ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION IN POS,Y' SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS IN ETHIOPIA: POLICY, PRACTICE, AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract
This study examines current policies and practices affecting the functioning of postsecondary institutions in terms of creating opportunities for adult and lifelong learning in Ethiopia. Data were collected from official documents, government statistics, as well as a telephone interview with ten officials of five purposefully selected public post-secondary institutions. The results show that existing national policies and programs related to adult and continuing education are limited in their coverage which in turn, affected not only institutional rules and regulations, but also actual practice. Thus, adult and continuing education programs found to be less responsive to the needs adult learners though they represent a sizable enrollment share accounting for 31.5% of the evening, summer, and distance education programs in public institutions alone. Further, the study uncovers the existing gaps in policy and practice in terms efficiently using post-secondary institutions as venues of adult and continuing education, and as centers of lifelong learning. Finally, the paper calls for fundamental national-level policy attention to redirect...
institutional level policies and code of practice which would subsequently impact organizational structure, curricula, and research undertaking in post-secondary institutions in Ethiopia.

Keywords: Adult Education, continuing education, lifelong learning, post-secondary institutions, Ethiopia

Introduction
The new world order, which is termed as “Globalization” has been affecting Africa negatively than positively, hence more than ever before, there seems to be a consensus among Africans that the continent can no longer afford to be indifferent to what is happening in the rest of the world. Simply put, the global interconnectedness has been harming Africans mainly due to the existing structural inequalities and systematic injustices (Mkapa 2005; in Seya 2005: 22) worsened by severely limited resources that undermined its capacity to produce new knowledge and technology. In this vein, one cannot forward evidence more convincing than the ramifications of the recent financial, food, and energy crises. One of the key measures to suffer the consequences of globalization is to bolster their capacity for human capital accumulation- which apparently calls for increased training and re-training not only to consume the knowledge and skills that are being rapidly produced by centers of knowledge, but most importantly, to survive the 21st century. As a result of this post-secondary institutions have been dramatically changing to present themselves as viable centers of lifelong learning of high quality. The expansion and classification of higher education, the proliferation of private institutions and cross border distance education providers and increased internationalization are some of the developments that changed the tertiary education landscape. Africa is also feeling the impact from the changes that are taking place around the world. Due to these changing realities, international players such as UNESCO had organized forums that resulted in the 1997 Hamburg Declaration of the UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education and subsequently the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education in Paris that assert the need to transform post-secondary institutions into centers of lifelong learning (Walters & Watters 2001; Walters 1999). In similar spirit, scholars (e.g.; Hake 1999) argue that lifelong learning is the necessary condition for survival during the era of "late modernity" which according to Hake (1999) is a period of social development. After about a decade has elapsed since these conferences were held, it appears that it is now the time to reflect on in what the African postsecondary education systems are heading vis-à-vis their counterparts in the developed world. The aim of this paper is to add to the evolving understanding of adult and continuing education in post-secondary institutions describes the method and data used. Section 5 presents the in Sub-Saharan Africa based on data obtained from Ethiopian postsecondary institutions. Section 2 documents some facts about the socio-economic conditions of Ethiopia while Section 3 gives a critical review of the history and development of adult and non-formal education in Ethiopia. Section 4 results and Discussion, and Section 6 presents the conclusions and policy implications.

The Socio-Economic Context
Ethiopia is an ancient country of continued civilization hosting diverse cultures, ethnic linguistic and religious groups. Though it has immense natural resources, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the 2007 Census the Ethiopian population is estimated to reach 74.5 million with 85 percent living in rural areas (PCC 2008), over 34 percent of the population earning less than one dollar
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Nevertheless, it is to be noted that after the change of government in 1991, growth has been registered in human capital development that affected socio-economic progress (World Bank 2005). In a positive note, a recent report indicated an economic turnaround with an average GDP growth of 6 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in 2002-and 2007 (World Bank 2008) while according to the Ethiopian Government, an average 11 percent GDP growth was registered in 2005-2007. In the education front, the 2005 World Bank report indicated that after the end of the protracted civil war there has been a rapid enrollment growth at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (World Bank 2005). This fast increase, however, is in a sharp contrast with state of adult education as national adult (15 years and above) literacy rate which stood at 35.9% (UNDP 2008), which is well below the Sub-Saharan African average (i.e. 60%). The argument is that the attention accorded to adult and non-formal education (ANFE) is disproportionately minimal (Sendhaas 2005). This is believed to have discouraged efforts that could be made to train professionals and conduct research in post-secondary institutions. In effect their potential in terms of ensuring adult education and lifelong learning has been severely limited. Notwithstanding the unprecedented expansion of the subsector (Tesfaye & Elizabeth 2008), little is known as to the efforts made by the Ethiopian postsecondary education system to realign itself to the changing global landscape. In particular, this study explores how national policies impacted the institutional policies and practices adult and continuing education in post-secondary institutions in Ethiopia.

**Adult and Continuing Education in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia has a long history of indigenous education which goes back to the introduction of Christianity in the 4th century B.C. In effect, secular (Western) education is only the phenomenon of early 20th century which began with the opening of Minilik School in 1908 in the capital, Addis Ababa (Tekeste 1996). In contrast, though one can be certain that adult education did not exist as it has been conceived today, in the past, the dominant religious and clan-based institutions used to offer adult education using different platforms (Zelleke 2005; Dessu 2005; Tilahun 2001:55). Owning to the well developed indigenous education system (Girma 1967), beyond educating the society, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church crowned Ethiopia as the only black African nation with written script of its own. Notwithstanding the abundant intellectual wealth accumulated over centuries of civilization, Ethiopians have, for the most part, orally transmitted their history, culture, art, literature, philosophy, as well as medical and scientific knowledge. The reason was/and still is the widespread illiteracy among the Ethiopian population. In a similar note, the role of post-secondary institutions in supporting adult and continuing education has been minimal despite their about six decades of existence. A closer look at the history of adult education in Ethiopia reveals the existence of two fundamentally distinct educational philosophies guided
by mutually incompatible ideological stances. However, as time goes by, there has been a gradual shift in the ownership of adult education from the hands of strictly traditional-religious establishments to that of modern and secular institutions. According to Zelleke (2005), the historical development of modern adult education has been divided into three major periods: The Imperial period, the Dergue (designating the Military Government extending from 1974-1991) period and the Current Status (post-Dergue period). The Imperial Era ends in 1974. During this period, adult education was both the responsibilities of government and NGOs. Adult education programs were flexible and government control over its activities was limited. The curriculum included Amharic reading and writing, arithmetic, English language, hygiene, geography, history, vocational skills of various forms including home science and child rearing, agriculture, trade, and military lessons (Hailegebriel 1971; in Zelleke 2005). Though adult and non-formal education enjoyed better attention with the advent of the Military Government, its administration had taken a more centralized and intractable approach. In 1975 the National Literacy Campaign (NLC) was proclaimed. This happened almost immediately after the Military Government took over political power. During the campaign, about 60,000 high school and university students and their teachers were sent all over the country for two-year terms of service (U.S. Library of Congress 2006). It is on the record that over 1.5 million people took part in the national campaign that included students, civil servants, teachers, military personnel, housewives, and members of the religious groups (U.S. Library of Congress 2006). Arguably, at the end of the campaign in February 1990 the national literacy rate was reported to reach 72.2% (Tekeste 1996). However, the NLC was criticized (e.g.; Tekeste 1996; Heleselasse 1997) for lack of meaningful impact on socio-economic development. Despite recognition of the achievements, Tekeste (1996) argues that the increases in literacy rate did not translate into concrete achievement in terms of discernable economic growth. Nevertheless, his analysis seems to have lost sight of the apparent relationship between economic, political, and socio-cultural milieu (Nafukho et al. 2005: 58-73; Nyerere 1989; Seya 2005) that was necessary to create the required link between adult education and development. To say the least, the fact that adult education has a political dimension, it would be naive to imagine development without the constructive engagement and support of the government (e.g.; Nyerere 1989; Seya 2005). Actually, this “constructive engagement” was lacking in Ethiopian case during the Dergue’s time. In hinge sight, Zelleke (2005) described the government’s action as a “top-down prescriptive approach” characterized by complete control and lack of flexibility that totally ignored the needs of adult learners. This eventually led to lack of interest and commitment even to attend literacy classes leave alone impacting development.

The Role of Post-Secondary Institutions in the Past

Unlike adult and non-formal education, continuing education program is a very recent phenomenon and its history only goes back to the introduction of modern education in Ethiopia. The widely used modes particularly in tertiary institutions were evening and summary in-service programs. Even distance education is not yet an established tradition in post-secondary institutions. Scholarly works in the area documented that continuing education program (CEP) as evening and summer in-service courses started with the opening of the University College of Addis Ababa (the present Addis Ababa University) (Mekonnen 2005; Tilahun 2001) which was established in 1952 (Balsvik 2008:3). With the
expansion of the post-secondary education sub-sector, however, that there has been a discernable quantitative growth in enrollment rate and number of programs. Among other things, the introduction of the private sector particularly encouraged the provision of distance education. In contrast, adult education in tertiary institutions is one of the least recognized in Ethiopia. In this vein, the first diploma program was launched in 1980 at Bahir Dar Academy of Pedagogy (now upgraded as Bahir Dar University) and trained adult education coordinators who used to be assigned at Woreda (district) level until the program was closed in 1996 (Dessu 2005: 2000). Save a lot of damages done, it would be unfair to deny that adult education had in fact enjoyed strong political support during the Military rule. It was during this period that adult education emerged as an academic program for the first time in post-secondary institutions. A similar effort, albeit with slightly different focus existed during the Imperial era. For example, the establishment of the Awassa Community Development School (which became Awassa College of Agriculture in 1976) at Awassa, southern Ethiopia and the School of Social Work in the then Haileselasse I University (currently known as Addis Ababa University) were indications of some degree of participation of post-secondary institutions in adult education and community development. In summary, the past history of adult and continuing education in Ethiopia reveal that until the change of government in 1991, the role of post-secondary institutions was at best marginal. When it was awarded some degree of reception by the political-establishments, the profits of adult and nonformal education is calculated, more in terms of achieving political objectives. This is why Haileselasse (1997), called the ANFE activities were uncoordinated and conducted on ad-hoc bases with little or no commitment. Regardless of other factors, lack of commitment and vision at system level seems to have discouraged post-

secondary institutions to drive their institutional policies and programs on adult and continuing education, not to mention opening up lifelong long learning opportunities as it has been happening elsewhere. However, as it stands, there is an emerging prospect particularly with the approval of the National Adult Education Strategy (NAES) (MoE 2008) which seems to open up avenues for post-secondary institutions to contribute their share. Thus, NAES is one of the key policy documents that the present study attempts to critically analyze.

Research Questions
The present paper will be guided by the following questions:
1. Do national policies provide a framework for the organization, curricula, and delivery of adult education and lifelong learning in post-secondary institutions?
2. To what extent post-secondary institutions involved in the training of adult education professionals?
3. What is the current state of continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities in public post-secondary institutions in terms of organization, curricula, and training methodology?
4. What are the key challenges of adult and continuing education in the context of post-secondary institutions?

Methodology
This study used primary and secondary data sources as well as document analysis. Primary data were generated via a telephone interview with relevant officials of five post-secondary institutions on state of continuing education and professional development programs in the respective institutions. On the other hand, secondary data were obtained from Ministry of Education Annual Education Statistical
Reports. In addition official government documents such as policies and proclamations and other relevant reports were used to analyze policies related to adult and non-formal education. The details about data sources and sampling procedures are discussed below.

Document Analysis
As indicated, this study employed published and unpublished official documents. Policy documents used included the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (TGE 1994), Education Sector Development Programs III (ESDP III) (MoE 2005), the Higher Education Proclamation (No. 351/2003) (FDRGE 2003), and National Adult Education Strategy (MoE 2008). The policy documents were subjected to content analysis in relation to their implications to post-secondary institutions which is defined to encompass Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and universities in this study. In addition, quantitative data were obtained from a secondary sources mainly from the Annual Education Statistical Abstracts (2004-2007) published by the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Education.

Semi-Structured Interview
A semi-structured interview guide was prepared to generate data on existing continuing and distance education programs, as well as academic and professional development opportunities in post-secondary institutions. The specific issues raised in the telephone interview were about the structure and organization, curriculum, admission criteria into continuing and distance education programs, and as well as the state of academic and professional development programs that are viewed as lifelong learning opportunity for the academic and non-academic community in Ethiopian post-secondary institutions and the wider public.

Interview Participants
Five public higher education institutions namely, Addis Ababa University, Bahirdar University, Dilla University, Harammya University, and Hawassa University were purposefully selected to participate in the study. The reason for the selection was that these institutions were among the eight relatively established universities in the Country. Thus, the selected universities represent the key public higher education institutions in Ethiopia. In each university, two individuals who held positions as continuous and distance education coordinators or assistant coordinators had participated. Totally, 10 individuals drawn from five institutions took part in the telephone interview. The average time required to conduct the interview was approximately 30 minutes.

Findings and Discussion
The findings are discussed under four sub-sections. The first section analyzes policies related to adult education as affecting post-secondary institutions by drawing heavily on official documents and literature review. Based on both secondary and primary data, section two analyzes the state of adult education in post-secondary institutions and the demand for adult education professionals. Section three presents the extent to which post-secondary institutions are contributing to adult and continuing education programs based on qualitative data obtained from official statistical reports. Finally, section four provides an overview of continued professional development opportunities in higher education institutions and the conceptual confusion therein.

Policies of Adult Education and Non-Formal Education
This part analyzes the relevant policies related to adult education and non-formal education (ANFE) and their
implications to training and research in post-secondary institutions. Though policies in past two regimes have had a serious repercussion on current policy and practice, emphasis on the former is made for a more sharpened focus on the situation that unfolded after the ouster of the Military Government in 1991. These among others include (1) the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (TGE 1994) and Education Sector Development I-III (ESDP I, II, and III), (2) the National Adult Education Strategy  (MoE 2008), and the Higher Education Proclamation (2003/No. 315). The following section analyzes these government policies.

**Education and Training Policy (TGE 1994) and Education Sector Development III (ESDP III)**

In connection with adult and non-formal education the Education and Training Policy (ETP) states: *Non-formal education will be provided beginning and parallel to basic education and at all levels of formal education.* (Article 3.2, No. 5). Though the ETP did not spell out 'Adult education' very clearly, the spirit of the above article indicates that it goes beyond basic literacy and numeracy to imply continuity within the formal system since it affirms that non-formal education would continue at all levels. Nevertheless, continuous professional development and continuing vocational education and training as instruments of lifelong learning were not part of the ETP. In addition, the roles of postsecondary institutions have not been indicated in this major policy document. On the other hand, the ETP also gives directions to curriculum development and the behavioral changes expected of adult learners as: "Non-formal education will be concrete in its content and focusing on enabling learners develop problem solving attitudes and abilities" (TGE 1994: Article 3.2 No. 7). On the other hand, the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP III) (MoE 2005) for the duration 2005-2010 depicts the vision of the government regarding Adult and Non-Formal Education (ANFE) stating that the adult and non-formal education program is basically focuses on literacy, numeracy and other relevant skills to enable learners to develop problem-solving abilities and change their lives. It further explains that the program has three components:

1.  a program for out of school children aged 7-14,
2.  literacy program for youth and adults aged over 15, and
3.  basic skill training to youth and adults in the community skill training centers

Nevertheless, as opposed to ETP, the ESDP III seems to recognize adult education as part of the lifelong education through which people will be able to cope up with changes by increasingly develop themselves. That following reveals the intent along that line: "The Government will establish an equivalence system between skills and credentials obtained in schools and those obtained through NFE and training programs, in order to increase the chance that learners who complete non-formal courses will subsequently find employment or enter the formal school system." (ESDP III 2005:40)

Apparently, ESDP III establishes the link between skill training and vocational education at lower level. However, it makes no mention as to how post-secondary institutions can contribute their share at different levels. At this juncture, it is relevant to mention what Brend Sandhaas (2005:49), had to say in this relation: "Whereas the primary education and TVET sub-sectors have been accorded top priority in the education sector by the Ethiopian Government, ANFE has been the least important..."
and only marginally supported education sub-sector for the last decade. Only recently — after the Dakar Forum on Education for All (EFA) and the formulation of the new Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) — has non-formal education as an alternative route to basic primary education received stronger political support.

Sandhaas' assessment of the state of ANFE and the broader field of continuing education in Ethiopia suggest the apparent lack of policy attention and action to address the gap in a comprehensive manner (Deribessa 2005) to encompass all ladders and variants of adult and continuing education including academic and professional development in the tertiary education domain.

**National Adult Education Strategy (NAES)**
The National Adult Education Strategy (MoE 2008) recognizes the need to have professional personnel for effective implementation of the strategy with high quality. More importantly, it indicated that the Ethiopian post-secondary institutions need to be strengthened in terms of their capacity and resources to provide adequate opportunities for academic study and professional training in adult education (MoE 2008). As has been noted earlier, there is very little study and training in adult education offered in Ethiopian universities and other tertiary training institutions. The document also underlines the need for professional staff to enable the country meet the targets set in the PASDEP and ESDP and for the development of adult education to move Ethiopia towards becoming a learning society, which alone will ensure the development of country’s competitive edge (National Adult Education Strategy 2008). In a nutshell, the NAES capitalizes on the role of the post-secondary education sub-sector specifically TVET institutions and universities in terms of supplying trained adult and non-formal education (ANFE) professionals who will be serving at grass-root level. However, it does not make a clear mention as to their responsibility which basically go beyond the boundaries of functional adult literacy (FAL) and livelihood skills training to include continuing education and vocational training, and generally lifelong learning that post-secondary institutions can effectively discharge their responsibilities which at the same time allow them respond to the changing global situation as expressed in the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris.

**The Higher Education Proclamation (2003/No. 315)**
The Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation (FD RoeGE 2003) is a general provision applicable to all institutions public and private stated that apart from offering regular programs, they can engage in continuing and distance education (Part II: Article 9:2237-2238). Most importantly, the provision also identified a key aspect of adult and lifelong learning without necessarily mentioning it. The provision states: "Any institution may give short-term trainings for upgrading qualification or for imparting knowledge and skills in specific fields." (p. 2238). In this regard, the Higher Education Proclamation simply identifies the provisions in the area of continuing education, distance education, and continuous professional development. Yet, it does not offer a clear conceptual framework for implementation. In short, the most relevant policy documents such as Education Training Policy (Transitional Government of Ethiopia 1994) and ESDP III (MoE 2005), National Adult Education Strategy (NAES) (MoE 2008), and the Higher Education Proclamation (2003/No.351) (FD RoeGE 2003) do not address the organizational, curricular, and admission issues that are critical to effectively run a relevant adult and continuing education programs in post-
secondary institutions. Most importantly, their scope is very narrow with respect to creating enabling environment to post-secondary institutions to go beyond FAL and livelihood skills training to broaden the operational span of post-secondary institutions as centers of lifelong learning. Seen from the standpoint of policies, post-secondary institutions do not have a clear national policy framework to harmonize their programs or embark on some sort of reform in line with the 1997 Homburg Declaration UNESCO or the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education that aimed at changing post-secondary institutions into centers of lifelong learning. In the section that follows, it endeavored to demonstrate how the fragmentation and lack of coherent policy direction affected the functions of post-secondary institutions in terms of programs, curriculum, and method of delivery.

Adult Education Programs in Post-Secondary Institutions
As far as the history of adult education in post-secondary institutions are concerned, the first diploma offering program was opened at the former Bahirdar Teachers' College (now Bahirdar University) in the early 1980s. The program was, nevertheless closed after the change of Government in 1996 despite the apparent need for adult education professionals in the country as evidenced in nation-wide need assessment survey (Jember et al. 1996). In 1999 Jimma Teachers Colleges launched a similar diploma program in Adult and Non-Formal Education (ANFE) upon the request of the Oromia Regional Government (Teshome 2005). Though little is known as to their placement of the graduates, Teshome (2005) argues that the total number of graduates from 2001 – 2005 was only 125 people (see: Table 1) and inadequate to satisfy the growing demand for adult educators in the region. A similar program is also reported to have started training for

| Table 1: Diploma ANFE graduates in Oromia regional state (Jimma Teachers' College) |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Institution            | Undergraduate Program  | Graduate Program           |
| Jimma Teachers College | Adult Education        | Adult & Non-formal Education |
|                       | Language and Literature| Education                  |
|                       |                         | Adult, Technical           |
|                       | Primary                 | Adult, Technical           |
|                       | Middle                  | Adult & Technical          |
|                       | High                    | Adult & Technical          |
|                       |                         | Adult Education            |

Thus, the findings clearly reveal that there is a demand for adult education professionals which in turn implies the need for training in post-secondary institutions. These results corroborate the findings of an earlier study made by a team of researchers following the closure of the diploma program in adult and non-formal education at Bahirdar Teachers College (Adane, Adane, & Tsehai 1996). Similarly, a recent study in Oromia regional state (Teshome 2005) documented the limited capacity of Jimma College of Teacher Education to...
satisfy the existing demand for professionals in adult education. The need for adult education professionals also triggered public universities to launch training adult educators chiefly in agricultural extension. Traditionally, agricultural extension programs are hosted in faculty/colleges of agriculture where there exists little understanding of either pedagogy or andragogy. Specifically, agricultural extension programs have been offered in two public universities namely Hawassa and Haramaya Universities (see: Table 2) at undergraduate and graduate levels. These institutions cater to all manpower needs in the area for the whole country. However, a closer inspection of their curricula portrays that the programs do not even constitute adult education fundamentals namely andragogy and psychology of adult learning. This is also the case in all agricultural TVET institutions (see: Zelleke 2005; Dessu 2005). Considering the fact that they are to educate and train adult farmers in rural Ethiopia, the manner in which agricultural extension workers or community development agents are trained, to say the least, has lost the right truck and disoriented. On the other hand, there is a growing interest on the part of public universities particularly after the approval of the National Adult Education Strategy in early 2008, to open formal adult education undergraduate programs. Specifically, Bahirdar and Hawassa Universities have started preparation to launch an undergraduate degree program in adult education and community development.

Table 2: Adult education programs in public universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Undergraduate Programs</th>
<th>Graduate Programs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Offsite</td>
<td>Adult &amp; Work Based</td>
<td>Adult &amp; Work Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Onsite</td>
<td>Adult &amp; Work Based</td>
<td>Adult &amp; Work Based</td>
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Vocational and Technical Continuing Education

In this section, an attempt is made to illustrate the state of post-secondary continuing adult education in Ethiopian tertiary institutions regardless of the fact that the existing practice does fulfill the definition of neither adult education nor lifelong learning. Bearing this in mind, first this section analyzes the state of continuing education programs in Ethiopian Technical and Vocational and Training (TVET) and higher education institutions (HEIs) via describing the participation and graduation trends of adult learners in the evening, summer, and distance education, academic and professional development programs; and formal adult education training at undergraduate and graduate levels in post-secondary institutions.

Vocational and Technical Continuing Education

It is to be noted that the Ethiopian economy is guided by Agriculture-Led-Industrialization with a positive sign in the growth in the agriculture and industrial sectors over the last few years (Bigsten, Bereket, Abebe & Mekonnen 2003). Informed by the changes on the ground, there has been a growing demand for vocational education and training for adults in the agricultural sector. TVET institutions are essentially meant to train extension agents who would be deployed to rural areas as health extension agents, agricultural extension workers, and forest and environmental protection workers. Considering the changing landscape, Ethiopia has been expanding the Technical and Vocational and Training (TVET) sector not only by setting up new institutions but also by inviting private investment. As a result, TVET enrollment has increased from 38176 in 2001/2 to 123,557 in 2006/7 in both regular and continuing education programs (2007). As depicted in Fig.1 above, the trend in enrollment has steadily increased over the five years period until, at the same time evidencing female enrollment has
in the regular and continuing education (extension) programs, 50.3% (i.e. 62, 142) were females.

Figure 1: Enrolment in TVET (Regular + CEP) Programs

In line with the national agriculture focused development strategy, of the 113 government TVET institutions, 25 of them exclusively engaged in the fields of animal science, plant science, animal health, natural resource, cooperative accounting and auditing, and cooperative organization, management and marketing (MoE 2007:12). At this juncture, it is interesting to note the compelling justification for designing and institutionalizing a proper adult education and lifelong learning programs for farmers, pastoralists, and people in agri-business and the like. This is not only improving individuals' quality of life and employability but also has a significant bearing on national development. To the contrary, the reality on the ground according to Zelleke (2005:95) suggest that none of the agricultural TVET institutions and farmers' training centers recognized the at least the importance of incorporating adult education programs (or courses) in view of improving their graduates' approach in their future relationship with farmers. In quite the same way, the trainers in the agricultural TVET institutions do not have the "how of teaching adults" the fact that they were not trained as trainers of adult educators (e.g.; Dessu 2005; Zelleke 2005). On the other hand, as a matter of right graduates of TVET institutions do not have opportunities for professional development and skills upgrading. In other words, certificate or diploma graduates will not be allowed to enroll to any private or public institution unless they have an official permission from government office that employs them to pursue their education or training at a higher level. This implies that the existing policy has no clear and elaborate direction as to how graduates of TVET institutions could be upgraded to the next ladder in the post-secondary structure.
Continuing Education in Post-Secondary Institutions

As compared to continuing post-secondary vocational education, adult learners seem to benefit more from higher education. Precisely because, adult learners want to upgrade themselves in their respective professions, fields of work or kind of business they are engaged in. More importantly, it is a day-to-day observation that acquisition of credentials themselves in their respective professions, fields of work or kind of business they are engaged in. More importantly, it is a day-to-day observation that acquisition of credentials

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Evening</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>CEP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa University</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa University</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiram University</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arba Minch University</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gonder University</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6300</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>11000</td>
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Table 3: Students enrollment in public HEIs (2005/06)

Graduates

As shown in Table 4 below, the total number of graduates in all programs from public HEIs was 24,598, of which 3856 (15.7%) were females. The share of graduates from non-regular evening and summer programs were 3234 for both sexes which is estimated to be 13.1% of all graduates. A separate computation for females yield 19.9% revealing about 80.1% of all female graduates were from the regular program. Thus, despite some limitation due to the absence of a time-series data to reach a final conclusion, it can still be argued that public HEIs enroll comparable number of students in regular and continuing education program (CEP). In contrast, graduates were fewer students from CEP. Though the reasons that underpin low output (graduates) of CEP in public HEIs need empirical scrutiny in its own right, it can be argued that, adult learners normally experience a high degree
of inconvenience emanating from rigid rules and regulations of traditional public tertiary institutions. This is why academics in the field call for a degree of flexibility on the part of higher education institutions (e.g., Walter & Watters 2001; Volbrecht & Walter 2000) as the absence of which might result in high drop-out rate or failure to fulfill the requirements to succeed in their studies among adult learners.

Table 4: Graduates from public higher education institutions (2005/06)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>OPEGA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa University</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>224</td>
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<td>Addis Ababa University</td>
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<td>320</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>224</td>
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Source: Education Bureau, Addis Ababa
Note: The data for Addis Ababa University are estimated due to the absence of end-year statistics.

Apart from the public sector, the contribution of private institutions within their short-time of existence has been impressive accounting for 25% of the total post-secondary enrolments in 2006 (Tesfaye 2007). Though not reported here, unlike the public ones, private institutions have been engaged in evening and distance education programs, in which case significant majority of female adults (75.8%) benefited more from the continuing education and distance programs compared to the regular program (see: MoE 2007). Overall, it is to be noted that private institutions have been contributing immensely not only to professional and career development but also to employability of previously unemployed adults. Nevertheless, it is a matter of public record, that some private institutions failed short of the required public accountability lack of credibility due to persistent abuse for the sake profit and money making (-) resulted in questionable quality of training of adult learners particularly in private institutions.

Continuing Education Programs: Organization, Curriculum, and Admission

In the previous pages, it was attempted to shade some light on the enrolment and graduates of continuing education programs offered in post-secondary institutions, mainly in public TVET institutions and universities. In this part, qualitative data obtained through a semi-structured interview will be presented and discussed. Specific questions that would answers include the types of programs, target groups, admission criteria, and nature of the curriculum including instructional methods and modes of assessment. Table 5 provides the summary of data obtained from five public universities. First, it is important to note the apparent uniformity in the type of programs (see: Table 5), admission criteria, and curricula used in continuing education programs across the five public universities included in the study. This may be attributable to the fact the three institutions in this study were formerly affiliated colleges of Addis Ababa University while the remaining two emerged later by sharing the experiences of the same institutions. Thus, it may not be surprising to witness similarities in range of areas.

Organizational Structure

The structure of higher education institutions, in all of the surveyed universities are organized as “Continuing Education Program Coordinating Office”, or “Continuing and Distance
Education Coordinating Office. Basically, the offices are directly accountable to the Vice President for Academic and Research (VPAR) and do not enjoy some degree of autonomy like "institutes" or 'Colleges'. Nevertheless, at Addis Ababa University, heads of CEP are equivalent to deans of faculties only for the purpose of remunerating staff (fixing payment rates) who normally assume the offices. However, this is not the case in other universities included in this study. Resource wise, they are poorly equipped even to conduct day-to-day routines. In short, they are not organized as independent institutions running their own unique programs. Most importantly, the suggested structure of public institutions as stated in the Higher Education Proclamation (2003/No. 351) (FDREGE 2003) does not make a mention of continuing and distance education as a key unit. Thus, continuing education programs are viewed as an appendage to the regular program (Mekonnen 2005) albeit recognized exclusively as important activity of revenue generation; not as complementary program that can open up avenues of lifelong learning. Here is where a clearly articulated policy must come in and provide a framework for postsecondary institutions to act accordingly.

Admission Criteria
As can be seen from Table 5, the admission requirements for the evening, summer in-service course, weekend, and distance education programs have two options: generic and advanced standing. The generic option entitle adult learners to directly join any of the universities' programs i.e. evening, weekend, or distance education programs after completing secondary education and successfully passing the higher education entrance examinations. The second option is advanced standing which entitles those who hold a college diploma. Majority of adults who fall under this category have some years of work experience.

Curricula, Teaching Methods, and Assessment Modes
The curricula have minor differences depending on the entry behavior of the adult learner. Those in generic programs take exactly the same courses offered to the regular (day) program students. Thus, the curriculum makes no distinction. Those in "advanced standing" options will have exemptions of equivalent courses taken at diploma level. In effect, the duration of the study or training shall be reduced by a maximum of one year. Nevertheless, when asked about whether or not there exist differences in the teaching methodology used, without exception, as a matter of policy, varying the instructional approaches to suit adults attending CEP programs have not been advocated. Rather majority of the respondents (seven out of ten officials) looking at the issue as undermining the 'quality' of the CEP program. One of the officials working as the CEP head said that 'making distinction has never been encouraged since the quality of instruction in the day and evening or summer programs must be the same. Thus, the instruction, the course content, and examinations are expected to be the same.During final and end exams we administer the same tests for both regular and evening students'.

In other words, no specifically designed teaching methods or assessment procedures are used for CEP students. In this connection, eight of the ten respondents coming from the five institutions stated that those instructors teaching in the day program are usually encouraged to teach CEP students. In this relation, the academic program officer of one of the institutions stated, 'we believe that these teachers [who teach in the day program students] have more experience in teaching their respective courses. They know the subject matter, they know how they should evaluate evening and
summer students, if possible, using the same tests and examinations.

According to the response of the interviewees, adult learners attending evening and weekend programs are supposed to sit for the same written exams with the regular students if they are registered to the same course. The present finding is consistent with an earlier study at Addis Ababa University (Mekonnen 2005). So where is the need to attend for individual differences?

Table 5: Types of continuing education program (CEP) in post-secondary institutions
Adult and Continuing Education

Tesfay & Amadi

programs both in terms of curriculum content, method teaching and mode of assessment. Organizationally, continuing education programs have no internal institutional autonomy and as such are seen as a parasite to the day-program- arguably viewed as using the resources of the day programs. Thus, given the present structure CEPs in postsecondary institutions cannot in any way respond to the needs of adult learners. On the other hand, the admission criteria are also rigid in a sense that it does not allow alternative pathways. The existing opportunities for continuous adult education and lifelong learning in Ethiopian post-secondary institutions portrays the fact that little attempt has so far been made to systematically establish a discernable sideways, downward or forward linkages as Candy put it (cited in Volbercht & Walters 2000). For instance, "sideways linkages" that could be effectively established by translating the knowledge and skill acquired at the workplace or home. Yet, this is not the accepted tradition of universities. To date, there is no mechanism of giving academic credits to adult learners so that they would be able to get admission to HEIs outside of the traditional ways sitting for higher education entrance examination in Ethiopian context. As a result, talented adults with abundant hands-on practical skills or scientific or indigenous knowledge could not be admitted to universities unless they complete pre-university level and sit for higher education entrance examinations. The same applies to so call "downward linkages" such as allowing learners by establishing equivalence for credentials acquired in adult education centers. Overall, as far as opportunities of lifelong learning in post-secondary institutions are concerned, there is no national and institutional policy at work at the moment. Therefore, there is a clear gap that must be addressed to guarantee the rights of citizens for lifelong learning so that

Academic and Professional Development

In order to get an overview of the state of the academic and professional development in post secondary institutions, five public higher education institutions namely: Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Dilla, Haramaya, and Hawassa Universities were taken as sample institutions. Information on the type of continuous professional development programs, organizing bodies, and target groups of the programs were obtained. Table 6 below summarizes the existing professional development programs commonly organized in the five public HEIs. As can be seen from Table 6 below, the professional development opportunities in the surveyed institutions include (1) research conferences and workshops, research methodology trainings, lecture series, public lectures on various themes, pedagogical skills training (usually for newly recruited academic staff, and basic computer/ICT training (word processing and professional applications software). With regard to its organizations of the programs, the data indicates that variety of institutional units are involved that included departments, research institutes, Academic Development Resource Center (ADRC), ICT units, and research and publication offices. In general, it can be argued that there is no institutionalized structure for organizing continuing professional development programs in HEIs except ADRC, which nationally mandated to coordinates pedagogical skills training for aca

on the other hand, the target groups, as indicated in Table 5 also narrowly focus primarily on the academic community with no outreach for adult clients outside of the university community. This is the other limitation of the public HEIs in
On the other hand, the target groups, as indicated in Table 5 also narrowly focus primarily on the academic community with no outreach for adult clients outside of the university community. This is the other limitation of the public HEIs in terms of creating opportunities of lifelong learning. Overall, though continuous academic and professional development has been perceived as the most useful avenue of adult and lifelong learning, for the most part, it is relegated to ad-hoc committees or interested group or institutional units in post-secondary institutions. And as such, no clear institutional vision and structure exist to promote academic professional development in post-secondary institutions.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Thus far, it was attempted to identify some of the critical shortfalls of adult and continuing education in Ethiopia. Most importantly, the study endeavored to demonstrate how the lack of clear vision coupled with the absence of elaborate national policy negatively impacted institutional legislations, organizational structure, admission criteria, and generally the role of post-secondary institutions. Overall, the results show that adult and continuing education has been given marginal significance for over five decades now both in terms of political support and actual commitment in terms of funding projects and establishing a functional units within post-secondary institutions. As a result, the role of post-secondary institutions has been very limited even in the training of adult financial issues. The following measures are worth considering to shore up the role of post-secondary institutions to contribute to the ongoing national effort to alleviate poverty in Ethiopia.

- **A comprehensive National Policy on Adult and Continuing Education**: The major obstacle in institutionalizing adult and continuing education, including the broader field of lifelong learning, has been the absence of clear policies at a system level which could be translated into institutional policies and regulations to initiate and guide actual practice in post-secondary education sub-sector. These gaps need to be properly addressed by government and postsecondary institutions should Ethiopia better position itself to cope up the challenges of the 21st century.

- **Organizational and Curricular Issues**: Due to limited experience as well as institutional and system level policy gaps, adult and continuing education including lifelong learning have not been fully part of post-secondary programs. Except continuing education program (CEP) (that has been traditionally in pace as evening, summer, and weekend program) which itself is viewed as the same as the regular (day) program in terms of curricula and organization, no suitable structure and system is in place to implement lifelong learning. As discussed earlier, little attempt has been made to provide a policy direction neither in both the Higher Education Proclamation and the National Adult Education Strategy (NAES), nor in the boarder national education policy document. This has led to the failure of post-secondary institutions to adjust the curriculum and methods of teaching-learning as well as the structure
and organization of adult and continuing education programs in a manner that responds to the learning needs of adults. Thus, curricular and organizational reforms to be made in post-secondary institutions should be viewed from the vantage point of the needs of the adult learner; and the preponderance of lifelong learning in increasingly changing global tertiary education landscape.

- Opening Alternative Path Ways: To increase the opportunity of adults to pursue their education and training calls for some degree of flexibility of entry criteria into post-secondary institutions. In this regard, there is a need for alternative pathways without necessarily abolishing the criteria that require the completion of a pre-university study. Thus, a comprehensive national policy framework on adult and lifelong learning should be developed to address the existing gaps in terms of opening alternative pathways for all adult learners. Apart from this, this exercise might need some sort of awareness creation among the academic community and the leadership of post-secondary institutions.

- Quality Assurance: Ensuring the desired level of quality is the other key challenge. This has become a source of concern for quite some time particularly since early 1999 with the explosion of the private domain. Precisely, the proliferation of private institutions on the one hand, and the rapid expansion of the public domain on the other, made 'quality of education' a matter of public concern. Thus, increasing the operational capacity of the existing system oversight and quality monitoring bodies should a priority to bolster confidence among adult learners and help post-secondary institutions to contribute for social and economic priorities.

Taken together, the explanations for the current weak and fragmented adult education practice in Ethiopia have been inadequate management and administrative structure, scarce human resource and training opportunities, and the lack of budgetary provisions (MoE 2008). Thus, it can be argued that establishing relevant and viable adult education and training programs, and setting research priorities which goes along with it, and financing and equipping post-secondary institutions with the necessary manpower and resources are decisive steps towards establishing the link between adult education and development. Notwithstanding the international commitments and agreements to which Ethiopia is a party, the driving forces initiating adult education programs at tertiary institutions are informed, first and for most, by national needs – eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. More specifically, whilst the rest of the world is coming to terms with the dramatically changing landscape of post-secondary institutions as centers of knowledge generation, dissemination, and consumption, it would have painful consequences if Ethiopia fails to act timely. Explicitly speaking, the Ethiopian post-secondary education system must overcome the dual challenges of adult and lifelong learning: Namely, the past problems of negligence and the new challenges of globalization. Past problems are characterized by inattention and inaction of all parties particularly by government agencies and post-secondary institutions. On the one hand, the Government should play the leading role in creating conducive policy environment and express its commitment through financing programs and projects. On the other hand, post-secondary institutions should adjust themselves to the changing realities by
abandoning their traditional-conservative stance and fine-tune their organizational structure, curricula, research, and teaching, and opening their doors to creating a learning society. This is the right way for post-secondary institutions not only to contribute to economic growth but also to remain relevant.

References
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