

## Chapter 2

# Lifelong Learning and Quality Education for Sustainable Development in Africa

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The future for all people in Africa lies in the provision of quality education, promotion and sustaining of lifelong learning. This chapter critically examines quality education, lifelong learning, and a learning society for Africa's sustainable development. Issues pertaining to quality education and lifelong learning are ever evolving and may not be completely addressed at any one time, hence the need for win-win solutions from within and without Africa. The chapter provides evidence-based guidance on how to implement rigorous approaches to quality education as an effective lifelong learning strategy to advance Education 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4).*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), correctly noted that building strong partnerships among governments, organisations, agencies, communities and individuals was the best to support the provision of quality education in Africa. (ADEA, 2015). In addition, ADEA argued that lifelong learning should be advanced by creating opportunities for people to learn through formal, informal and nonformal settings.

The African Union Commission (AUC) on the other hand noted that the Pan African Vision for Africa is *an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena*. In order to achieve this vision, the Golden Jubilee Summit of the Union in September 2015 came up with a solemn declaration which identified key areas including: social and

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economic development; integration, democratic governance and peace and security. In order to make the solemn declaration a reality, the Golden Jubilee Summit of the Union directed the African Union Commission (AUC), supported by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), to prepare a continental 50-year agenda through a people-driven process outlining the Africa We Want, namely Agenda 2063 (AUC, 2015).

It is argued in this chapter that quality education for the youths and women and lifelong learning for all are fundamental to the achievement of the Pan African Vision for Africa. It is significant to note that the concept of lifelong learning goes back to the origin of life in the continent of Africa (Nafukho, Amutabi & Otunga, 2005; Youngman, 2001). Thus, the African traditions like many other traditions world over encouraged continued learning. Children learned from adults how to live and function in society. And adults likewise learned from children and fellow adults. Learning was part and parcel of life in Africa even before the arrival of the missionaries. As noted, "it is evident that the practice of people learning throughout their lives was characteristic of pre-colonial African societies" (Youngman, 2001, p. 7).

Omolewa (1981) observed that the Nigerian traditional society provided a variety of informal and non-formal adult learning situations within a lifelong learning context. In this chapter, it is noted that people in Africa continuously learned in non-formal and informal environments. Youngman (2001) and Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga (2005) noted further that the elders in African societies, especially grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts played a major role of passing on to younger adults and children, essential knowledge, skills and values. This is quite in line with the concept of lifelong learning. Therefore, like many other societies in the world, the African societies valued and promoted lifelong learning from one generation to the other. With the advancement of technology and knowledge economy that is demand driven, there is an urgent need to revisit the concept of lifelong learning in Africa. In addition, with the cultural shift among African families where the roles of uncles, aunts and grandparents are diminishing, African policy makers and educators have to rethink the issue of lifelong learning.

## **METHOD**

To successfully carry out this study, the literature review was conducted using academic literature databases, Ebsco, Proquest Research Library Plus, and Academic Search Premier. The search terms that were used are adult learners, adult learning, learning, lifelong learning, quality education, quality assurance, adult education, self-directed learning, experiential learning, curriculum development, human resources, teachers, and lifelong learning policies. The references from books and articles were used to identify additional material on the topic of quality education and lifelong learning with a focus on Africa. On the importance of literature review, as a method of research, it is noted, "Although the literature review is a widely recognized genre of scholarly writing, there is no clear understanding of what constitutes a body of literature. Each reviewer must decide which specific studies to include or exclude from a review and why" Kennedy (2007, p. 139). In the case of this chapter while a wide review of literature was conducted, only the studies relevant to adult learning, lifelong learning, quality education, quality assurance, adult education, lifelong learning practices were included in the final writing.

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