



TESTIMONIES

To the Secretariat and the IALLA Class of 2004.

This is to thank you all for your good wishes for me in my new job. I am enjoying it, though my bottom is sore with meetings and meetings! I guess that's the price for the job.

IALLA has been a big help to me in my job. I am planning to hold a conference on UN Discourses and their implications for Universities some time in October this year. I feel the Discourses are not widely known in Universities and that universities can play an important role in the achievement of goals set by these same discourses.

I am looking for any information on research on the Perspectives of Peasants and Workers on Lifelong Learning in the Third World, particularly Africa. I am planning a similar research for Zimbabwe. Most of the material seems to relate to these called first and second worlds.

Wishing you all 2005 replete with new learning opportunities similar to those offered by IALLA.

I wish the Queen of Lesotho the best in her research.

Taka Mudariki de Zimbabwe



Paballo Mokenela
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IALLA I
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Hi everyone,

It is quite a pleasure for me to be able to write a few lines to you after a very long time. The last 3 months of 2004 were a very trying time for me which ended with the loss of two most valuable people to me - my Mother and a Sister-in-Law. However, I thank God that I have survived all these and am able to catch up with life again - life must go on.

Just so you know what I've been up to, between September 2004 and now:

1. Upon my arrival from Darbu, I prepared and submitted a report on IALLA to my Department - with a recommendation that my Institution (Institute of Extra-Mural Studies - IEMS) registers as a member of ICAE. However, this has not yet happened. We have just gone through major changes in the Management, but I intend to pursue the matter.

2. In September I wrote an article entitled "Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: A Personal Perspective" for a very popular Annual Publication of our University (The Light in the Night) circulated countrywide. I attach the article for you to read.

3. I carried out an informal research on how IEMS relates to the rest of the Civil Society in Lesotho. To my surprise, I learnt that IEMS is actually involved in joint activities with a number of NGOs and CBOs in the Country. IALLA has really been quite an eye opener for me because all along I was not aware of all those activities and their importance to the development of my country. However, based on the findings of my informal research I realise that there is a great need for research on the contribution, impact, and/or effectiveness of the existing strategies/networks in responding to the EFA Goals and MGDs.

4. Lastly, I have established a close contact with some NGOs and, more importantly, the Non-Formal Education Inspectorate (NFEI) of our Ministry of Education, in an effort to make way for further formal studies/research on the position of Lesotho. Actually, IEMS through its Non-Formal and Continuing Studies Department, is working closely with the NFEI) - it just that prior to my participation at IALLA, all these were not that important to me. What I now need is to work out modalities of carrying out the required studies and be able to provide factual information to ICAE, and even the Social Watch. Comments, advice, and suggestions from all of you in this regard will be most welcome.

Let me take this opportunity to assure ICAE that IALLA was a worthwhile initiative, especially to me as an upcoming adult educator and learner. I also want to assure you of my high level of interest in promoting and advocating for adult education - and supporting all the activities of ICAE and IALLA. Thank you and all the best of luck in organising IALLA 2005.

To Ntate Taka - congratulations on your new and challenging job. All the best of luck. Well, this is all for now from the Queen's Desk!

ADULT EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

PABALLO MOKENELA

There was no indication in September 2003 that I would have achieved so much academically a year later. All I knew was that I had just completed a Degree in Adult Education. That was a miracle for me!

24 years ago I completed my High School education with a General Certificate of Education (GCE). This was a blow to me as well as my parents since we all knew what it meant. I could not access University education - a wish and a dream for every high school pupil and every parent. Despite this disappointment I secured employment as a clerk in one of the Government Ministries. As I carried out my duties, I developed an interest in the tasks performed by the Secretary to the Director. These included typing, taking notes in shorthand, transcribing notes, and using a Dictaphone. So, I enrolled for a Diploma in Secretarial Studies at the then Commercial Training Institute (CTI). After acquiring the Secretarial Diploma I was appointed by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) as a secretary. I worked at the University from 1985 to September 2003.

During the 19 years of my job as a Secretary at NUL I worked closely with academics that were busy with their teaching, research, and community service. My task was to facilitate their work. But how I envied them, knowing that I had missed my opportunity to be one of them because I had not done well in my high school so many years ago!

But, guess what? Today I am working in the Adult Education Department of IEMS, teaching, researching, and doing community service just like them. I have participated in a number of workshops, conducted research locally and internationally, and just got back from the beautiful country of Norway where I represented NUL at the International Council of Adult Education Academy of Lifelong Learning Advocacy. And all thanks to the adult education and lifelong learning I got at IEMS. !

I had heard about adult education in the past and was fully aware that IEMS at NUL offered adult education programmes. But what had that got to do with me? I was a young woman. Adult education was not for me, but for elderly citizens. This misconception of adult education continues to block the development and growth of many people who do not really understand what adult education is. Fortunately I realised what I was missing before it was too late. I first put my toe into the Adult Education pool by enrolling for the Diploma in Adult Education at IEMS. At that time there still was a preliminary Certificate in Adult Education to be taken, but I was exempted from this because of my Secretarial qualifications. This is a good example of IEMS widening access by being willing to take account of prior learning. I found I liked what I was getting into. I got my Diploma and was able to get onto the Degree in Adult Education which I obtained last year.

My eight -year journey from Secretarial Diploma to Degree had its difficult sections and periods of sheer delight in learning. At every step I was supported by my teachers, my family and fellow students. Thank you IEMS. But, my story is just a tip of the iceberg that represents the scope of adult education. What is adult education and lifelong learning?

Adult Education is education that supplements and complements the conventional or formal education system. It often is the only way people who have left the conventional system can get a second chance to continue with their academic development. However, second chance education in no way is second-class education. It is just as good academically as the conventional system. In fact, adult education has an edge over the conventional educational system because it focuses on developing and improving the lives of all people socially, economically, academically, emotionally, politically, and even spiritually within and outside the four walls of a classroom.

Adult education is a very broad concept defined by various authors in a number of ways. Bamisaiye & Mohasi writing in 1994 viewed it in three ways. They said that adult education can be seen as *a programme of activities, a social movement, and an academic study*. In all these three cases what is important is that both formal and non-formal adult education is about empowering individuals with knowledge and skills that enable them to perform and function to their full potential in the various spheres that they engage in. It involves teaching and learning that occurs anywhere, anytime. It is lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning is learning that goes on from cradle to grave. People must learn from the time they are born right up to their time of death. A newborn baby learns survival skills such as how to suckle, how to register discomfort, and even how to demand attention. The child going through various developmental stages continues to learn and acquire knowledge and skills to cope and deal with challenges in each stage. The learning process goes on through adulthood and ultimately, as we approach death. Lifelong learning is about the need to learn continuously, to acquire new knowledge, skills and be empowered to cope and deal with various challenges that occur at all the stages of a person's life. Today people are faced with global challenges. A few of these are the fight against HIV/AIDS, reduction of infant mortality, poverty reduction, gender equity, democracy, and achieving basic and functional literacy. The key to all these problems and challenges lies with Adult education and lifelong learning which provide the means to unlock our knowledge and understanding.

People, irrespective of age, gender, level of education, occupation, and social standing must be empowered with knowledge and skills to deal effectively with all these challenges. There is also an ever-increasing challenge for people in their respective workplaces to cope with the new demands and advancement of technology. This also calls for workers to engage in learning through training programmes that are relevant to their work. This is also another form of adult and lifelong learning. An example is that of a medical doctor who qualified only five years ago but has not participated in any form of continued professional education and training. How capable will that doctor be in dealing and coping with new and emerging epidemic and pandemic diseases? Can the doctor work with the new medical technologies that have become available since she or he qualified ?

This is only an indication of how much lifelong learning is a necessity in any society concerned with the welfare of its members. I hope it sketches a picture of what adult education and lifelong learning are about. Currently, some adult educators are considering a shift from the term "adult education" to "adult learning" because seemingly the word education is associated with the conventional educational system of didactic, classroom instruction. This narrows the scope and complicates the meaning of adult education to those who are not familiar with the concept.

There are a number of formal and non-formal adult educational activities and programmes offered by various institutions in the Lesotho. They meet the needs of people working for Government Ministries, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and private firms. All the institutions and organisations providing education for adults have a common goal in that they offer programmes that aim at education and providing information that will improve and develop the lives of individuals, communities, and ultimately, the entire nation. Such programmes range from health issues, gender, education, agriculture, income-generating activities, and democracy, to mention a few.

The National University of Lesotho, through IEMS, offers formal academic programmes such as Business Management, Mass Communication and Adult Education. It organises and runs tailor-made non-formal training programmes and workshops for institutions and organisation and community members. IEMS is working together with Government, NGOs, CBOs, and other sectors in its quest to *bring the University to the people*.

This discussion of IEMS leads us to the objective of the International Academy of Lifelong Learning Advocacy IALLA Academy mentioned earlier. The Academy had been organised by the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) with the objective to increase the capacity of adult educators and social movement activities in advocating and supporting adult learning for change. It also consolidates ICAE as a global network committed to that end. The IALLA meeting I was honoured to be able to attend in Norway focused on the importance of all civil society adult learning institutions and organisations to join hands and form links and networks in working towards their common goal of developing their countries. This could maximise effective use of all available resources and also reduce duplication of efforts. As the saying goes *Kopano ke Matla (Unity is Strength)*. Strategies on forming networks locally, nationally, regionally, and globally were also explored.

My message, in a nutshell, is that adult education, adult learning, and lifelong learning can help provide the changes required for the development of our country. Many of the developed countries, such as the USA, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Norway, to mention just a few, have used and continue to use these strategies to maintain and sustain development. Lesotho is using these strategies to some extent, but on a smaller scale, to meet its developmental goals. However, there is still a need for more understanding of these concepts, their worth, and ultimately, maximum use of available adult educational structures and resources. Trust me, I know it for myself.



Yoko Nakato – Japan
IALLA I

I was really happy to be able to join the IALLA in 2004. It was great to be familiar with the latest and stimulating theory and practice of the world in person. It's beyond our imagination by reading and so exciting. It was also nice to make friends engaging in adult education all over the world. It was really something to join it both in my job and my life.



Archie Mokonane Mokonane
South Africa
IALLA I

My trip to Norway and the workshop impacted positively to me because I was able to use some of the advocacy strategies learned from the workshops conducted by very efficient and professional tutors. The discussions on the Global Education Campaign, the MDG goals the World Social Forum have also contributed towards checking our country's progress on International agreements. Personally it empowered me with advocacy skills that I now use as chairperson on the Adult Learning Network.

I am convinced that the workshop served its purpose. It was exciting to meet with IALLA friends in Nairobi and to experience the World Social Forum "live" after the theory we learned about in Norway.

I am proud of all the IALLA friends who made presentations in Nairobi.

Viva IALLA Viva

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Purnina Gupta
India
IALLA I

Dear friends,

It has been almost 3 years since I was part of IALLA I. This was my first trip outside my country and for such a long period. Being part of IALLA I has enriched me in many ways, first it really gave me the opportunity to interact with so many nice people from all over the world who are working on the issue of adult education. Through this course I got to know about their work, country situation. Especially I didn't had any idea about how EU and Scandinavian countries are working on the issue of adult education.

I definitively benefited from all resource people who were with us. I got to know different theories and concepts. It gave me a new dimension to think about adult education differently.

Most of the time I felt that being part of such a long course there is no effort to keep in touch with each other. but ialla is such a network which gives you more chance to interact with each other and how can we do effective networking and adocacy at policy level.

I really want to give thanks to IALLA.



Daniel Baril
Canada
IALLA I

For me, IALLA has been an enriching experience, mainly, in three ways. First, the three weeks in residence format allows for a real human relationship dynamic to develop. We had a vivid proof of that at the last ICAE world assembly where we meet for the first time after IALLA. It felt like if we had just left each other. The bond was warm. Second, the experienced moderators were generous of their person and of their experience, giving us relevant and practical knowledge to which I still refer regularly in my work. Third, IALLA has been a way for me to know better ICAE, most notably, by getting to know all those wonderful persons giving life to ICAE's work.

In solidarity



Nazir Ahmad Ghazi
Pakistan
IALLA II

I must say that the experience I got from IALLA course is the asset of my professional life. I would like to say the canvas was so big and the comprehensiveness of the course was managed so beautifully that I got a lot. The environment was so friendly that I got personal friends from that meeting. Everyone was ready to teach and learn from each other. And all that credit goes to IALLA that arranged such type of extensive learning program. The things I learned from that platform are also reflected in my work within the organization and outside the organization. I think my words are so long and you have short time so I would like to skip all remaining feelings that are surely healthy. Thanks.



Chola Mtonga
Zambia
IALLA II

At a personal level, the IALLA training was a spring board for my further training in the United Kingdom. It gave me the motivation to pursue a programme in Human Rights, and strengthened my belief in the pursuit of human equality. Above all IALLA exposed me to the World Assembly of ICAE, an unforgettable experience where I met IALLA 2 friends, and to have been given an opportunity to speak at such an event has uplifted my personal confidence, and made me feel that my little voice matters in the world, and a collection of little voices makes one big voice that inevitably brings change. I wish IALLA 3 participants all the success in their stay in Montevideo; I also wish you joy as you interact with different cultures. One Love.