

Reflections on the impact of Mwalimu Nyerere's vision on adult and non-formal education

Yusuf Kassam

Budd Hall¹

Introduction

This chapter, written as reflections by Yusuf Kassam and Budd Hall, provides some personal and historic background to the decade following the launch of Adult Education Year by Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere in 1970. The phenomenal developments that took place in adult education during the decade of the 1970s can justifiably constitute nothing short of a 'revolution' in adult education in Tanzania. Our stories are based on our respective roles at the Institute of Adult Education and the Faculty of Education. Our chapter consists of reflections on adult education in Tanzania during that period and by the impact of the vision of Mwalimu Nyerere as it radiated out into the world. Our chapter follows each of us as we took inspiration from our work together in Tanzania in building the International Council for Adult Education and then separately into the Kassam's innovations in participatory evaluation and international development and Hall's move into community university engagement and global training in participatory research. We conclude with some reflections on the contemporary value of the Nyerere vision for adult educators today in Tanzania and around the world. Finally, we provide a selected bibliography of our publications about adult education in Tanzania.

Our Roles in Tanzanian Adult Education and Development

Yusuf Kassam was initiated into the field of Adult Education during his studies at Makerere University (1963-67) where he was given an opportunity to teach English to adults in the evening classes at Makerere's Centre for Continuing Education. As a teacher at Mzumbe Government Boys Secondary School (1967-69), he trained

¹ Yusuf Kassam is a consultant on international development based in Toronto, Canada

Budd Hall is Co-Chair of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education at the University of Victoria, Canada

Grade 12 student in methods of teaching literacy to adults, and organised them to teach literacy in the two surrounding villages of Mzumbe using the school's vehicle.

He then joined the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) as an Assistant Resident Tutor and later became a lecturer in Adult Education and ultimately an Associate Professor of Adult Education at the University of Dar es Salaam (1970-81). During these years, he taught in the one-year Diploma Course in Adult Education and the Adult Education optional course at the B.Ed. level at the University of Dar es Salaam, and later became the Director of the Diploma Course.

During the latter part of this period, he served as a Regional Coordinator of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)'s International Participatory Research Network. Participatory research and participatory evaluation was part of ICAE's adult education paradigm. In 1969, he was appointed by Mwalimu Nyerere to become the Director of IAE. In this position, among taking other initiatives at the IAE, he organized and launched a National Radio Study Group Campaign on Afforestation known as "Forests are Wealth".

In 1981 he joined the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) located in Toronto as its Director of Programmes where Budd Hall was the Council's Secretary General. The ICAE and Tanzania had important mutual links.

After leaving the IC AE in 1990, Kassam worked in the field of international development as an evaluation specialist incorporating much of what he had learned from his Tanzania years in over 20 countries working with bi-lateral aid agencies, trade union organisations and foundations. During these years he returned to Tanzania where he employed his participatory evaluation practices to the work of the Tanzania Education Network, National Organization for Legal Assistance, Foundation for Civil Society, and the Ethics Secretariat in the President's Office.

Budd Hall was finishing his Doctoral studies at UCLA in Los Angeles, USA when there was a visit by the Hon. Nicolas Kuhanga, then the Deputy Director of the Institute of Adult Education. He told Hall that the IAE was looking for someone to fill a research fellow position in the Institute. As a student of African Educational Systems and someone who had heard about the exciting developments in Tanzania following the Arusha Declaration, he said that he would be interested in applying. Following an interview with Kuhanga and Professor Ranger, Budd was hired. When he showed up to work at the Lumumba street building, the first person that he met was Yusuf Kassam.

Budd was given the task of setting up a small research department which was given the responsibility for the evaluation of the Institute's major adult education activities. His evaluations were linked to the roll-out of the appointment of the first district Adult Education Officers, the Six-District Literacy campaign and the first radio study group campaigns. He was also responsible for supporting the visit of Paulo Freire to Tanzania in 1972, a visit which included a famous meeting between Paulo Freire and Mwalimu Nyerere. It was during this time that the ideas for a decolonial research approach which was called participatory research emerged. Indeed some 50 years later, Hall is still working on training young people in many parts of the world drawing on principles that emerged from that period of Tanzanian adult education history.

Upon leaving Tanzania, Hall spent 20 years working with the ICAE, first as its Research Officer later as its Secretary-General. On leaving the ICAE he spent 10 years as Chair of the Adult Education Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education or the University of Toronto. For the last 20 years, he has been working at the University of Victoria where he currently holds a UNESCO Chair in Community-Base Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

Mwalimu's Vision of Adult Education

Mwalimu Nyerere's vision as articulated by Nyerere himself and by many of the adult educators of the times was seen as a broad area of learning activities with emphasis on the arousal or awakening of adults' awareness of their realities and the abilities to change their realities. Adult education was seen as a key to socialist development. Further, it was viewed as a practical and problem-solving contribution. As much as possible adult education should be integrated into life and should not be considered as a separate segment of life. The education of adults in Tanzania was seen as an ideological, practical and flexibly integrated process; integrated into the lives of learners and in the reality of the emerging Tanzania. There was a clear sense of urgency in the Tanzania of the 1970s with many saying that we must educate the adults of today, we cannot afford to wait for 25 years until the children have grown".

National Literacy Campaign

The National Literacy Campaign was a gigantic undertaking that involved more than five and a half million illiterates. The campaign is noteworthy for its magnitude, President Nyerere's articulated vision and philosophy of adult education, political commitment from the top of the country's leadership, political mobilization,

revolutionary fervour, role of TANU, organizational structure, involvement of many government ministries, parastatals, and industries, volunteerism, the training of adult educators, and innovations (Kassam,1978).

The 15th Biennial Conference of TANU in September 1971 directed that illiteracy in Tanzania should be completely eradicated by the end of 1975. The initiation of the National Literacy Campaign (1972-75) was a nation-wide extension of two preceding smaller campaigns, namely, the UNESCO/UNDP Work Oriented Adult Literacy Pilot Project which had operated in provided an invaluable base of expertise and experience.

The number of illiterates towards the end of 1971 was estimated to be about 5.2 million people of 10 years and above. However, by September 1975 the figure stood at about 5.9 million, 44% were males and 56% were females.

In mobilizing more than 5 million people, TANU played a leading role from the national level right down to the ten-cell level. The adult education committees at the regional, district, and ward levels carried out the major task of planning and establishing numerous adult education centre, enrolling participants, distributing literacy primers and writing materials, recruiting voluntary and organizing their training, and supervising the centres.

The literacy classes took place at thousands of adult education centres most of which were located at primary schools while many others operated at a wide range of places such as offices, factories, dispensaries, churches, community halls, TANU offices, the backyards of individuals' houses, under large shady trees halls. In some places, the learners themselves built their own special shelters.

The total number of teachers in the campaign was 98,000. Primary school teachers totalled about 14,000, while the rest numbering about 84,000 were voluntary teachers. Most of the voluntary teachers were primary school leavers who received an honorarium of Shs. 30/- (Approximately U.S. \$0.40) per month. With the help of the Mwanza Functional Literacy Project, 12 different primers were prepared All of which, except two, were based on the agricultural activities of the people – cotton farming, maze growing, coconut growing, cashew nuts growing, tea growing, cattle ranching and fishing. One primer was based on the political ideology of the country and the other was on home economics. All of the primers were accompanied with their teacher's guides. A total of about 12,500 spectacle were provided free of charge to those who had poor eye-sight.

On 12th August, 1975, a National Literacy Examination was administered throughout the country. The results of the test showed that about 3.8 million persons or 77% of the total enrolment of about 5.2 million participated in the test. 37% or 1,403,985 persons passed at Levels III and IV, who according to the national criteria for literacy, were considered literacy graduates. Out of these, 15% or 574,876 persons had performed at Level IV and were considered to be functionally literate.

In conclusion, the illiteracy rate in Tanzania was reduced from 67% in 1967 to 39% at the end of 1975.

In the preceding section, the statistics on the number of people who acquired the practical literacy skills has been documented. In terms of the qualitative impact of literacy, an evaluation of new literates using participatory evaluation methods of dialogue and testimonials showed a powerful qualitative and psycho-social impact of literacy on a sample of eight new literates in different parts of the country (Kassam, 1979). They expressed dramatic changes in the quality of their lives which included getting rid of their former state of marginality, alienation and fear, acquired self-confidence and self-assertiveness, regained their full human dignity, and felt a sense of liberation. Simply put, they felt empowered.

To highlight these self-perceptions in the new literate's own words, here are a few examples: "The blindness from my eyes has been removed. These days when people see me, they say to themselves 'You cannot deceive or intimidate this old man' " (Salum Nassoro); "Now that I have become literate, , I feel that before I was carrying a lantern and a now a pressure lamp has been brought to me" (Yusufu Selemani); "Now that I am literate, no one can ask to just sign blindly – I first have to ask what the whole business is all about, I read the documents myself, and only after I am satisfied that I agree to sign" (Rukia Okashi; Our eyes sparkle now and they can see" (Paulina Paulo); "You despise yourself because you feel oppressed as a result of illiteracy and ignorance" (Kondo Kawambwa).

The Training of Adult Educators

In view of the growing importance of adult education in Tanzania, the necessity for extensive and professional training of adult educators became extremely evident and urgent (Kassam, 1978). The five years beginning in 1969 witnessed impressive efforts in initiating the training of planners, organizers, coordinators and teachers of adult education at different levels. Six major institutions and agencies got involved with the training of adult educators. These were:

1. The Institute of Adult Education
2. Colleges of National Education
3. The Mwanza Functional Literacy Project
4. The University of Dar es Salaam
5. Adult Education Officers of the Ministry of National Education
6. Regional Training Teams

The Institute of Adult Education launched a full-time one-year residential Diploma Course in Adult Education. The students were sponsored by the Ministry of National Education, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, TANU, Tanzania People's Defence Forces, National Service, National Institute of Productivity, cooperative unions, missionary societies, town councils, various parastatal organizations, and various industries.

The graduates of the Diploma Course got engaged in a wide assortment of occupational categories in the field of adult education. These included: Adult Education Officers at various administrative levels under the Ministry of National Education; Principals of training centres; Rural Development under the Prime Minister's Office; Organizers of adult education at the Institute of Adult Education; Adult Education Tutors at the Colleges of National Education; Education Secretaries of Cooperative Unions; Workers Education Officers in industries and parastatal organizations; apolitical Education Officers in the Tanzania People's Defence Forces, National Service, and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In addition to the Diploma Course in Adult Education, conducted many short training courses for a wide range of parastatal organizations and industries.

Since all primary schools were required to operate as centres of adult education, all Colleges of National Education introduced compulsory training in adult education methodology in 1971 for all teachers who are trained to teach in primary schools.

The Mwanza Functional Literacy Project trained various categories of personnel for the functional literacy programmes in the four pilot regions in northern Tanzania as well for the National Literacy Campaign. The different individuals who were trained included teachers, literacy supervisors, trainers, adult education officers under the Ministry of National Education, agricultural extensions officers, writers of functional literacy primers, and rural librarians.

One of the tasks of the Adult Education Officers of the Ministry of National Education was to train teachers and organizers of adult education programmes, primary school teachers, civil servants from the different Ministries, and study - group leaders for the various radio study group campaigns.

Every region in the country had established Regional Training Teams whose task was to train functional literacy teachers most of whom were volunteers. Members of all the Regional Training Teams had been trained intensively by the Mwanza Literacy Project.

The Ministry of Agriculture introduced functional literacy as a subject in the training of Agricultural Extension Officers in its 11 training institutes.

The University of Dar es Salaam introduced an adult education optional course for B.Ed degree.

The Radio Learning Group Campaigns

The radio learning group campaigns of the 1970s were extraordinary exciting and productive adult education activities. The ideas of the radio learning group campaigns were born from a combination of Tanzanian ideology and pedagogy of change, Swedish study circle traditions and the Canadian Farm Radio Forum experiences. Tony Dodds, a British born resident tutor working for the IAE in its Mbeya office brought the example of the Farm Radio Forum from Canada of the 1950s from his course in adult education at the University of Manchester. Swedish adult educators who worked in Tanzania during those years brought their well known study circle experiences and Tanzania adult educators pulled everything together within the ideology of grass roots village led development of the era. The campaigns consisted of weekly radio programmes, printed materials to be read, trained study group leaders and weekly listening groups in villages around the country.

The first two campaigns Uchaguzi ni Wako (The Choice is Yours) and Wakati Wa Furaha (A Time for Rejoicing) were organized around the national election of 1970 and the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Independence in 1971. Mtu ni Afya (People are Health) and Miti ni Mali (Forests are Wealth) were larger scale national events that drew involvement from millions of people. The radio listening groups were designed to educate citizens and engage citizens in the new steps being proposed for education, healthcare, agriculture, local government, village development and to take action. The Mtu Ni Afya campaign was the first large scale

national campaign. With support from the Ministries of Education, Health, TANU (the national political party of the day), and the Swedish International Development Agency the campaign involved training 75000 study group leaders in a training of training strategy. The selection of health related concerns (Malaria, Bilharzia and others) were chosen because they were subject to significant reductions through environmental changes. Removing banana trees and ponds from around the houses had a positive impact on reducing the breeding places for mosquitos for example. Building of latrines was an important way to reduce diarrhea and feces borne contagions. Each radio study group was encouraged to create lasting legacies for the campaign. In the end hundreds of thousands of latrines were built in every region of the country.

The Miti ni Mali campaign consisted of planting of millions of seedlings. Yusuf Kassam was the architect of the Miti ni Mali campaign while Budd Hall was responsible for the evaluation of the Mtu Ni Afya campaign.

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

ICAE, the global non-governmental organization that supports literacy and adult education around the world was in many ways baptised by Mwalimu Nyerere. Founded at the 1972 UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education, the founding Vice-President of ICAE was Paul Mhaiki who at the time was the Director of the Institute of Adult Education. He led the Tanzania delegation to the Tokyo conference where he showcased the exceptional work that Tanzania was doing in the field of adult education. Tanzania and Mwalimu Nyerere's adult education vision had gained international attention and the ICAE approached Mwalimu Nyerere to become its' first Honorary President. Mwalimu Nyerere graciously accepted recognizing the ICAE's aspirations for progressive international advocacy and programmatic work in adult education. Mhaiki in 1976 hosted the first ever World Assembly of Adult Education in Tanzania. Mwalimu Nyerere was the keynote speaker whose words blessed the newly emerging world network and served to brand it as a transformative and energetic space.

When Budd Hall's contract with the University of Dar es Salaam was coming to an end, Paul Mhaiki, the ICAE Vice-President for Africa recommended Budd to the ICAE founder, J Roby Kidd to come and work with him in Toronto, Canada to help get the ICAE moving. Budd took up the position as Research Officer and served as the Secretary to the Dar es Salaam World Assembly working with Paul Mhaiki to

welcome 600 participants from 70 countries to come to discuss putting adult education at the centre of the international development discourses.

Following the World Assembly, Budd and Yusuf worked together on the creation of the International Participatory Research Network. Tanzania through the work of Yusuf Kassam, Marjorie Mbillinyi, Kemal Mustafa, Marja-Liisa Swantz and others had been the place where the term participatory research was first born. While Budd had moved to Canada to work in the ICAE, Yusuf was the first coordinator of the African Participatory Research Network. In this capacity, he hosted one of the founding international meetings and co-authored a book on African perspectives on participatory research.

In 1981, Yusuf joined Budd in Canada to work in the Secretariat of the ICAE as Director of Programmes. They continued working together drawing continually on their formative years under the influence of Mwalimu Nyerere and other Tanzanian adult education leaders

Impact in Higher Education

In 1991, Budd left the ICAE to take up an academic position eventually as Chair of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Toronto. This department's vision was of adult education and social justice. Adult education from an anti-racist, transformative lens carried echoes of the Nyerere vision from 20 years earlier. A number of Tanzania adult educators successfully obtained their PhDs from the University of Toronto during that period.

In 2001, Budd joined the University of Victoria as the Dean of the Faculty of Education but in 2006, he was to once more close the circle to link back to his days in Tanzania. The University of Victoria had discovered the discourse of participatory research, which they called community based research. They learned of Budd's early years as a pioneer in participatory research and invited him to set up the Office of Community-Based Research. With that as a platform he helped to launch Community-Based Research Canada and eventually what became the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education. The UNESCO Chair is build it on the roots of the early International Participatory Research Network of which Kassam and Hall had been founders. Hall and Rajesh Tandon of India, the early Coordinator of the IPRN serve as joint Co-Chairs. A key activity of the UNESCO Chair is supporting a global training network of young participatory researchers. Each training course, the young people are

taught about the foundations of Mwalimu Nyerere's thinking and the origins of the work in Tanzania.

Implications for contemporary Tanzania

The Tanzania of the 1970s and 80s is not the Tanzania of the 2020s. Mwalimu and that generation of educational thinkers have died. The ideas of the Ujamaa generation have over the past 50 years undergone much criticism. Tanzania's aspirations to strike out on a different path from the dominant economic options of the 1970s have fallen by the roadside as a neoliberal capitalist system has swept aside notions of self-reliance and a more locally self-sufficient economic life. Adult education, like other ideas from the Nyerere years, has fallen far from the heights of policy prominence and public imagination that it once occupied. Literacy rates have fallen from the achievements of earlier times. Schooling of course has grown with both public and private provision reaching nearly every young person. The question of quality of provision in both primary and secondary school remains a concern. Tanzanian state policies are related more to industrial strategy than rural development. So what does the Nyerere vision of development, education and adult education offer to a contemporary Tanzania?

“Poor people do not use money as a weapon”

This is one of the things that Mwalimu used to say when explaining the foundations of his thinking. His words were a way of saying that there is knowledge in the lives of ordinary people. Today we speak of asset-based community development meaning that when looking at urban or rural communities it is important to look at them from an asset base rather than a deficit perspectives. A development strategy whether in the field of entrepreneurship, agricultural production, healthy living needs to begin with the experiential lived experience, the knowledge of those who are engaged in moving their lives forward. In adult education principles, we speak of starting our education and training 'where people are'. These principles are valuable foundations for any and all adult education and skill training that is undertaken.

The architecture of learning

The keys to the development of the adult education movement of the 1970s and 80s were a vision or an ideology of learning, training of adult education leaders, political will from the state and the creation of an adult education infrastructure. A strong

case can be made that adult education has a critical role to play in the national and international recovery from COVID as well as any kind of just industrial policy. The re-energising of the literacy movement which is an essential platform or any kind of economic or social development is also needed. Climate change and the gap between the rich and the poor all can be effectively addressed through adult education. But the scaffolding that once supported the national adult education movement has deteriorated. There is a need to build a series of institutional bridges to connect the archipelago of segmented offerings that exist today. A national review on adult education provision as part of the 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Adult Education declaration would be a good start.

Selected Bibliography on Adult Education in Tanzania by Kassam and Hall

Kassam, Yusuf (1978), *The Adult Education Revolution in Tanzania*, Shungwaya Publishers Ltd., Nairobi

Kassam, Yusuf (1978), *Development of Adult Education in Tanzania and The Interaction Between Formal and Nonformal Education in Tanzania*, two chapters in The Educational Process edited by A.G.M. Ishumi and G.R.V. Mmari, University of Dar es Salaam

Kassam, Yusuf (1979), *Illiterate No More: The Voices of New Literates from Tanzania*, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar es Salaam

Kassam, Yusuf (1982), *Formal, Nonformal and Informal Modes of Learning: A Glimpse of the Tanzanian Experience in International Review of Education*, Vol. 28, No. 2, UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg

Kassam, Yusuf, (1983) *Nyerere's Philosophy and the Educational Experiment in Tanzania* in Interchange, Vol. 14, No. 1, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto pp 56-58

Kassam, Yusuf (1989), *Forests are Wealth: Tanzania's Forest Campaign in Convergence*, Col. XXII, No. 4, International Council for Adult Education, Toronto

Kassam, Yusuf (1994), *Julius Nyerere: Profile of an Educator* in Thinkers of Education, Volume 3, UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education

Hall, Budd (1971) *Universiity Adult Education: A Time for Broadening Participation?* Dar es Salaam: Institute of Adult Education

Hall, Budd (1972) "Mass Adult Education in Tanzania" in *Ufahamu* Vol II No 3 pp29-37

Hall, Budd (1972) *Who Participates in University Adult Education* Dar es Salaam: Institute of Adult Education

Hall, Budd (1973) *Wakati Wa Furaha: An Evaluation of a Radio Study Group Campaign.* Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute

Hall, Budd (1975) "Participatory Research: An Approach for Change" in *Convergence Vol 3 no 2*

Hall, Budd (1974) *Voices for Development: The Tanzanian national radio study group campaigns,* Milton Keynes: International Extension College

Hall, Budd (1975) *Participation and education in Tanzania* Falmer: Institute of Development Studies monograph series

Hall, Budd (1975) *The structure of adult education and rural development in Tanzania* Falmer: IDS monograph series

Hall, Budd (1975) *Man is Health: Tanzania's Health Campaign* Toronto: International Council for Adult Education 74 pp.

Hall, Budd (1975) *Adult Education and the Development of Socialism in Tanzania.* Nairobi:East African Literature Bureau 144pp.

Hall Budd (1975) "The Ideology of Adult Education in Tanzania" in NAEAT *Adult Education and Development in Tanzania Vol 1* Dar es Salaam: National Adult Education Association of Tanzania pp24-34

Hall, Budd (2020) "Elimu Haina Mwisho: Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere's vision of Adult Education" in *Papers in Education and Development* vol 8 No 2 pp 1-15

Key writings by Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere and others

Kawawa, R. M. (1973). Vice president Kawawa's opening address for the African Adult Education Conference" in Hall, BL, Ed. adult education and national development. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.

Mhaiki, P.J. (1970). Plan for adult education in Tanzania. Mimeo, Mbeya: Institute of Adult Education.

Mhaiki, P.J. (1972). Adult education revolution in Tanzania, speech for the UNESCO Third International Conference on Adult Education, 25 July-7 August, 1972. Tokyo.

Ministry of National Education (1971). Idadi ya elimu ya watu wazima. Dar es Salaam: MNE.

Ministry of National Education (1972). Adult education in Tanzania: A national development revolution towards socialism and self-reliance. Dar es Salaam: Ministry of National Education (mimeo).

Nyerere, J.K. (1971a). Elimu Haina Mwisho: Risala za Rais kwa Taifa alizozitoa katika Mkesha wa Mwaka 1970 na 1971. Dar es Salaam: Government Printers.

Nyerere, J.K. (1971b). Tanzania ten years after independence. Dar es Salaam, TANU.

TANU (1971). Katiba ya TANU. Dar es Salaam: Government Printers.

Nyerere, J.K. (1978) Development is for Man, by Man and of Man: The Declaration of Dar es Salaam in Hall, B. L. and Kidd, J. R. *Adult Learning: A Design for Action*. Oxford: Pergamon Press

