapman, Hatton & Sawano (2001) advocated for the need for the adult learning systems that allow interaction among different structures, institutions and agencies that offer learning opportunities for provision of all possible learning opportunities, to a larger extent this has not been the case for the educational provision in the country. Generally, in Tanzania, the educational system is predominantly formal, academic and hierarchically-structured running right from primary school to tertiary level. It is based on a 2-7-4-2-3+ system comprising two

years of pre-primary education, seven years of primary education (Standard I-VII), four years of secondary ordinary level education (Form 1-4), two years of secondary advanced level education (Form 5 and 6) and three or more years for technical or higher education. The official school attendance age in Tanzania ranges from 5-6 for pre-primary, 7-13 for primary, 14-17 for lower secondary, 18-19 for upper secondary and 20-24 for university education (United Republic of Tanzania, 2010).

With regard to education for older adults, even though institutions, such as the vocational training centres, the Institute of Adult Education (IAE), and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), exist in the country as a means for the provision of adult education, much emphasis in terms of resources and recognition seems to be placed on formal education. The existing non-formal institutions are mainly concerned with offering programmes such as adult literacy training, community education and vocational education and training; most of these programmes seem to be less coordinated and less organized. Moreover, the majority of government official documents in Tanzania tend to treat the formal education system and qualifications as superior to the non-formal education system. Critics such as Bhalalusesa (2003) note that the official reports such as the country's Education for All Assessment Report (United Republic of Tanzania, 2000), in which the major government decisions and actions undertaken since the World Conference on EFA are reported, tend to put more emphasis on primary education rather than on adult education. Bhalalusesa (2003) noted further that adult education is mentioned only in passing as part of basic education. Similarly, it has been further argued that in terms of investment in EFA the report does not show how much was allocated and spent on adult basic education. As Bhalalusesa (2003) suggested, further marginalization of non-formal education within the education system includes the reforms made at the Ministry of Education, in which the adult education sector that used to form an independent directorate with its own budget was reduced to a mere unit. Comparable observations are also maintained by Hoppers (2006:93) who noted that the relationship between formal education and non-formal education remains "fluid, dynamic and often problematic and curtails the provision of a wider diversity of education forms, each of which can have its own place". Given this tendency, the non-formal education sector in Tanzania, which handles education for older adults, seems to be treated as an entity separate from the educational system. The consideration of formal education as a separate entity with a different structure has been one of the main sources for the polarization of education provision between the formal and non-formal educational systems (Mushi, 2012). Consequently, there has been a trend towards a diminution of the role of non-formal and informal educational agencies in the country because of under-funding and poor governance (Urch, 1989; Galabawa, 1990; Mushi, 2012).

Issues and concerns in the provision of education for older adults in Tanzania

As stated earlier, in Tanzania the provision of educational and learning opportunities for older adults is affected by many factors and trends, which determine the nature, provision and the levels of participation. Similar to other developing countries, some of the commonest factors and trends that influence the provision of education for older adults and education at large in Tanzania, include issues relating to political will, resources availability, economy and politics as discussed below.

Lack of reliable data

One of the key factors that define and shape provision of older adult learning is demographics (Longworth & Davies, 1996). However, one of the concerns in the provision of older adults' education in Tanzania is the lack of data. Fewer data exist that would have indicated the composition of older adults, their age, sex, motivations, needs, and obstacles and participation rates. Most of the available data are too general and they do not give a special attention to older adults, thus making it harder to ascertain the levels and extent of participation as well as the actual needs. It seems important therefore for Tanzanian government to carry out annual surveys in literacy that among other things would have analysed the needs and participation status by gender, age and the nature of programmes. The problem of a lack of research and data on education for older adults in the context of developing countries such as Tanzania has also been highlighted in a study conducted by Oppong (2006). The author calls for a critical need for comparative analyses of different aspects including issues related to how factors such as culture, socio-political systems, how sweeping social change shapes lives, inter-connections, opportunities, constraints and analyses of gender.

Lack of holistic adult learning policy

The adult education sub-sector does not have a comprehensive policy to guide provision and implementation of adult learning opportunities in the country. Although the government Education and Training Policy (United Republic of Tanzania, 2014), provides broad guidelines on adult and non-formal education, these guidelines are not adequately comprehensive and are not simplified into sub-sector versions of policy in order to guide effective provision of older adults learning opportunities in the country. The absence of comprehensive policy has also been highlighted in the previous empirical studies. A study by Nabalambaa and Chikoko (2011), for example, indicated that despite the serious demographic shifts in most African countries, ageing is not visible in most policy dialogue and vulnerable older people are often overlooked in major policy documents and in most national development plans.

Overlooking older adults in programme design

Some recent studies such as that of Mushi (2012) have indicated problems affecting the adult learning programmes because most programmes are designed and developed without adequate consultation with the clients. The older adult learners are only brought to the picture when it comes to mobilizing them for implementation. Clearly, unilateral programme design and decision making process that do not involve the target group is less likely to continue and has slender chances of survival. Some of the adult learning innovations in Tanzania could not be sustained due to this reason (Mushi, 2016). There is need for the government to address itself seriously to the question of incorporating the views of adult learners in programme design, implementation and evaluation to ensure that adult learning programmes reflect their needs and interests (Mushi 2010).

Lack of institutional support

Traditionally, Tanzania's education for adults has focused on those people who were denied access to education and learning opportunities in their childhood, in such a way that most institutions and programmes were designed to offer educational opportunities for adults who missed education (Mushi, 2012). Given this trend, the sector of education for adults, including programmes such as education for retired adults and older learners has not been diversified to cater for adults' formal, informal and non-formal educational needs. There has been a lack of programmes such as pre-retirement education in the current education system. The few programmes that exist have been offered in an *ad-hoc* fashion and are arbitrarily conducted by individual companies and organisations for their staff. The problem of lack of resource can further be noticed due to a lack of policies and resource centres that would have designed programmes for adults especially in rural areas. As pointed out earlier, the major focus had been on the provision of formal education. Similarly, the role of provision of adult education in Tanzania has traditionally been the responsibility of central and local governments. However, in recent years, given the emergence of privatization and liberalization policies, some new providers of adult education have emerged mainly non-governmental organizations.

Poor resources, financing and expenditure on education in later life

Due to lack of political will and commitment for older adult education, fewer monetary and non-monetary resources have been allocated in the area of learning in a later life. In most cases, the policy and financial support emphasis have been for basic, secondary and higher education. Only a limited attention has been given to the education for older adults. The reason for underfunding of adult learning programmes appears to be attributable to the low status accorded to adult education in general because it is not academic and does not prepare people for high income or status (Mushi, 2010). While adult education was considered by the government to be the most potent force for bringing about change, academic training was at the same time thought to be needed to produce the required higher-level manpower. In contrast to other sectors of education adult education seems to come at the bottom of hierarchy in terms of revenue allocation.

Attitudes towards older adults' learning/education

The issue of attitude has been cited in much literature as having an important role to play in understanding education in general, and appreciating teaching and learning in particular (Oppong, 2006; Topală, 2014). Within the context of Tanzania, the general public perception towards education and learning is that basic, secondary and tertiary education systems are the most crucial components. Compared to other forms of education, the broader field of adult education has suffered from an overall inferior image, and the tendency has been to view education for older adults as leisure. A similar poor image on adult education within the context of Africa, has been for most of the people to consider it as mainly linked to literacy. Given the poor image that education is mainly linked to literacy, the adult education sector, and the education for older adults in particular, has received insignificant policy attention. As

mentioned earlier in this paper, one of the reasons for persistence of this trend has been due to the fact that education for older adults has not been given due weight, and not deemed to be contributing factors to social, economic, cultural development of the country. It has been seen as not contributing to the economy, but only useful for personal interests and survival. To redress this situation, it is important that this dominant popular attitude is reversed.

The other common attitude-related issue curtailing the provision of education and learning opportunities for older adults in Tanzania, has to do with adults' personal views and attitudes toward education and learning. In most cases the adults' personal views and attitudes have been based on negatively associating learning in adulthood with a front-end model, whose main focus is on education for children and young adults. The problem of older adults' poor image and attitude has also been reported in some of the previous studies, such as that of Friebe and Schmidt-Hertha (2013). They noted that adults are more or less open to get involved in educational processes depending on their self-perception, and whether they see themselves as active learners, including their perceptions of their own learning capabilities and their potential for personal development.

Lack of policies to support indigenous knowledge systems

Older adults in communities acquire knowledge, skills and values from indigenous cultural systems through observation and active participation (Mushi 2016). This knowledge is related to the environment in which they live and is passed among village members and from one generation to another informally with the aim of sustaining the community. Some of these activities in which older adults take part include fishing, building, tinsmithing, animal husbandry, traditional dancing, soil conservation and decorative arts. Unfortunately, these indigenous knowledge systems have not been recognized by the government as a critical source of knowledge.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the trends, issues and concerns regarding education for older adults in Tanzania. The discussion of issues and concerns in this paper seems to be crucial because apart from illuminating problems and concerns, it could stimulate further discussion of areas that require further attention and reforms that may lead into more radical approaches in addressing concerns in education for older adults in the country. The discussion of trends and issues in the provision of education for older adults in Tanzania in this paper is crucial also because it can contribute into shaping the strategies for offering learning opportunities and training for older adults in Tanzania. Clearly, there is a need to set an agenda so that radical changes in educational policy that would redress the challenges and shape the future to achieve lifelong learning policies in Tanzania are made. In the light of the issues raised in this article, it is essential for policy makers and practitioners to examine critically policy and practice concerning older learners. It is important that reforms are made to encourage education for older adults in Tanzania. Such reforms and improvements can engage stakeholders such as industries, non-governmental organisations, government agencies and employers. There is also a need for the government and other stakeholders to find a way to

allocate adequate resources that would widen access of education opportunities to older adults in the country.

References

- Aspin, D. Chapman, J., Hatton, M., & Sawano, Y. (2001). Introduction and overview. In D. Aspin, J. Chapman, M. Hatton & Y. Sawano (Eds.), *International handbook on lifelong learning* (pp. xvii-xiv). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Barnett, T., & Blaikie, P. (1992). *AIDS in Africa: It's present and future impact*. London: Belhaven Press.
- Bhalalusesa, E. (2003). Education for all: is Tanzania on track? In Norrag (Ed.), *Critical Perspectives on Education and Skills in Eastern Africa on Basic and Post-Basic Levels* (pp. 49-53). Norrag: Network for International Policies and Co-operation in Education and Training. Accessed 25 March 2017
from:<http://www.norrag.org/en/publications/norrag-news/online-version/critical-perspectives-on-education-and-skills-in-eastern-africa-on-basic-and-post-basic-levels/detail/education-for-all-is-tanzania-on-track.html>.
- Charlton, K., & Rose, D. (2001). Nutrition among older adults in Africa: The situation at the beginning of the Millennium. *Journal of Nutrition*, 131(9), 2424-2428.
- Dayton, J., & Ainsworth, M. (2002). *The elderly and AIDS: Coping strategies and health consequences in rural Tanzania*. Dar es salaam, Tanzania: Population Council.
- Findsen, B. (2005). *Learning later*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Findsen, B., & Formosa, M. (2011). *Lifelong learning in later life: A handbook on older adult learning*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Ford, R., & Orel, L. (2005). Older adult learners in the workforce. *Journal of Career Development*, 39(2), 139-152.
- Friebe, J., & Schmidt-Hertha, B. (2013). Activities and barriers to education for elderly people. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*, 1 (1), 10-26.
- Galabawa, J. (1990). *Implementing educational policies in Tanzania*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Hoppers, W. (2006). *Non-formal education and basic education reform: A conceptual review*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Kalache, A., Barreto S.M., & Keller I. (2005). Global ageing: The demographic revolution in all cultures and societies. In M.L. Johnson (Ed). *The Cambridge handbook of age and ageing* (pp. 30-46). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Longworth, N., & Davies, W. (1996). *Lifelong Learning: New vision, new implications, new roles for people, organisations, nations and communities in the 21st century*. London: Kogan Page.
- Mushi, P.A.K. (2010). *Principles and practice of adult education*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Dar-es-Salaam, University Press.
- Mushi, P.A.K. (2012). *History and development of education in Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Dar-es-Salaam, University Press.
- Mushi, P.A.K. (2016). Tanzania. In B. Findsen & M. Formosa (Eds.), *International perspectives on older adult education: Research, policies and practice* (pp.433-443). New York: Springer.

- Nabalambaa, A., & Chikoko, M. (2011). Aging population challenges in Africa, *African Development Bank*, 1 (1), 1-19.
- Oppong, C. (2006). Familial roles and social transformations older men and women in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Research on Aging*, 28 (6), 654-668.
- Roberson Jr., D.N. & Merriam, S.B. (2005). The self-directed learning process of older rural adults. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55 (4), 269-288.
- Stanley, E. (Ed) (2008). *Older people in Africa: a forgotten generation*. Accessed on 25th March 2017 from: <http://eng.zivot90.cz/uploads/document/205.pdf>
- Topalã, I. (2014). Attitudes towards academic learning and learning satisfaction in adult students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Vol.142, pp 227-234.
- Urch, G. (1989). The role of education in restructuring socialism: the Tanzanian case. *Educational Studies*, 15 (3), 213-228.
- United Republic of Tanzania. (2000). *The 2000 assessment of education for all: progress towards EFA goals, 1990-2000: Technical annex*. Dar-es-Salaam: Ministry of Education and Culture.
- United Republic of Tanzania. (2010). *Basic education statistics in Tanzania (BEST)*. Dar es salaam, Tanzania: Ministry of Education & Vocational Training.
- United Republic of Tanzania. (2014). *Education and Training policy*. Dar es salaam, Tanzania: Ministry of Education & Vocational Training.

‘Good Living’ and the education of older adults

José Alberto Yuni¹ and Claudio Ariel Urbano²

Abstract. This article deals with the notion of Good Living - Living Well, deeply rooted in critical Latin American thinking. Its aim is to revise some theoretical conceptions inherited from the prevailing gerontological tradition having centre-European origin. First of all, an epistemic framework is established in order to consider how the cultural dimension influences ways of making up scientific knowledge on old age and ageing. Secondly, we discuss the concept of Good Living or Living Well as a theoretical and political contribution that may allow us to re-think meanings, policies, and gerontological practices located in the Latin American region and its various realities. Then, we describe some topics, generated by ancestral visions of the world that make up the social construction of old age in contemporary societies. Finally, on the basis of principles of critical intercultural gerontology we produce some guidelines on the concept of Good Living that may contribute for the education of older adults.

Keywords: cultural Ageing, critical gerontology, education for older adults, gerontology, Good Living.

Introduction

By the end of the 20th century the education for older adults (older adults) became a sociological novelty, (Glendenning, 1985; Hiemstra, 1998). Some recent scholarly works mention this new phenomenon that burst into education that challenges stereotypes and prejudices governing modern capitalist societies (Yuni & Urbano, 2008b; Jarvis, 2011; Formosa, 2014). Findsen and Formosa (2016) made a thorough analysis of the educational situation among older adults, the scope of their research covered 42 countries, i.e. globally. Attempts made to delimit and justify the principles of gerontological education on the basis of Peterson’s programme (1976) have led to a deeper knowledge of a large number of multiform practices that have prevailed over four decades. One consequence was an

¹ CITCA-CONICET, (National Council of Scientific and Technological Research), Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Humanities, National University of Catamarca, Argentina. (joseyuni@yahoo.co.ar)

² CITCA-CONICET, (National Council of Scientific and Technological Research), Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Humanities, National University of Catamarca, Argentina. (claurbano@hotmail.com)

expansion of educational opportunities for older adults and their potential contribution to promote development in older age (Withnall, 2002). However, the development of these experiences on an international level did not generate theoretical categories. This production of categories, from the epistemic perspective of education, may have improved ways of thinking and the language used to report on this phenomenon (Lemieux & Sanchez, 2000; Formosa, 2002). This work deals with a concept of critical Latin-American thinking named Good Living or Living Well. Its purpose is to start an intercultural dialogue that may enrich ways of learning, thinking, and doing in older adults' education. Our concern is to discuss the notion of Good Living as a conceptual resource by addressing hegemonic conceptions about old age, ageing, and education of older adults; within an epistemic framework. Therefore, we discuss the main features of Good Living and its potential contributions to social and educational gerontology, mainly in a Latin American context.

The cultural dimension: A forgotten discussion around older age

During the 20th century, the various disciplines constituting social gerontology have shown deep transformations concerning conceptions of old age and ageing (Bengtson, 1997). Theoretical and epistemological development of gerontology is mainly hampered by the neglect of its cultural dimension. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006) holds that this deficiency could be understood as an epistemic 'absence'. It appears that ways of gerontological production ignored the role of cultural processes in the social construction of ageing and in seniors' production of subjectivities. In fact, related investigations are limited. They are mainly concerned with ways of social representation, symbolization, and ritualization. These features become signals of acknowledging power and social status towards seniors in societies considered as 'primitive'. This kind of study becomes a rich source in the field of ethno-gerontology as a specific branch of the anthropology of old age (Morgante, Martínez & Remorini, 2008).

Investigations on older adults consider them as a social group clearly differentiated from the rest of social ages such as childhood, youth, and adulthood (Fericgla, 2002). Thus, these studies have concentrated on the analysis of older adults as consumers of culture. Likewise, cultural dimensions connected to the ontology of old age and ageing are very scarce. Cultural structure strongly influences individuals long before they become seniors. The human experience of becoming old is achieved through language, rituals, and belief systems that convey full meaning to this state (Yuni, 2015). Ageing is a vital human issue derived from the existing conditions of a community and the symbolic resources used to understand it, (Calasanti, 2003; Moya, 2014).

Nowadays, western societies keep representations and popular imagination as useful tools for representing old age and ageing of their members through history. Golpe (2011) points out that ageing usually has negative connotations in the social imagination of Western societies; it is seen as an area of alienation and radical otherness; thus, it is difficult to recognize and assess it positively. The concern for the relationship between culture and ageing cannot be exhausted by an analysis of ideas that abound among different groups and societies. This relationship also allows us to approach the discussion of a central issue in gerontology:

interpretation of time and temporality (Lalivé D'Épinay, 1988) that each society develops on the basis of its own historical dynamics through which the passing of time achieves meaning. But in the contemporary social imagination old age is open to a wide range of meanings on the basis of a linear conception of time. Nevertheless, some of its main features must be mentioned: biological decline, obsolescence with an outdated cultural basis, rejection of aesthetic imagination, silencing as a signal of the loss of power, and hopelessness, whose basis is the loss of vital motivation. A further 'absence' within this cultural dimension is the theoretical consideration of educational gerontology. Every educational practice for all ages of life is defined by its predominant cultural nature.

Education for older adults shifted traditional conceptions of education (Yuni & Urbano, 2016) related to the four dimensions on which the modern process of schooling rests:

1. Education for older adults is not an asymmetric relationship between older adults and the younger generations. Nowadays, older generations are learning from the younger ones a body of knowledge whose expertise is dominated by them; it may also become a meeting point among peers of the same older generation (Findsen & Formosa, 2011).
2. Education at this level not only provides knowledge and skills that may be useful for ageing but also stresses transmission of knowledge to deal with the present.
3. The nature of the pedagogical content emphasizes scientific knowledge leaving aside knowledge related to visions of the world, social practices, cultural and religious traditions. Studies have demonstrated the capacity and motivation of older adults to learn, in a systematic way, about further kinds of knowledge. International experiences report this feature as an important one in the education for older adults (Schuller & Watson, 2009).
4. Older adults may assume various potential positions during the learning process. They may then become transmitters, creators, and cultural producers as a result of previous knowledge acquired in the course of life; such a wealth of knowledge is often enriched and transformed by new experiences gained in educational spaces (Urbano & Yuni, 2013; 2015). older adults as learners may occupy different positions as subjects who reconstruct and re-signify themselves through the learning process.

Investigations of gerontology produced a standardization effect in Western capitalist societies. Thus, production has been influenced by American, Anglo-Saxon, and Centre-European traditions. Approaches to critical gerontology, feminism, post-colonial and post-modern studies have pointed out biases displayed on account of this way of production of gerontological knowledge (Yuni & Urbano, 2008a; Formosa, 2011; Yuni, 2015). Theoretical developments in contemporary gerontology are focused on older adults belonging to a white and urban middle-class; their active participation in public or private institutions reflects values, ideologies, and utopias from a modern Western model of civilization. A number of critical authors (Lander, 2000; Quijano, 2000; Castro Gómez, 2005) posited that this process can be characterized as a sort of epistemic colonization of professional and academic communities whose practices differ considerably from the socio-cultural context in which gerontological theories originate. Present theoretical approaches defend a scientific work of decolonization from the Latin American position.

Approaches to 'Good Living' as a theoretical and political notion

The concept of Good Living, as a contribution to critical Latin-American thinking allows us to re-think meanings, policies, and gerontological practices concerning different realities of the region (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010). Our aim is to analyze the concept as a divergent and complementary theoretical resource that can be potentially useful for reflecting on the limitations imposed on our ways of thinking, naming, watching, and considering the social structure of old age (Mejía, 2012). Good Living is a ubiquitous notion. Different authors consider it in various ways; some of them say it is a paradigm, while others interpret it as a vision of the world, a discursive metaphor, a political utopia, and even an ideological plexus (Delgado Ramos, 2014). This wide range of ideas entails the resistance of groups, societies, and social movements against old and new forms of colonialization or a theoretical notion that backs up an alternative episteme (De Sousa Santos, 2010). We consider it is an eclectic notion whose origins belong to the ancestral knowledge of Latin American indigenous peoples. But the last two decades have produced a re-elaboration from the perspective of philosophy, politics, and society.

Estermann (2012) pointed out difficulties in translating the concept of Good Living, derived from indigenous languages, without suffering loss of its connotative meaning. The concept of Good Living - to 'live well' - derives from indigenous languages Sumak Kawsay (Quechua) and Suma Qamaña (Aymara). Although both expressions differ in their translations, they have a similar meaning. To 'live well' means to lead a peaceful life in the community by keeping a good balance with nature; that is why it is also considered as 'to live well together'. Good Living also expresses relational logics as the basis of indigenous thinking. It is different from the Western conception that categorizes, classifies, and organizes reality in such a way that indigenous visions can be clearly differentiated. Indigenous people consider that things exist because of their relationship with other things and beings. The Cartesian principle stating that knowledge must be oriented to the creation of different and clear ideas cannot be applied to relational logics. For instance, some authors consider it as trivalent logics because it accepts contradictions as a kind of truth.

Trivalent logic means a way of thinking that challenges the principles of Aristotelian bivalent logics, an important feature of Western civilization. Estermann (2012) remarked that in indigenous languages 'well' (suma, allin, sumac) describes the fact and process of living. 'Living well' in Andean communities conveys the idea of relationship. Western logics define a concept on the basis of relationships between similarities and differences whereas indigenous languages have an affixation system to convey different meanings. Thus, the notion becomes a polysemous expression used to convey many ideas according to the context of situation. Therefore, the core of Good Living is 'life' itself. However, 'life' and the ideal of 'living well' do not only refer to living beings but includes 'nature', comprising both humans and non-humans, and the whole universe along with the spiritual and religious world. Then, we come across a cosmic perspective in which relations among beings, things, and gods constitute 'life'. Life is just the result of a harmonious exchange among beings. This metaphysical conception of the universe is expressed by Pacha, Mother Earth. The latter is a living organism in which all parts are interrelated through a permanent interdependence and

exchange. Therefore, the ideal Good Living, for human beings, aims at living together harmoniously within a natural environment, along with the spiritual world, and future generations. The idea of harmony not only refers to human beings but also to nature and sacred things. It can also be applied to living and dead human beings, because the souls of the latter must be worshipped. The search for harmony is based on the achievement of balance while living together with others, with present and future generations as well as ecology (Acosta, 2012).

The implicit anthropological conception of this notion changes the Western anthropocentric concept, since it holds that the human species is only part of the cosmos. That is why people share rights with Nature. The prevailing idea of the need to protect Mother Earth's rights led governments and organizations to take measures for the protection of both human and nature's rights. The conclusion is that human beings are not the owners of nature; they have no right to exploit its resources and change it for their own benefit. On the contrary, they should be 'caretakers', 'cultivators', and 'facilitators'. Human beings are 'transformers' of those processes that do not depend upon them. Thus, the basic relations making up life are those of nurturing and care. However, they achieve full sense when they function on the basis of reciprocity and correspondence (Gudynas, 2009).

Correspondence implies a relationship of interdependence between beings and things - that is why nurturing and care get intertwined in a chain that holds cosmic order. Mother Nature behaves in the same way as human beings do. Then, in order to guarantee their survival, individuals renew their total commitment with Nature in the act of caring for persons, animals and plants, in their relations with others, in their contribution to community care, and with future generations. Correspondence also demands reciprocal care, a moral obligation of giving and receiving. It is a gift to be cared for but this benefit implies the responsibility of returning care to whom it provided or others who did (Andía, 2015). Both care and nurturing are structuring principles of life. They function differently according to the life course of human beings, communities, and nature. Therefore, we play two roles at the same time; we are both caretaker and cared for, not only of the members of our families but also of those of the community. This community character constitutes the basis of the notion of living together. Good Living is an improvement of every human being's life that can only be achieved when all community members become involved. Responsibility for future generations implies the obligation for looking after natural resources, collective remembrance, and ways of life. To 'live' depends, above all, on 'living together' from an anthropological, ecological, and cosmic viewpoint (Vanhulst & Beling, 2014).

Western tradition upholds a lineal conception of time (Gastrón & Oddone, 2008), whilst modernity brought about an irreversible concept of time that is always being projected into the future as a platform for the achievement of any utopia such as religious salvation, civilization, and so on. This idea of time contributes to thinking of the future as based on metonymical reasons in which future is already known. To live is to walk towards the future. Good Living is based on a cyclic concept of time having many transitions of a heterogeneous nature and of a qualitative character. Unlike Western tradition, objective and quantifiable, measures time; vision in Good Living is like a winding cycle in which every new step displays

life again and again; as a result, time is cyclic and reversible. From this viewpoint, utopias are rarely ahead of time; they accept the possibility of broad horizons. Western tradition views the horizon as if it were ahead, whereas indigenous people consider the horizon next to and even behind individuals and communities. Personal or collective projects do not only imply an unknown future but they may also be in a past that has to be conquered. Whereas what was lived or happened may represent better harmonious situations than those of the present or coming years. Consequently, in indigenous culture “the human being walks backward towards the future but looking at the past in order to find the utopia” (Andía, 2015:319)

Ageing in the imagination of Indo-American ancestral cultures

Latin American investigations indicate that indigenous peoples are undergoing seriously vulnerable conditions, particularly older adults. They are stigmatized for being poor and they suffer limitations in securing basic goods, especially of possession and the use of land. Their cultural identity has become strongly influenced by processes of acculturation produced by migrations, by information technologies, by urbanization under modern planning and, last but not least, by public policies (OISS-Organización Iberoamericana de la Seguridad Social, 2015). Nevertheless, older adults have kept, through generations, the concept of Good Living as ancestral knowledge updated in modern times as a theoretical and political notion. Various investigations, from the perspective of ethnology and gerontology, show that most Latin American indigenous cultures lack specific terms to refer to ageing and to old people. The term ‘old’ is generally used to refer to things. Some indigenous languages use metaphors to refer to old age, such as ‘time that falls on the running life’.

Most indigenous languages contain terms whose connotative meaning implies social roles (grandpa) or moral authority because the person is a grown up (older). Andía, (2015:321) contended that being ‘older’ does not depend on chronological age but on gaining wisdom that provides personal security - “it is a firm and secure walk in every walk of life that strengthens his identity”. Social recognition of being older means that wisdom has been gained and it can be seen that an old person embodies Good Living in its strict sense. It is the happiness of the wise person who knows that everything is interrelated and honours life. The older persons’ wisdom expresses Good Living in that this ideal conveys happiness, and inner peace; a perfect balance with oneself, with the community and with nature. Wisdom is not considered an acquired quality just because the person is old but rather an accomplishment process of self-comprehension on the face of transformations taking place while walking life. Morgante, Martínez and Remorini (2008) point out that while Pachamama (Mother Earth) is socially represented as an old woman, Andean cultures ignore aesthetic models of beauty, particularly youth models. On the contrary, wrinkles on the face, as a sign of ageing, give those who bear them higher social respect. On the other hand, Zerda (2015:338) stated that in the Aymara culture some idioms connected with old age make metaphorical reference to the process of changing into an old man or woman; they stress the gradual shift into old age as a natural and permanent process. In this sense, ageing is not seen as a break with the rest of ages but as a continuity of life characterized by its counterpart of life/death. An individual’s life is just a cycle within a successive series of cycles, of generation after generation who are interrelated and interdependent.

Several investigations confirm the observation that chronological age is not the main signal of transition to old age as a social phenomenon. Transition is signalled by changes in productive and family roles produced by the reduced ability to perform everyday activities. The passage from adulthood to older adulthood is perceived by changes in physical ability. This passage connects to the performance of new activities that may enable an older individual to participate in community life (Guzmán, 2014). Therefore, work is the central occupation throughout life and does not stop in old age. Andean cultures consider that frailty in old age is associated with becoming weak that is, lacking strength for self-sustainment. The situation demands collaboration of other societal members so as to sustain life. It is the time of giving and receiving, particularly by those who have been cared for and raised by elders; it is based on the principle of reciprocity. This moral obligation is not only within the scope of near relatives but it also includes further members of the community with whom there was a relationship in the past (Golpe & Yuni, 2012). In spite of the loss of physical or mental abilities, Andean culture respects older adults' social value, since their full wisdom and sanctity are appreciated at this stage of life. The condition of being a little old man/woman is acknowledged by the demands for help. Besides, the caregiver has an opportunity of being next to a quasi-sacred individual.

Socio-cultural representation of old age has a positive evaluation in an indigenous community; symbolically, deterioration is made up by conferring him/her a different spiritual condition. Older adults are considered as mediators between the supernatural and the real world. They are also recognized as intergenerational mediators not only among members of their communities but also with souls of the dead and natural beings (González Cordero, 2015). Further mediating functions include knowledge between older people and the community, older people and the future. That is why various research shows that seniors continue performing roles connected with religious, medicinal, and productive practices (Reyes, Palacios, Fonseca & Villasana, 2013). Productive roles continue even in old age, akin to community service activities. Old age is not understood as a time of harvesting and receiving care; it is a moment in life in which individuals assume responsibility within the community. Old age as transformation is a walk, walking with others, and walking for others. In the meantime, walking is accompanied and assisted by the community during this last life stage (Vázquez, 2007).

Good Living as a contribution to critical inter-cultural gerontagogy

The concept of Good Living is a good one for re-thinking education for older adults. It represents another epistemological place while it holds a different way of considering and understanding that is based not only on reasoning and rational knowledge but also a holistic comprehension supported by the ecology of knowledge. This ecology involves several types of knowledge and practical experiences as a result of interaction with others and dialogues with other beings and with oneself. Knowledge within a modern Western conception is acquired not only by understanding but also by contemplation, meditation, practice, reminiscence, observation, and dialogic interaction with the knowledge of others, memories, and dreams. However, from the viewpoint of Good Living, the goal for knowledge acquisition

is gaining personal wisdom so that decisions derived from knowledge are guided by ethical choices, whose highest value is its contribution to Life. Therefore, education becomes a process and a means to reproduce and change subjects and society through cultivation, care, and transformation of Life.

Life should be the source and end of education. However, this conception of life overflows into biology and covers everything in the universe including the spiritual, socio-cultural, and Nature's order. Life, as the core and meaning of education for older adults, is the condition and aim of the possibilities of their existence. Some Brazilian researchers, inspired by Paulo Freire's ideas, hold that education for the elderly should be education for life (Cassia, Silva & Scortegagna, 2010; Cassia, 2012). His theory states that we cannot talk about a life project or life quality without considering the possibility of life itself. He also considers detrimental conditions that characterize the life course of the majority of the older population. Ethical demands in education for older adults go far beyond the aforesaid features; they are oriented to sustain human dignity in terms of Good Living. Education means to enjoy a decent and harmonious standard of living in good balance with the universe, living beings, and gods. In this respect, the aim of education for older adults should be to contribute to the growth of their vitality and liveliness in old age (Yuni & Urbano, 2016). Vitality is understood as a quality of living beings that is shown in the capacity applied to creativity so as to care for and keep the past, the present, and the future. Liveliness means to reaffirm the strength of life for changing the world, the community, and oneself. Education for older adults focused on life means education for life, in life, and with life.

Education for older adults also reinforces their memory as well as the overall project. In fact, Lizarazo, (2011) held that Good Living contributes to keeping memory of our culture and also that of the future, because it keeps within itself the best aspirations of a more humane future. Education furthers the creation of new practices by which the OA can live the present and face the new demands of the modern era. Accordingly, education for older adults must contribute knowledge of the past in order to reinforce personal identity and community affiliation. At the same time, it should also stimulate hopes and dreams so as to extend projects for the future and underpin the present in order to understand the demands and complexities of modern society. The present approach to educating older adults assumes enabling them with skills that may facilitate interaction. These capacities play an important role in the transmission, reproduction and creation in social life of intergenerational practices. The principles of reciprocity, of giving and receiving become very important for older adults to transmit their knowledge and learn from other generations so that they can walk together while living in the present. Education is a social practice of caring and cultivating human capacities for the improvement of the community. Its practice with older adults, from the Good Living approach, implies education with elders, for elders, and among elders. It represents a culture of caring for others. The concept of Good Living stresses the ecological and intergenerational idea of caring; it is based on reciprocity and frequent interaction. Therefore, institutions are not in charge of the social regulation of caring practices but in charge of the subjects themselves. They are both objects and recipients of care of other human beings, spiritual powers, and nature. The focus of education is perceived as a collective construction of ecology of knowledge that leads to harmony among human beings and

generations (De Souza Silva, 2013). Thus, this approach oriented to older adults can contribute to overcome the existing gap in Western societies. The tendency is to exclude them as unproductive, fragile, and vulnerable objects to be cared for.

Interdependence between generations upholds community life as a living being. A common practice in the processes of cultural transmission is the application of various strategies. They can range from narrations to talking circles; thus, decisions are taken or collective agreements are made while narrating or talking (Villagómez & Cunha de Campos, 2014). These ancestral practices provide material for recovering gerontagogical strategies in order to approach newly generated needs in the education of older adults. As a result, we come across the need to construct a critical intercultural gerontology. The proposal would represent a step forward in human, social, and spiritual collective development. It would consider humans as social, cultural, and spiritual beings who learn by inter-ethnic interaction on the basis of democratic and intercultural dialogue in their own context. Education for older adults sustained by Good Living suggests a utopia and a dream of a different society. The difference relates to a fair, egalitarian, peaceful society based on solidarity. This entails an atmosphere in which, human and non-human beings can live together harmoniously in fullness. The aforementioned notion recognizes human beings as a mediating bridge. This mediation consists in the contribution to constitute and restore harmony and universal balance on the basis of knowledge and actions in its own context. It also states that there are no processes of collective or individual knowledge without an acquisition process. Besides, carelessness in the preservation of common knowledge threatens liveliness of individual and community life.

One can therefore state that gerontology, as underpinned by the notion of Good Living, should integrate and sum up the four dimensions that guide and organize life. These dimensions show the distinctive human features of every stage of life, including old age (Aguirre, cited in Mejía, 2012). They are manifestations of the capacities of its caring and transforming nature embodied in such practices as:

- Material production (connected with the idea of having) whose aim is access to the creation and enjoyment of goods.
- Spiritual production (connected with being) whose manifestations express affective and subjective fulfilment along with collective expressions in feasts and leisure.
- Knowledge production (connected with knowing) entails the recognition that culture has its own system of categories and languages.
- Sociability production (connected with decision-taking) refers to patterns of behaviour for living together and it is designed collectively in the community.

Finally, we must re-assert the character of this essay as just a proposal, an exercise of dystopian hermeneutics. Our concern was to discuss the notion of Good Living as a conceptual resource by addressing hegemonic conceptions about old age, ageing and the education of older adults. The field is open to future and deeper studies so as to advance the construction of gerontology.

References

- Acosta, A. (2012). *Buen vivir. Sumak kawsay. Una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos*. Quito: Ediciones Abya Yala.
- Andía, E. (2015). *Construcción de la identidad del anciano (mayor) en el imaginario de la comunidad rural Aymara*. Actas del VI Congreso Iberoamericano de Psicogerontología. La Paz, Bolivia: Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo.
- Bengtson, V. (1997). Theory, explanation, and a third generation of theoretical development in social gerontology. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 52 (1), S72–S88.
- Calasanti, T. (2003). Theorizing age relations. In S. Biggs, A. Lowenstein, & J. Hendricks (Eds.), *The need for theory: Critical approaches to social gerontology* (pp. 199-208). Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company.
- Cassia, R. (2012). *Políticas públicas, educacao e a Pesquisa sobre o idoso no Brasil. Diferentes abordagens da temática nas teses e dissertacoes*. Actas de IX ANPEDSul. Ponta Grossa.
- Cassia, R; Silva, F. and P. Scortegagna (2010). A Construção de Espaço Educativo para uma Nova Velhice: A Universidade Aberta para Terceira Idade. *Ageing Horizons*, 9, 28-39.
- Castro Gómez, S. (2005) Ciencias sociales, violencia epistémica y el problema de la «invención del otro. En E. Lander (Ed.), *La colonialidad del saber: Eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas Latinoamericanas* (pp. 88-98) Buenos Aires: CLACSO.
- De Sousa Santos, B. (2006). *Renovar la teoría crítica y reinventar la emancipación social*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.
- De Sousa Santos, B. (2010). *Para descolonizar Occidente. Más allá del Pensamiento Abismal*. Buenos Aires: UBA-CLACSO.
- De Souza Silva, J. (2013). La pedagogía de la felicidad en una educación para la vida. El paradigma del 'buen vivir'/'vivir bien' y la construcción pedagógica del "día después del desarrollo". En Catherine Walsh. *Pedagogías decoloniales. Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir* (pp. 469-509). Tomo I. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala.
- Delgado Ramos, G.C. (2014). *Buena Vida, Buen Vivir: imaginarios alternativos para el bien común de la humanidad*. Colección Debate y Reflexió. UNAM, México DF.
- Estermann, J. (2012). Crisis civilizatoria y Vivir Bien. *Polis, Revista de la Universidad Bolivariana*, Volumen, 11 (33), 149-174.
- Fericgla, J. (2002). *Envejecer, una antropología de la Ancianidad*. Barcelona: Editorial Herder.
- Findsen, B. & Formosa. M. (2011). *Lifelong learning in later life*. Rotterdam: Sense Publisher.

- Findsen, B. & Formosa, M. (Ed.) (2016). *International perspectives on older adult education: Research, policies and practice*. New York: Springer.
- Formosa, M. (2002). Critical geragogy: Developing practical possibilities for critical educational gerontology. *International Journal of Education and Ageing*, 17 (1), 74-85.
- Formosa, M. (2011). Critical educational gerontology: a third statement of first principles. *International Journal of Education and Ageing*, 2 (1), 7-22.
- Formosa, M. (2014). Four decades of universities of the third age: Past, present, and future. *Ageing & Society*, 34 (1), 42-66.
- Gastrón, L., & Oddone, M. J. (2008). Reflexiones en torno al tiempo y el paradigma del curso de vida. *Perspectivas en Psicología. Revista de Psicología y Ciencias afines*, 5 (2), 1-9.
- Glendenning, F. (1985). *Educational gerontology: International perspectives*. New York: St. Martins Press.
- Golpe, L. (2011). Las vejeces: memoria generacional y trayectorias vitales de otredad. In J. Yuni, (Ed.), *La Vejez en el curso de la vida* (pp.105-130). Córdoba, Argentina: Encuentro Grupo Editor.
- Golpe, L., & Yuni, J. (2012). *Cuidado de personas mayores: Dones, responsabilidad y compromiso*. Córdoba: SPU-Encuentro Grupo Editor-Unmdp-Unca.
- González Cordero, F. (2015). *Rumbo al Panteón: Tradiciones, envejecimiento y muerte en Axotlán*. Actas del VI Congreso Iberoamericano de Psicogerontología. Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo. La Paz, Bolivia, pp. 326-333.
- Gudynas, E. (2009). La dimensión ecológica del buen vivir: entre el fantasma de la modernidad y el desafío biocéntrico. *OBETS: Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 4, 49-54.
- Guzmán, S. (2014). *La vejez en el curso de la vida rural*. Catamarca, Argentina: Ed. Científica, Universidad Nacional de Catamarca.
- Hiemstra, R. (1998). From where have we come? The first twenty-five years of educational gerontology. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 77 (1), 5-14.
- Huanacuni Mamani, F. (2010). *Buen Vivir / Vivir Bien. Filosofía, políticas, estrategias y experiencias regionales andinas*. Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas (CAOI), La Paz.
- Jarvis, P. (2011). *Learning in later life: An introduction to educators and carers*. London: Kogan Page.
- Katz, S. (1996). *Disciplining old age: The formation of gerontological knowledge*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Lalivé D'Épinay, C. (1988). Le temps et l'homme contemporain. In D. Mercure & A. Wallwmacq (Eds.) *Les temps sociaux* (pp 15-30). Bruxelles: De Boeck.
- Lander, E. (2000). *La colonialidad del saber: Eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales, perspectivas latinoamericanas*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.

- Lemieux, A. & Sánchez, M. (2000). Gerontagogy beyond words: A reality. *Educational Gerontology*, 26, (5), 475-499.
- Lizarazo, N. (2011). *La no violencia y la no discriminación como campos informativos: un aporte simbólico al Buen Vivir*. Cuenca: Pressenza IPA. Agencia de Noticias de Paz y No-violencia.
- Mejía, M. (2012). Las búsquedas del pensamiento propio desde el buen vivir y la educación popular. Urgencias de la educación latinoamericana a propósito de las relaciones entre saber y conocimiento. *Educación y Ciudad* N° 23 Julio-Diciembre, pp. 9-26.
- Morgante, M., Martínez, M.R, & Remorini, C. (2008). *Viejos y jóvenes: hacia la apertura de nuevas formas de interacción y diálogo. Reflexiones desde la práctica etnográfica con adultos mayores*. Actas del VII Congreso Argentino de Antropología Social. La Plata-UNLP.
- Moya, M. (2014). *Genealogía de una vejez no anunciada: bio-política de los cuerpos envejecidos o del advenimiento de la gerontogubernamentalidad*. Polis [En línea], 36 | 2013, Publicado el 16 enero 2014. Accessed 2 October 2017 from: <http://polis.revues.org/9597>.
- OISS-Organización Iberoamericana de la Seguridad Social. (Ibero-American Organization of Social Security) (2015). Personas Adultas Mayores en Poblaciones Indígenas. *Boletín del Programa Iberoamericano de Cooperación sobre Adultos Mayores*, Vol 8, Madrid.
- Peterson, D. A. (1976). Educational gerontology: The state of the art. *Educational Gerontology*, 1 (1), 61-73.
- Quijano, A. (2000). *Coloniality of power, eurocentrism, and Latin America*. Nepantla: Views.
- Reyes, L. (2002). *Envejecer en Chiapas. Etnogerontología zoque*. Instituto de Estudios Indígenas; México: Unach.
- Reyes L., Palacios, A., Fonseca, S., & Villasana, S. (2013). La Gerontocracia y el Consejo De Ancianos. *Península* 8 (1), 7-24.
- Schuller, T. & Watson, D. (2009). *Learning through life*. Leicester: NIACE.
- Urbano, C. & Yuni, J (2015). Aprender para un envejecimiento activo: Retos para las prácticas educativas con personas mayores. En Lirio Castro Juan (Comp.) *Gerontología Social y Envejecimiento Activo*. Ed. Universitas: Madrid.
- Urbano, C., & J. Yuni. (2013). Envejecimiento activo y dispositivos Socio-culturales ¿una nueva forma de normativizar los modos de envejecer? *Revista Publicatio* 21 (2), 259-270.
- Vanhulst, J., & Beling, E. (2014). *El Buen vivir: una utopía latinoamericana en el campo discursivo global de la sustentabilidad*. Polis [En línea], 36 | 2013, Publicado el 16 enero 2014. Accessed 30 November 2016 from: <http://polis.revues.org/9638>.
- Vázquez, F. (2007). Los caminos hacia una comprensión de la vejez. *Anuario de Estudios Indígenas* XII: pp15-29.

- Villagómez, M., & Cunha de Campos, R. (2014). Buen vivir y educación para la práctica de la interculturalidad en el Ecuador. Otras prácticas pedagógicas son necesarias. *Revista Alteridad*, vol. 9, no 1, pp. 35-42.
- Withnall, A. (2002). Three decades of educational gerontology: Achievements and challenges. *Education and Ageing*, 17 (1), 87-102.
- Yuni, J. (2015). *Notas sobre o presente e o dever da educação de adultos maiores como projeto de mudança cultural. Anais VI Congresso Ibero-americano de Programas Universitários para Adultos Maiores*. Ponta Grossa, Brasil: UEPG.
- Yuni, J., & Urbano, C. (2016). *Envejecer Aprendiendo. Claves para un envejecimiento activo*. Montevideo (Uruguay): Grupo Editorial Magrú.
- Yuni, J., & Urbano, C. (2014). Transition times in adult education in Argentina: A historical-institutional perspective. In K  pplinger, B. & Robbak, S. (Eds.), *International anthology in pedagogy, andragogy, and gerontology* (pp. 103-118) Peter Lang Ed. Berlin University.
- Yuni, J., & Urbano, C. (2008a). Envejecimiento y g  nero: perspectivas te  ricas y aproximaciones al envejecimiento femenino. *Revista Argentina de Sociolog  a*, 6 (10), 151-169.
- Yuni, J., & Urbano, C. (2008b). Cartograf  a de experiencias educativas con Personas Mayores en el   mbito latinoamericano. *Revista Electr  nica Palabras Mayores*, a  o 1, agosto 2008. Lima, Per  : Facultad de Letras y Ciencias Humanas-PUC.
- Zerda, M. (2015) *La configuraci  n del envejecimiento en la cultura Aymara*. Actas del VI Congreso Iberoamericano de Psicogerontolog  a. (pp. 334-230). Universidad Cat  lica Boliviana San Pablo. La Paz, Bolivia.

On 'learning for leisure' and the margins of mainstream education: A critical review of the University of the Third Age Movement in Malaysia

Ibrahim Rahimah¹, Zakaria Noor Syamilah²,
Hamid Tengku Aizan³, and Chai Sen Tyng⁴

Abstract. The University of the Third Age (U3A) has been promoted as an example of positive engagement in later life by many countries around the world. Nevertheless, the situation of lifelong learning is diverse and varies between countries, particularly in Malaysia. Using the case of two U3A associations in the Greater Klang Valley area, the authors study the institutionalisation of later-life learning in the local context. The review outlined the operational structure and practices of the two separate groups, noting the differences between U3As in Malaysia with that of other developed countries, as well as highlighting the issues and challenges faced by advocators of older adult learning in Malaysia. It is evident that lifelong learning for older persons lagged behind in multiple ways in terms of the vision and philosophy, operational framework and funding structure despite the imperatives of related national policy discourse. Learning as a leisure activity for older adults has remained outside the education system that focuses on human capital development and return of investment. An age-stratified education system, coupled with stereotypes of ageing, compressed the time and space for learning in later life, relegating it to the margins of social welfare. At the micro level, financial uncertainties and competition for limited government funding has detracted the U3A associations from collaborating with existing civil society groups. Concomitantly, the shortage of skilled and coordinating personnel, member attrition, and cultural ideas about later-life learning negate the expansion and replication of the U3A movement in Malaysia.

Keywords: lifelong learning, older adults, University for the Third Age (U3A), policy, Malaysia.

¹ Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, Malaysia. (imahibrahim@upm.edu.my)

² Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Department of Counsellor Education and Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Educational Studies, Malaysia.

³ Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, Malaysia.

⁴ Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.

Introduction

The broad concept of lifelong learning is embodied in a utopian ideal of a learning society in which people of all ages should be encouraged, equipped, and incentivized to participate in learning across different environments on a continuing basis throughout life. The Delors report (1996) emphasised this concept of lifelong learning through the four pillars of education, namely, learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. Lifelong learning for older adults tends to centre on self-care, self-improvement, and self-fulfilment. Older adults must be equipped with the knowledge of the consequences of ageing and encouraged to partake in such learning initiatives to acquire necessary skills to deal with life transitions. Lifelong learning as a conduit for social change is widespread (Steventon, Cureton, & Clouder, 2016) and becomes relevant in the context of knowledge economy and population ageing.

The knowledge economy capitalises on education and knowledge, generally known as human capital, to serve as a productive asset and to yield returns for the individual, the business and the economy. In this regard, lifelong learning in policy is primarily related to human capital to enable people to be productive and remain in the labour market longer, upgrade their skills or venture into a new career and become more adaptable to change and multiple transitions (Barnes, Brown, & Warhurst, 2016; Boström & Schmidt-Hertha, 2017). Lifelong learning goals include providing a 'second chance' at formal learning for adults who missed the opportunity due to socio-historical circumstances earlier in life (Orr & Hovdhaugen, 2014; Siivonen, 2016). Despite that, adult learning statistics generally exclude adults over the age of 65, assuming that they have already exited the workforce (Narushima, Liu, & Diestelkamp, 2016). In other words, investments in personal productivity beyond the mandatory or normal retirement age imply opportunity costs and marginal impact on human capital. On the other hand, economic analysis also demonstrates that delayed entry and earlier exits from the workforce due to educational opportunities and compulsory retirement age would reduce the time in employment at both ends (Baruch, Sayce, & Gregoriou, 2014). Thus, an age-stratified approach on human capital development may lead to a waste of productive capacity over the life course.

In the context of population ageing, a lifelong learning paradigm entails modern policy goals to deliver physical, psychological and even societal benefits including delayed cognitive decline (Simone & Scullin, 2006), Baumgart, Snyder, Carrillo, Fazio, Kim & Johns, 2015), increased physical activity (Ahn & Janke, 2011; Greaney, Lees, Blissmer, Riebe, & Clark, 2016), improvement in quality of life (Escuder-Mollon, Esteller-Curto, Ochoa, & Bardus, 2014), as well as enhanced positive social relationships and preservation of social capital (Merriam & Kee, 2014). Learning and active participation in later life are seen as the panacea to create a more positive experience of ageing (Manheimer, 2008; Lunenfeld & Stratton, 2013). Nonetheless, Slowey and Schuetze (2015) argue that some post-secondary institutions were slow to accommodate lifelong learners and the concept of lifelong learning remained underdeveloped. In the same vein, the adoption of World Health Organisation's active ageing framework in some countries has been too focused on physical activity, paid work and volunteerism, and less so on the lifelong aspects of learning (Narushima, Liu & Diestelkamp,

2016). This is due to the fact that the adoption of the active ageing framework by governments is linked to concerns of the presumed increasing burden of financing health care and social services (Narushima et al., 2016). Therefore, despite the mainstreaming of lifelong learning in national policies for education and active ageing, the challenges of developing a coordinated and cross-sectoral responses still persist.

The engagement in learning throughout the life course and an extension in working life augur well for active ageing to mitigate issues such as ill health and dependency in old age. Since the proliferation of learning opportunities for midlife and older adults in the early 1970s, the University for the Third Age (U3A) has become a vital institution of late-life learning through continued educational experience derived from academic and non-academic courses, excursions, community services, and volunteerism (Manheimer, 2008; Formosa, 2014). Later-life learning establishments, such as the U3A have become the mainstream in many ageing societies globally and part of the societal goal of social inclusion of older adults. The change in the focus of lifelong learning on social capital and social cohesion in the new millennium have shifted the discourse largely from economic concerns to prioritising social relationships (Boström & Schmidt-Hertha, 2017). In line with the policy approach, lifelong learning policies and programmes underpin the approaches of managing the risks of an ageing population via a more inclusive educational system and socially vibrant lifestyle in later life.

Based on the case of two registered U3A associations in Malaysia, this paper reviews the institutionalisation of later-life learning in the local setting. The review delineates the operational structure and practices of the two U3A groups, highlights the differences between U3As in Malaysia with that of other developed countries, as well as discussing the issues and challenges faced by the U3A movement in Malaysia.

U3A models in selected developed countries

Different regions and countries offer different lifelong learning systems and perspectives. Lifelong learning systems in most developed countries can be categorized based on the institutional structures, welfare and governance, dominant pedagogies as well as knowledge/programmes and traditions (Green, 2006). It is clear that different nations have their own interpretation and implementation of lifelong learning. Developed countries invest, regulate, create and apply different types of lifelong programmes for their citizens. In developing countries, whilst the responsibility of developing and implementing lifelong learning programmes for older adults becomes the concern of the community and voluntary sectors, the role of the government is more prominent in organising and offering lifelong learning for older adults such as in the case of China's Universities for the Aged. Lifelong learning for older persons in other developing countries such as Thailand and Vietnam focuses more on adult literacy and decent work initiatives through Community Learning Centres (CLCs) (Singh, 2002; UNESCO, 2008; Dhirathiti, 2014).

France

France and some Mediterranean countries, have established the most centralised lifelong learning system in which the government or educational institutions provide the education and training for adults. The main objectives of developing the U3A in France are to improve the quality of older adults' life, to develop a similar educational system or programmes of younger learners for older adults, conducting research projects, and to develop programmes in gerontology. The approach to the U3A in France was initially an academic-based programme and a top-bottom approach, with the first U3A established in Toulouse in 1973. By 1978, there were already more than a 100 U3As but the movement opened up to a wider group beyond older persons in the 1990s. Many U3As in France evolved and were rebranded into Universities of All Ages (*Universite Tous Ages*) or Universities of Leisure or Free Time (*Universite du Temps Libre*) to broaden their appeal to local communities with a renewed emphasis on retraining and employment (Chamahian, 2010). The funding for these programmes are often supported by private or non-profit organisations (Kern, 2016). The national coordinating body, UFUTA (*Union Francaise des Universites de Tous Ages*), reported that there are more than 70,000 students in 45 establishments and 250 branches throughout France in 2013.

Germany

Germany and some German speaking countries, control and regulate the learning programmes at regional level as the central government does not have a major role in the educational system. Most of these countries which include Austria, Germany, German-speaking Switzerland, and the Netherlands have strong training structure which develops a clear pathway from school to work. These countries have a structured learning system with a mixture of statutory and sectoral agreements on licensing to practice. Initially, older adults were not a target group for adult education because the main interest of the educational system was to prepare citizens for jobs. In the 1970s, some educational institutes began to offer courses for older adults, concentrating on preparations for retirement and leisure activities. Later in the 1980s, the first course to educate older adults on their life situation was designed; as the number of older adults who were in the education system emerged and intergenerational learning became more popular. Concurrently, self-help groups of older adults have become more active and these groups offered learning courses in more informal manner. Informal learning is accepted to be a significant part of older adults' lives which the learners take responsibility of their own learning process. Nowadays, the federal government addresses research and educational programmes for older adults specifically for labour force development. Although there are federal-funded vocational training programmes for older workers, there are no state-funded learning activities available for retired citizens on the assumption that the population is generally sufficiently affluent to spend on their own education. In addition, there are several initiatives and programmes in later life which are held by local and regional organizations. Most of the programmes and lifelong learning initiatives are developed by the community and not by federal public institutions or agencies (Schmidt-Hertha, 2016).

Nordic countries

The Nordic countries have established rules and regulations for education at local levels in all states, yet within a robust central government framework that operates according to a steering by goals policy. Post-compulsory education and training includes high levels of public funding but also solid social partnership traditions with regards to work-based learning. The Nordic model of lifelong learning mainly focuses on creating equal opportunities for all ages to participate and gain from the educational system. There are three main goals for adult education in this model: (a) partaking in a wider society associated with the concepts of democracy, civil society and citizenship; (b) developing and maintaining the equal match between educational qualifications and skills as well as increasing key skills and performance in the labour market and (c) creating an inclusive learning system which can include all ages (Tuijnman, 2003). The main characteristics of lifelong learning according to a Nordic model are summarized as being flexible, inclusive, needs-adjusted and available for all. One of the most important success factors of the Nordic model is the collaboration that exists among not just different states but all countries and all stakeholders, even though there are different cross-national perspectives toward lifelong learning (Tikkanen, 2011). In his paper, Yenerall (2003) noted that the Finnish U3As are a “cultural hybrid” of the French and British models where a “U3A institution would be affiliated with a university programme, would use university resources, but would rely heavily on ‘local learning groups’ of older Finnish students to define the curricula to be implemented on a semester by semester basis”, with nine U3As and 24 satellite centres serving well over 4,500 older persons in 1999. The first Swedish U3A was founded in 1979 at Uppsala and a conference report in 2013 reported that there are 29 U3As in Sweden that are formally linked to the Folkuniversitetet, an adult educational association that is supported by the Government (Aldskogius, 2013). U3A did not gain a strong foothold or presence in Denmark but flourished in Norway. The web portal www.u3a.no listed over 70 links to U3A organizations in Norway. According to Tosse (2013), about half of the Norwegian U3As are extensions or associated with the Folkuniversitetet (the Folk University system) that received State subsidies and only a few have links to universities or colleges.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, and the English-speaking countries, have a highly-decentralized education system. Adult education and training is rather widespread yet highly uneven, which has factually stimulated high levels of specialization and individualization in learning (Green, 2006). The uneven approach to lifelong learning for older adults is manifested throughout the United Kingdom and the concept of lifelong learning has undergone transformation due to the development at regional, national and international levels. Although the importance of education has been putative within the country’s community and the concept of lifelong learning for older adults has been well established, the responsibility of creating and delivering lifelong learning programmes for older persons falls mainly to the voluntary sector. Hence, the funding and the quality of such programmes are variable (Withnall, 2016). The Third Age Trust, the national representative body for U3As in the UK

for example, is both a limited company and a registered charity, but local U3As operate independently of each other. With a typical size of about 250 members, there are almost 900 registered U3As at the end of 2013 (Beckett, 2014).

China

China, though still a developing country, saw its first U3A set up in Shandong in 1983 (Chiu, 2012). The U3As then grew rapidly in the cities and the China Association of Universities for the Aged (CAUA) was formed in 1988. Its growth has been staggering and it was estimated that today there are more than 60,000 UTAs in China with 7.6 million participants (Yang, 2016). These Universities of the Aged rely heavily on government support and funding but are immensely popular, with some setting up distance learning offices to reach out to underserved communities. The government of China actively supports the development of such institutions and targets to have at least one university for older persons in each city by 2020 (see 13th Five Year Plan for Elderly Care by the State Council of People's Republic of China, 2017). Different countries and regions have used global definitions of lifelong learning and created tailored approaches to meet the needs of their older adults. The way lifelong learning for older adults is interpreted and implemented in different local communities, regions and nations around the globe depends on several factors such as economic development, educational systems, culture, and the needs of society.

Case presentation

Learning in later life in Malaysia can be formal, non-formal and informal. Formal education is usually part of human capital development and takes place in formal learning institutions with a clear structure and specific learning outcomes. Non-formal learning in the context of a knowledge economy in Malaysia takes form in the workplace and on-the-job training programmes to sustain or improve individual productivity with expectations of return on investment. There is a dearth of information on later-life learning in this country and such programmes have been limited in reach and scope. For the older Malaysians, senior citizen clubs are more common in urban towns and cities, while traditional Quranic learning have always been a mainstay of Islamic communities (Muhamad & Merriam, 2000). Against this backdrop, the U3A associations are not sufficiently visible as non-formal education avenues for older adults and are commonly perceived as foreign to people who are more used to less formal educational activities in later life. For this paper, key individuals from U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, U3A Bandar Utama and the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing), were interviewed separately.

From U3A Malaysia to U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor

In 2007, the Institute of Gerontology, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), introduced a Lifelong Learning Initiative for the Elderly (LLIFE) programme and it became a precursor to the development of the first University of the Third Age in the country a year later. Initial funding was provided through a project jointly funded by the Malaysian government and the United

Nations Population Fund to promote lifelong learning among older persons. A hybrid of the British and the French U3A models, the fee-based programme was initially planned and managed by the Institute staff with full support from the public university - sharing office space, manpower and campus facilities. Right from the onset, it was envisioned that the lifelong learning programme would eventually be operated and managed by senior citizens themselves to be truly sustainable and independent. A pro-tem committee consisting of older participants was appointed in 2009 and the Association of Lifelong Learning for Older Persons (U3A) Kuala Lumpur and Selangor (No. 2522-10-SEL) was successfully registered in 2010. A gradual handover process began and since 2012, the elected committee members of the U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor have managed all aspects of the lifelong learning programme with the continued support of various government agencies and private companies. Its President is limited to a maximum of two consecutive terms and in 2017 a new and the third President was elected.

The lifelong learning programme based primarily in UPM Serdang campus retains its original aims to: (a) utilize lifelong learning to optimize the potential and ability of older adults, (b) develop an active ageing model by empowering older adults' social, cultural, and economic participation, and (c) increase Malaysian senior citizens' opportunity to contribute to national development. In the beginning, the U3A Malaysia programme, as it was known then, experimented with different modalities and fee structures. Today, members pay a fixed rate about RM30 per course, to attend weekly courses offered in a two-semester system. Instructors were engaged from within and outside the public university. Some courses, each lasting about four to six weeks, are held outside the UPM campus and members are free to suggest and propose new subjects to be included in future semester schedules. An orientation event is organized before the commencement of semester to publicize the courses and a certificate presentation ceremony is held at the end of the calendar year. From an initial 84 participating senior citizens in 2008, the programme has grown to serve well over 250 members a year on average, offering over 50 courses that has benefitted more than 800 different individuals since its inception. A majority of the members are women, Malays and almost all of them have at least a secondary level education. Most of the members are from Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and a small number from Putrajaya and other nearby states. Nonetheless, the current membership size has plateaued and the membership base presently comprises approximately 60 per cent of the Chinese ethnic group. Although there are no prerequisites for participation, a majority of the members are English-speaking and it is the working language of the Executive Committee.

The U3A programme has expanded the borders of knowledge, skills and experience among its members, and has encouraged them to be active participants in their own learning process. The members regularly provide input, feedback and evaluation regarding their courses and some of them became course instructors themselves. Members also actively participate in the running of the organization, including grant applications and other fundraising activities, maintaining their own Facebook page (www.facebook.com/U3AMalaysia) and setting up a Gamelan musical troupe. Today, the lifelong learning activities under U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor are partially funded by the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia, and members manage their own activities with the support provided from the Malaysian Research Institute of Ageing, University

Putra Malaysia. It is highly dependent on funding support from the Government to make up shortfalls from the collection of course fees and operates from a shared office space at the Institute. In 2015, the 11th Malaysia Plan singled out the University of the Third Age programme for replication at the national level with other Senior Citizen Activity Centres, NGOs and community colleges (Economic Planning Unit, 2015). Unfortunately, the up-scaling of the programme is still largely in its planning and development stages as earlier attempts for replication in Shah Alam and Kota Bharu have yet to materialize. Thus far, the U3A programme in Serdang has led to many new ideas and outreach activities such as a pilot lifelong learning programme for the institutionalised older persons at a federal-funded old folks' home 'Rumah Seri Kenangan Cheras', the e-MAS computing knowledge transfer programme in collaboration with the National Council of Senior Citizens Organization Malaysia (NACSCOM), an intergenerational learning programme at a secondary school in Kajang funded by UNESCO, and a financial education programme for mature women funded by Citi Foundation through United Way World. In all these programmes and projects by the Malaysian Research Institute of Ageing (MyAgeing), participating U3A members have played key roles as instructors, mentors, trainers, coordinators and facilitators. This does not include the numerous occasions where U3A members were included in research surveys, focus group discussions, laboratory studies as well as other community outreach activities by MyAgeing, UPM and collaborations with other institutions of higher education. All in all, the U3A programme is more than just a lifelong learning initiative to gain knowledge and leisure, it is a platform to mobilize and empower older adults (Ibrahim & Hamid, 2012).

A new model in U3A Bandar Utama

In line with the need for expansion and replication of the U3A programme in Malaysia, efforts began as early as mid-2015 where a new branch was proposed for Bandar Utama, a highly urbanized and affluent township in Selangor. Efforts to establish the Bandar Utama branch was spearheaded by several members of the U3A Kuala Lumpur (KL) and Selangor in Serdang. Defying all expectations, a soft launch of the U3A branch in Bandar Utama was quickly publicized in October 2015 and a pro-term committee was formed.

The Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing), U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor and U3A Bandar Utama have attempted to chart a path that could be replicated at the national and state levels. In the 2016, during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, attending members approved key amendments to the Association's original charter in order to accommodate a branch structure at the district or sub-district levels. However, the proposed amendments were never submitted to the Registrar of Societies (ROS) as the inaugural AGM of U3A Bandar Utama held shortly later expressed a strong desire to be an autonomous entity. U3A Bandar Utama submitted its own independent charter and was successfully registered by mid-2016 (PPM-025-10-14042016). The new group maintains its own social media platform at www.facebook.com/u3abu/.

The rapid establishment of U3A Bandar Utama was leveraged by its strong community linkages and leadership of an appointed councillor in the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ).

Links to the State government political party machinery have helped in the initial setup and securing of resources, in particularly the use of a community centre as its base of operations. Without other sources of funding, U3A Bandar Utama relies fully on membership fees and income from courses to sustain its activities. This has necessitated significant changes in the programme structure and management as fixed rate fees could not be adopted. U3A Bandar Utama is hence a perfect study of the British U3A self-help model in Malaysia. The challenges faced by the new U3A are numerous and significant, and its association to personalities with strong political affiliations can be a double-edged sword. As a case in point, long-term stability of the Association is affected by short-term changes in personal political fortunes, but the U3A Bandar Utama experience have opened up new, possible avenues for replication.

Emergent issues

Lifelong learning for older adults has lagged behind in the philosophy, framework and funding structure despite the imperatives of lifelong learning in national policy discourse. The education system is centred toward human capital development focusing on the younger generation in line with the focus on nation-building and wealth creation toward becoming a high-income nation (Economic Planning Unit, 2015; Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). Neoliberalist ideologies of cost-efficiency, privatisation and productivity intermingle with an interventionist approach in the country's deeply regulated higher education system, resulting in major reduction in university funding and a drastic loss of institutional autonomy (Lee, 2004). In this context, lifelong learning is no longer regarded as a public good but as a commodity and henceforth, the education system goals are directed at fulfilling market objectives, including graduate employability, global competitiveness and productivity. As such, when these graduates enter the workforce, they are expected by their employers to perform to achieve productivity goals. Although the employers provide skill development programmes, these trainings are tied to productivity enhancement and promotions, rather than as purposeful learning.

Policy orientation and implementation

The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MoHE) (2011) recognises lifelong learning as the third pillar in human capital development, which is built upon a continuous process to enable individuals to acquire and update their interests, knowledge, qualifications and skills at all levels of education and work environment, as well as in post-retirement. Despite the promulgation of lifelong learning in the national development plan and the higher education blueprint (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, 2011; Economic Planning Unit, 2015), these documents remained silent on the policy framework and funding structure for lifelong learning in old age did not materialise.

With a higher education system underpinned by employability and productivity, later-life learning in the non-formal and informal domains remains invisible. Even as these policies adopt the ethos of lifelong learning as learning over the life course, there is a need to slot in

the learning pursuits within a specific time frame within the formal education system. For instance, the age limit for doctoral applicants under the MoHE's MyBrain15 programme is recently revised, with the limit now set at 45 years old. It is evident that the scholarships are not attainable after a certain age probably because older adults' population is no longer considered relevant as an asset or as a valuable investment to the nation. Since older adults are not considered as a major population served by the education system, the system does not have specific allocations for learning programmes in later life; the exception is for those who attached to formal education and research. As lifelong learning is not fully integrated with the other two pillars of education, namely the school and higher education systems, the system does not recognise the contribution of other types of learning towards qualifications framework. The lack of recognition for non-formal education and informal learning in the qualifications framework was previously reported (UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, undated). The two groups that are marginalised by the lifelong learning strategy, comprising those who were excluded across various range of basic and post-basic education and those with some post-basic education but are not capable of dealing with the increasingly technological environment (Gobaloo & Mohd. Fahmi, 2013), represent the majority of later-life learners.

In most developed countries, there are many educational opportunities for older adults. However, these opportunities are not mentioned as learning initiatives but as leisure activity. In tandem with the stereotypes of ageing, older adults' opportunity to pursue learning as a leisure activity has remained at the margins of the national education system. The stereotypical view of ageing is inextricably linked to the 4Ds of death, disease, disability and decline which has deterred older adults from purposeful learning. The higher education policies have not fully transformed the understanding of knowledge and learning, missions, structures and practices in line with the idea of lifelong learning; to envision a learning society that is open, flexible, and egalitarian (Slowey & Schuetze, 2015). Hence, the education system has not embraced the culture of learning, which purports to uphold social justice with emphasis on creating educational opportunity for all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or class. There are some emerging issues to be addressed by the different sectors involved in lifelong learning for older adults, which include the education and training sectors forming a single comprehensive qualifications framework, leisure activities for retirees, training of volunteers, health education as well as self-care (Kern, 2016).

For many years, occupational training has been championed by young employees rather than older ones. To include older employees, knowledge must be developed based on the employees' cognitive capabilities, experience and motivation. Also, the diversity of needs must be addressed appropriately to meet the needs of the employees as well as the employers. Moreover, there are some older adults who already are voluntarily engaged in society, public or private sectors. The main challenge is gauge their competency and offer them the right training for acquisition of "right" skills and to meet the necessities of their jobs ((ibid.). Ideally, the spaces for learning transcends formal educational institutions, as they also encompass non-formal education in the workplace or in the community, and through self-directed learning (Slowey & Schuetze, 2015). Therefore, an age-stratified education system, coupled

with stereotypes of ageing, have compressed the time and space for learning in later life relegating it to the margins as part of social welfare.

An example of programme implemented at secondary and tertiary level educational institutions under the National Policy for Older Persons 2011, spearheaded by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MoWFCD), is the propagation of the policy and programmes for students to interact with older adults. The MoWFCD also allocates funding for U3A associations and other community organisations through the Department of Social Welfare. Being consigned under the Association Grants' Scheme, the registered U3A associations have to compete with one another as well as with the other, more established non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in support of the three main areas under the purview of the Ministry, namely women's development, family development and community development. The U3A associations are eligible to apply for a grant under the rubric of community development focusing on elder rehabilitation and wellbeing or on retirement planning. Against all these different societal causes, the chances of securing government funding are low. The awarding of grants can sometimes be subjected to the Ministry's key performance indicators and political headwinds or connections. It is evident that a coordinating body is needed to bridge the different roles of the MoWFCD and lifelong learning proponents by the Department of Community Colleges under the Ministry of Higher Education, thus justifying the repeated calls for a National Third Age Learning Directorate (N3ALD) by MyAgeing, UPM.

Unsustainable practices

The implementation of lifelong learning policies for older adults requires sector-wide approaches, which rely on a more structured funding to support inter-ministerial or inter-agency programmes impacting at the micro level. Instead, narrow sectoral arrangements which are perceived not as a multi-stakeholder process but as a specific government programme championed by a single ministry, have led to challenges at the micro level. One of the major challenges is financial unsustainability and competition for limited government funding. Community-based associations run the risk of becoming financially unsustainable due to inadequacies in organisational capacity, including general administration (procedures, roles, and functions); financial management (fund raising and applying for grants); and accountability (complying to funding requirements and to performing financial audits). As a case in point, key informants from both the U3A associations reported that they are struggling to stay afloat. Without public funding and support from both government agencies and private corporations, the U3A programmes can no longer be viable. As a consequence, the relationship between the U3A associations and other existing community groups or associations has less to do with collaboration and more about competition due to limited funding resources. The challenges in developing a mechanism to expand the U3A in Malaysia is in developing new thinking and finding a common working platform. In this manner, it would be better to assist new U3As and socialise them to wean and to run their own programmes after becoming independent, by broadening their horizon as social enterprises and soliciting support from related private institutions, businesses and industries.

The culture of dependency on the government for support will take time to resolve as the mentality is culturally enshrined and perpetuated. Affirmative action programmes and interventionist measures have been part of the country's development and welfare policy approaches, promoting dependency on government handouts (Menon, 2009; Azman, Sulaiman, Mohamad, Jamir Singh, Yahaya & Drani, 2014). At the institutional level, the idea of giving free handouts is short-lived as it depended on whether the patron remains in power or on the current priorities of a political figure or party. The process can also develop a sense of mistrust, conflict in terms of legitimacy and a quiet rivalry between the existing and the new non-governmental organisations. When politics have a hand in an organisation's dealings, questions of transparency will invariably arise. There are lessons to be learnt from past and current lifelong learning programmes in Malaysia as there are many pathways that are available (Ibrahim & Hamid, 2012). The third age learning movement must be willing to explore new modalities across the digital-traditional divide and establish more sustainable inter-sectoral partnerships.

Shortages in human resource

Both U3A associations lack the resources to hire skilled personnel to administer the programme. Not many U3A members are computer-savvy and able (or willing) to do clerical tasks using computer applications such as issuing regular letters or memos and to undertake data entry. Member mobilization is a common issue. Besides that, those who are currently doing administrative duties are already very old or are no longer interested to serve longer as a committee member. Hence, while the approach of 'learning for leisure' in U3A associations in Malaysia has attracted participation among older adults, it also demotivated them from taking responsibility in the coordination or daily operations of the courses as organizers. Many U3A members are content to be consumers of the services offered, but are generally more reluctant in getting involved as coordinators or managers.

Like many NGOs in Malaysia, the level of organisation and management of the association is still in its infancy. As a consequence, these associations are not managed professionally as an organisation. Furthermore, as a learning organisation the members should understand the expectations of the association, monitor the attainment of learning goals, evaluate the effectiveness of the learning programmes and rectify the issues that arise. As for current practices, it appears that current committee members rely upon their previous work experience and also the spirit of volunteerism to run the associations. It is the sheer dedication and hard work of the past and current executive committee members that have kept the U3A associations going and this is often undervalued or appreciated. Therefore, it will take some time for the U3As to become fully self-sustainable and functioning as the driving force for a non-formal adult learning organisation in Malaysia. In many ways, the difficulties faced by the U3A movement is closely linked to the broader problems of civil society groups in Malaysia.

Member attrition and mobilization

In U3A associations, member retention ensures long-term stability and efforts are continuously made to minimize and overcome the disruptive effects of attrition. Membership drives have been commonly undertaken to boost membership numbers but sometimes there is an underlying cause that needs to be understood. Among the Malays, there is a significant drop in active participation, with only seven per cent who are presently enrolled in courses, even though there is a slight increase in new memberships. From the key informant interviews, it was revealed that the attrition among Malay members was attributed to a lack of interest in courses offered and that many of them were involved with grandparenting duties. A resounding theme of attrition due to the lack of options to progress in a particular course was also reported during the focus group discussions at the end of a learning period by the U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The need to have economy of scale to make the class viable has also led to some courses being offered but not sufficiently taking into consideration the pool of learners' prior knowledge and experiences. The minimum number of students is set at 15 to ensure cost-effectiveness, factoring in the cost of an instructor. Even though the U3A courses are not designed to provide certification, some members have felt stuck at the introductory or beginner stages and not able to progress to intermediate or advanced levels. This is related to the fact that the different batches of students who enrolled to meet the minimum student intake for a class, may also have taken the subject earlier on and expect new content/materials to be introduced. On the other hand, the U3A Bandar Utama faced a different issue related to attrition. The fact that the courses are run as short learning stints posed a problem when some courses are cancelled or postponed at the last minute. Members who have already paid for the course voiced their frustrations and felt less keen to join upcoming activities. This is essentially about balancing member expectations and the capacity of the organizers to deliver the programme activities.

Cultural ideas about later-life learning

Based on the experience of U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malay members are more religious-centric and prefer courses such as Quranic recitation, Islamic revealed knowledge, and Arabic language. When these courses are offered in a semester, enrolment tends to increase for the older Malays. It has been argued that Malays tend to view late-life learning as an avenue to prepare for life after death and less appreciative towards more modern leisure pursuit that are centred around fun and amusement. Besides, it is also found that religious activities the most common activity for leisure among older Malays in Malaysia, especially among older females (Minhat, 2014). Malays in Singapore were also found to accept religious activities as part of the cultural script of growing old (Mehta, 2014). Therefore, courses such as musical instruments, dancing, choir and theatre were less popular within this demographic group. The second observation about course participation is that many members have a more pragmatic view about learning and lean towards practical and income-generating courses. The spirit of learning for knowledge's sake is not present, particularly in a non-formal setting. To illustrate this point, it was reported that many new members at U3A Bandar Utama did not truly understand what lifelong learning entails, as they imagined it to be an extension of

their usual senior citizen club activities such as hobby-based pursuits and socialising at the designated U3A centre. The notions of learning to empower behind the U3A programmes were not fully actualized. Whether in U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor or U3A Bandar Utama, traditional academic fare such as courses on philosophy, history, literature and current affairs have yet to make a significant presence in their line-up of subjects. At the heart of the issue is the matter of branding distinction – what sets U3A apart from other senior citizen groups and activity centres? As long as this is not satisfactorily resolved, the identity of U3As in Malaysia will remain ambiguous and indefinite.

It is clear that both the U3As in Malaysia have a lot of work cut out for them. Although U3A Kuala Lumpur and Selangor has been in operation longer, the executive committee and members have expressed little interest in further replication and up-scaling, needing to focus on the everyday running of their programmes and activities. It has achieved some funding continuity, but the annual community grant is unreliable and a strong, sustainable financial foundation has to be established if the group covets a broader, state-wide role. On the other hand, U3A Bandar Utama is trying to hit the ground running with limited resources under a short span of time. The groups will find some equilibrium and stability as time progresses, but this is contingent upon a committed effort to good management and transparent practices. The Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing has to rethink its bottom-up approaches and develop new modalities to get key stakeholders to work with each other. Justifying investments in lifelong learning for older persons is as important as the work to educate older persons to help themselves. At present, there is an urgent need for a national framework to link current and future U3As together to consolidate the cooperation with public, private and civil society partners - promoting a shared vision for third age learning for all older persons. Proponents of the U3A movement in Malaysia must adhere to several key principles for sustainability, emphasizing cooperation, efficiency and outcome-based approaches. The concept of U3A offers many promises and potentials for the empowerment, mobilization and mainstreaming of older persons. For Malaysia, at least, the U3A movement have just started to gain public attention. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step and the few tentative steps have clearly illustrated the need for greater collaboration, coordination and pooling of resources. Where the journey will lead us will depend largely on the decisions and choices of key actors.

Conclusion

Lifelong learning is a foundation of knowledge and considered as an epitome of an inclusive society. It deals with creating an environment to help all individuals gain knowledge, experience and develop skills. To ensure lifelong learning becomes a reality, it requires a comprehensive framework, collaborative alliances as well as recognition and support for learning in various spaces over the life course. In meeting the goals of lifelong learning, it takes all parties' responsibility which include governments, institutions and organisations. Resilience, resourcefulness and adaptability of older adults in every aspect of learning are required as lifelong learning faces several challenges both at the macro and micro levels. At the macro level, challenges persist such as societal transformation and cultural lag; awareness

and participation of stakeholders; incorporation the changes and transformation within the formal education system; policy integration for lifelong learning into the wider education system; an institutional framework for improved access, coordination and monitoring; as well as adequate tangible and intangible incentives. These challenges are amplified by the stereotypes of ageing which hinder later-life learning. As people get older, lifelong learning is relegated to the margins of workforce education and training systems due to the diminishing returns of human capital development on productivity beyond retirement age. Hence, we ought to be mindful of the macro context in evaluating institutional capacities such as the U3A associations in improving the quality of older adults' learning. At the micro level, the U3A associations are now part of a structured, non-formal education in later life, alongside informal learning that is customary in the community. Both of these types of learning are not recognised in the formal education system and are relegated to be part of social welfare. As a contender of funding for various social causes under the welfare department, these U3A associations have to compete for limited financial support, operate within insufficient capacity, and resort to unsustainable practices. These micro challenges have negated the expansion and replication of U3A associations in Malaysia in the absence of a strong, national coordinating body.

References

- Ahn, Y.J., & Janke, M. C. (2011). Motivations and benefits of the travel experiences of older adults. *Educational Gerontology*, 37(8), 653-673.
- Aldskogius, M. (2013). *Equal opportunities for senior citizens*. Paper presented at the Conference by the Uppsala University of the Third Age and International Association of Universities of the Third Age, September 13, 2013, Uppsala, Sweden.
- Azman, A., Sulaiman, J., Mohamad, M.T., Jamir Singh, P.S., Yahaya, M.H., & Drani, S. (2014). Addressing poverty through innovative policies: A review of the Malaysian experience. *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice*, 2 (4), 157-162.
- Barnes, S.-A., Brown, A., & Warhurst, C. (2016). *Education as the underpinning system: Understanding the propensity for learning across the lifetime (Future of Skills & Lifelong Learning Evidence Review)*. London: Foresight, Government Office for Science.
- Baruch, Y., Sayce, S., & Gregoriou, A. (2014). Retirement in a global labour market: A call for abolishing the fixed retirement age. *Personnel Review*, 43 (3), 464-482.
- Baumgart, M., Snyder, H. M., Carrillo, M. C., Fazio, S., Kim, H., & Johns, H. (2015). Summary of the evidence on modifiable risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia: A population-based perspective. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, 11 (6), 718-726.
- Beckett, F. (2014). *The U3A story: A short history of the U3A movement*. London: Third Age Press.
- Boström, A.-K., & Schmidt-Hertha, B. (2017). Intergenerational relationships and lifelong learning. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 15 (1), 1-3.
- Chamahian, A. (2010). *Se former dans les universites tous ages : Contextes educatifs, logiques d'engagement et experiences du vieillir (Training in Universities of All Ages: Educational*

- contexts, engagement logics and experiences of age). Paper presented at the Congress of Education and Training Research (AREF), 13-16 September, 2010, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Chiu, E. (2012). Elderly learning in Chinese communities: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. In G. Boulton-Lewis & M. Tam (Eds.), *Active ageing, active learning: Issues and challenges* (pp. 141-162). New York: Springer.
- Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
- Dhirathiti, N. (2014). Lifelong learning policy for the elderly people: A comparative experience between Japan and Thailand. *The International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33 (6), 770-790.
- Economic Planning Unit. (2015). *The 11th Malaysia Plan (RMK11), 2016-2020*. Putrajaya, Federal Territory, Malaysia: EPU.
- Escuder-Mollon, P., Esteller-Curto, R., Ochoa, L., & Bardus, M. (2014). Impact on senior learners' quality of life through lifelong learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 131, 510-516.
- Formosa, M. (2014). Four decades of Universities of the Third Age: Past, present, future. *Ageing and Society*, 34 (1), 42-66.
- Gobaloo, V., & Mohd. Fahmi, Z. (2013). The Malaysian qualifications framework and the recognition of prior learning. In M. Singh & R. Duvekot (Eds.), *Linking Recognition Practices and National Qualifications Frameworks* (pp. 125-130). Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning.
- Greaney, M. L., Lees, F. D., Blissmer, B. J., Riebe, D., & Clark, P. G. (2016). Psychosocial Factors associated with physical activity in older adults. *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 36(1), 273-291.
- Green, A. (2006). Models of Lifelong Learning and the 'knowledge society'. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 36(3), 307-325.
- Ibrahim, R., & Hamid, T. A. (2012). Experience of lifelong learning among participants of LLIFE programme. In T. A. Hamid, H. Sulaiman, & S. F. Z. Abdullah (Eds.), *Profile of older Malaysians: Current and future challenges* (pp. 280-303). Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Kern, D. (2016). France. In B. Findsen & M. Formosa (Eds.), *International perspectives on older adult education: Research, policies and practice*. New York: Springer International.
- Lee, M. N. N. (2004). Global trends, national policies and institutional responses: Restructuring higher education in Malaysia. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 3(1), 31-46.
- Lunenfeld, B., & Stratton, P. (2013). The clinical consequences of an ageing world and preventive strategies. *Best practice & Research: Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 27(5), 643-659.
- Manheimer, R. J. (2008). Lifelong learning in aging societies: Emerging paradigms. *Annual Review of Gerontology & Geriatrics*, 28, 111-127.
- Mehta, K. K. (2014). Active ageing in Singapore. In A. Walker & C. Aspalter (Eds.), *Active ageing in Asia* (pp. 151-164). Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis.
- Menon, J. (2009). Macroeconomic management amid ethnic diversity: Fifty years of Malaysian experience. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 20(1), 25-33.

- Merriam, S. B., & Kee, Y. (2014). Promoting community wellbeing: The case for lifelong learning for older adults. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 64(2), 128-144.
- Minhat, H. S. (2014). Why Malay elderly female frequently engaged in religious activities during leisure? A qualitative approach in Selangor. *Malaysian Journal of Public Health Medicine*, 14 (1), 39-46.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2015). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Preschool to Post-Secondary Education)*. Accessed on 21 July 2017 from: <http://www.padu.edu.my/blueprint>
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2007). *National higher education action plan 2007-2010*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Ministry of Higher Education.
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2011). *Blueprint on enculturation of lifelong learning for Malaysia, 2011-2020*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Higher Education.
- Muhamad, M., & Merriam, S. B. (2000). *Aging and learning in a non-Western culture: The case of Malaysia*. Paper presented at the 41st Adult Education Research Conference, 2-4 June 2000, Vancouver, Canada.
- Narushima, M., Liu, J., & Diestelkamp, N. (2016). Lifelong learning in active ageing discourse: Its conserving effect on wellbeing, health and vulnerability. *Ageing and Society*, 1-25.
- Orr, D., & Hovdhaugen, E. (2014). 'Second chance' routes into higher education: Sweden, Norway and Germany compared. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33 (1), 45-61.
- Schmidt-Hertha, B. (2016). Germany. In B. Findsen & M. Formosa (Eds.), *International perspectives on older adult education: Research, policies and practice* (pp. 133-143). New York: Springer International.
- Siivonen, P. (2016). Becoming an educable lifelong learning subject: adult graduates' transitions in education and working life. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 35(1), 36-50.
- Simone, P. M., & Scullin, M. (2006). Cognitive benefits of participation in lifelong learning institutes. *LLI Review*, 1 (44-51).
- Singh, M. (Ed.) (2002). *Institutionalising lifelong learning: Creating conducive environments for adult learning in the Asian context*. Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO.
- Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H. (2015). All change - no change? Lifelong learning and higher education revisited. In M. Milana & T. Nesbit (Eds.), *Global Perspectives on Adult Education and Learning Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- State Council of People's Republic of China. (2017). *13th 5-Year Plan for Elderly Care*. The State Council of the People's Republic of China.
- Stevenson, G., Cureton, D., & Clouder, L. (2016). *Student attainment in higher education: Issues, controversies and debates*. London: Routledge.
- Tikkanen, T. (2011). From managing a problem to capitalizing on talent and experience of older workers. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22 (6), 1217-1220.
- Tosse, S. (2013). *Learning in later life and the U3A movement in Norway*. Paper presented at the 5th Nordic Conference on Adult Learning, 5-6 March, 2013, Reykjavik, Iceland.

- Tuijnman, A. C. (2003). A 'Nordic model' of adult education: What might be its defining parameters? *International Journal of Educational Research*, 39 (3), 283-291.
- UNESCO. (2008). *Community learning centres: Country reports from Asia*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2015). *Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Malaysia*. Accessed on 21 July 2017 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002297/229719E.pdf>
- UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning. (undated). *Malaysia*. Accessed on 21 July 2017 from: http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/UIIL_Global_Inventory_of_NQFs_Malaysia.pdf
- Withnall, A. (2016). United Kingdom. In B. Findsen & M. Formosa (Eds.), *International perspectives on older adult education: Research, policies and practice* (pp. 467-480). New York: Springer International.
- Yang, Q. (2016). *U3A in China: Active and healthy ageing and intergenerational cooperation*. Paper presented at the U3A Asia Pacific Alliance and AIUTA International Conference, 11-12 October, 2016, Osaka, Japan.
- Yenerall, J. D. (2003). Educating an aging society: The University of the Third Age in Finland. *Educational Gerontology*, 29 (8), 703-716.

Long-term care of older persons in India: Learning to deal with challenges

Ilango Ponnuswami¹ and Rangasamy Rajasekaran²

Abstract. It is estimated that the recent trends of an escalating older population in India will drastically increase in the next few decades. According to the United Nations Population Division and World Population Policies, persons above 60 years of age are projected to increase from eight per cent in 2010 to 19 per cent in 2050. This significant change in the older age population, along with the implications of socio-economic, cultural, financial and health issues will lead to challenges in long-term care of older persons from a gerontological social work perspective. Currently available elder care services in the country, mainly include residential care, both free and paid, day care centres, geriatric care in selected government and private hospitals and other services by non-governmental organisations. The availability and affordability of care, especially Long-Term Care, at primary, secondary and tertiary levels is an essential aspect to combat the health problems of older persons. Long-term care for the older persons which had remained primarily within the domain of families has started gaining recognition as an emerging vital area of service industry. However, there is a need to educate all stakeholders including older people themselves, caregivers and the entire society about how to deal with the enormous challenges of long-term care for the elderly. This paper supports the argument for a nationwide survey of existing care delivery systems, facilities, existing and required manpower, quality of eldercare services, regulatory and monitoring systems and legal measures. Greater awareness is required about the enormous need for long-term care, of growing professionalism of long-term care and of the innumerable socio-political and economic challenges associated with these developments.

Keywords: long-term care, quality of care, elder care, learning in later life.

Introduction

India's population explosion has engendered alarming signs to be addressed by all relevant professionals. Areas of population pyramid shift show an increased percentage of the older age population and the epidemiological transition particularly characterized by Non-Communicable diseases. The census of India 2011, reports an Indian population of 1.21 billion

¹ Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, India.
(pon.ilango@bdu.ac.in)

² Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, India.

which comprises of nearly eight per cent of older people population who are 60 years plus making up approximately 104 million persons aged 60 years or above in India with 53 million females and 51 million males (Census of India, 2011). By 2050, the 60 years plus population is expected to increase approximately to 323 million which constitutes 19 per cent of the total population, a population larger than the entire population of USA. The 'Elderly in India 2016' report by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation states that there were 103.8 million (8.6 per cent of the population) elderly persons in 2011 as compared to 76.6 million (5.6 per cent) in 2001. The report states that 71 per cent of the elderly population resides in villages while 29 per cent are in the cities. The gender ratio among elderly people was as high as 1028 women per 1,000 males in 1951; it subsequently dropped and again has reached 1033 in 2011 (Central Statistical Organisation, 2016).

Table 1: Elderly Population (aged 60 years & above) in India (millions)

Source	Total			Rural	Urban
	Persons	Female	Male		
Census 1961	24.7	12.4	12.4	21.0	3.7
Census 1971	32.7	15.8	16.9	27.3	5.4
Census 1981*	43.3	21.1	22.0	34.7	8.5
Census 1991**	56.7	27.3	29.4	44.3	12.4
Census 2001***	76.6	38.9	37.8	57.4	19.2
Census 2011***	103.8	52.8	51.1	73.3	30.6

* The 1981 Census could not be held in Assam owing disturb conditions. The population figures for 1981 of Assam were worked out by 'interpolation'.

** The 1991 Census was not held in Jammu & Kashmir. The population figures for 1991 of Jammu & Kashmir were worked out by interpolation.

*** The figures include the estimated population of Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur

(Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, 2016).

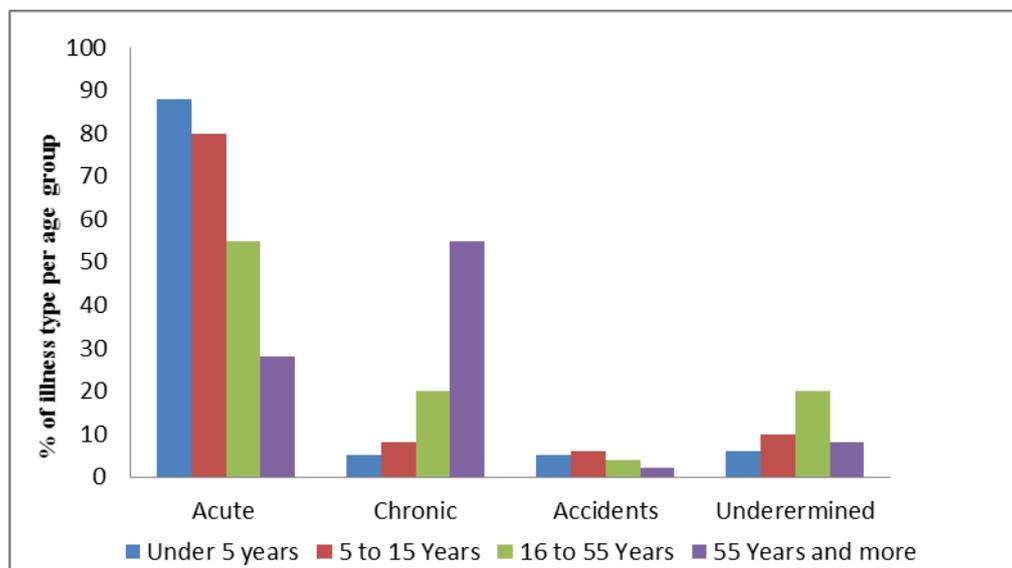
Among the older population in India, a key factor is that two thirds live in a rural setting. Half of the rural older population could be categorised as enduring poor socio-economic status; the majority of them, particularly elderly women are dependent on their families.

Illness among older persons

The prevalence and morbidity patterns of disease among the older population show multiple ailments and a mixture of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. It also includes the impairment of sensory functions and degenerative diseases. Thus, the disease burden among our elderly population demands a review and reformation of our public health system with specific focus on long term care for an older population. Therefore, as shown in Figure 1, a basic structure of elder care needs to be strategically formulated to develop a holistic model to offer a complete package for comprehensive care for the elderly population. Integrated care should promote a proactive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative service.

An analysis made by the National Sample Survey Organisation (2006) clearly portrays the morbidity patterns of various age groups, in which the older population is subject to greater burdens of multiple ailments.

Figure 1: Burden of illness type among Indians



Source: Dror, Putten-Rademaker, & Koren, 2008

Long-term care for older persons

India's changing age structure is characterized by an upward trend explained by an increased life expectancy achieved because of economic wellbeing, better medicines and medical facilities and reduction in fertility rates. The decadal growth in general population has shown a decreasing trend since 1961 and so is the growth in elderly population till 2001. This growing elderly population is becoming a major challenge for our health care delivery system. This draws attention to a wider gamut of implications both for the elderly persons and to society related to health issues, long-term care (LTC), social security measures, policy and legal initiatives, economic consequences and other areas of life. Peterson's (1980) three themes - education for older adults, public education about ageing, and the education of professionals and paraprofessionals in the field of ageing, is a useful framework to apply to the domain of LTC. Learning in later life is also considered to be one among the various emerging social innovations for better ways of living in the later life. This is evident from various cognitive learning research outputs. Most of the studies related to improving cognitive abilities affirm that learning improves brain function.

General understanding of the concept and definitions of long-term care

LTC service is a broad term used to describe a constellation of services, including a continuum of both medical and non-medical services designed to support the needs of older persons living with chronic health problems that affect their ability to perform everyday activities (McCall, 2001). Though the term appears to be self-explanatory, it is not very easy to arrive at a simple universal definition. The term LTC has moved its definitional framework into an operational concept. In this article we strive to incorporate all the dimensions, components and perspectives with reference to older persons only. Historically, the term “long-term care” has been used to refer to services and supports to help frail older adults and younger persons with disabilities to maintain their daily lives. Recently, alternative terms have gained wider use, including “long-term services and supports”. The needed support, depending on the degree of limitation, can be provided at home, in the community or in institutions. LTC is an integral part of health and social systems. It includes activities undertaken for people requiring care by informal caregivers (family, friends and neighbours), by formal caregivers, including professionals and auxiliaries (health, social and other workers), and by informal caregivers and volunteers. The need for LTC is influenced by changing physical, mental and/or cognitive functional capacities that are in turn, over the course of an individual’s life, influenced by the environment. Many people regain lost functional capacities, while others decline. The type of care needed and the duration of such care are thus often difficult to predict. The goals for LTC present obvious conflicts. Most apparent is the tension between safety versus choice, control, individuality and continuity of a meaningful personal life (Kane & Kane, 2001).

However, the goal of LTC is to ensure that an individual who is not fully capable of long-term self-care can maintain the best possible quality of life, with the greatest possible degree of independence, autonomy, participation, personal fulfilment and human dignity (World Health Organisation, 2000). Appropriate LTC includes respect for that individual’s values, preferences and needs; it may be home-based or institutional. People who require home-based LTC may also need other services, such as acute physical or mental health care and rehabilitation, together with financial, social and legal support. Informal caregivers should therefore have access to supportive services, including information on and assistance in securing help, training and respite (*ibid.*).

LTC services include assistance with activities of daily living [(ADLs) e.g., dressing, bathing, and toileting]; instrumental activities of daily living [(IADLs) e.g., medication management and housework]; and health maintenance tasks (Harris-Kojetin, Sengupta, Park-Lee & Valverde, 2013). LTC services assist people in maintaining or improving an optimal level of physical functioning and quality of life and can include help from other people and special equipment and assistive devices. However, to have a comprehensive understanding of LTC it is worth mentioning the definition by Pratt (2016). According to Pratt (*ibid.*), LTC can be defined as a variety of individualized and well-coordinated total care services that promote the maximum possible independence for people with functional limitation and that are provided over a period of extended time, using appropriate current technology and available

evidence-based practices, in accordance with holistic approach while maximizing both the quality of clinical care and individual's quality of life.

Figure 2: Significance of long-term care in the emerging context of India's population explosion.



The current status, challenges and future of long-term care

In the Indian scenario, the elderly population is the fastest growing and will equal the population of United States of America by 2050. Families have been playing the major responsible role for providing necessary care. Most are able to support a continuum of basic care only. Yet, LTC for older persons in India has always been a family affair. At the policy level, the National Policy on Older Persons (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) was adopted in the year 1999 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment [MoSJE], 1999). Its mandate was derived from the Constitution of India. Article 41, the Directive Principles of State Policy, that stressed the State, “within the limits of its economic capacity and development, shall make effective provision for securing the right of public assistance in cases of old age”. Hence, the National Policy on Older Persons directs the state to improve the quality of life of its citizens. The right to equality has been guaranteed by the Constitution as a fundamental right and these provisions apply equally to older persons. In spite of the policy measures, currently we do not have a sophisticated system to integrate the specialized multi-disciplinary psycho-geriatric/gerontological care. This needs to cut across or intersect with all the disciplines to incorporate all the necessary aspects of an old age home or senior citizen accommodation that provides not only shelter to older people with mental and physical disability but with required assistance in activities of daily living and intense nursing care with multi-disciplinary approach. Only a very few institutions such as the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) offer professional courses in gerontological social work in India. This lack of provision is testimony to its place as the least important and lowest priority among social work professionals in the field. It reminds us to take serious steps and measures to sort out the emerging LTC needs and the available professional human resource labour force to take up this challenge. Further, there has been limited research to address the hurdles from the gerontological social work perspective. But the majority of the older population prefers to receive informal care which is

bound by the traditional value of being looked after by their children, especially by sons rather than daughters. This caring exerts enormous amount of stress and burden on the family, relatives and caregivers. People who are primarily associated with elderly persons may experience economic constraints and burdens in their lives, irrespective of economic status. Older people living alone without any surviving caregivers also need long term care at some point of time or the other – this is currently problematic.

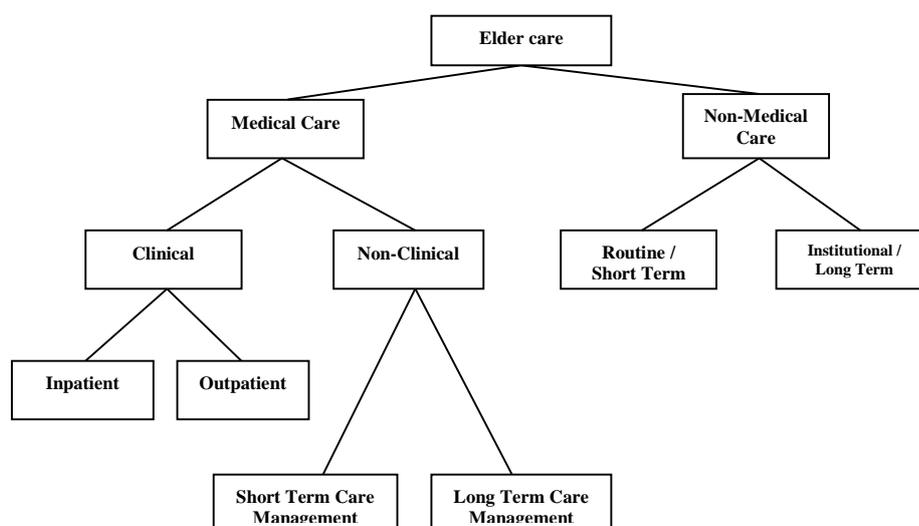
The status of a large majority of older persons is by and large ignored. So the time has come for serious thinking to create a provision of LTC funding in India. This should also include a creation of an autonomous body to pool together all the resources from diverse sources and utilise them for an older population who are desperately in need of LTC. Otherwise, they will have no other means to access and afford care by themselves. Recently, the central government launched the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) to address the health-related problems of elderly people (Government of India, 2011). This is intended to provide additional human resources and funding for home care, screening for early diagnosis, vaccinations for high-risk groups and health education for caregivers. The Vision of the NPHCE is to provide accessible, affordable and high-quality long-term, comprehensive and dedicated care services to an ageing population. It intends to create a new “architecture” for ageing; to build an enabling environment for “a society for all ages” and to promote the concept of active and healthy ageing in the health system of India (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2011). The more specific objectives of NPHCE are to provide easy access to health services through community based primary health care; to identify health problems and manage them; to provide referral services to district hospitals and regional geriatric centres; to build the capacity of medical and paramedical professionals as well as caretakers within the family and to coordinate services with the National Health Mission, the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and homoeopathy (AYUSH) and MoSJE.

Social welfare support provided to elderly persons includes old-age pensions, subsidized food and transport, lower income tax and higher savings interest rates. Benefits under certain schemes for the elderly, such as the old-age pension scheme and the public distribution system, are available to those below the poverty line. However, most elderly who live in rural areas are unaware of such services. Indian bureaucratic and administrative procedural systems make the elder population’s access to these benefits into a Herculean task. The system should be more transparent and made easier to access for the older population. However, in India we do not have a clear, transparent, proper and periodical monitoring of the implementation and the effectiveness of Government programmes such as the National Policy on Older Persons, NPHCE in accordance with older people’s needs and demands. Thus, the National Policy on Older Persons (MoSJE, 1999.) and National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (2011) came into existence to address the health care of the elderly population. Their major theme exclusively focused on long term care with specific reference to older people.

Generally, home-based care is the acceptable norm in our country and it is remarkable that it meets the socio-cultural expectations of the people in line with our traditional value system.

Institutional care is neither affordable nor accessible to most of the elderly because of economic concerns and poor social security schemes or assistance for the elderly people in our country. Therefore, the home-based informal care is seen as the best choice and the easiest way to offer long term care for elderly people. Nevertheless, this over-dependence on familial care in this country has to go a long way to meet the demands for sufficient LTC services. The comprehensive policy framework that offers LTC as a fundamental right of older people has to be reframed carefully by considering the current political, socio-cultural and prevailing economic conditions. The priority for LTC services in India is still very low and continues to be the least governmental priority because most of the policy-makers think only in terms of investment and returns or equity shares of growth. Thus, the past contributions of the older population have been discounted and never thought of as an asset in terms of knowledge or expertise, wisdom and their ability to actively participate in the community as productive contributive members. However, an increasing life expectancy, an expanding middle class, technological sophistication, cultural fusions, the impact of globalization, free trade, the fast-growing workforce of women—all these factors have paved the way for greater demands for LTC. This is mainly because of the shrinking of the working population and the growing numbers in old age. So there is a mismatch in regard to the people in the work force. This is one of the major reasons why the private sector is providing more home care for the elderly. This trend of privatization is currently blooming in India, as a paid service, particularly noticed in states such as Kerala. Private home care has emerged as a timely service for those who are able to afford to hire such services. Then what about the rest of the elderly population? There are various stakeholders: the Government, NGOs, voluntary organisations, philanthropists, professionals, practice researchers and the whole society. It is urgent to develop an effective model to offer holistic and integrated approaches that include every aspect and dimension of LTC for an older population along with the considerations of availability, affordability and accessibility. It is important to maximize quality of care to emphasize elders' quality of life.

Figure 3: Flow Chart Showing the Basic Structure of Elder Care.



(Source: www.deloitte.com/2014)

Comprehensive long-term care: Links to later life learning in India.

Comprehensive LTC refers to the available, affordable, accessible and quality elder care which offers a constellation of medical, social and personal aspects of care including preventive, curative, restorative, legislative and rehabilitative measures. It aims to maximize the independence and dignity of older persons and to minimize the dysfunctionality; to encourage active healthy ageing by integrating appropriate and relevant application of technology; to incorporate all spheres of socio-economic, cultural-political and spiritual milieu of an Indian context, specifically to elders who need LTC. Effort is required to develop a common reserve funding structure, to merge with a suitable infrastructure to implement the social welfare programmes and policies to review the status of elderly persons on a regular periodical basis, preferably in a wider nationwide context. Equally, the demand and the challenge of LTC necessitates a strong data base and preparation of competent professional care givers along with education, training and research activities.

Figure 4: Comprehensive long-term care: Links to later life learning in India. (Authors)



According to Walter (2017), learning can improve overall mental health. While technology is becoming more sophisticated; there is technology, tailored specifically to seniors to make things easier especially for online learning. The Springfield College authorities confirms that Learning in Later Life Programme is a way to occupy the seniors to expand their knowledge on a variety of subjects while hopefully keeping their brain in good working order. Such programmes are helpful to reawaken seniors' passion for learning. It also gives them an opportunity to meet and make new friends providing a platform for older adults' socialization in such a way that their time is fruitfully occupied and their mind is reactivated. The establishment of the role of later life learning in the context of 'successful ageing' includes both sociological and educational perspectives, taking into consideration the complexity of older people's engagement in society and participation in education with regard to social use for the learning outcomes and personal growth. The positive impact of learning in later life linked to maintenance of cognitive function and the effective utilization of personal growth and self-efficacy of older adult learners have been supported by findings of many recent studies (Štatiéné, 2015). Education has been identified as one of the predictors of active engagement with life as an essential component of successful ageing; it can be helpful in terms of LTC of the older persons too (ibid.).

Regarding public education about ageing in the Indian context, it is very urgent. The main focus is to promote positive ageing and to raise the awareness of the general public to various ageing-related issues. Mass media tools including social, print and electronic media should be better utilized. The youth of the nation have to be targeted to prepare them for developing suitable knowledge of ageing to initiate innovations for better ways of living in their later years of life. From a gerontological social work perspective, knowledge building about ageing becomes essential to understand the ageing related issues of our nation. This in turn provides a rich scope for offering professional social work practice and service to LTC for older persons. Empirical research practice and academic exercises help to pave the way for innovation. Innovation can form the architecture to develop a comprehensive model that depicts a holistic and integrated approach towards learning in later life aligned with LTC of older persons. The following framework from the pioneer educational gerontologist, Peterson (1980), aims to connect LTC with learning in later life. His three foci were: Education for older adults, Public education about ageing and the Education of professionals and paraprofessionals in the field of ageing.

Education for older adults

Health literacy is defined as the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways that promote and maintain good health. Being health literate involves a multitude of cognitive processes that are challenging for any one at any age. First of all, one needs an understanding of what kind of health issues he/she is struggling with, the kind of treatment given, the complexity of dealing with prescriptions and referrals, choosing appropriate health care service provider/s, dealing with costs, insurance and social security benefits, if at all there are any, while being exposed to a constant unstoppable inflow of conflicting information, ideas and suggestions from friends, relatives, magazines, internet etc. all these cognitive tasks

become increasingly difficult for older adults since they tend to process information at a slower pace, have less working memory (the ability to process multiple bits of information at a given moment), and experience difficulty in comprehending abstractions.

Age-appropriate teaching strategies for the older adult must be planned, purposeful and adapted to accommodate the special needs of the elderly person. Because of the high prevalence of inadequate health literacy in this population, all teaching should, at a minimum, include practices that have been demonstrated as effective with low literacy learners. However, specific strategies that adhere to the principles of geragogy should also be an integral part of every professional's teaching repertoire to promote health literacy in this special population. Geragogy is a model of teaching older adults that is based on the work of Knowles' Adult Learning Theory (Hayes, 2005). Teaching interventions within this framework are designed to compensate for the cognitive, sensory and physical effects of ageing, and to promote independence and achievement of the older learner's full potential. Age-appropriate teaching strategies that are based on the principles of geragogy include approaching the older adult in a way that communicates respect, acceptance and support, (Cornett, 2006). Creating a learning environment in which the older person can comfortably acknowledge what is and is not understood, scheduling several brief teaching sessions in mid-morning when energy levels are high, allowing additional time for the older adult to process new information by pausing after presenting each new concept or bit of information, helping the older adult focus, speaking slowly and clearly, providing written materials, using visuals and making repetitions wherever necessary.

Public education about ageing

In India, probably like many other countries, there is a serious lack of understanding about ageing and its associated problems among the general public. There is also cultural stereotyping of ageing as an inevitable stage of life marked by sufferings. However, owing to the enormous diversity in the country, even public perceptions concerning old age and their ways of dealing with the older people and their problems are also quite diverse. Besides, the media have been promoting a very typical stereotypical image of ageing as a stage of life marked by illness, dependency and a lack of self-worth and respect from the society. On the other hand, of late, the rapid increase in the population of older people has triggered a sudden upsurge of commercial interest concerning LTC of the elderly who are seen as a potential growing market opportunity. Against this complex backdrop, we also have the widespread lack of awareness regarding ageing among the vast majority of rural people. The governments, both state and central, have undertaken enormous awareness campaigns concerning problems of children, women and even youth to some extent, but have not carried out any kind of public awareness campaigns regarding the situation, problems and rights of the older people. The NGOs working in the field of ageing in India have been involved in effective public awareness campaigns on ageing in isolated pockets of the country. However, their reach is very limited. The national level NGO HelpAge India has been doing exemplary work in this regard but even their reach is quite limited and restricted to their partner organizations.

When we understand the situation concerning public awareness of ageing in India, it is quite easy to understand how the specialized area of LTC of older people might be addressed in the country. The LTC of elderly predominantly remains as an area of expertise for a handful of corporate houses and some large NGOs. The vast majority of people in India feel that the responsibility of providing LTC to the elderly is primarily the responsibility of their families and fail to understand the responsibility of the government sector. Hence, there is a need to create awareness among the public concerning the need for LTC, its scientific aspects, the specific requirements and the responsibility of the state and other stakeholders in the matters relating to LTC of older people.

Education of professionals and para professionals

Provision of formal LTC to the population requires an adequate, skilled and diverse workforce. Professionals-including physicians, social workers, therapists (physical, occupational, and speech), mental health providers, dietitians, pharmacists, podiatrists and dentists-provide many different kinds of essential services to at least a subset of those using LTC. Non-professionals, who provide the majority of personal care services, such as assistance with eating or bathing, have a major impact on both the health status and the quality of life of long-term care users. In addition to direct care providers (or caregivers), administrative, food service workers, housekeeping staff, and other personnel play essential roles.

The education and training requirements for formal LTC providers and informal care providers are clearly important for ensuring high quality of care. The training should be directed to all professionals, not only nurses but also therapists, social workers as well as other caregiving personnel. Providers themselves are principally responsible for ensuring adequate training and competency of their workforce. As a general principle, the workforce should have the education, training and commitment to provide care that is consistent with the needs of the individuals being served.

Emphasis in the future should be placed not only on the content of training programmes but more importantly on competency testing of skills for both formal and informal care providers. Training programmes should be tailored to provide appropriate care to special population groups such as individuals with developmental disabilities or AIDS, children and other groups. Providers also have to be trained and be competent in providing care that uses the most current clinical practice standards for different conditions such as dementia, diabetes, traumatic brain injury and others. Professionals have to be competent in care assessment and planning, supervision of care workers, coordination of care services, and client- and family-centered care. Increased attention to the education and training of the LTC workforce is needed to ensure that staff have both the knowledge and the skills to provide high quality of care, with particular attention to client-directed care and the needs of special population groups.

Final comments

The present scenario of availability and utility of facilities for LTC of older persons is highly deplorable considering the rapidly growing older population in the context of declining family care. LTC should be considered as a priority by the government. The NPHCE should include a special infrastructure to deliver and monitor LTC. Systematic development of an exclusive funding structure that is proportionate with the growing older population becomes essential. It should include effective and active coordination and integration of multi-ministerial teams to carry out the policies and programmes for older persons as an urgent priority. However, effort should be made to see that such a formal structure does not weaken the intergenerational solidarity in the Indian society. Gerontological social work perspectives need to be integrated with training and development of skilled and competent manpower to effectively address the needs and demands of older population with a specific focus on LTC. Knowledge building process about ageing for the younger generation should be given prime importance. Government policies need to focus on legislative measures, social welfare programmes, non-governmental agencies' involvement, corporate and community initiatives to evolve a universal plan of action for learning in later life and LTC for older persons.

References

- Census of India, (2011). *Census of India*. Accessed 23 July 2017 from: www.censusindia.net
- Central Statistical Organisation. (2016). *Elderly in India: profile and programmes*. New Delhi: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Cornett, S. (2006). *The effects of aging on health literacy*. Accessed 16 February 2009 from: http://medicine.osu.edu/sitetool/sites/pdfs/ahecppublic/HL_Module_Elderly.pdf.
- Dror, D.M., Putten-Rademaker, O., & R. Koren, (2008). Cost of illness: Evidence for a study of five resource-poor locations in India. *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 127: 347-361.
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (2016). Long-term care of older persons in India. *Sdd-Spps Project Working Papers Series on long-term care for older persons in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: ESCAP
- Government of India. (2011). *National programme for the health care of the elderly (NPHCE), Operational guidelines*, New Delhi: Government of India.
- Harris-Kojetin L., Sengupta M., Park-Lee E., & Valverde, R. (2013). *Long-term care services in the United States: 2013 overview*. Accessed 23 July 2017 from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nsltcp/long_term_care_services_2013.pdf
- Hayes, K. (2005). Designing written medication instructions: Effective ways to help older adults self-medicate. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 31 (5): 5-10.
- Kane, R.L. & Kane, R.A. (2001). What older people want from long-term care, and how they can get it. *Health Affairs*, 20 (6): 114-127.
- McCall, N. (2001). *Who will pay for the long term care? Insights from the Partnership programme*. Chicago, IL: Health Administration Press.
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), (2011). *National programme for health care of the elderly: Operational guidelines*. New Delhi: Government of India.

- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. (1999). *National policy on older persons*. Accessed 15 August 2014 from: <http://socialjustice.nic.in/hindi/pdf/npop>.
- National Sample Survey Organization. (2006). *Morbidity, health care and the condition of the aged: National sample survey, 60th Round, Report no. 507 (60/25.0/1)*. New Delhi: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.
- Peterson, D.A. (1980). Who are the educational gerontologists? *Educational gerontology*, 5 (1): 65-77.
- Pratt, J. R., (2016). *Long-term care: Managing across the continuum*. Burlington, Ontario: Jones & Baret.
- Registrar General, (2006). *Census of India*. Accessed 23 July 2017 from: www.censusindia.net.
- Štatiéné, S. (2015). Learning in later life: The perspective of successful ageing. *Applied research in health and social sciences: Interface and interaction*, 12 (1): 11-23.
- Walter, J., (2017). *The benefits of learning in later life*. Accessed 6 March. 2017 from: [https://www opensesame.com/ blog/benefits-learning-later-life](https://www.opensesame.com/blog/benefits-learning-later-life).
- World Health Organisation, (2000). *Home-based long-term care: Report of a WHO study group*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

**Pachana, N.A. (2016). *Ageing: A very short introduction*.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 152 pp. ISBN 978-01-987-
253-29**

Banu Cangoz¹ and Yesim Gokce Kutsal²

Ageing: A very short introduction is organised around six well-established core areas related with ageing. Since recently more and more researchers have turned their attention to the problems of ageing in later periods of life, selected areas provide readers with a framework to understand the ageing and a unique balance of traditional and contemporary perspectives. This approach invites readers to develop a modern appraisal of ageing. The book covers a brief history, physical and biological aspects of ageing, psychology of ageing, social and interpersonal aspects of ageing, positive and successful ageing and reflections on ageing and future directions. The book is important to many features of daily life, from workplace and the family, to public policy matters. It is complex and new questions are continually raised about how behaviour changes with age.

The areas explored in *Ageing: A very short introduction* include a historical perspective of gerontology as an important emergent field of study; cultural myths and common wrong assumptions about ageing, later life, and old age; health and functional abilities in old age which are necessary for older persons to experience productive, successful and active ageing; the interface of increasing age on one hand, death, grief, loss and loneliness; the changes of familial dynamics and structures following retirement; the daily narratives and experiences of older persons; ageing-in-place and the impact of social location on wellbeing in later life; and the importance of financial planning as life expectancies continue to expand and grow. It is positive to note that that these areas are not only present in different chapters but are to a great extent interrelated in various parts of the book. Indeed, it is theoretically and empirically impossible to discuss gerontology without underlining the multifaceted and interdisciplinary nature of ageing and later life.

The publication *Ageing: A very short introduction* is organised around eight key chapters. The second chapter, 'Gerontology: A historical review' provides an overview of the foundational components from which current gerontology was built and considers many explanatory

¹ Hacettepe University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Psychology (Chair) Ankara-Turkey.
(banucan@hacettepe.edu.tr)

² Hacettepe University, Faculty of Medicine, Department of PMR-Ankara-Turkey.
(ykutsal@hacettepe.edu.tr)

stances, both past and present, used in examining later life. The third chapter, 'Myths and common assumptions about ageing', addresses some of the prominent cultural narratives that frame what we think about old age and how we study it. This is a very important chapter since, unfortunately, many discussions about old age and later life are clouded by myths, stereotypes and assumptions that can limit possibilities in later life. The fourth chapter, 'Health and functional abilities in old age', looks closely at concept related to health measurement as well as the cognitive aspects of ageing, examining health and functioning from a broad context. The fifth chapter, 'Rethinking family and family structures', begins with an overview of the family and kin structure with regard to later life, including trends in marriage and other partnered relationships, sibling and later life and grandparenting - followed by an analysis of living arrangements and caregiving in the family context. The sixth, 'Death, grief, loss and loneliness', provides a brief overview of how death, grief, loss, and loneliness became structured and problematised in old age to the point that they are often not addressed in gerontological books. This chapter also deals with two other usually neglected topics: suicide and eldercide. The seventh chapter, 'Social location and place' begins with an exploration of the various ways in which social location affects ageing, with ageism being a major consideration, followed by an investigation of the types of spaces available to older people such as multi-generation housing, single dwelling and institutional settings), and the concepts how older persons experience place. The eighth chapter, 'Financing old age', examines retirement as a relatively new concept and life phase, and its interrelationship with pension systems, especially contemporary economic changes and reform policies. The final chapter, 'Narrative and creativity', profiles narrative gerontology, creativity and creative expression in later life, by highlighting the many positive ways in which age can viewed and experienced, and exploring the 'growth' aspect of growing old through narrative studies, creativity, wisdom and the arts.

Exceptionally well written, *Ageing: A very short introduction* uses tables, diagrams, figures and cartoons to help readers connect with the different aspects of ageing. All running features are integrated into the main body of the text, helping to maintain the flow of the narrative and the attention of readers. Also adding knowledge to the understanding of the multifaceted and highly complex process of life-span development, provides source material for researchers, clinicians and students regarding the basic problems of older persons. To sum up, *Ageing: A very short introduction* offers a rare, inside glimpse into the field of ageing and the ageing experience as it is actually lived. This book assists gerontologists and geriatricians to make sense of our journey through ageing. There is no doubt that as Thomas Cole and Chris Phillipson remarked respectively, "whilst this compact, focused guide is perfect for students and others new to the field of gerontology, it is also an outstanding, invaluable guide to research in gerontology".

Gawande, A. (2014). *Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 282 pp. ISBN: 978-1-62779-055

Reviewed by Elaine M. Eliopoulos¹

Four hundred thousand Google hits and over 1,000 book reviews reveal the breadth with which *Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end* has spoken to consumers and providers of health care. Families facing serious illness in a technologically advanced American health care delivery system are mesmerized by Gawande's stories. The author's sophistication in articulating the ways in which this system misses the point of "doctoring" is a first step in a vision for a better way. His evolved vision embodies a more humane approach to caring, especially for older people. He speaks of preserving "the fibre of a meaningful life." Large and important questions rise from his compassionate and poignant portrayals of ordinary people facing difficult choices, and of his own father's process in facing death. Gawande dares to ask questions of those facing life debilitating illnesses: "what do you want for your final time"; 'what are you willing to sacrifice or not?'. Another layer of inquiry also must shine through on the greater context in which he dares to ask the right questions.

The American system of health care is considered one of the most advanced in the world, yet we do not receive the highest "marks" in mortality. As Gawande aptly ponders, do we really know the "patient?" Why do these problems endure? What is driving this disconnect between highly advanced care and the here and now for the patient, especially the simple inquiry into that which matters for the patient? Why does the American system seem to have a disregard, or at least disconnect, from the more personal aspects of one's final days? Who benefits from the way the system operates now? Gawande's critique of the system is powerful and his acknowledgement that it "fails the people it is supposed to help" is telling. He indicts the system in his observation that "we have allowed our fates to be controlled by the imperatives of medicine, technology and strangers."

Gawande leads us to examine why this is so, but his focus on the individual offers only patient's response of "courage" and a "certain endurance of the soul". This misses the larger systemic considerations of a health system which offers highly technological interventions that provide only a "sliver of hope", and often exponentially increase suffering in the final time. While acknowledging the emergence of palliative care more attuned to the perils of relentless intervention, Gawande does not examine the reasons why the 'system' arguably promotes the kind of care he masterfully questions.

¹ University of Malta Alumni & Attorney, Boston, Massachusetts. (elaineeli@comcast.net)

The American system, (fee for service), embraces different priorities than a universal care system. Does the fee-driven system preclude the possibility of less aggressive use of those interventions which often slate a person's final time to an agonizing mass of symptoms needing to be controlled by yet further interventions? Gawande does not ask these questions but they are important, perhaps essential to ensuring a path forward for a more patient-centered approach to old age and death.

Gawande is a well-respected surgeon who practices within a major metropolitan system where the Chief Executive Officer earned an annual salary of \$5.5 million in 2014; a 120 per cent increase over the prior year's salary for this position. Arguably, the compensation figure reflects the problem - the economic health of the system and the revenues it earns through the fee for service model inherent in the American health care institution. Is the hospital healthy at the expense of the patient? Patients with known, life threatening illnesses with clear prognoses may not have the "courage" to decline a course of treatment that could result in a "miracle". Does the patient lack courage or has the system lost its way in favour of its own enrichment?

These questions need not diagnose a malevolent system, but point to one in crisis; one where incentives for overutilization are the norm, not the exception. The origin of this systemic illness is not exclusively medical, but rather involves a complex system of interconnected economic and social phenomena that underlie the American health care system. Profits (or "surplus" in not-for-profit speak), drive result from increased screenings, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and a system which aspires to continue life at any cost.

Gawande brings us back to the human side of this life sustaining morass and asks us to rethink medical "care" in a way which highlights the person and what matters most to them. It is profound, yet so very simple in its beneficence. Are consumers ready for this shift? Do the leaders of the system, especially hospital sponsors and trustees, not just executives need to take stock of their role in the present state of affairs and reinvent themselves, revisit the role of the patient in their own process at the end of life? Can the present fee for service model survive with such a shift in power?

The American system may benefit from a close examination of its ideals and Gawande makes that case in a personal and poignant way.



**International Institute on Ageing
United Nations - Malta (INIA)**

117, St. Paul Street, Valletta, VLT1216, Malta | +356 2124 3044

www.inia.org.mt

Twitter: @UNAGEING | facebook: fb.com/INIAMALTA