

I. General Overview

Eritrea is a country located in the horn of Africa, a region badly affected by conflicts, war, displacement and droughts. Despite the huge natural and man made obstacles, the country is working hard towards developing the war and droughts damaged economy and social services.

The population of Eritrea is estimated at 4 million with projected annual growth rate of 2.3%. Like many other developing countries the largest population increase is for the under 15 years of age (education and training sector note, WB 2002). Female illiteracy rate among adults has dropped from 65% in 1990 to 55% in 2000. The rates of young literate females to males (15-24 years) increased from 0.68 in 1990 to 0.76 in 2001 (NUEW, 2000)

No national census has been carried out yet to indicate clearly the percentage of adult population in relation to the total population by qualification and levels. However there are indications that majority of adult population could be classified at their lower basic education level and there is a wide gap of literacy rate among the six administrative zobas (districts) ranging from about 30 percent illiteracy rate in one zoba (Zoba maekel which is almost urbanized) with more than 75 percent illiteracy rate in the other 5 zobas which are predominantly rural areas.

The majority of the population lives in rural areas (about 79%) where their education and training needs are not sufficiently addressed. The population is made up of nine ethnic groups where regional and gender disparities are prevalent. The government uses the various ethnic languages, in education training where much progress has been done.

The Government considers Education as a high priority in the development of the nation's human resources as a means of reducing poverty alleviation and promoting economic growth. Eritrea is in the process of reforming its education and training programmes in order to address the various needs and gaps in the near future. To this end, Eritrea's over all poverty alleviation strategy and national development framework depend on raising the general level of education and training among the population so that citizens have the necessary potential to participation in developing the economy as well as the democratization process.

In terms of education and training, the Eritrean context could be categorized as:-

- a population of high illiteracy rate and low level of literacy skills;
- Illiterate environment with no or very little materials to read and very low habits of reading among the population;
- Unstable socio economic situation due to incessant drought and war;
- Uneven distribution of social services such as education among the adult population especially the youth. Those residing in urban areas are a better advantages than those residing in rural areas in the areas of training and education
- No systematic, monitoring and assessment mechanism is in place yet for ALE etc.

The country is very much aware of the impact that a literate population can have on its economic, cultural, social and political development. It is also equally conscious that the building of peace, democracy and democratic institutions has good chance of success with a literate society. Poverty alleviation and sustainable economic growth are promoted through increased basic literacy skills provision which creates a conducive environment for implementing new ideas and innovation (ibid).

II. Adult Learning and Education

1. Policy Legislation and Financing

1.1 Legislative and policy frameworks of ALE

1.1.1 Description of the legislation and policy situation

Considerable progress has been made at the policy and strategy levels related to education and the following section describes major policies established since 1997 related to ALE. More importantly policies guiding the current provision of adult education programmes can be discussed at three levels: the general policies that create a generally enabling socio-economic environment; educational policies that generally support adult learning; and specific policies that particularly deal with adult learning:

- a) **The *Macro-Policy (1994)*** underscores the overall importance of human capital development to national development by making broad provisions for the development of lifelong and life wide educational strategies which will bring about widespread learning in the Eritrean society at large. In respect of education, the following objectives are set out in this national document:
 - To produce a population equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and culture for self-reliance and a modern economy;
 - To develop in the population: self-consciousness and self-motivation, to fight poverty, disease and all the attendant causes of backwardness and ignorance;
 - To make basic education available to all.
- b) **The *Eritrea National Education Policy Draft (2003)*** contains two fundamental guiding principles for the provision of education in Eritrea. Firstly, the policy shows a clear commitment to lifelong learning as stipulated in the following points:
 - Education ... is a fundamental human right and a lifelong process by which all individuals are given opportunities to attain their potential as all rounded citizens.
 - Secondly, the policy shows full commitment to the development of human capital thus: Eritrea's greatest asset is its people: revitalizing citizens with relevant education and training is the only means by which the overall socio-economic development of the country can be achieved

Adult education is generally catered for in a number of general policy statements on education. Notable among these policy statements is what is contained in the *National Education Policy (2003)* and the *Concept Paper for a Rapid Transformation of the Eritrean Educational System (2002)*.

The *National Education Policy* mentions three issues that are pertinent to the provision of adult education in Eritrea.

- First, the *Policy* states that five year Elementary Education is compulsory for all citizens irrespective of age. Literacy education has, over the years, significantly contributed to the national adult literacy rate; the *Policy* seeks to expand the scope of the literacy education

beyond reading and numeracy. The literacy curriculum will cover life skills development programmes such as good health, agricultural production, conservation, and active citizenship. *The Policy recognizes the diversity of adult education and thus makes provision for widespread provision to cover all the aspects of human life.*

- Secondly, the *Policy* makes provision for continuing education through formal and non-formal education. This policy statement clearly makes provision for learning opportunities outside the formal structure of schooling.
- Thirdly, *the Policy makes provision for the integration of adult literacy and continuing education provision into the mainstream of education and poverty reduction.* To date, adult education provision has lagged behind other education sub-sectors due to insufficient resources. Making adult literacy and continuing education an integral aspect of national education provision and a strategy for poverty alleviation will put it in good stead in respect of resource allocation.

The Concept Paper (2002) makes two significant policy statements pertaining to adult learning.

- First, the *Paper* makes reference to adult craft training and primary vocational training. This makes room for the provision of vocational training programmes for adults who have completed literacy and post literacy programme. These vocational programmes will be designed to enhance adults' capabilities in their occupations or to enable them to acquire new skills that will enable them to get new jobs or break into the business world.
- Secondly, the *Paper* proposes the development of adult literacy programmes that will be equivalent to elementary school education, and thus bridge the gap between literacy and middle school. This will enable neo literates to further their education in evening or day classes for adults, and through distance education.

c. National Policy on Adult Education (NPAE) drafted in 2005 has the following important objectives:-

- *To promote a broad concept of adult education as a field of activity that is much wider than literacy and numeracy education for adults and out of school youth,*
- *To promote awareness of adult education as a diverse multi-sectoral activity;*
- *To facilitate the effective implementation of the right to education for all as enshrined in the constitution and other national policy papers;*
- *To facilitate the establishment of inter-sectoral co-ordinating mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accreditation of adult education activities etc.*

Some of the essential policy statements indicated in the policy document include:-

- a) Basic education to be delivered through parallel and complementary systems: formal and non formal;
- b) Literacy and post-literacy levels will be 18 months course stretched in 3 years and will be equivalent to the elementary level at the formal system;
- c) All adults, especially the disadvantaged groups such as women and the disabled, will be provided with opportunities for basic and further education;
- d) Opportunities will be created for adult literacy graduates who are qualified to pursue life

skills and vocational training where and when it suits them;

In this policy document adult education is entitled as *literacy and continuing education* that embraces literacy and post-literacy, advocacy and civic education, life skills and follow up programmes.

This national policy on adult education was developed through a two phase consultative process in 2005. The first phase consisted of a survey that sought to determine the state of the art in adult education and related sub-sectors. The second stage was made up of several consultative meetings and workshops involving all key players in adult education. The policy is intended to put adult education into a proper perspective as a broad field of activity that includes, among others, literacy, continuing education, life skills and vocational training.

The formulation of the NPAE benefited from the rich experience of the implementation of adult education in general and adult literacy in particular in Eritrea. Some of the essential policy guidelines used prior to the draft of this important policy document includes:

- *the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in literacy education;*
- *give precedence to the 15 to 45 age group;*
- *give priority to the disadvantaged groups such as women and the disadvantaged areas(rural);*
- *maximize utilization of the resources of formal school to promote adult education and training*
- *provide learning materials to learners free of charge etc.*

1.1.2 Priority goals

In line to the developmental education policies the priority goals for ALE in Eritrea are

- Introduce and enhance provision of youth and adult basic education
- Give emphasis to disadvantaged groups such women/girls and especially those residing in rural areas;
- Create literate environment to sustain and expand the skills acquired at the basic level and make combined effort to develop the habit of reading;
- Use media and support mechanisms to provide quality of adult education.

1.1.3 Organizational Framework of ALE

The organizational structure of the ministry is designed in such away that could facilitate effective implementation of the broad educational objectives. At the national level, the Ministry is composed of five departments and administrative division and cultural affairs office. Each department is sub-divided into divisions and divisions to units. The major tasks of the ministry at a national level are:-

- The formulation of policies, strategies and delineation of sectoral and development programmes;
- Issuing regulations and standards and monitoring their implementation;
- Conducting sector based studies and researches, compiling information and disseminating it to the concerned and interested parties;

- Develop human resources
- Produce teaching/learning materials in mother tongue etc.

The implementation of policies, strategies and other procedures takes place at the zoba (region) and sub-zoba levels. Since, a process of decentralization is going on; the task of implementation is in the process of devolution.

Currently Eritrea is engaged in a process of transforming its educational and training system in light of the past 12 years experience gained and to tune it to its human resource development effort in line with the rapid global changes. The main rationale behind the need for the transformation of its educational system is stated in the 2002 concept paper as:-

- A) All doors and opportunities must be open to all Eritrea's to develop to their full potential both professionally and personally;
- B) Education must be employment oriented such that at the end of any level of education any person can find gainful employment commensurate with his/her level of education or training;
- C) The standards and quality of education and training in the education system must be high enough that products of the system would have a high degree of acceptability in the international arena of education and employment;
- D) All wastage of human power, resources, efforts and time in the educational system must be abolished.

As part of the educational transformation efforts, the government of the state of Eritrea has made a decisive change within the structure of the MOE upgrading the Division of Adult Education to the Department of Adult Education and Media, (in 2003) in order to meet the immense learning needs of adults and out of school children using diversified methods of delivery. Currently the Department of Adult Education and Media (DAEM) under the Ministry of Education is entrusted to co-ordinate and activate adult learning programmes through out the country. The Department in its current mandate is active in the provision of adult literacy, continuing education through extension (evening programme) and educational programmes via radio for adults.

The DAEM is organized into three divisions and seven units and functions mainly as a regulatory body at national level as the other Departments of the Ministry of Education.

The administrative structure of the country is decentralized in to six administrative regions known as zobas. Each administrative region/zoba has its own education offices where the implementation of educational programmes including adult education programmes takes place. The adult education structure that goes down to the region, sub-regions and centers is not yet well established. However, effort is being made to ensure adult education coordinators, supervisors and facilitators are assigned at every level in order to implement, monitor and evaluate the various adult education activities.

1.1.4 Alignment of policy and implementation strategies

Adult education as an important instrument must be aligned to the overall national development plan and be jointly dealt with. As in the case of Eritrea's situation, some of the inter-ministerial activities that could be sited as an aligned development and implementation strategies are:

- There is a strong co-operation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health at all levels to implement the project of HAMSET. This has been a successful project, where combined effort in the area of information campaigns to raise awareness,

- creating friendly and learning environment (such opening libraries) and also preparing health related reading materials;
- There is also well organized and structured school health programme with the purpose of promoting healthy school environment ;
 - The awareness created in the school environment is positively influencing the parents and the community. There is also a plan to extend similar health related activities to be introduced in the adult educations programmes (giving emphasis to the learners of post-literacy graduates)
 - The content of the educational radio broadcast includes health, agriculture, environment, gender issue etc. and this is done in a close co-operation with the respective Ministries and organizations.

1.1.5 Main developmental challenges

The major developmental and educational challenges could be summarized as follows:

- The challenge of ensuring self sufficient and sustainable development throughout the country;
- The current low productivity and subsistence farming;
- The huge demand of training of human resources to increase productivity and improve standard of learning;
- The challenge to make the provision of education and training relevant to the production needs and employment demands;
- Organized and coordinated need of advocacy and communication to raise and sustain implementation of literacy and continuing education.

Despite all this list of challenges and others, the work that has been done so far in the areas of policy formulation, consultation and awareness raising activities and more importantly the sustained commitment of the Government of the State of Eritrea towards education for all, justifies the prospect to overcome the above mentioned challenges.

1.2 Financing Adult Learning and Education

Education is not only a basic human right but also an essential component of social and economic development. Investment in education is fundamental for stimulating long-term economic growth and also for improving the overall well being and welfare of the society. Within this framework of development, the macro-policy of the government clearly prioritize education and training as a productive investment in human capital formation with the aim of producing a population equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and culture for a self-reliant economy. Though there has been a substantial increase in the amount of government expenditure on education in Eritrea in the last 10-17 years, the share of education as a percentage of total government spending is still low.

Moreover, the public expenditure on adult education is very small compared to other components of the education system. But it has increased greatly in the past ten years.

Table 1: Expenditure on Adult Learning (in Nakfa- local currency)

	Description	Year	Amount	Source of fund
1	Adult Literacy	1998/9-2001/02	42,450,215.00	The GOE and SIDA (Sweden)
		2002/03-2007/08	65,000,000	The GOE and UNICEF
	Total		107,450,215.00	
2	Educational Radio Programme	1997-99	1,622,600.00	ODA(UK),UNFPA,UNICEF,WB, HBF, Rotary Club, Canada Fund, Eritrean Community in Washington, Public Affairs of American Embassy(Eritrea) British Library
		2000-2002/3	3,042,100.00	
		2003/04-2005/06	8,250,000	
		Total		12,914,700.00
3	Basic Vocational skills training	1997-2000	6,200,000	GOE, UNDP, NUEW, British Council(Eritrea) OBS
		2001-2002/3	15,000,000	GOE
		Total		21,200,000
4.	Continuing Education	1998-2002/3	2,685,000	GOE
		2003/04-2005/06	3,250,000	GOE
	G/Total		5,935,000	

Exchange rate 1 USD to 13.5 - 15 Nakfa

Source: Financial Report of the Ministry of Education

There are also different adult education activities provided by different private organization and Local NGOs. However, the expenditure presented in the above table only covers the activities, which were under the direct control of the Ministry of Education. The data does not also include cost of all adult learning activities within the Ministry due to the lack of adequate data.

In the literacy activities undertaken since 1998, the GOE made financial contribution besides the implementation and management of the programme. As agreed with SIDA (Sweden), the

financial share of the Government was 1/3 of the total budget required (1999-2002). After 2002, however, the GOE is the sole source of fund of the adult literacy programme. The DAEM in collaboration with other concerned parties within the MOE has been responsible in the overall budget planning and disbursement of funds to the six zobas.

Effort has been also made to maximize the utilization of the available resources to promote adult literacy, such as using school premises as literacy centers and elementary school teachers as adult literacy facilitators in the past 10 years.

Continuing education for adults (evening programme) has been provided using the resources of the formal system. This programme is on cost sharing for which students are also made to pay for salary and other running costs. But this is not included in the expenditure for continuous education described in table 1. It only shows government share.

Majority of the fund for adult literacy goes to teaches salary, textbooks, stationery etc. It is very difficult to indicate the estimation of the amount of investment made all in adult education due to lack of adequate data and co-ordination of the different providers.

It is quite obvious to imagine that substantial financial resources will be needed to expand access and ensure quality provision of education to adults in countries such as Eritrea where educational provision is far behind compared to the potential learning demands, especially for citizens outside the formal system. In future there is a plan to diversify the source of fund for adult learning programmes in the country to meet the growing demand. Adult learning programme and the means of delivery are the collective responsibility of all agencies, organizations and governmental bodies. Therefore, efforts need to be done to attract varied investors and funding partners.

2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education; Provision, Participation and Achievement

2.1 Provision of Adult Learning and Institutional Frameworks

2.1.1 Managing and coordinating of Adult learning in Eritrea

The quality of Adult Learning and Education depends on the quality and relevant services provided. Quality of teachers, relevant curriculum and effective management and co-ordination can be mentioned as some of the factors that determine quality ALE.

Adult learning and education in Eritrea currently is understood as Adult Literacy and Continuing education.

The Ministry of Education through the Department of Adult Education and Media has the mandate to lead and co-ordinate the implementation of literacy and continuing education throughout the country. The major Adult Education programmes include:

- Literacy and post-literacy for 15 years and above;
- Continuing education (middle and secondary evening programme) for youth and adults who could not continue in the formal system;
- Vocational life skills training;
- Advocacy and communication;
- Adult education for prisoners;
- Language and computer training; and
- On the job training etc.

It is not easy to ensure quality education for the non-formal education sub-sector due to the diversified nature of the beneficiaries. As in the current situation of Eritrea there are many obstacles that hinder provision of quality of Education. To mention some:-

- There is shortage of well trained adult education staff at all levels to plan implement and evaluate literacy and continuing education programmes as it should be;
- Lack of relevant curriculum that matches the need of the diversified clientele. For instance, in the continuing education programme (evening) it is implemented using the resources of formal system (in terms of curriculum, administration, methodology etc.);
- Lack of comprehensive research on learning needs survey in line to the diversified nature of learners;
- Limitations in funding to supply support materials.

Despite, the given challenges and constraints, however, much effort has been done in the past 10 years to address the needs of adult learners as is presented in the next pages.

Among the other the major providers of adult education in Eritrea are:-

- Ministry of Education through the Department of Adult Education and Media; Ministry of Defense; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Transport and communication; National Union of Eritrean Women; National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students; Parastatal Developmental and Construction Companies and many other private providers etc.

The education and training provided by the above listed agencies range from advocacy and awareness raising orientation to long term academic courses that beneficiaries are given certificate or diploma. Some give on the job training for their staff while others give education services to their customers.

Although there is a wide range of adult education provision throughout the country as is reflected above, it was not easy to get the required data, as is required in this report. Efforts were made to contact the respective agencies and data collecting format was prepared and communicated. The response was encouraging but still much is needed to sufficient and comprehensive data to prepare a national adult education report of this nature.

It is believed that with all the given limitations what has been included in this report could indicate what is happening in the country and most importantly is a way forward to find ways to act jointly and co-operatively in the implementation of literacy and continuing education in Eritrea.

Learning areas provided by different agencies during the short and long term courses (that range from 3 months to 18 months) can be summarized as follows:

- Literacy skills (reading, writing and numeracy);
- English language and training;
- Computer training including computer maintenance;
- Journalism;
- Income generating;
- Advanced training beyond basic literacy skills;
- Life skills training such as domestic science, hygiene etc.
- Training on primary, health care, nutrition, hygiene;
- Livestock and training;
- Advocacy and awareness raising short training orientation.

The overall provision of quality education rests on the combined effort of all stakeholders and developmental partners. Effort is being made to achieve this mission. And some measures taken so far include:

- o There is a draft of National curriculum framework to co-ordinate efforts and resources for the maximum out put out of the limited resources;
- o Literacy instructional materials are prepared in eight local languages to enhance learning;
- o Use of mother tongue as medium of instructions is being implemented;
- o Different literacy programme implementing guide lines are prepared and in use;
- o Consultation and awareness raising meeting and seminars are regularly conducted etc.

The following activities are also being taken and some are at the stage of planning, which are expected to improve the quality of adult education.

- Conduct national literacy survey to determine the literacy status of the country (learners by age, sex, ethnicity, region etc.);
- conduct comprehensive literacy and continuing education learning needs in order to make necessary interventions;

- prepare/translate varied extra reading materials to create literate environment and about 30 different life skills related supplementary reading materials are published and distributed in local languages;
- Improve the capacity of adult education staff at all levels to professionalize the field etc.

Table 1: ALE Programmes in Eritrea

No	Programme	Provider			Area of Learning	Target Groups	Programme Cost	Funding Source
		Public/state	CSO/NGO	Private				
1	Adult Literacy	MOE/DAEM with strong support of stakeholders such as the NUEW			1. Literacy and numeracy	Adults 15 - 45 of age		Government fund
					2. Social Studies			
					3. Life skill			
2	Continuing education	MOE			subjects studied in the formal school	Adults and youth who couldn't participate in the formal school		-Tuition fees - Government Fund
3	Vocational Training	MOE		Private institutions	Computer Related, Typing Maintenance hand crafts/tailoring income generating courses, Cooking, Mechanics, Driving Home economics	The general public		-Tuition fees - Government Fund
4	On the Job Professional Training	Different Ministries	NGOs	Private institutions	Different subject areas related to the respected ministries/organizations	Employees		Government fund

2.1.3 Linkages between formal and non formal education

a) Policy level

At the policy level the provision of formal and non formal channels are stated in an integrated way in the following documents:

- Transformation of the education system (concept paper 2002);
- 5 years education sector development plan (2005-2009);
- Education For All Framework for Action (2000-2015);
- National Curriculum Framework and others (2007).

b) Use of resources and experiences sharing

The non formal sub-sector is benefiting a lot from the existing resources of the formal system such as:

- school resources (for literacy and continuing education);
- in preparing instructional materials (in local languages);
- Experience sharing during meetings, workshops;
- Sharing of resources at MOE level etc.

2.1.4 ALE certification and national awards

- certificate of participation is given for literacy and post literacy graduates
- certificate for middle school learners (evening programme)
- middle school students sit for the national examination (at the end of 8th grade)
- certificate is given for secondary school graduates and students sit for the Eritrean Secondary Education Certificate Examination and join University if succeeded.

2.2 Participation in ALE

As discussed above the major adult learning programmes are: literacy and post literacy, basic vocational training, continuing education, education for out of school children, education in prison and rehabilitation centers, education in the Ministry of Defense and educational through the radio programme. Other governmental and non-governmental institutions also provide on the short trainings in their respective areas.

The following table shows the summary enrolment for all adult education programmes in the last nine years (since CONFINTEA V 1997).

Table 2: ALE enrolment of all programmes 1998 – 2007

Programme	Enrolment		
	Male	Female	Total
Adult literacy	53,216	499,595	552,811
Continuing education	19,635	25,269	44,904
Prison & Rehabilitation	2,933		2,933
Vocational Training (2006 – 2008)	7347	14371	21718
On the job Professional training in other organizations	22349	43794	66143
Grand Total	98,133	568,658	666,791

Table 3: Adult literacy enrolment 1998 – 2007

Year	Enrolment			Dropout				Complete			
	M	F	T	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%
98/99	1431	19442	20873	764	5759	6523	31.3%	667	13683	14350	68.7%
99/00	2835	49497	52332	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
00/01	3362	51084	54446	1321	15646	16967	31.2%	2041	35438	37479	68.8%
01/02	5112	47719	52831	1707	13170	14877	28.2%	3405	34549	37954	71.8%
02/03	5524	51258	56782	1334	10561	11895	20.9%	4190	40697	44887	79.1%
03/04	7114	53963	61077	1562	12172	13734	22.5%	5552	41791	47343	77.5%
04/05	9671	72530	82201	1902	7780	9682	11.8%	7769	64750	72519	88.2%
05/06	10189	91548	101737	2162	9833	11995	14.6%	8027	81715	89742	88.2%
06/07	7978	62554	70532	1914	10464	12378	17.5%	6064	52090	58154	82.5%
Total	53216	499595	552811	12666	85385	98051	17.7%	37715	364713	402428	72.7%

Remarks

- In 2002 data on dropouts and completion was not obtained due to Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict
- Average completion rate of about 72 percent is really promising considering the learners environment and socio economic situation;
- The above table also indicates the highest female participation (more than 80%). This is also good indication considering the prevailing gender literacy gap without ignoring the importance of ensuring that all concerned should get rid of illiteracy. On the other hand there is the provision of basic education including adult literacy given by the Ministry of Defense for which majority of the participants are men.

a. Continuing education (Evening programme)

Table 4: Enrolment in the evening programme 1998 – 2007

Year	Enrolment			Dropout				Complete			
	M	F	T	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%
98/99	3787	4825	8612	644	506	1150	13.4%	3143	4319	7462	86.6%
99/00	1411	3461	4872	340	299	639	13.1%	1071	3162	4233	86.9%
00/01	797	3224	4021	72	217	289	7.2%	725	3007	3732	92.8%
01/02	1447	3721	5168	171	447	618	12.0%	1276	3274	4550	88.0%
02/03	2322	3444	5766	486	291	777	13.5%	1836	3153	4989	86.5%
03/04	2506	2512	5018	590	498	1088	21.7%	1916	2014	3930	78.3%
04/05	3233	1691	4924	1100	324	1424	28.9%	2133	1367	3500	71.1%
05/06	3268	1401	4669	2289	354	2643	56.6%	979	1047	2026	43.4%
06/07	864	990	1854	152	191	343	18.5%	712	799	1511	81.5%
Total	19635	25269	44904	5844	3127	8971	19.9%	13791	22142	35933	80.0%

b. Prison and Rehabilitation Centers

In Eritrea, the Prison and Rehabilitation centers are not just camps for correcting/punishing criminals. They are learning institutions, where many citizens are provided with an all-round knowledge that helps them improve their future life among the society. Indeed, The Prison and Rehabilitation centers are other strong adult education providers for adult and youth prisoners.

This programme adopts all the subjects taught in the formal education with minor adjustment on the period allocation. It is a government funded programme.

Table 5: Enrolment in Prison and Rehabilitation Centers 1998 – 2007

Year	Enrolment			Dropout				Complete			
	M	F	T	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%
98/99	818	-	818	-	-	-	0.0%	818	-	818	100.0%
99/00	224	-	224	-	-	-	0.0%	224	-	224	100.0%
00/01	295	-	295	-	-	-	0.0%	295	-	295	100.0%
01/02	264	-	264	-	-	-	0.0%	264	-	264	100.0%
02/03	315	-	315	-	-	-	0.0%	315	-	315	100.0%
03/04	185	-	185	-	-	-	0.0%	185	-	185	100.0%
04/05	278	-	278	129	-	129	46.4%	149	-	149	53.6%
05/06	228	-	228	-	-	-	0.0%	228	-	228	100.0%
06/07	326	-	326	-	-	-	0.0%	326	-	326	100.0%
Total	2933		2933	129		129	4.3%	2804		2804	95.6%

The above table shows only the academic achievement in the respected prison centers. However, there are a number of life skill and vocational training provided especially for women in the centers whose data are not available.

c. Short Vocational training

The following table shows a two year total enrolment in various vocational training offered by the private sector.

Table 6: Vocational Life Skills Training

Course Type	Year			Year			Grand Total		
	2006 - 2007			2007 - 2008					
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Computer Related	1114	2187	3301	1539	3376	4915	2653	5563	8216
Language+ Tutorial	1786	1335	3121	1110	1638	2748	2896	2973	5869
Home Economics	33	1467	1500	61	3570	3631	94	5037	5131
Management + secretarial science	19	71	90	13	67	80	32	138	170
Maintenance, Installation, editing	766	323	1089	906	337	1243	1672	660	2332
Total	3,718	5,383	9,101	3,629	8,988	12,617	7,347	14,371	21,718

d. On the job professional training in other Ministries/organizations

These programmes are the professional development initiatives conducted in the different Ministries and institutions in the country. As indicated below since 1998 alone around 70,000 employees have benefited from the on the job training programmes for the educated staff members.

The courses offered in the above mentioned institutions are strongly related to the overall national developmental policy. As Eritrea's economic policy is based on self-reliance, the on the job trainings provided by the different Ministries/organization also are planned to support the policy of self- reliance.

Trainings provided by the ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of education for example are targeted at creating awareness and promote knowledge on primary health care, nutrition HIV/AIDS and other similar diseases preventive measures. These initiatives in turn help in reducing child mortality and improve maternal health. Many of the training provided by the Ministry of Agriculture are also aimed at combating poverty and related extension works.

A recently conducted survey on the different programmes offered since 1998 by other Ministries/ organization show the following figure.

Table 7: Diploma and Certificate awarded for the on the job trainings

Award Given	M	F	T
Participation paper	6,054	26,957	33,011
Certificate	13,039	9,246	22,285
Diploma	1,097	6,745	7,842
First degree and above	1,194	110	1,304
Total	21,384	43,058	64,442

The information indicated on table 7 is the result of the on the job training given by those ministries who provided the data.

e. Adult educational programme via radio

Adult educational programme via radio (media Education) is one of the major means of disseminating quality education to the public. Education via radio was in use long before independence. Indeed, the role it played in educating the public, both children and adults, is significant.

After independence, it was restarted in 1995 to support the ongoing literacy and post-literacy programmes for adults. At first, the focus of the programme was on health, agriculture and social studies. However, year by year the programme was enhanced to include more subjects and attract more audiences. Since it was restarted in 1995 the radio has developed and broadcast 6312 scripts in local languages and on different subjects.

The subjects/scripts broadcasted by the educational radio are aimed at enhancing the on going various adult and youth educational and training activities. Campaign against HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis ... are among the main subjects broadcasted in four local languages. Special programmes in agriculture targeted at adult farmers are also broadcasted. Programmes targeted to teachers on how to improve the teaching learning process are also regularly broadcast. Efforts are going on to ensure maximum use of radio to provide quality ALE.

2.3 Monitoring & Evaluation Programmes and assessing learning outcomes.

Within the Department of Adult and educational media, there is a division of monitoring and Quality assurance. The main functions of the division are;

- Design appropriate tools and instruments for evaluation and assessment for all levels of the adult learning programmes;
- Give technical and professional assistance for teachers/facilitators, that enable them to effectively monitor their day to day professional work;
- Monitor and set rule and guidelines which can uniformly be adapted by all adult education providers within and out side of the Ministry of Education;
- Collect and analyze data of all programmes and feed timely information for policy makers;
- Provide training/workshops for concerned bodies;
- Conduct supervisory activity at all levels of the system;
- Participate in mobilization and awareness raising activities ...

In practice however, there are certain challenges and shortcomings hindering the full implementation of the above listed functions. To mention some;-

- Monitoring and evaluation personal especially at grass root level are poorly qualified;
- The scope of monitoring and evaluation at all programmes is not yet systematic and sufficient;
- There is an urgent need of capacity building in the whole evaluation and monitoring process;
- The shortage of adult education supervisors/coordinators at the lower level;
- The data gathered from the providers lacks consistency and accuracy;
- The working linkage between the formal education and non-formal education is not yet clearly stated, in particular regarding monitoring and evaluation.

2.4 . Adult educators/facilitators status and training

2.4.1 Capacity building is one of the critical challenges when it comes to adult educators and facilitators. The work of adult education activities in Eritrea is executed by recruiting staff on permanent and contract basis. For instance majority of the literacy facilitators are recruited on part time basis (for six months every year). There are also staff members working as curriculum developers; supervisors programme coordinators working on permanent bases. At this stage there is acute shortage of staff in terms of quality and quantity.

Concerning qualification most of the programme coordinators and supervisors have diploma of director's course, and some have certificate of teacher training institute, and they have more experience in formal education (teaching children). Some of them had the experience of school management, as school directors and supervisors while others were simple elementary school teachers in the formal school system.

Literacy facilitators are currently recruited from the national service, elementary school teachers, and the community. The majority are females. Grade wise, the majority (66%) possesses at least a Grade 8 certificate, and 10 percent are below Grade 8. Apart from a six weeks at the beginning (pre-service) and weeks of orientation, no formal training has been given to the national service and community recruits. A monthly honorarium (about 45 USD) is paid to a facilitator who works for more than 2 hours a day.

One of the aims of teacher education development indicated in the draft document the of **National Curriculum Framework for Eritrea** that includes formal non formal sub-sectors is to produce competent, conscientious and responsive teachers for all the education sector, hence effort has been made to improve capacity of staff and especially for facilitators to assist adults learn. Some of the measures taken at the national level include:

- Teaching/learning manual developed in one local language (Tigrigna)on how to assist adults learn;
- More than 20 guide lines and formats including teacher's records have been developed and used since 1999.
- Charts of teaching aid materials developed in local language at national level and distributed to the zobas (for teaching literacy skills;
- Different short training and orientations were organized at national and zoba levels for literacy facilitators, supervisors and managers by the DAEM in the past ten years.

The Department of Research and Human Resources Development is responsible for the development of human capacity of the Ministry of Education staff working at different levels. The DAEM is working closely with this department on how to develop the capacity of adult education personnel. With the leadership of this department the Ministry of Education has developed a **Teachers' Development Master Plan** which includes formal and non-formal channels. Despite the current constraints in teacher training, the master plan is intended to have well trained and oriented non-formal teachers at all levels (including adult literacy). However, due to fund constraints, this could not be materialized yet.

2.4.1 Another main constraint at hand is that there is no clearly stated policy of non-formal education teacher training although this has been indicated in the different educational policies. And almost all the teaching and non-teaching staff of adult education (NFE) are not professionally trained and most of them were working in the formal system and there is no training center that provides longer training course that provides certificate or diploma. Professional development of adult educators could not be materialized without establishing necessary mechanisms (training institution) to address this important profession.

The experience gained and lessons learned so far in the area of literacy and continuing education, however, will be an important step in developing a comprehensive policy of non-formal education teacher training in Eritrea.

Training provided to the teachers/facilitators particularly for those newly recruited from the community, focuses on basic skills and knowledge on adult teaching such as, adult psychology, methodology (andragogi), lesson plan preparation, assessment and reports writing, are some of the contents, which last from one to two training weeks. Additionally several periodic meetings are conducted to assess & evaluate teaching/learning process and to share the experience they have yearly.

2.4.3. In parallel to the expansion of the literacy programme, the number of literacy educators/facilitators increased from 138 in 1993/4 to 2500 in 2005/06 within ten years time. According to the statistical report of the MOE there are about 15,000 teachers in the formal schools and about 2500 educators/facilitators in the literacy programme, in total about 18,000 for the system. Therefore, the proportion of adult educators/facilitators in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel in the country currently is about 14 percent

3. Research, Innovation and Good Practices

3.1 Research studies in the field of adult learning

Adult learning is an area of educational provision that still lacks sound research works, especially in the developing countries. Eritrea is not an exception which is badly in need of wide and balanced assessment and research outcomes to maintain its commitment on the necessary change it wants to bring about to the education system in the country. Lack of adequate capacity compounded by war and other emergency issues, much has not been done in the past ten years in the area of research. However, different case studies, assessment and evaluation exercise has been waged some of which are listed below.

3.1.1 Key study areas

- study on demobilization and integration of soldiers into society;
- survey on education via radio for the public;
- Knowledge and awareness of the public on certain killer diseases etc

3.1.2 Main Findings

a) In the year 2002 MOE in collaboration with National Commission of Demobilization and Integration Programmed (NCDRP) conducted research studies on: -

- Assessment of reintegration needs of SDC's & strategies & operational training plan.
- Private training providers assessment & capacity building
- Standardization & improvement on non-formal skills training provision.

Local & international consultants conducted the research. The research tried to investigate the need for standardisation of skills, recognition of prior learning, certification system, curriculum, training methods etc. As a result the findings have been helpful for the policy makers in revising and improving the non- formal skills training programmes for adults.

b) The heavy house holds burden is one of the stumbling blocks for women's participation in adult learning activities. Especially in Eritrean context injera (local bread) baking is one of the toughest household works. The firewood cookers are the least inefficient, inconvenient, unhealthy and time consuming. The Ministry of Mines & Energy has been one the pioneer ministries to tackle the problem. Through the Ministry's research & development effort, the efficiency of the traditional bio mass injera cooking stove has been improved. The benefits of the improved Mogogo (stove) can be summarized as follows: -

- Will decrease deforestation pressure, as well as the reduction of CO₂ emission.
- Wood or dung collection labor is reduced by at least 50%
- Due to decrease in wood collection duties, students are now able to spend more time studying & mothers will have ample time to participate in learning activities.
- Cooking time and labor is reduced.
- House holds cash expenditure is reduced.
- The health of the people is improved due to reduction of smoke, respirable particulates and other toxic emission during cooking.
- The standard of living will increase at the house held level.

Nowadays a major programme is being undertaken to disseminate such stoves to the rural area with over 12,000 so far installed. The improved stove dissemination programme has won the

distinguished Ashden Award for innovations in renewable energies in developing countries in June 2003.

c) Concerning the activities of the Adult radio programmes, researches have been conducted by national and international agencies for different purposes of which the following are the main:

- ◆ Identifying the most important issues/problems to be addressed
- ◆ Situational analysis/needs assessment which helped the producers design and develop messages relevant to the need of the listeners,
- ◆ Message design and production
- ◆ Finding out listener ship and determining the impact of messages on the audience, etc.

One of the main researches that can be stressed as an example was a research conducted to find out the role and impact of radio programmes in reducing the vulnerability of drought in Eritrea. The research was conducted on samples of drought susceptible areas by a forestry expert in collaboration with communication experts (both from UK) along with the radio staff of the MOE.

Based on the findings of the research, maintaining forests through land-enclosure was taken as an important issue to be addressed to the rural people in order to fight against the vulnerability of drought.

The research included training that assessed the producers in designing, developing and produce quality educational radio messages, which was relevant to the best needs and interests of the target audience. As a result the producers developed more than 18 radio programmes in different formats on the issue of land-enclosure chosen as one of the solutions for quick reclamation/regeneration of the deforested land.

At the same time the research included provision of 350 winding radio receivers to the radio listening centers as well as to people who won in the contest of radio listeners.

After broadcasting of the messages, listener ship and impact evaluation was conducted by the help of Cranfield Disaster Preparedness Center (CDPC_UK) and at a later stage by UNFPA. Both the evaluations which showed that 60% of the intended audience listened and benefited from the messages. Especially the evaluation of the CDPC proved that the enclosure's radio programme provoked debate on the issue of environment among the members of the audience, which helped the listeners to be more conscious on care and protection of their forests in solving the problems of the drought in their daily life activities.

As noted in the past six years and beyond the following are some of the areas of concern that beg attention of further assessment and research.

- Low enrolment and high dropouts especially in some ethnic groups and geographical areas of the country;
- Impact assessment of the adult learning provided in the past 14 years in the area of curriculum, learning achievements etc;
- Learning needs assessment survey to identify who the potential clients of adult learning really are and what is the type of training courses required;
- Impact assessment of media education, diversification of the basic vocational skills training etc

d) Assessment and survey of the health related findings show that considerable achievements have been scored in the past seven years in controlling preventable killer diseases. To mention some:

- The MOH report indicates that death rates and patient being registered in health centers alone, there were between 400 to 500 deaths out of 180,000 malaria patients in 1998, however, in 2007 there were only 10,000 patients and 35 deaths(Eritrea profile, April 2008);
- The count down to 2015: maternal, new born and child survival report of 2008 shows that of the 68 ‘priority countries’ only 16 are on track to reach the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on reducing the mortality of children under five by two-thirds. Eritrea has been identified as one of the few countries and this is the out come of the combined effort made including the intensive awareness campaign launched through out the country. Generally Eritrea is recommended by the World Bank and other international organizations that the country is doing well to meet most of the MDG, such as child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS, Malaria and including access to safe water.

3.2 Innovations and examples of good practices

In the Eritrean experience of providing literacy and continuing education as non-formal education provision, the following points can be listed as good practices in the overall efforts:

1. Provision of sustained adult literacy programme by the GOE despite the unfavourable situation in the region due to conflict, drought and economic hardship;
2. Provision of literacy programme in 8 mother tongue (out of the 9)
 - Instructional materials developed by local writers
3. Giving emphasis to women and the effort made to sustain it. Since 1999 participation of women was more than 80% annually.
4. Provision of basic education including literacy for illiterate soldiers within the MOD. Given the commitment of the ministry and the beneficiaries themselves and the friendly learning environment created at learning centers the programme is functioning successfully;
5. The introduction of complementary basic education for out of school children and lessons learned so far.

4. Adult Literacy

4.1 Adult literacy is understood as part and parcel of basic education. According to the Eritrean National adult literacy draft policy paper (2005), *'A literate person is defined as a person who can both read and write with understanding simple statements pertaining to everyday life, and work out simple calculations in the four operations'*.

4.2 Adult literacy in Eritrea is implemented in a co-ordinated manner. Ministry of Education with the strong support of stakeholders has the leading role in planning, implementing and evaluating the national literacy programme. There is no major single adult literacy provider in the country since 1998/9 for it was agreed among the stakeholders that such programme should be jointly dealt with rather than waste resources by spreading efforts and duplicating activities.

The target groups for this programme are adults and youth (men and women) of age 15-45 who missed the opportunity of formal education during their childhood school years. Adult literacy in Eritrea is composed of three levels which is equivalent to five years of the formal education.

Although the Ministry of Education is the main provider of adult literacy, other governmental and non-governmental institutions also provide small scale literacy programmes for their members.

The main objective of the adult literacy programme is to provide adults and youth with basic literacy and numeracy skills along with knowledge in some functional areas, such as hygiene, civics and environmental issues.

4.3 Effective and Promising practices of adult literacy in Eritrea (since 1997)

- adult literacy has been developed as a government programme and enrolment increased annually by about 20 percent upto 2005/2006;
- majority of participants were women, a development that certainly will narrow existing gender literacy gap;
- adult basic education including literacy is being successfully provided in the MOD for the army;
- Opening community reading rooms (rural libraries) with the aim to enhance the literacy skills acquired in literacy centers and promote the habit of reading among the population. Currently there are about 70 community reading room.
- Awareness raising efforts has been provided to the public using different media outlets (such as TV, radio, as well as meeting and seminars).

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and Future Perspectives of ALE

5.1 Expected outcomes from CONFINTEA VI

- Assist member states and especially LIFE countries to clearly prioritize areas of intervention based on their ALE current situation with interested developmental partners;
- The conference to be organized in such a way that countries to be able to ultimately utilize the duration in experience sharing and also as an opportunity to seek developmental partners;
- Set an easy to use network of member countries and other interested parties to be able to maintain and enhance the provision of ALE etc

Eritrea received International Reading Association Literacy award in 2002 for the following main reasons:

- Provision of adult literacy for more than a decade despite the unfavorable conditions of war, conflict and drought in the region – accepting and developing adult literacy as a government programme giving emphasis to the disadvantaged groups especially women;
- Using mother tongue as medium of instruction of adult literacy, allowing different ethnic groups to participate (literacy given in 8 local languages);
- The intention and efforts made to create literate environment by opening rural/community reading rooms (there were about 30 then) etc

All these commitments of the government of the State of Eritrea not only are sustained but also enhanced. For instance:

- The then Division of Adult Education has been updated into a department
- Funding Adult Literacy by the government increased since 1997 (with an average of about 2 m USD annually)
- National policy on Adult Education formulated;
- Adult Literacy enrolment increased by about 20 percent up to 2005/2006;
- About 70 community reading rooms opened to enhance self learning;
- Instructional materials prepared in 8 local languages
- Public awareness towards the importance of adult literacy improved etc

Eritrea is at a better position currently than it was 7-10 years especially in the area of adult education. All these should be sustained and enhanced through:

- research and impact analysis;
- creation of literate environment;
- capacity building of Adult education staff at all levels to professionalize the sub-sector;
- Publication and documentation etc.

The main areas of intervention and interest for assistance can be summarized as follows:

1. The capacity of the institution needs to be developed to develop :-
 - Relevant and quality teaching learning materials
 - monitoring and evaluation systems needed
 - carrying out research to develop the program
2. Training of literacy personnel and in particular literacy facilitators.

3. Experience sharing in the development of materials of literacy for adult and out of school children (with other relevant countries);
4. Non-formal data base management systems development;
5. Consultancy services to consolidate and upgrade policies and strategies on non-formal education, development of training manuals for literacy personnel at different levels of responsibility;
6. Impact assessment and research of the implementation of literacy program in Eritrea in the past decade).
7. Creating literate environment to check relapse to illiteracy and cultivate the habit of reading by:-
 - Community reading rooms
 - increasing radio programs coverage (related to life skills, civic issues, health, income Generation, recreation etc.) to reach all
 - developing and distributing varied reading materials in the various local languages etc

It is the strong believe of the MOE(DAEM) that much is expected from the International Adult education Conference (CONFINTEA VI) to be held in 2009 that range from experience sharing to the creation of net work and enhancing capacity and also an opportunity to initiate co-operation and partnership.

5.2 Future Perspectives

- Improve and expand literacy provision to reach more adults and youth who do not have the opportunity yet;
- Provide training and orientation to literacy personnel. Develop the capacity of staff from the various ethnic languages in order to develop relevant and quality teaching learning materials in all local languages;
- Conduct comprehensive learning needs survey to develop relevant course contents (curriculum) to match the diversified nature of adults at the basic level and beyond in line to the effort being done at the basic literacy level;
- Make impact and situational analysis of the provision of adult literacy in Eritrea in the past decade;
- Organize and conduct awareness raising seminars and workshops to maintain and enhance the participation and contribution of the public;
- Develop systematic literacy(NFE) data base system;
- Contribute in creating literate environment. Consolidate and expand establishment of community reading rooms (rural libraries) and other learning centers to check relapse to illiteracy;
- Intensify the use of multi media in the effort towards literacy: Increase and improve radio coverage to reach all and in particular those in remote areas;
- Enhance partnership and co-operation. Involving all stakeholders and developmental partners at national and international levels.

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