21st Century African Philosophy of Adult and Human Resource Education in Southern Africa

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Abstract

This paper will attempt to define a philosophy of adult education for the purpose of workforce development in Southern Africa. The different influences such as Ubuntu and communalism, indigenous education, diversity western philosophy, globalization and technology are explored in the context of the Southern African region.

Introduction

The philosophy of adult education for the purpose of workforce development in Southern Africa has long been defined by colonialism, racism, imperialism and now globalization. In seeking to establish an educational philosophy that is relevant to the needs of countries in Southern Africa one is forced to consider the current global economic, social and political environment. I seek to define a 21st century philosophy relevant for adult education programs that are designed for workforce development by building on established African and western philosophies.

The nations south of the Cunene and Zambezi Rivers; Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe and parts of Mozambique are inhabited by Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Northern Ndebele, Southern Ndebele, Tswana, Sotho, and Shona people, BaLunda, Mbundu, Ovimbundu, Chaga and Sukuma people who speak languages that share common Bantu language and cultural traits. These nations share a unique history and cultural heritage as well as philosophy. While it is tempting to define the values and beliefs of African people in a monolithic approach it would be too presumptuous when the focus is on workforce development. In defining my philosophy I have chosen a region that shares common ancestry, values and colonial histories.

It is not my goal to present a philosophy that seeks to defend the decolonization of the African mind as Wiredu, Geykeye, Ngugi, Hountondji and Nkrumah espouse (Pearce, 1992). However, I would like to incorporate the different ideas and models characteristic of most education systems to create a philosophy that will be relevant in this and the future economic environment. My goal is not to define a philosophy that alienates African from the general discourse by labeling itself uniquely and distinctly 'African' while running the risk of self-

marginalization of isolating itself not only from interaction with the wider (i.e. non-African) world but also from any critical interrogation (Horsthemke & Enslin, 2009).

Some issues remain central to African educational discourse and should be considered in developing a philosophy of education for the future. Issues such as the democratization of the classroom, the importance of social and cultural contexts within curricula and syllabi, HIV/AIDS education and western funding of the educational process are all relevant in creating a philosophy. I would acknowledge that the basis for my philosophical ideas is rooted in black African tradition but one cannot ignore the emerging cultural diversity fueled by globalization.

There is a broad consensus that education is both formal and informal and takes place in a classroom as well as outside the classroom. For the sake of this paper, I will construct a philosophy that is not limited to a formal and informal education system but transcends it. The process begins by asking the same questions that Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire suggested. Freire believed there are questions we should ask ourselves. In favor of what do I study? In favor of whom? Against what do I study? Against whom do I study? (Jackson, 2007).

The purpose of this paper is to establish an adult education philosophy that is relevant for workforce development in Southern African states in the 21st Century and beyond. In addition, I will examine the merits of Ubuntu and communalism, indigenous education, and global education should be considered in framing this philosophy that will enable Southern Africa to remain economically relevant in a global economy.

African Philosophy of Education

To define an African Philosophy of education I will begin by defining 'African' as Mudimbe (1988) and Hountodji (1985, 1996) as cited by Higgs (2012) do, "African simply because it is produced or promoted by Africans". I agree with the notion by Higgs in developing

my philosophy that the goal goes beyond philosophy for its own sake but a philosophy that contributes towards the political, ethical and economic upliftment of human resources (Higgs, 2012). In a sense philosophy is expected to render a service which for me would be to ensure that Africans are prepared for the global economy of the future.

The roots of African Adult Education can be traced back to Egypt, Ethiopia, Gao, Timbuktu which had established centers of learning many centuries prior to colonialism. However with colonialism, imperialism and globalization, there continues to be challenges in defining a 21st century adult education philosophy. African philosophy has remained largely historical but it is important that we define the philosophy of the future. The Addis Ababa Conference in 1961 was a landmark in the development of education on the continent. It was the first international conference to be held in Africa to discuss education not only *for*, but also *by* Africans. It launched a new development philosophy based on the recognition that the educational systems, especially higher education, play a pivotal role in the social, economic and cultural transformation and sustainability of nations; therefore, African culture should be an integral part of higher education (Banya & Elu, 2001).

Adult education can be broadly defined as activities designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles and self-perception define them as adults. In addition the term 'adult education' will cover vocational and technical education and academic programs in post-secondary institutions such as colleges and universities Colonialism is the use of force or diplomacy to bring a foreign people under the rule of a dominant power. Imperialism is the desire by a militarily and economically stronger country (or its agents) to conquer and exploit another country whether directly or indirectly. Globalization is the intensification and transformation of relations between nations and the emergence of strong global actors such as

supra-national organizations. It refers to the fast sharing of benefits and problems on a massive scale never seen before through improved technology and the movement of ideas, ideologies and culture across the world. (Nafukho, Amutabi, & Otunga, 2005)

The globalization of education in Africa began with the onset of colonialism when the goals and purposes of education changed. Prior to colonialism, African philosophies of education were localized to meet the immediate needs of the native community. As most nations in Southern Africa have only recently achieved political Independence they are in a still in the process of asserting their economic independence by redefining their values and beliefs. In establishing economic independence there is a need to address the roots of the education systems which are the foundations of economic structures. During colonialism and even post-independence adult education has been primarily shaped by western philosophy.

In attempting to define a philosophy of adult education for the future it is important to remember that African societies are increasingly more urbanized and detribalized; education is shifting into a process of interaction between the guardians and seekers of knowledge without regard for age or position (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003). In this shift, there is no consensus established for how these changes will define our adult education practices. African beliefs about education have changed rapidly over the past 150 years and we continue to scramble to define the past and future.

Ubuntu and Communalism

The philosophies of Ubuntu and Communalism have become central to African philosophy. According to Letseka (2000, p. 181) the importance of communality to traditional African life cannot be overemphasized. This is because community and belonging to a community of people constitute the very fabric of traditional African life. Unlike the Western

liberal notion of the individual as some sort of entity that is capable of existing and flourishing on its own, unconnected to any community of other individuals, not bound by any biological relationships or socioeconomic, political and cultural relationships, obligations, duties, responsibilities and conventions that frame and define any community of individuals, the communal conception of the individual in most traditional African settings is described by Mbiti (1970, p. 108) in the following way: Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say, 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am' (Higgs, 2012).

Community in Africa is linked to the role of African states in the developmental process and is generally connected with development theories. Development is defined by economic growth and human development. The first is centered on economic growth, and the second on human development.

According to Monaheng (2000) the human development approach has been broadly used in project development in rural communities. It was supposed that poor people live mainly in the rural areas, and as a result, the concept 'community' has also been assigned the meaning, 'rural' development. My concern in noting the philosophical, sociological and political elements inherent in the discourse of community in Africa has been directed at highlighting the role of community knowledge in educational research. It is evident from these philosophical, sociological and political inferences that the discourse of community in Africa reveals that: The human development approach places the people of a community at the center of projects and development strategies, and uses concepts like 'empowerment', 'equity', 'capacity building' and 'participation' to describe the developmental process. This approach is also known as the community development approach.

It is my goal to craft an educational philosophy for Africa that does not dwell on the romantic ideals of a pre-colonial African society. The notion that in African culture the community always comes first and that African societies place a high value of humanism which is expressed in a communal context rather than the individualism that characterizes the west is a myth that cannot sustain policy making for this century. The popular notion of 'Ubuntu' in African philosophy has been challenged by development of global economies. While Ubuntu fosters communalism, there is an individualistic notion that is supported by the current push towards creating a global workforce (Venter, 2004).

Mkabela (1997) as cited by Venter (2004) is right in advocating an African philosophy of education that deals with the issues of imposition of western values on African culture, encourages critical thinking, deals with modes of thinking regarding Africans as lesser human beings. I also agree with their notion that, "African Philosophy of Education should try to reconstruct African culture to fit and facilitate modern learning in an African setting." Africans will need to consider a value system that will take into account the political, social, economic challenges they face in a modern world because of the impact and demands of westernization. Subjects taught at school should relate to real life issues and should fit into the context of the learners' society. On the other hand education should also be in line with international trends in economy and modern technology (Venter, 2004).

Makgoba (1996) as cited by Horsthemke (2004) argues that an overemphasis on the economy as the standard of judging and evaluating recognition, respect, acceptance and success… humans have lost dignity, status and respect. Western style democracies have attained liberty but have lost humanism. While humanism is an important aspect of African culture, one cannot ignore that economics and human resource development are important aspects too.

There is too much simplicity in describing African society as, "communities, in a very broad sense, that closely participate in the socialization of their members. Parents, older brothers and sisters, grandparents, uncles, aunts, neighbors and elders that all participate in the socialization process and feel a sense of responsibility for the results….The focus is on the development of the community not a specific individual. Individuality is developed but the emphasis is on the individual's development as part of a community, not to resolve personal dilemmas" (Beckloff, 2008).

While Beckloff (2008) correctly describes some aspects of African societies, colonialism, imperialism and globalization have altered some aspects of African society and individualism is becoming prevalent with increased urbanization. He further asserts that, "In Africa, adult educators must not focus on the individual but on community. This precludes approaching educational programs with the common Western humanistic concept of self-actualization in mind." If we follow Beckloff's (2008) assertions, how do we account for the influence of western educational programs particularly in urban areas where most institutions of adult education are located? Even with the aspect of community learning, how does that fit into the context of a global economy and the globalization of education?

Current Literature suggests that adult education in southern Africa has continued to be molded by different influences. While nations in southern Africa try to establish standards that reflect local needs, Intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations, OECD, and the World Bank, are promoting global educational agendas that reflect discourses about human capital, economic development, and multiculturalism. At the same time Information and communication technology is speeding the global flow of information and creating a library of world knowledge. Global nongovernment organizations, particularly those concerned with

human rights and environmentalism, are trying to influence school curricula based on their perception of the needs of Africans. Multinational corporations, particularly those involved in publishing, information, testing, for-profit schooling, and computers, are marketing their products to governments, schools, and parents around the world (Spring, 2008). This constant tug and pull of different forces makes it difficult for nations in southern Africa to establish independent standards that meet their needs for human resource development.

It is encouraging that Venter acknowledges that Ubuntu "remains an ideal, because in the global village it is often not practiced, but the ideal would be that the human race would care for one another" (Venter, 2004). While Ubuntu is a noble idea it is too vague a philosophy to use in establishing educational standards for the future. Many African philosophers argue that the notion of Ubuntu itself has not been tested as a philosophy on its own but rather as an idea within the collective realm of African philosophy.

According to Wiredu (1996), African intellectuals who continue to revive and reinstate traditional thinking in Africa without reference to present modern ways of thinking, are doing a disservice to Africa by pretending that traditional ways of thinking are still sufficient, useful or even applicable to today's needs in Africa. According to Wiredu (1996), there are new and modern problems and challenges facing Africa, and traditional ways of thinking cannot always cope with these problems and challenges (Higgs, 2012).

Proponents of Ubuntu philosophical thought use it as a contrast to western individualism, and often with the assumption that western ideals are selfish and uncommitted to the good of others. One has to consider that if the current global economy is primarily shaped by western philosophy then we must acknowledge this diversity in crafting our own values.

Indigenous Education

Michael B. Adeyemi and Augustus A. Adeyinka have defended the idea of returning to a modified form of indigenous African education. They have presented five principles that, they claim, informed customary education in Africa and continue to yield 'sound philosophical foundations' for contemporary education. These principles are 'preparationism, functionalism, communalism, perennials and wholisticism' (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003).

The principle of preparationism implies that 'the role of learning and teaching was to equip boys and girls with the skills appropriate to their gender in preparation for their distinctive roles in the society' The principle of 'functionalism' is related to the principle of preparationism: With few exceptions, if any, traditional educational practices in pre-colonial Africa were predominantly utilitarian. 'Communalism' was the third principle ('all members of the society owned things in common and applied the communal spirit to life and work'). By 'perennialism', Adeyemi and Adeyinka mean that 'most traditional communities in Africa perceived education in Africa as a vehicle for maintaining or preserving the cultural heritage and status quo. Fifth, 'wholisticism or multiple learning' provided young people with skills they needed for their future, mainly gender-specific, occupations (Adeyemi et al, 2003).

They discussed two major weaknesses with traditional African education. The first is that its focus on clan or tribe, along with its oral rather than its written literacy restricts the possible transfer of skills and knowledge across space and time. A second general shortcoming is that traditional African education favored indoctrination rather than reflective thinking. Once these two problems are addressed, possibly in the light of 'the good aspects of the formal education of the western type' (p. 439), the authors were confident that traditional African education would

yield sound philosophical foundations for education in Africa today. (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2004)

Ideally an indigenous education model would allow Africans to control their own educational institutions. Traditional indigenous education would serve as the guide for developing curriculum and instructional methods. Southern Africa is rich in would cultural heritage. Education would be provided in the local Bantu language that most citizens are comfortably familiar with. Ideally adult education would reflect the culture of the indigenous people (Spring, 2008). Developing a philosophy based on this model would be admirable except that local culture has been altered by globalization and is not always easy to define.

One cannot ignore the devastating effects of colonialism and the constant imposition of other cultures in shaping the philosophy of adult education. Mkhabela and Luthuli (1997) observed that 'the biggest task that faces African Philosophy of Education is turning blacks from subjects into citizens. As citizens they will value autonomy and therefore individual contributions to productivity in a global economy. (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2004).

Influence of Western Philosophy

Globalization forces one to consider western philosophy when defining an African philosophy for the 21st century. Ikuenobe(1997) cited by LeGrange (2004) disagrees with the use of Western analytic philosophy as the yardstick by which to measure whether the other trends in African philosophy qualify to be called 'philosophy' (Le Grange, 2004). Western philosophy arises from western culture and supports Western ideological discourse. African scholars debate whether it is possible or desirable to study western philosophy supposedly tainted by its origin in an alien culture and saturated with ideological presuppositions ultimately designed to foster

imperialism and racist dominance over the Third World (Pearce, 1992). At the same time it is hard to ignore its influence in shaping the global educational systems and the economy.

This section will examine how the ideas of western philosophers can be used to establish a framework for a new educational philosophy in a global economy. During colonialism education was often used to pacify people and create a support workforce to meet the demands of European colonialists. Traditional adult education was replaced with colonial education which suited the needs of missionaries for evangelism and imperialism (Nafukho et al, 2005).

The American philosopher Booker T. Washington was one of the main proponents for vocational education for African Americans. Part of his philosophy on vocational education is relevant to a Sub-Saharan African workforce that is still experiencing the effects of colonialism as slaves did during reconstruction. However, it is important to note that the same reasons why some African Americans rejected vocational education in the United States are also significant in post-colonial Southern Africa. Part of the reason why Washington decided to pursue vocational education was because of his experience at Hampton Institute and the belief that vocational education was the only thing southern whites would accept as a compromise. The latter reason presents the same problem in Southern Africa because the now independent citizens of this region cannot continue to cater to the needs of past colonialists. The centerpiece of the Washingtonian philosophy of African-American education was an emphasis on economic self-help through agricultural and industrial/ vocational training and development (Dunn, 1993). The first learning experience for the student should be the concrete world closest to his personal experiences.

At the same time it is important to include Dewey's philosophy on education for democracy because it is useful in young democracies in Southern Africa. In developing a

philosophy for adult education it is also relevant to weigh the benefits of educating for democracy or for economic development in the race to compete globally. Part of the goal for education should be for it to be viewed as an economic investment with the goal of developing human capital or better workers to promote economic growth.

In western philosophy various philosophers like Rousseau who focused on creating a better citizen to create a better society and unite people of various classes through equality and John Stuart Mill who believed in Utilitarianism have useful ideas for adult education even in an African context. In addition, Critical Theory is useful because of the history of injustice in this region. To merge the different ideas crafted over many centuries would be ideal; however the competing needs of this century make it almost impossible.

Renowned Brazilian philosopher, Freire believed that the more education becomes empty of dreams to fight for, the more the emptiness left by those dreams becomes filled with technique, until the moment comes when education becomes reduced to that. Then education becomes pure training, it becomes pure transfer of content, it is almost like the training of animals, it is mere exercise in adaptation to the world (Jackson, 2007). If Southern Africa adopts Freire's philosophy then education becomes more localized and free from foreign agendas. Yet in the 21st century Africans cannot remain disconnected from the reality of the constant demands of the global economy. Training and education for pure economic gains is important for this region.

Even though Freire described the universality of his book "universal issues" meaning the book speaks to people across many boundaries, it does not give sufficient attention to difference, to the conflicting needs of oppressed groups or to the specificity of people's lives and experiences. We should not only teach tradition and help students gain an appreciation of its best

features but also raise consciousness of students so that they will realize they cannot exist, think or act outside their culture and tradition (Soltis, 1985).

There is merit in both Dewey and Freire philosophies when they can be fit into an African context. While Dewey wanted education to produce citizens for democracy, however, Freire sought in the spirit of Marxism revolutionary praxis to develop a pedagogy of the oppressed that would produce revolutionary subjects, empowered to overthrow oppression and to create a more democratic and just social order (Kellner, 2003). Democracy and overthrowing oppression are not antagonistic in their fundamental principles. While Freire's ideas are noble, in the quest for democratic ideals, it would be naïve for policy makers to ignore economic issues that also dictate the ability of a people to demand other needs. There is a need to use adult education to create citizens with global skills that are relevant for the current economic environment while also receiving an education that will promote democratic ideals.

Diversity

In defining the 21st century philosophy for adult education I cannot ignore the complexities of diversity in this region. Globalization continues to alter the strict definition of an African. If we are planning for the future we cannot neglect the diversity not just of race but of ideas among Africans who have been exposed to different cultures and values. Makgoba (1996) as cited by Enslin (2004) argues that Ubuntu prepares us to transcend race and culture and puts us ahead of the west and the east in dealing with the reality of multiculturalism. To achieve cultural coherence members from different cultural locations must engage equally in the design and evolution of their institutions. Education must form the distinct and unique basis for responding to the needs of a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual society (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2004).

Globalization of Education

The current state of adult education in southern Africa can be described as, " The school system is seen as a pilgrimage to the promised land, a pilgrimage of pain and suffering largely arising out of the need to pass examinations at various stages of the system. These must be borne without bitterness to the very end, for to reach the end of the educational ladder is to at long last 'arrive' and to be able to 'fall into things', i.e. secure a comfortable job. Education thus becomes a painful secular pilgrimage towards a paradise of leisure. As long as expectation and reality coincided things moved along fairly reasonably well. But this happy state of affairs was not to last very long. Soon after independence changed circumstances became instantly reflected in an educational crisis from which many African countries today see no way of escape.

One of the most serious problems to hit the majority of African countries almost immediately after independence was that of the so-called 'school leavers'; i.e. those who drop out before completing a prescribed program of education or who, having completed the program, are unable to find paid employment. Part of the reason is of course a population that continues to gallop ahead of available social services, including school places and employment. But an equally pertinent factor is the expectation of the 'educated' children and their parents. Education means a certificate to a comfortable job and to leisure. When these are unavailable, there is a crisis. African education of today must look to the world of tomorrow. It is a world that demands of Africa economic development. In this the advanced technologies that have been developed in the West are instrumental. But in using them Africa needs to be aware of their potentialities for good and for evil. Above all, economic development must not be bought at the high price of loss of African cultures. But such cultures are in the final analysis the property of the people, the majority of whom are peasants. Both economic development and the reinterpretation and enrichment of these cultures must be people-centered rather than élite-centered. Education

should shift its emphasis accordingly. But this is unlikely to happen until the countries whose influence over the world scene is so great as to be irresistible, change their attitude over basic social values and thereby allow to come into existence a world context in which Africa can make her unique contributions (Ocaya-Lakidi, 1980).

Most countries in Southern Africa are confronted with globalization so soon after colonialism and have not had an opportunity to establish their own identities outside of colonial education. Instead they find themselves caught between the need to reinvent their curriculum to meet the needs of their local culture while embracing the ever changing global economy. The challenge is to create an adult education model that caters to the needs of local economies while preparing students to function in a global economy. After all in an increasingly global job market, education has to become standardized so that employees are interchangeable with little or no training required. Multinational companies demand employees who are easily substitutable. As a result adult Education becomes a field of study which aims at equipping adults with new competencies which can, for example, enable them to fit into the changing world of work (Nafukho et al., 2005). The transformation of educational discourse in Africa requires a philosophical framework that respects diversity, acknowledges lived experience and challenges the hegemony of Western forms of universal knowledge (Higgs, 2012).

This presents an advantage for students in adult education programs in Zimbabwe to be able to compete in the global labor market. In recognizing that global skills competence is an issue for all students regardless of location allows policy makers to leverage the ideas in other countries to develop an ideal model for use in Southern Africa.

There is a history of misapplied and poorly designed programs implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa by inter- and supranational organizations; the neocolonialist policies promulgated

by globalization and its advocates; and the gradual decline of the importance placed on indigenous and local knowledge. Globalization has had a deleterious effect on education development in Sub-Saharan Africa because it is not designed . . . to develop the African people and its educational prescriptions are making the situation worse for African children" (p. 23). According to Abdi, globalization's detrimental effects on Sub-Saharan Africa from the 1980s to the present show that globalization is an ineffective tool for improving the life chances of Sub-Saharan Africans (Piper, 2007).

Abdi's solution to the misapplied colonial and neocolonial philosophies of education that has been pervasive across Sub-Saharan Africa is twofold. First, Sub-Saharan African education systems must "recast the philosophical foundations of African education" and reintroduce indigenous ways of knowing to formal education curricula. Secondly he suggests that the African systems must reorganize to better reflect African realities and culture and fit the texture of children's lives and community realities (Piper, 2007).

Zimbabwe's education system is a typical example of the contradictions that exist when one is trying to define a philosophy of education. After independence there were huge gains in enrollment, significant government investment, and the production of a remarkably high number of university-educated elite. This growth and expansion of education in Zimbabwe continued until the early 1990s. A dramatic shift came in October 1990, when Zimbabwe embarked on the type of education policy responses to the Structural Adjustment Programs encouraged by the IMF (Psacharopolous, 1985).

The heavy hand of globalization is imposed on governments through the World Bank and IMF, which dictate the terms of educational development. In the field of adult education, since that field has fallen out of favor with the World Bank in the face of higher returns for earlier

levels of schooling. Mkosi's most provocative argument is that there is a symbiotic relationship between the World Bank, IMF, and globalization such that each benefits from the other:

The relationship between globalization, and the World Bank, and the IMF is complementary and mutually beneficial. Globalization ensures that the institutions reap economic benefits from African nation states it has weakened, and in reciprocity, the World Bank and the IMF create and maintain optimum conditions for the proliferation of globalization.

Human capital theory has been a remarkably influential idea in the field of international development. Investing in human capital through education and training is likely to produce economic returns, just as investing in physical capital does. Folson summarized the theory in this way: "More formal differential education . . . would lead to higher productivity and macroeconomic growth". The theory's influence in educational development was at its peak in the 1960s, although its continued influence should not be ignored (Piper, 2007).

Technology

As advances in technology make education, particularly western education more accessible to more people, Africans are compelled to prepare themselves for the future. The community will not be the only one that controls the information disseminated to members of the society. There are a number of issues associated with technology and globalization. Most of the popular computer technology used in the world has not been created in Africa and hence is biased towards western language and ideals. Most of the computer programs are not even designed to work with a local African language which ensures that English, French, Portuguese automatically become the language of choice. (Nafukho et al, 2005)

The teacher centered model of placing the instructor as the keeper and bearer of all information is shifting because of the influence of information technology. As in most countries

were technology use has increased in the classroom, the teacher has become a facilitator of learning rather than the sole disseminator of information. The teacher as a facilitator of learning challenges that notion that Beckloff uses in defining the structure of African society where the elder in society has the answer to all questions and teaches the young people everything they need to know. As Southern African societies are faced with the challenge to adapt, adult education must accommodate the shift.

In Southern Africa computer technology training has become one of the fastest growing areas of adult education and human resource development in general. However, the burden of training workers in new technologies has shifted from workplace training and state initiatives to adult education courses paid for by the worker. In addition this private sector model forces most students to place more emphasis on individual advancement (Nafukho et al., 2005).

As the knowledge gap between Africa and the rest of the world increases there has been more emphasis placed on trying to bridge the gap by leveraging information technology. The World Bank sponsored the African Virtual University (AVU) as a model for adult learners to receive education through virtual courses taught by Professors in mostly American Universities. However, the proliferation of such institutions of adult education only furthers the spread of western educational philosophies. As most projects like this one are funded by Europeans or Americans it is a fair assumption that the material chosen for learning will probably favor western values of capitalism, democracy etc. that Africans have no control over. Projects like AVU also foster dependency as most African governments do not have adequate resources to successfully fund such an endeavor at the present moment.

Conclusions

The challenge of defining an adult education philosophy that will meet the needs of an ever changing global workforce can be daunting. In attempting to define an education philosophy

there are various influences such as Ubuntu and communalism, indigenous education, diversity western philosophy, globalization and technology. While it would be convenient to choose one philosophy over another it would not be prudent. Unemployment remains high and the skills gap continues to widen, there is a need to revisit the debate on vocational and technical education which equip citizens with skills in demand globally and may in turn promote entrepreneurism that will advance the developing economies in this region.

An educational philosophy for adult education in southern Africa should encompass communalism and diversity within a Progressive Education Model. Communalism, because it is still a part of African culture and diversity because of the variability in race, ideas and culture within the region. When these are incorporated into a Progressive Education Model they will allow some learning to occur in local languages, learning will be based on African interests, it will train citizens for social justice and ultimately guarantee social and political change when needed.

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