



Social Transformation Through Lifelong Learning in the Community: A Kenyan Context

8

Nancy Njiraini

8.1 Introduction

Learning throughout life has been considered as one of the driving forces for transforming our world to achieve goals such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many communities consider lifelong learning as essential to education goals and agree with the development frameworks that are captured within the Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is new attention towards the transformative potential of lifelong learning considering its contribution to producing a skilled and adaptive workforce in a more equitable and cohesive society. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has vision for lifelong learning that focuses on social and personal benefits, respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice, cultural diversity, international solidarity and shared responsibility for a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2016). This means that education systems which promote these issues have the potential to change life where it is able to adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach that include sub-sectors and various levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for individuals and communities (UNESCO, 2016). Lifelong learning is an organising principle of education covering all phases of life and all forms of learning—formal, non-formal as well as informal learning. This chapter focuses on the transformative role played by lifelong learning, specifically looking at the role of educators in the community, who teach learners the value of critical thinking and self-reliance. The chapter examines the learners' perspectives of the learning process, paying attention to the engagement between the learner and educator in the process of impacting meaningful change and social transformation in the community.

N. Njiraini (✉)
Strathmore University Business School, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: nnjiraini@strathmore.edu

8.2 Learning and Social Transformation

Rogers (2002) acknowledges that adult learners return to a learning environment by choice. They are aware that they have the freedom to choose to participate in the learning experience and therefore expect that the process they submit themselves to will meet the goals they intend to reach. Some learners may lack motivation to participate because of a negative experience which may cause them to resent being involved in a learning experience and therefore miss the opportunity for a transformative experience (Longworth, 2003). For transformative learning to take place, theorists such as Mezirow (1991) indicated that it should be a process of affecting change in a frame of reference. A connection should exist between learners' classrooms, the learners' experience and the educator, as Taylor (2008) emphasises, transformative learning perspectives are replacing andragogy as a way of engaging in lifelong learning. The awareness of the economic and industrial needs of society have placed demands of learning such as in vocational training, to have visible transformative impact. This has created a shift in learning, particularly within learning that takes place beyond compulsory education, which is referred to as lifelong learning. There is an emphasis on producing well-equipped learners, with a focus on outcomes that pay attention to problem-solving and are reflective as well as those that build transformation characteristics such as critical thinking and self-reliance (Kerka, 2002; Vella, 2002). Lifelong learning is often associated with learning in later life, and these types of learners bring with them experiences they have acquired throughout their lives and are able to make connections from different personal traits that they have developed throughout life. Learners expect to draw on and reflect on basic life concepts and values, which are responses that make up life experiences and means that they require an opportunity to reflect. This reflection may be based on a person's ability to critically think, self-direct and be inquisitive in order to shift and evolve towards growth and development, in other words, to transform (Cranton, 2006). To have meaningful shifts in the evolution of life experiences, an educator has a key role of directing and supporting this complex process for the shift and transformation to take place.

Learning is socially transformative, and according to Cranton (2006), this is a process of revising old assumptions and ways of interpreting experiences through critical thinking and self-reflection. Cranton (2006) continues to say that this is a process that can empower individuals and communities to change their perspectives and habit of minds. Taylor (2008) agrees with this opinion and adds that more attention should be paid to the practical aspects of transformative learning. The role of the educator is to ensure they facilitate an environment of trust and care in order to develop relationships between learners as well as with themselves as educators, where there exist support and opportunity for self-reflection in order to learn, develop and transform (Taylor, 2008).

8.2.1 Learning, Development and Transformation

Human development occurs as a result of the interaction of the environment that we live in which includes our communities as well as the family and home. (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). He believes that in early life as well as throughout life, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex interaction between an active, evolving human and the objects and symbols in its immediate external environment. Bronfenbrenner (2005) observes that ‘human beings create the environments that, in turn, shape their own development, and demonstrates that human beings can also develop those environments to optimise their most practical abilities’. He continues to observe that ‘what makes human beings human, therefore, is both the potential to transform their world in physical, social, technological and cultural ways and the possibility that these actions will nurture meaningful transformative development’ (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). We examine the way in which communities and individual develop and transform through empowerment and ability to make choices. Developing human beings, thus, is concerned with making choices wider and it means that opportunities are available to enable people to choose one direction over another in a way that can enrich their life. Sen (1985, 1999 as cited in Njiraini, 2016) observes that when individuals are able to access resources such as education, health and a good standard of living, then development has or is occurring. For individuals to make these choices, they need to be aware of them. The educator brings this awareness to the individual or community, and they have a role to ensure that this awareness in the form of learning has meaning and potential to transform, through the nature of engagement and the capabilities that are taught or demonstrated.

Humans develop through various experiences that enlarge their awareness of choices available to them. Human development is identified as a process that enlarges people’s choices and improves their lives towards transformation (Haq, 1995). Njiraini (2016, citing Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011) highlights that ‘people are central to all development under this concept and the basic goal of human development therefore is to create conditions where people can live meaningful lives. A meaningful life means that people need to be healthy, to be able to develop their talents, participate in society and be free to achieve their goals’. Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) say that human development is an approach that deals with the basic idea of increasing the richness of human life. Human beings therefore become the real wealth of an economy and developing and expanding their opportunities and capabilities enable them to transform their lives towards creativity and productivity. These capacities manifest in the skills, talents, competences, proficiencies and potential of humans to produce income and improve their welfare (Njiraini, 2016).

8.2.2 Educators' Role in Imparting Capabilities for Transformation

When people are empowered through investing in them, they are able to develop and transform as humans. The idea of human development is supported by the concepts of equity, sustainability and the ability to have continuously available opportunities and have capacities that empower the ability to make choices (United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR), 2011). Njiraini (2016) observes how capabilities approach to teaching and learning are focused on creating awareness of the freedom to achieve well-being, reflecting on real opportunities to be and do what is of value to individuals. The capability approach emerges as a framework about well-being, development and justice. There are traces of this approach to thinkers such as Aristotle, Adam Smith and in more recent times associated with Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum among others. This approach suggests that freedom to achieve well-being depends on what people are able to do or be and therefore making a choice on their lifestyle (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). People need to know what these choices are and how to claim them as rights. It is necessary to create an awareness of such rights through education and equip individuals and communities to enable them to ensure that their rights are respected and the nature of education, the contents and how it is processed are important considerations (Njiraini, 2015). The contribution of education and learning in creating capabilities needs to be seen from a social transformative perspective, to be beyond that of creating skills for a livelihood and income generation. Nussbaum (2011) suggests that creating capabilities should be transformative and involve empowering the individuals and communities and enabling skills such as critical thinking and self-directing.

According to Nussbaum (2011), capabilities are about the availability of genuine opportunities centred on what people are able to do and she emphasises the shifts of the capability question from resources to transformative abilities and skills which create freedom and opportunity. Nussbaum (2011) reflects on aspects of capabilities from social justice using the basic entitlements which include practical reasoning among others and how that reasoning can transform the environment in which one lives in. Human development and the capability approach need to consider that freedom for individuals and communities to transformed should be based on the ability to make choices. These choices need to be respected when framing education concepts, where Nussbaum (2011) looks at the importance of education in creating opportunities and therefore capabilities. Transformative skills including critical thinking provide an ability to reflect and to understand other people and to grasp the world as well as current global issues in a transformative way, so as to meet challenges of a changing environment. This looks at a person's ability to evolve while developing the ability to use their skills and knowledge effectively and to strengthen their life skills (Njiraini, 2015). These life skills are supported by key areas such as learning to know, to be, to do and to live together in a lifelong learning setting.

8.2.3 Lifelong Learning and the Transformation Disconnect

The idea of lifelong learning is not entirely new and has evolved through various dimensions of social adjustments through many generations. Lifelong learning incorporates life-wide learning that include breadth of learning such as family, cultural settings, communities, work and leisure, and also incorporates life-deep learning that relates to processes of contemplating or spiritual practices (Schuller & Watson, 2009). The authors highlight that lifelong learning incorporation of life-wide and life-deep perspectives includes learning behaviours, obtaining knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and competences for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity and employability. The reflection focuses on a continuous process that is based on, learning to do, to know, to be and to live together and in more recent times, this includes learning to change and to take risks. There is continuing focus on lifelong 'learning' away from focus on lifelong 'education' as learning occurs through formal interventions as well as informally, in the ways people make sense of experiences and knowledge and captures aspects of formal education, non-formal education and informal learning (Cooper & Walters, 2009).

Lifelong learning educators are limited in their awareness of the needs of their learners. Lifelong learning occurs in later life meaning that this will often be among adult learners and adult learners required a different approach to the process of learning as they often bring with them experiences of previous learning encounters (Rogers, 2002). The author observes how learners at this stage approach a learning situation with a ready agenda based on their intention of engaging in the process and that they have a set way of viewing the world based on their background and culture. The author continues to show how specific challenges face the learners such as previous experiences in learning, their culture, values, family background, socioeconomic issues and life in general affect their individual approach, talents and interests. Thus, the context in which lifelong learning develops, and particular in later life among adults has an important impact on any future learning. The self-concept notion where the adult learning in later life moves from dependency towards self-direction and readiness to learn and enable development of their social roles can help to shift focus towards solving problems and being self-directed. Although these claims are open to debate, such as the issue of self-direction which may be culturally bound, they broadly offer a lifelong educator a starting point in acknowledging that these learners need a different approach. With this level of appreciating the differences in lifelong learning, the educator can facilitate greater integration and show empathy within a learning environment. Most educators have been trained to deliver learning from a young learners' perspective and rarely have the skills to work with adults. The task of being able to support adult learners can be difficult and where the learners and educators are not aware of or sensitive to such differences makes the learning experience extremely difficult for all involved.

As communities continue to be diverse, learning environments will equally be diverse meaning that a learning set-up will include learners of various backgrounds. Learning in such an environment can have its challenges. Bennett (2009) notes that

exposure to differences in backgrounds has the potential to broaden the learners' experience and has a positive contribution to transformation competences. Sensitivity (or lack of it) to learners' needs may pose as a problem since the diversity of learners will require the educator to have a broad appreciation of the different learning concepts and theories that are likely to be applied by the varied learning needs among the participants (Finger & Asún, 2001). The authors observe that learning in later life would need to be considered purely on an individual basis as learning goal is seen as contributing to personal transformation and growth and as a process of development. This leads to intellectual competence and awareness and as a method of problem-solving, both individually and collectively and several concepts and theories contribute to our understanding of the transformative potential of lifelong learning.

8.3 Social Transformative Lifelong Learning Approach to Educating

In the attempt to understand lifelong learning, scholars such as Merriam and Caffarella (1999) focus on the issues of behavioural change and point to experiences that learners bring with them as an important consideration in contributing to transformative lifelong learning. Cognitive learning models also contribute to this learning as they are concerned with the way in which knowledge is acquired and what information we need to know, rather than what we need to do. Sternberg (2003) describes learning as the development of insight, which can be seen as the ability to integrate and organise perceptions into a pattern. In order to be an insightful and transformed learner, it is necessary for learners to consume the required information and then combine it with what they know to make a meaningful whole. Lifelong learners are not passive as it is up to them to make the appropriate connections to their world, which then results in learning. What the educator provides is the best conditions and access to the possibility of learning. The best conditions are also aided by having learners do the work in an environment in which they feel comfortable (Sternberg, 2003). On the other hand, social learning concepts involve learning by observation and imitation. This way of learning is concerned with watching the actions of someone else and then observing the consequences. If positive reinforcement occurs, then the watcher is more likely to try those actions themselves. However, if they are negatively reinforced, then the watcher is more likely to avoid that course of action (Bandura, 1997). He states 'Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do' and continues to say, 'fortunately, most human behaviour is learned by observing others, and one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this information serves as a guide for action' (p. 22). This is useful among adult learners as they can observe good practice as well as social norms from one another.

Learning concepts that focus on teaching that is controlled by the educator are common in many developing countries. The educator carries out the task of

promoting learning through the provision of instruction and a belief in that standards of performance are clear, and all stages of that performance are testable (Welsh & Swann, 2002). O'Sullivan (2003) observed the practice of this concepts in his case study of Namibia where he says that a developing country such as this one focuses on this concept and will consider other learning concepts such as learner-centred as a Western approach to learning which could be detested as too liberal. He notes that educators in such situations may also find it difficult to use other methods due to limited resources and suggests that the educators may find it easier to use learning cultures that they are already familiar with. Adult and lifelong learning, since it is an action of choice, is seen as a route towards liberty and as Mezirow (1991) says, adult learning has the potential to be transformative, which means that the individual can move towards being more inclusive and differentiated as well as being open to different points of view.

8.3.1 Impact of Learners' and Educators' Culture

Culture and learning are connected from early life experiences and are part of forming a person's values and behaviours. These affect expectations in future learning and the process of that learning. The way culture affects learning is a useful consideration for a framework for curriculum and instructional decisions and needs continuous consideration in order to support the success of lifelong learners. Re-examination of educators' assumptions, expectations and biases would also be required says Rong and Preissle (2009). Adult and lifelong learners will have gained further experience elsewhere that differentiates them from what would be a cultural, national or racial learning style. There can be positive and negative recognition and identification of education effects where the positive effect can be the awareness of different types of learning that exist and how they may be supported to enable effective transformation in the learning process.

Educators too have their own cultures, and they draw their teaching and educating inspiration from their own cultures. It is necessary for them to identify ways in which they can within their own cultures and teaching styles to successfully reach the diverse populations of their learners and not just those whose culture they identify with. Bennett (1990) believes that 'to the extent that teachers teach as they have been taught to learn, and to the extent that culture shapes learning style, students who share a teacher's ethnic background will be favoured in class' (p. 96). Bennett (1990) says that ignoring the effects of culture and learning style can affect all students as a learner's expectations may be limited by their culture and where educators teach according to their preferred methods, will affect the success of the learner even those from a shared culture but differ in learning style. Some such as Daniels (2003), Jarvis (2003), Tan (2009) argue that educators have a special role in representing their own culture, but that can be a positive factor as we all have learned successfully from educators who were different from us in learning style or culture. The importance of integration learning setting is useful for an educator and an awareness of the role and the culture they represent as well as the culture

represented by their learners has an influence on the way they approach the process (Joy & Kolb, 2009). Taking a holistic approach to lifelong learning emphasises self-reflection and as well as mindfulness that will promote the development of learners.

8.4 Approach to the Study

Ellis (2003) shows how social cultural theory assumes that learning arises in activities of interaction where learners succeed in performing a new task with the help of another person and then internalises this task so that they can perform it on their own. Donato (2000) advocates the use of social cultural frameworks as it gives the educator and learners an opportunity to mediate and assist each other in creating the zones of proximal development which enable learning and development. These thoughts by Ellis (2003) and Donato (2000) form the basis on which this study explored the role of educators in supporting meaningful transformation. The approach was based on understanding the impact of transformation from the experiences and perspective of the lifelong learners above the age of 18 as they would be able to demonstrate what difference may (or may not) have occurred as a result of the engagement with an educator. The approach in this study was to listen to the participants tell their stories from their own perspective. As it was important to have an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the learners, a qualitative approach was found suitable as it aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the world as seen through the eyes of the people being studied (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Creswell, 2013). In-depth interviews were conducted where the participants were given space to articulate what their learning experience were as well as what they may have perceived as the difficulties in their experiences as learners. This way, it is possible to see the situation through the eyes of the participant and provide a unique example of real people in real situations (Cohen et al., 2003). The complex dynamics, human relations and interactions of events in unique instances portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the individual reality and thick description of participants' lived experiences and to hear the thoughts and feelings about their situation.

The participants were selected on the basis of their background, level of education, the type of learning they were engaged in at the time. The selection was done in this way purposely to provide a variety in the data collected. The characteristics of individuals were taken into consideration such as their age, education levels, type of learning they were engaged in so that the selected participants could reflect diversity and breadth. Cohen et al. (2003) acknowledge that this method of selection does not pretend to represent the wider population and that it can be biased, and this was taken into consideration. Specific themes and patterns were identified from the information received. Some sections were highlighted if they were evaluated as providing evidence and were identified for use to demonstrate the theme they represented. The sample constituted 13 learners from the community of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. As this is a small sample, the findings presented can in no way be

claimed to represent the experiences of all learners of Africa. This does not, however, undermine the validity of the information gathered from the participants.

While considering ethics in qualitative research that examine and explore others operated in their environments, it is important to be aware of the importance of confidentiality which would be useful in building trust which was required for interacting effectively. This study ensured that participants were well informed about the goals of the research study and were offered the chance to raise any concerns regarding risks to their work and to their relations with stakeholders. Any concerns raised were addressed by reassuring them that all information would be made anonymous. Details of the research were given in a detailed ‘Plain Language Statement’ (PLS) document and they were offered an opportunity to ask any further question they had. The consent form was given and signing it indicate their agreement to be part of the research study. Participants were offered anonymity and where there was objection to audio recording or photographs, this was handled in a way that respected those wishes by blurring the faces of those who did not wish to be photographed and not including the audio of those who objected to audio recording. There was no disclosure of sensitive material or confidential information gathered from documents.

8.5 Supporting Self-Reliance in Transformation— The Lessons

As earlier highlighted, the objective of transformative learning is to revise old assumptions and ways of interpreting experience through critical thinking and self-reflection (Cranton, 2006). These skills are useful in making meaning from experiences and require a process of altering basic assumptions and values and the role of transformative approach to learning is to support this. Transformative approach to learning helps individuals to critically reflect and question assumptions and beliefs in order to determine their value for themselves and avoid over dependence on opinions of others. For this level of change to be achieved, educators need to prepare learners who demonstrate critical thinking as well as other different ways of reviewing and interpreting past experiences. This level of conscious engagement is what Longworth (2003) sees as core to social transformation through learning. Educators can support learners in the journey to form habits of the mind that evaluate and examine issues, so that they can become self-aware, empowered and transformed. The participants in this study indicated that there was a high dependence on educators to provide guidance in learning, as highlighted by one participant.

I had always learnt in the same way...,I waited for the teacher to give instructions which we were expected to follow closely then wait for further instructions. I went to the lecture halls, sat at my desk and waited to be told what to do. When I started my studies, I expected the same to happen. It took me some time to realise that the teacher was not going to do all the work for us, and I had to learn how to study on my own. A3

Where transformative change was recognised by the participants, it was linked to the type of engagement that took place between educator and learner. An

engagement approach to learning and educating that recognised a learner's past experiences and integrated it in the learning encounter was considered positive and transformative.

I was learning how to weave basket and other artwork so that I could start a business. The teacher was not very helpful because she was interested in teaching us only what they knew, and she was young and did not know a lot of different weaving styles. I had done some weaving when I was young and I wanted to see what else I could learn, but the teacher was not even taking note of what I or my other friends knew about weaving. This was not useful for us, and we thought it was a waste of time. If only she had discussed with us about what we knew, we could have learnt from each other. M2

Participants discussed the focus of their conversations with the educators highlighting specific areas of engagement where self-dependence and discovery were enabled, and past experiences were considered part of the learning process. An educator's approach as well as their background was also considered a contributor to transformation, where it was seen to either contribute or hinder transformative conversation especially where it was in conflict with the learner approach to learning as was the experience of the participant below who expected to learn in a particular way based on their experience.

I was learning a course and on the first day, the teacher introduced the course and showed us all the computers that we would use, then he left us to work on our own. I thought since it was the first day, he wanted us to try and play with it just to see how comfortable we were. The rest of the week was the same, the other students would raise their hands and ask questions, but I had no idea what was going on. After the second week, the teacher came to class and said it was the assessment day. I was in shock ... what assessment? According to me, we had not learnt anything! I left that class very angry and felt cheated. I spoke to someone later who explained that it was a self-study class and that is how the class was run. I thought it was very strange! A1

The engagement process as well as the impact of the educators' background contributed to building capabilities that had an impact on realities and expectations.

8.5.1 Transformation Through Meaningful Engagement

Educators' and learners' engagements are often not a process of collaboration, and participants in this study stated that they always felt that educators had little regard for who they were or how their life and professional experiences affected their perspectives. This was clearly stated by participants who felt that there was usually little consideration for effective engagement or consultations. This meant that learners were not able to adequately interact with the educator or any material that the educators used for the teaching experience. For many of the learners, the process was just a transmission of general information that did not address issues that were relevant to their situations. This rendered that type of learning meaningless or ineffective to the learners, as indicated by one participant.

We are used to leaning in a way that helps us understand information better when the teacher is easy to talk to and we are able to ask questions. It also helps when we have a chance to discuss with other learners, but mostly, it the teacher can ask us our opinion instead of telling us all the time, it may be helpful of us to understand them, and they can also understand us. A5

An understanding of the learners as well as their background and values was essential for the educator in order for the learning process to have the intended transformative impact. This is demonstrated by what King (2004) says that the manner in which educators deliver learning can determine if there is potential for growth through self-reflection. It can either help or hinder transformation, leading to the recognition of the need to have the necessary skills in developing their community in the way that benefitted them.

8.5.2 Role of Educator in the Transformative Process

Methods of educating where the teacher controls all the learning in the way Freire describes as ‘banking’ (Freire, 1970) was the experience of most of the participants in this study. The learners were expected to take in all that was being taught to them and no contribution was expected from them. This was expressed in several of the conversations with participants such as one participant who shared her learning experience where she was familiar with an approach of the educator giving instructions on every aspect of learning. When she went to a different learning setting and was required to work by herself, she was lost and unable to follow the class lesson. She blamed this on the educators on both settings where the first one did not give her the opportunity to think, and the second one did not help her to learn how to adapt to a class that required thinking.

Participants described most of their learning environment where the emphasis was on knowledge of the text and theory as expressed by a participant.

We studied our text day and night and knew the text so well that we could almost be able to repeat a whole textbook back to you. That is what the teachers required. When I came to the new college, I followed the same way of learning as that is what I knew and when it was time to do the examination, I knew I was prepared as I had read the text. When I got the results back, I could not believe I had failed, and I had to ask the teacher how that happened. The teacher explained that it was important for me to show that I knew the text, but it was more important to show that I knew how to apply the knowledge I had. M2

The requirement was to read all the text indicated and regurgitate it in an assessment process, and this was how the educators would know that the learner had understood the lesson. This regurgitation exercise does not give room for critical thinking and self-reflection. However, if this is the way in which a learner is familiar with the approach to learning, then the educator has a role to enlighten the learner on the value of making meaning for themselves. This is determined by the way in which the educator approaches the teaching process in order to support the learner, to adapt their perspective and expectation and move it from a process of transmitting

information to a state of transforming. This process of transforming can bring the learner to a place of observing learning as a growth and change process that includes their participation and contribution. This does not happen automatically and a transformation thinking educator needs to pay attention to their own approach or style and that of the learner to determine the point of divergence of opinions in approach and how to ensure there is understanding of the requirements of the process.

In order to be able to engage effectively, educators need to ensure that their ideas about life are not imposed on the learner in the teaching process. This can take place when there is a possibility of an image of a fixed and standard idea about people. This may in part lead to unjust generalising about members of a particular group and make assumptions about them (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Effective engagement serves the purpose of social cohesion and supports the process of working towards change of attitudes and building cultural bonds that will create a sense of belonging and encourage participation among learners, especially in a community setting (Bleszynska, 2008). Many people feel the need to maintain their identity by remaining faithful to their culture and way of understanding life. The extent to which a person wants to maintain their culture and way of life may limit their freedom and openness to learning new ways of approaching life (Banks, 2008). He suggests that education should help a learner to appreciate life and it can also help free them from boundaries in a way that enables them to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to participate in the society.

8.5.3 Capabilities for Transformation

The learner-centred nature of a learning approach focuses on engagement in line with participatory approaches where it generally provides opportunities to build capabilities where people can learn from each other and also from outsiders including educators (Butler & Mazur, 2007). Participants expressed the lack of information and material that was relevant to them and their circumstances and demonstrated how educators used examples from other settings such as other cultures and countries.

Examples are really useful, but when they are about other countries like America, England, Egypt, it is hard for me to follow because these places have different ways of doing things. Why not find examples that we know about? M8

The relevance or application of such examples was not made clear and rendered the lessons uninteresting as the learners were not able to make sense of the lessons. The process of reflecting and obtaining evidence in a broad vision and identifying ideas on what should be achieved is a useful place to begin to support capabilities for transformation. It is useful to learning in this way as it encourages people to reflect on what they know and to then begin to think critically. A process such as this one can be useful in supporting meaningful social transformation where the approach to educating and learning focuses on selecting suitable interventions, those that engage in ensuring learners experiences are intertwined with learning new information and aiming at making new meaning that enable capabilities for development. As shown by Nussbaum (2011), a level of individual well-being which includes education has a role in contributing to community and individual

well-being which can also lead to social transformation and development. This has the potential to build capabilities that transform communities and enable them to take control of their own lives, to create and manage their social transformation and to develop their lives in a way that encourages less dependency and works towards becoming self-reliant.

8.5.4 Realities and Expectations

Realities and expectations can play a role in the learning process where there are a separation and distance in learning relationships between those with perceived power and those without. The lifelong learner may feel as if they are tied to a relationship of patronage and feel the need to act in an unnatural manner that does not reflect their life realities or life goals (Njiraini, 2015). When lifelong learners are engaged in reflecting, exploring and questioning issues, it serves to support efforts of making meaning in the learning process. Conversations are stimulated when questions of meaning, emancipation, freedoms and authority are presented, and these conversations can shape self-awareness that can lead to transformation (Njiraini, 2015). Freire (1970) refers to this self-awareness as critical consciousness which is about being present, being aware of your surroundings, of your own identity and basis of beliefs and attitudes. Being in such a state and then analysing the situation in a critical thinking manner should allow one to become aware of what matters and of what one's reality is (Freire, 1970).

It was an important moment for me when I realised how useful it is to be aware of my environment and what was surrounding me, because I started to think harder about the things I believed and practiced and why I did those things. M7

When educators collaborate and partner with lifelong learners who are critically aware, it becomes meaningful and solutions that integrate knowledge contributed by everyone are taken into consideration and have the potential to transform. This way, according to Nussbaum (2011) and Longworth (2003), solutions for identified problems can be those that enable individuals and communities to truly influence the learning process and get the social transformation that is desired.

8.6 Conclusion

The main evidence of transformation includes perception of meaningful change from understanding of values and critical reflection of opinion, showing what differs occur between known values and new learning. The contributing factor to that reflection lies in the way the educator approaches the learning and teaching process, to engage in meaningful ways that takes into consideration the learners' experience and integrates those into realities and expectations. Reflection of lifelong learning in this study revealed the importance of recognising that lifelong learners make a choice to participate in a learning encounter and therefore expect it to fulfil a set goal. The fulfilment of the aims and goals of those lifelong learners can be impacted by the educators' approach where the educator can help or hinder the transformative

process. The study showed that transformation is impacted by meaningful engagement where cognitive development is affected by possible conflict between current values and new learnings. These dilemmas can be addressed by efforts of self-reflection and fact integration which are at the heart of the transformative learning and the educator has the role to engage with the learner in a way that they can be transformed by the encounter. The role of the educator is therefore key in ensuring this transformation takes place. This does not happen automatically, and a transformation thinking educator needs to pay attention to their own approach and that of the learner to determine the point of divergence of opinions in approach and how to ensure there is understanding of the requirements of this process. As the educator and learner engage, they can support the learners in building capabilities for social transformation. The support should include encouraging reflection on what is known as a way to begin to think critically. The reflective, exploring and questioning process serves to support ways of making meaning where questions of meaning, emancipation, freedoms and authority stimulate conversation that can shape self-awareness and lead to transformation.

References

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
- Banks, J. A. (2008). *An introduction to multicultural education*. Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Bennett, C. I. (1990). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Bennett, M. (2009). Defining, measuring, and facilitating intercultural learning: A conceptual introduction to the Intercultural Education double supplement. *Intercultural Education*, 20, 1–13.
- Bleszynska, K. M. (2008). Constructing Intercultural Education. *Intercultural Education*, 19(6), 537–545.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Sage Publications.
- Butler, L. M., & Mazur, R. E. (2007). Principles and processes for enhancing sustainable rural livelihoods: Collaborative learning in Uganda. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*, 14(6), 604–617.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2003). *Research methods in education*. Routledge Falmer.
- Cooper, L., & Walters, S. (2009). *Learning/work: Turning work and lifelong learning inside out*. HSRC Press.
- Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults* (p. 228). Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- Daniels, D. (2003). Learning about community leadership: Fusing methodology and pedagogy to learn about the lives of settlement women. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53(3), 189–206.
- Donato, R. (2000). Sociocultural contributions to understanding the foreign and second language classroom. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 27–50). Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Finger, M., & Asún, J. M. (2001). *Adult education at the crossroads: Learning our way out*. Zed.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder and Herder.
- Haq, M. u. (1995). *Reflections on human development*. Oxford university press.

- Jarvis, C. A. (2003). Desirable reading: The relationship between women students' lives and their reading practices. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53(4), 261–271.
- Joy, S., & Kolb, D. A. (2009). Are there cultural differences in learning style? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(1), 69–85.
- Kerka, S. (2002). Teaching adults: Is it different? *Myths and Realities*, 21. (pp 3–4)
- King, K. (2004). Furthering the theoretical discussion of the journey of transformation: Foundations and dimensions of transformational learning in educational technology. *New Horizons in Adult Education*, 18, 4–15.
- Loden, M., & Rosener, J. B. (1991). *Workforce America!: Managing employee diversity as a vital resource*. Business One Irwin.
- Longworth, N. (2003). *Lifelong learning in action: Transforming education for the 21st century*. Taylor & Francis.
- Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1999). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Njiraini, N. (2015). *Exploring the importance of critical thinking in creating capabilities for self-reliance in international community development: A Kenyan context*. (Unpublished Doctoral thesis). University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK.
- Njiraini, N. (2016). Critical thinking as a core competence for the future. *Adult Education and Development*, 83, 94–99.
- Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Harvard University Press.
- O'Sullivan, M. (2003). The reconceptualisation of learner-centered approaches: A Namibian case study. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24(6), 585–602.
- Rogers, A. (2002). *Teaching adults*. Open University Press.
- Rong, X. L., & Preissle, J. (2009). *Educating immigrant students in the 21st century: What educators need to know*. Corwin Press.
- Schuller, T., Watson, D., National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales), & Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning (Great Britain). (2009). *Learning through life: Inquiry into the future for lifelong learning*. National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.
- Sen, A. (1985). *Commodities and capabilities*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
- Sternberg, R. J. (2003). *Cognitive psychology*. Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Tan, F. (2009). Tri-fold transformation: An international adult student's reactions on online learning. *Adult Learning*, 20(3), 38–40.
- Taylor, E. (2008). *Transformative Learning Theory. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, Issue 5, 15 p.
- Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) (2011). http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/networks/replies/HDR2011.ConsolidatedReply_EN.pdf. Accessed 7 April 2020.
- UNESCO. (2016). *Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all, global education monitoring report, 2016*. UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf>. Accessed 7 Dec 2020.
- Vella, J. (2002). *Learning to listen learning to teach: The power of dialogue in educating adults* (Rev. ed.). Jossey-Bass. (Original work published 1994).
- Welsh, I., & Swann, C. (2002). *Partners in learning: A guide to support and assessment in nurse education*. Radcliffe Medical Press.