

***The Second International Conference on
Gross National Happiness – Paper/Poster proposal by Gary P. Liebert***

Building Capacity for Local Development in Chad: Community-Based Organizations and the Role of Adult and Nonformal Education

Poverty persists as an important challenge to Africa: the UN Economic Commission for Africa reports that four in ten Africans live in absolute poverty, citing evidence that poverty on the continent is increasing, not decreasing (2000, p.1). In Chad and other countries, central governments cannot provide expected services, functions are devolved to local governments and civil society actors: in this decentralized setting, community-based organizations (CBOs) can capitalize on opportunities and avoid pitfalls only if they acquire resources and capacities to manage new local level functions. The situation in Chad is more critical due to the country's recent re-emergence after many years of civil war, ethnic strife, drought, etc. The current exploitation of oil reserves in southern Chad brings unprecedented revenues and hopes for development, and the possibility of disappointment if development is botched.

Pertinent to the themes of the conference – exemplary models of development integrating sustainable and equitable economic development with environmental conservation, cultural promotion and good governance – this paper addresses the importance of capacity building strategies for African grassroots organizations and their impact on educational policy. Capacity development – often viewed as a panacea for development problems, despite the many varieties available and ambiguity of the concept – is a key investment in Africa's people, developing knowledge and skills for local development. Adult and nonformal education (ANFE) plays an important role in this investment, and CBOs initiate innovative educational programs.

This paper focuses on a policy analysis addressing capacity development through ANFE, by: (a) analyzing the context/causes of the problem facing Chad; (b) identifying alternative capacity development strategies, implemented elsewhere in Africa; and (c) – by analysis and comparison of selected cases – recommending approaches likely to benefit Chad. The nature of capacity building, in particular *local* capacity building strategies in Africa, will be explored, along with case study summaries as models for effective local development: combining elements of an enabling environment for local development with ANFE strategies, microcredit programs, marketing and finance training, environmental education, etc.

Data was gathered through: analysis of grey literature; interviews with key informants; and, analysis of “e-discussions” on technical cooperation and development (supported by capacity.org/UNDP) to generate research themes. A data summary will be presented on a poster, with cases of CBOs from Mali, Senegal and Chad, and this will (hopefully) initiate discussion of capacity development strategies to complement ANFE programs.

Initial data analysis was disseminated to stakeholders for review; communicating research results follows Majchrzak's policy research methodology, to develop “action-oriented recommendations” to solve problems in society (1984, p. 12). This policy analysis of capacity development strategies can serve as 1) a catalyst for debate among educators, researchers and development experts concerning local interventions to complement development strategies, and 2) a means to disseminate capacity development lessons throughout Africa, influencing policy choices – particularly in ANFE programs – made by local communities, non-governmental organizations, CBOs, educational organizations and governments.

REFERENCES

- Majchrzak, A. (1984). *Methods for policy research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). (2000). Economic report on Africa, 1999: The challenges of poverty reduction and sustainability. Retrieved March 21, 2002, from http://www.uneca.org/publications/ESPD/economic_report_1999.htm