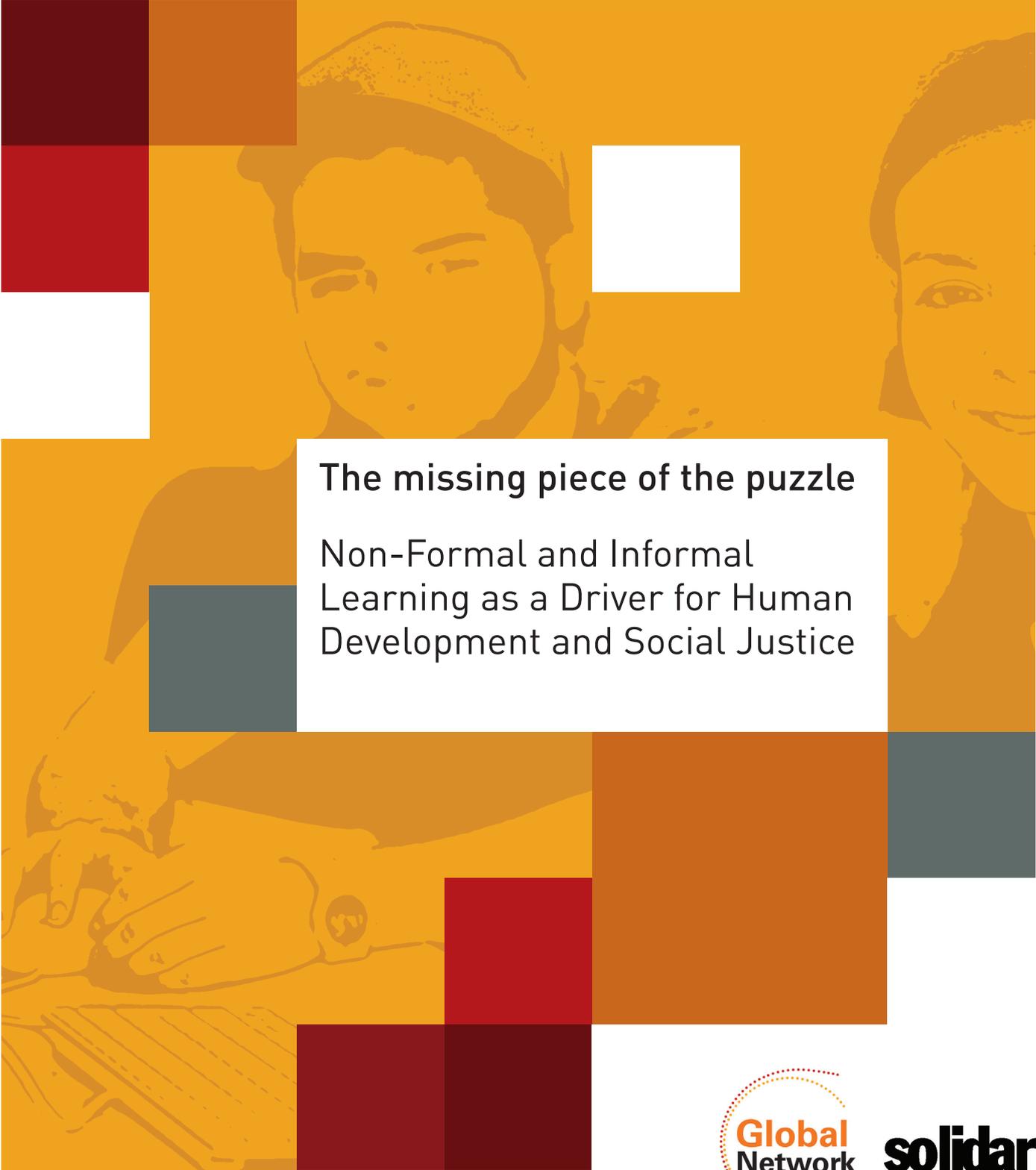


ORGANISING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

briefing #67



The missing piece of the puzzle

Non-Formal and Informal
Learning as a Driver for Human
Development and Social Justice

**Global
Network**

solidar

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Executive Summary and Recommendations	4
Learning, Social Progress and Democracy	6
Defining Non-Formal and Informal Learning	10
Examples of Learning for Social Progress	14
Learning Post 2015	22
Social Protection and Education	29
Recommendations	31

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SOLIDAR is a European network of 59 NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR lobbies the EU and international institutions in three primary areas: social affairs, international cooperation and education.

For more information see: www.solidar.org

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Foreword

In recent years, inequality, poverty and social exclusion have been on the rise throughout the world. World leaders will have to agree on a new development narrative by 2015, as there will be a post 2015 agenda to tackle this growing injustice. SOLIDAR calls upon the international community to be ambitious and work together to achieve real change based on social justice through education.

We believe real change is best achieved through initiatives driven by the local community. SOLIDAR strongly believes in the partnership principle where people define their own needs and goals based on local circumstances. We believe non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) is the best way to achieve this. NFIL creates awareness and it empowers people to make positive life-decisions. It also enables people to acquire new skills and knowledge, and it helps develop a thriving democracy.

Its success can be seen in the many projects our members and partners undertake throughout the world. For instance, the **Sister Namibia Magazine** enables women to ensure their sexual rights and challenge patriarchal norms and power structures in Namibia through NFIL. In Pakistan, NFIL is used to empower home based workers through **Know Your Rights** workshops and it enables them to advocate for gender equality and human and trade union rights. In Peru, workers acquire Digital Skills through NFIL - groups of workers in the informal economy learn from one another how to use a computer and surf the net. These are just three of many examples where NFIL contributes to the empowerment of people who live in precarious conditions.

These examples also underline how formal education is not the only universal answer to all learning needs. NFIL can achieve a variety of different goals as it provides a methodology that is formed and shaped by individuals. It benefits from people's relationships with people around them, their unique context and the specific needs of the situation. This holistic approach creates '**Building Learning Societies**' where people are empowered to participate in society and find new employment opportunities through non-formal and informal learning.

In the light this background, SOLIDAR calls for a 'loose standing' development goal as part of the post-2015 agenda. By 2030, it must ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all where the learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning are recognised, validated and certified.



Conny Reuter
SOLIDAR Secretary General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Non-formal and Informal learning (NFIL) has to be prioritised in the post-2015 agenda, both by integrating elements into a loose standing goal on education and learning as well as mainstreaming it within various other Sustainable Development Goals that world leaders should commit to in 2015.

The uneven economic recovery and successive downward revisions in economic growth projections have had an impact on the global employment situation. Almost 202 million people were unemployed in 2013 around the world (an increase of almost 5 million from the year before), and 'vulnerable employment' accounts for almost 48 per cent of total employment.

SOLIDAR, and other International Organisations such as UNESCO, believe non-formal and informal learning is a powerful tool to empower those furthest away from formal education and the labour market. NFIL provides a fairer opportunity for both young people and adults to acquire skills, competences, and knowledge during their lifetimes. It gives them an opportunity to be innovative and to contribute to change both in society and the workplace.

SOLIDAR recommends the following learning priorities. The post-2015 agenda should:

1. Include **NFIL as a driver for change** in all post-2015 MDG (Millennium Development Goal) discussions. NFIL should be given a similar status to all other forms of education, sometimes as a choice in a particular situation, sometimes

as a good alternative, and sometimes as complementary education.

2. Design **NFIL development efforts to build local learning societies**. NFIL activity should be created for and together with the people it is intended for. Local NGOs, social networks and associations are key. Informal meeting points where citizens can define both problems and solutions are also important.
3. Strengthen NFIL methodologies in development to **empower vulnerable people and workers in precarious employment**.
4. Recognise NFIL within **active labour market policies** in development. The acquisition of skills, competences and knowledge is recognised as a key component of employability.
5. Ensure the inclusion of NFIL within the **National Development Strategies together with** access to essential services such as essential health care and education and income support measures.
6. Enable NFIL activities **to be democratic and based on participation**. Any non-formal and informal learning that hopes to advance democracy must also be democratic in construction. In other words, full and equal participation should be both the end goal and the method for achieving it.

- 
7. **Include NFIL Stakeholders** in discussion of the post-2015 agenda. To bridge the skills mismatch, other education practitioners need to go beyond the traditional narrow approach and be brought into international discussion on promoting participation and active labour market policies.

More specifically, the post-2015 agenda should more actively develop new educational policy strategies aimed at promoting synergies between formal and non-formal education. It must develop approaches that validate, accredit and certify skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning. It should promote non-formal education provision in a wide variety of extra-curricular contexts, and strengthen local education landscapes as part of local policies for young people, adults and education and training.

LEARNING, SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEMOCRACY

According to ILO data¹, our world is still very much divided, and even though some say the gap between what we call “the industrialised world” and “the developing world” is shrinking, such slow-moving trends offer little consolidation to those caught in poverty or living in areas of conflict.

The uneven economic recovery and successive downward revisions in economic growth projections have had an impact on the global employment situation. Almost 202 million people were unemployed in 2013 around the world, an increase of almost 5 million compared with the year before. This reflects the fact that employment is not expanding sufficiently fast to keep up with the size of the growing labour force. The crisis-related global jobs gap that has opened up since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, (over and above previous unemployment levels) continues to widen. In 2013, this gap reached 62 million jobs, including 32 million additional jobseekers, 23 million people that became discouraged and no longer looked for jobs, and 7 million economically inactive people that prefer not to participate in the labour market.

Vulnerable employment accounts for almost 48 per cent of total employment. People in vulnerable employment are more likely than to have limited or no access to social security or secure incomes waged and salaried workers. In fact, only 20% of the world’s population has adequate social protection coverage, even though just 2% of global GDP could provide social security for all of the world’s poor. Last but not least, 375 million

workers are estimated to live on less than US\$1.25 per day, and as many as 839 million workers have to cope with US\$2 a day - or less.

With 23 million people estimated to have dropped out of the labour market due to discouragement and rising long-term unemployment, active labour market policies (ALMP) need to be implemented more forcefully to address economic inactivity and the skills mismatch. Indeed, with more and more potential workers becoming discouraged and remaining out of the labour force, the risk of skills degradation is increasing.

In SOLIDAR’s view, non-formal and informal learning is a powerful tool to empower those furthest away from formal education and the labour market. It can also help vulnerable people with precarious employment to participate in society and the labour market.

SOLIDAR’s approach is recognised by UNESCO² when it states that quality education and learning at all levels should be at the core of the post-2015 education agenda, and that particular attention should be given to marginalised groups. Lifelong learning provides flexible life-long and life-wide learning opportunities through formal, non-formal and informal pathways. In this way, equal opportunities are created for all young people and adults to acquire knowledge and skills over their lifespans, to be innovative and to contribute to change both in society and the workplace.

¹ ILO Global Employment Trends Report 2014

² UNESCO Concept note on the Post-2015 education agenda here: http://en.unesco.org/post2015/sites/post2015/files/UNESCOConceptNotePost2015_ENG.pdf



How does the nation we are born into shape the terms of our lives?

If you are born in the industrialised world, the average life expectancy is still around 14 years longer than in the developing world, and the mortality rate for children below five is around seven times higher in developing countries. Our access to education, clean water and sustainable energy is also largely dependent on where we happen to be born. Across the world, unemployment in a time of economic crisis is paving the way for new waves of xenophobia and prejudices. It is therefore urgent that we accelerate the development of a more equal world and there are many possible ways to do just that. Some say a globalised economy is the answer, others believe worldwide agreements and goals are our best bets for rapid development. In fact, a range of measures are most likely needed, with the focus firmly on fighting unemployment, providing quality education, pushing back poverty by offering social protection and decent work conditions, and driving forward rural development.

In this briefing paper, SOLIDAR explores how non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) can help impel such positive change in developing countries. Our thesis is that real change, as well as targeted non-formal and informal learning, is best achieved through initiatives driven by the local community – with participation and democracy as key pillars. We believe in a bottom up approach where people define their own needs and goals based on local circumstances – and we believe NFIL is the best tool for driving change on that basis.

SOLIDAR believes that:

- **Non-formal and informal learning creates awareness - empowering people to make positive life-decisions**
- **Non-formal and informal learning is useful for acquiring new skills and validating skills developed outside formal education systems**
- **Non-formal and informal learning helps create ‘deliberative democracies’³**

Too often, the definition of different forms of learning, social progress and democracy is quickly glossed over in order to make a point, show off results and list suggestions for future policy. However, we believe that the principles for defining these terms are important for the purpose of the activities, as well as for the end result. For this very reason we have divided this paper into three parts:

- a. Defining non-formal and informal learning
- b. Defining social progress and democracy
- c. Good examples of where NFIL has contributed to social progress and democracy.

³ Deliberative democracy is a form of democracy where discussion and debate is key for the decision-making. In a deliberative democracy, everyone should be able to add his or her input and a common solution is then worked out in unison. This approach shares DNA with NFIL, as the collective process is a key part of non-formal and informal learning.



In addition, this paper also includes a section on how NFIL is essential for the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals, and general policy recommendations.

SOLIDAR believes these following principles define social progress of NFIL:

- Non-formal learning is not necessarily characterised as 'education', but it has a theme or a common focus for a desired learning process. Informal learning, on the other hand, is something that stems from necessity or opportunity – like a group of people overcoming a mutual problem through trial and error, or a parent teaching a child how to perform a task
- It is possible to deliberately incorporate informal learning into a semi-structured non-formal action. The abbreviation NFIL comprises both non-formal and informal learning - a non-formal action with informal learning is a vital component
- Equality is the defining core of all democratic ambitions
- To be truly equal, there must be a minimum level of knowledge, means and opportunities – to guarantee the independence of thought and choice
- Any non-formal and informal learning that hopes to advance democracy must be democratic in construction. Both the methods and the end goal must be full and

equal participation – a context where knowledge is shared or gained through a mutual quest, driven by collective decisions

- The practice of people learning together, learning by doing and creating, learning by practical trial and error, alternating between roles and meeting at eye-level is key for democratic development
- NFIL depends on and is shaped by the actual participants during any given action, as well as on the setting, the surroundings, the social and political situation, and any other external or internal factor that might influence the situation

Defining non-formal and informal learning

Informal learning is a core human feature. As humans, we need to collaborate and communicate with others in order to create purpose and coherence for ourselves. This is the essence of non-formal and informal learning – the act of taking whatever resides in our private minds, putting that into words, presenting it to others, combining that with what the others bring to the process, fashioning it all to something mutual through discussion, trial and error, or analysis and finally creating something new that is not possible in isolation. Society, language and indeed social behaviour are all constructs that we must embrace in order to even begin to express our individuality (so the act of defining one's independence is dependent on collectively developed tools for thought and expression). It is therefore fair to say



that all social progress requires some form of interaction between people.

It is naïve to believe that NFIL came about by defining a certain methodology or pedagogy at a certain point in time. For as long as human kind has existed, there has been a need to communicate, to create solutions for mutual problems, to pass on information and knowledge, and to come up with the best course of action for survival and advancement. Informal learning, in particular, is therefore probably as old as intelligent life itself. This does not mean that methodology and pedagogy are pointless tools when working with NFIL – on the contrary, with the basic belief that humans are wired for collaboration, it becomes critically interesting to find structure and methods for how humans might go about this fundamental task of creating progress through interaction.

DEFINING NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Defining and distinguishing the principles of informal and non-formal learning

When discussing non-formal and informal learning, there is sometimes a slight confusion on where one starts and the other one ends. This brief chapter is included to give a simplified definition of the terms used in this paper. We will use the general concepts of Mark K. Smith, presented in his 2002 article “Informal, non-formal and formal education: a brief overview of different approaches”, from “the encyclopaedia of informal education”, published by the YMCA George Williams College⁴ as a basis.

According to Smith, formal education is curriculum-driven, with a specific plan for both proceedings and outcomes, and with pre-defined and developed content as the basic pedestal for learning. Informal education, as described by Smith, is the opposite of this; driven by conversation and interaction, it is dynamic and always subject to the people involved and the situation that germinates. Smith goes on to say:

“Informal educators do not know where conversations might lead. They have to catch the moment, to try to say or do something to deepen people’s thinking or to put others in touch with their feelings”

In essence, this means that non-formal and informal learning is a process that resides much closer to the actual human being - the individual, but at the same time

it is driven by the collective undertaking. NFIL depends on and is shaped by the actual participants in any given action, as well as on the setting, the surroundings, the social and political situation and any other external and internal aspect that might influence the situation. The basis for learning and the preferred outcomes can therefore not be specified beforehand. Each and every action remains unique and independent.

So what differentiates non-formal and informal learning?

In the 2009 CEDEFOP European Guidelines for validating Non-Formal and Informal Learning⁵, the distinction is defined as follows:

“Non-formal learning is a learning which is embedded in planned activities

not always explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contains an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view.

Beside this, “informal learning” means a learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is mostly unintentional from the learner’s perspective.”

As a simple rule then, non-formal learning is advertised or presented (but not necessarily as education), with a theme or

⁴ More information:
http://www.infed.org/foundations/informal_nonformal.htm

⁵ More information :
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/5059.aspx>



a common focus for the desired process. Informal learning, on the other hand, is something that stems from necessity or opportunity – like a group of people overcoming a mutual problem through trial and error.

Leaving those basic concepts behind, it is of course possible to deliberately incorporate informal learning into a semi-structured non-formal action: To create or try to replicate situations and settings where such exchanges could transpire. For that very reason, we will use the abbreviation NFIL in this paper, comprising both non-formal and informal learning if not otherwise specified. For clarity, the reader can presuppose the term to mean a non-formal action with informal learning as a vital component.

Defining social progress and democracy: the principles of democracy as defined by its polar opposite...

Staffan Larsson, at the University of Linköping in Sweden, launched the intriguing premise that democracy can be defined by its ultimate polar opposite (its 'antipode') – in consequence, Larsson suggests democracy's antipode is elitism⁶. In a conference paper, Larsson argues that equality is the defining core of all democratic ambition. The belief that all citizens should hold equivalent possibility for influencing and taking part in public decisions – that no one person's opinion is worth more and no one person's opinion is

worth less – is therefore the determinant factor.

Once explained, this proposition entails a social order where resources are shared and managed in a way that creates freedom – where no one group is dependent upon the good grace of another group for survival or influence. In a true democracy – and in accordance with Larsson's definition – the concept vegetates beyond polity and includes socioeconomic balance and status. To be truly equal, there must be a minimum level of knowledge, means and opportunities – to guarantee every human's independence of thought and volition.

Entering the definition for social progress, we must presuppose that what we want to progress towards is indeed democracy as defined above. For this reason, social progress only lives up to its name if it is owned and driven by the community - social progress can be understood as the idea that societies can improve based on the choices and actions taken by the citizens. The term is normally used for social, political and economic structures.

Defining social progress and democracy: How to build social progress?

Using Staffan Larsson's thesis, it is fair to suggest that any non-formal and informal learning that hopes to advance democracy must also be democratic in its construction. In other words, both the methods and the end goal must be full and equal participation – a context where knowledge is shared or gained through a mutual quest, driven by collective decisions. No true social progress can

⁶ Larsson 2001, Later reworked into several articles but also available in its entirety at: http://www.academia.edu/360012/Study_circles_and_Democracy_in_Sweden



come from a second party entering a specific context. The bottom-up approach is crucial for achieving the equality-defined democracy that we discussed in the previous heading. This means that initiatives should come from – and goals should be defined by – the participants and the local community.

Going back to this report's section on defining NFIL, there is a basis for the assumption that NFIL is an ideal vehicle for democracy-bound social progress – as the participatory element is the very foundation for this learning method. NFIL is by its nature well suited for social progress. The idea of people learning together, learning by doing and creating, learning by practical trial-and-error, alternating between roles and meeting at eye-level is core for democratic development and closely related to deliberative democracy. This way, knowledge can be acquired and change and results can be achieved simultaneously.

Defining social progress and democracy: the resource and knowledge conundrum

In the debate surrounding aid work there is a growing belief that it is better to provide means and resources that lead to self-sufficiency, rather than addressing immediate needs with solutions that only provide temporary relief. For aid work, and especially for separating aid from charity, this is a wise approach. But when we are dealing with NFIL, this mind-set is not enough. Indeed, in the latest Adult Education and Development Journal,

published by DVV International in 2013⁷, Doctor Auma Obama defines the divergence with the following quote:

“Do not give us fish. Do not teach us to fish. Ask us if we eat fish”.

This quote highlights the independent and democratic nature of NFIL, which we touched upon in the earlier section about defining non-formal and informal learning. (As a brief reminder, NFIL depends on and is shaped by the actual participants of any given action, as well as on the setting, the surroundings, the social and political situation and any other external and internal aspect that might influence the situation.) Now with her own foundation, Sauti Kuu (meaning “powerful voices”), Dr. Obama is using NFIL to put the focus on the needs AND thoughts of the participants (young men and women from Kenya who are trying to become independent adults) in an effort to make them able to sustain themselves financially. In the DVV article, Dr. Obama explains that her foundation created a “safe space”, where the participants can come to discuss and interact with each other; a place where they can perhaps feel in control and uncensored.

This is a vital approach, when constructing NFIL, which works with the democracy goals and definition of social progress established under previous headings in this paper. The process, the definition of needs, and the discovery of the common goal must be owned by the collective -by the group. There can certainly be experts and people with the role of a teacher,

⁷ More information : http://www.iiz-dvv.de/index.php?article_id=1514&clang=1



involved in NFIL. But the striving for progress and the exploration involved in that process must come from participants. Looking only at the resources that are missing or needed, in any given context, and then providing the knowledge to acquire these resources does not address the democratic evolution needed for true social progress, as previously discussed and defined. When we discuss developing countries, there is a tendency to ‘convey the subject matter in simple terms’, confining it to needs and resources.

For NFIL, we must use the same holistic approach as we do when discussing European issues. As an example, when discussing long time unemployment, in the SOLIDAR briefing paper #63, “Empowering people through NFIL”⁸, published in early 2014, we analyse the physiological effects of life at the brink of poverty, arguing that issues of low self-esteem and self-confidence are just as important to address, as validation or education for new skills that match labour market demands.

Every journey begins with a first step – and then many more will follow. Each step is necessary to reach the goal. The same comprehensive picture must be drawn for projects dealing with social progress in developing countries. While charity and aid work must sometimes deal with life-threatening disease or starvation, NFIL is a tool best used for measures that can achieve fundamental, long-lasting changes, both for communities and for the individual. If we think of change as movement or motion, the power to retain

the energy needed to power that transport must come from the community – the participants. This is why NFIL starts with the “safe place”, the meeting, the interchange. Indeed, like a small seed that grows to be a solid and grand tree, NFIL is an intimate process with the potential for greatness and overlapping change.

⁸ Available at http://solidar.org/IMG/pdf/63_empowering_people_through_nfil.pdf

EXAMPLES OF LEARNING FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

Creating what is already there: Magazine creation in Namibia



Examples of the magazine, Sister Namibia, 2013-2014

Referring back to the argumentation in the beginning of this paper (Informal learning as a core human feature), setting up NFIL can be treacherous if you are entering a context as a new actor - any sort of third party to the prevalent local circumstances. It is theoretically easy to fall into the top-down trap, meaning entering with a pre-made concept and eagerly explaining the pedagogy of a specific form of NFIL.

As touched upon previously, it is both naïve and contemptuous to believe that people in any region or location need to be introduced to the basic notion of working together as a community or as a group. Of course there can be benefits of certain methods and pedagogy, but the first step should be an inventory of what already exists locally. What this creates is often a co-operation of sorts, where a local initiative can be strengthened and supported.

A good example is the women's right organisation [Sister Namibia](#), which works

with sexual rights. It tries to challenge patriarchal norms and power structures. In co-operation with two SOLIDAR members, the Olof Palme International Center and ABF both operating out of Sweden, the Namibian organisation is now able to publish the "[Sister Namibia Magazine](#)" – in which women can share their experiences and thoughts on matters relevant to the cause. Building on the magazine, a new advocacy initiative has been launched, built on dialogue and training for creating media content. In this example **knowledge of the local context created co-operation with a group already using a form of NFIL (discussion groups on women's rights) – who then could define their own needs and goals. As part of reaching those goals, new knowledge was needed (in this case, media production) and an NFIL 'concept' was therefore created mutually to obtain those skills.**

Home-Based Women Workers in Pakistan lead the way



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Global Network

MOBILISING FOR FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Human Rights Defenders Tell Their Stories

Khalid Mahmood
from **Aptalops** 1 year ago

Mr. Khalid Mahmood has been the Director of the Labour Education Foundation (LEF) based in Pakistan since 2000. He holds an MBA in Human Resource Development. After engaging as a student activist in his youth, he got involved in the trade union and labour movement. Besides his responsibilities as director of LEF, he is a trade union trainer. As a human rights defender, he contributes to better living and working conditions for vulnerable groups in the Pakistani society (such as Home based women workers). Labour Education Foundation (LEF) is a non-governmental organization providing intellectual input to trade unions and various civil society organisations advocating for the rights of vulnerable workers. In 2011, LEF was awarded the SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards.

Watch the video of Khalid Mahmood on HBW in Pakistan

No one knows exactly how many home-based male, female or child workers (HBW) there are in Pakistan. SOLIDAR's Pakistan partner and global network member, the [Labour Education Foundation](#) (LEF), believes it to be around 12 million, of which 80-90% are women – 60-70% of whom live in the Punjab Province.

Caring for their families, doing housework and working to supplement their income from home – and with male family

members denying that this work happens – these women are literally invisible to society, in terms of their economic contribution. They make jewellery, garments, shoes, dried fruit, packaging and decorations. Assisted by their children, an average worker works for around 8-12 hours a day, earning between 2,600 to 3,500 rupees a month (the minimum wage in Pakistan is 10,000 rupees a month). Their homes are often very small, with no proper workspace. A bedroom might double as a kitchen and



workplace. Health and safety risks with hazardous chemicals and repetitive strain injuries are high. This invisibility is double layered because, as part of the informal economy, their work is also unrecognised by law. They therefore have no social protection coverage, no right to join or form a trade union and no access to the labour courts in case of industrial disputes.

SOLIDAR partner LEF first started working with HBW in 2003, providing work based training and literacy courses. Together with local women's groups, they created subsidised community kitchens, to free up the women's time from cooking – so they could spend more time working and raising awareness about different women's issues.

With the support of the Finish Trade Union Solidarity Centre (SASK), LEF started organising Home Based Workers Unions in 2009. Today there are over 4,000 members. Around six districts are currently functioning; they have elected officials, a rising membership and some funds for activities.

Since 2009, nearly 300 leaders from the unions have attended the yearly "Know your rights workshop". **Through active NFIL, the union leaders discover the common situation of home based workers – and how they compare to other workers in the country. They explore gender equality, as well as human and trade union rights. At the end of the workshop the women draw up simple action plans, setting out quarterly actions, such as holding awareness raising sessions for other women and signing up workers to the unions.** Although the results of the action

plans are not officially monitored, part-time LEF organisers assist the leaders in implementing the plans through Study Circle-style awareness raising events at the leaders' homes or in community buildings.

Story of Asia Afzal - President of the unregistered Home Based Workers Union

Asia Afzal is a part-time HBW with four children from Lahore. Before Asia was married she was trained in making decoration pieces and garments. Her husband is retired from the army and works as a security guard. To supplement his income and keep their children in school – although her health is not good – Asia works part-time making caps from home. She first came in contact with LEF when she went to their Lahore Cooperative, and they invited her to train other workers. She was very nervous and, as she was illiterate, could not possibly imagine how she could train anyone. Yet it was a success and her confidence grew. When LEF began organising the workers into unions, Asia became involved as an activist. She then attended the Know Your Rights Workshop in 2011. Asia shares her experience:

“When I attended the Know Your Rights Workshop, I got a sense of togetherness... That was the point when I really felt that I was a leader. I realised that organising is power... After the training, I came in contact with a group of women making bulk order collars for dresses. They got 6 rupees for 12 collars. I had been elected as a trade union leader and I went with the workers to the contractor, to ask for a set fee of 12 rupees – one for each collar. He refused, so we asked for 10 Rupees. He still refused. So then the women, in return, refused to do the work.

“Within two days the contractor returned and offered 8 Rupees. Today he is paying 10 Rupees and we plan to get the 12 Rupees eventually.... I also provide community services, for example I spoke to the Administrator of a hospital to recruit a woman for a cleaning job...I also persuaded a woman with cancer to transfer her property to her children ... In the past, I could not talk to influential people. Now, I realise that I am very skilled and I am not a nervous person anymore.

In addition to the workshops, unions and community activities, LEF works with advocacy measures and collaborations to influence laws and policy on HBW. However, this highlights the Know Your Rights Workshops and the NFIL activities that enable the women to define their own goals and organise mutual activities. As seen in the quote from Asia Afzal, the “safe space” provided by the workshops – a room for free expression of thoughts and concerns – was the determining factor in making her feel like a leader. This is the sort of variable that is hard to calculate and put into a spreadsheet when presenting final results. However, we see this as a crucial ingredient for the growth

of the unions and the mutually organised activities that follow. **During the Know Your Rights Workshop, the women define their needs and goals – and make their own plans to reach those goals. They are then supported locally by LEF organisers. This process is needed in order to create participation. It is here that the women claim ownership of future activities. It is here that they get to define what future projects must address.**

Informal workers in Peru teach each other to use the internet

Global network member PLADES (Programa Laboral de Desarrollo), active within Peru, launched a skill assessment initiative for the informal economy workers in 2011. In a trial run, 80 workers from the informal sector were asked what they wanted to learn if given the possibility to gain a new skill. Surprisingly, all of the participants answered the same way – they wanted to learn about computers and the internet. The participants came from various trades within the informal sector. Their number included domestic workers, cargo handlers and newspaper sellers. Most of them had been out of formal education since primary or early secondary school.

The challenge for PLADES was therefore to organise something that would match the expressed need of the workers, while also complying with the group's wide and varied work schedules, reading ability and past study experience.

With the basis for NFIL already in place – the group had as mentioned defined their own needs and their own goal; to learn how to use a computer and access the

Internet – it was decided to try something a bit different. Since the aim of the project was to learn how to use new technology, the course would be organised online. And, to cope with the various schedules and skill levels of the participants, it was decided that the learning would be organised both in groups – where the participants would help each other and seek solutions together – and through in-person tutorials lead by a trainer from PLADES.

Learning how to use a computer was not the only objective of the activity. The participants also explored how the new technology could help them organise informal economy workers with the aim of creating a network for exchange and political advocacy. The course was made up from three modules: “Computing tools”, “Workers in the Informal Economy” and “Communication and Advocacy”. Through this approach the participants not only learned new skills, but they could immediately explore them in other areas that they felt passionate about. Additionally, the peer-to-peer tutoring gave leadership positions to workers who had never led groups before – thereby boosting their self-image and self-esteem.

Juan Carlos Vargas, organiser at PLADES, provides some additional insights:

“The ability to communicate and find information online has opened up new opportunities for the participants. All of the participants now regularly use and share information through email – where they did not previously. Additionally, some participants now regularly use and share information with other workers through YouTube and Facebook. Before participating in this course, this was not part of their language. Furthermore, the participants now regularly use their computer and advocacy skills for on-going campaigns to extend social protection, communicate with other members across their unions and to contact decision makers.”

The success of this activity can be traced back to the principles that we've previously etched out – at the beginning of this paper – for both NFIL and for social progress. **The participatory nature of the course design, the opportunity for the participants to define their own needs and the use of cooperation in the learning process are all evident and**

present here. Also, the possibility of immediately using newfound skills for action, where the group collectively launched initiatives for organisation of workers and political change through advocacy work, is a testament to how big change can be achieved if the initiative is fuelled by a collective, democratic undertaking.

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A stable force for social progression in Bolivia



Learners of the Asociación Boliviana para la Cultura

Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, and the unstable political landscape has historically not provided enough stability for any major social progression. Swedish SOLIDAR member ABF, in a cooperation project between several local branches, has been involved in the country since 1997, running a comprehensive development project that was wrapping in 2014. The Project is sub-financed by Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and developed together with Olof Palme's International Centre. Together, the Swedish organisations provided the groundwork for the establishment of the Bolivian cultural association, **ABC** (Asociación Boliviana para la Cultura). After 17 years with support from ABF, the association now has functioning centres in a number of different locations across Bolivia.

Education is at the heart of all ABC activities. The idea is to **form local groups in each community, as a chapter of the association. From there, local needs are discussed and the group defines what areas need to be**

developed and what kind of knowledge needs to be acquired. ABF offers assistance educating tutors and study-circle leaders with the tools needed to vouch for the democratic proceedings that signifies the non-formal approach. ABC also hosts cultural activities that help to unite the community and bring people together.

During the last 17 years, ABC have worked with a range of topics, including human rights, cultural traditions, literacy, violence in the family, local development and environmental issues. The aim of the activities varies based on the needs, interest and wishes of the local ABC chapter.

ABF project leader Åke Söderman

"The key to success is the democracy aspect. We've been careful in making sure that ABC is run by local representatives. From ABF, we've provided guidance in organising a democratic association, creating non-formal training for the board members and leaders of the chapters. But we designed the training together with the people from ABC, making sure that they define where the project needs to go."

Leadership training for ABC members is held with representatives from different chapters travelling to a central location. This has provided an additional opportunity to build social cohesion and form bridges between different groups and cultures in Bolivia. When people sit down together in a study-circle or another non-formal setting, the meeting and the conversation is at the centre of the activity – and that enables people to put old conflicts aside and meet as individuals.

Currently, ABC provides activities in six locations across Bolivia, but public transport is limited and some members walk for up to five hours to get to the meetings. New technology is needed to allow more communication between members. In Oruro – one of a few locations where the activities are now totally independent from the support of the overarching project – the activity group started a radio station in order to widen their output and reach beyond the physical limitations of a set meeting place. Radio activist Francisca Alvarado explains: "We broadcast information about our activities and initiatives and now have a much broader reach throughout our region."

In Cochabamba, the ABC chapter organises study-circles for women who teach each other different crafts and handiwork. The result is provides additional revenues, but the circles also create opportunities to discuss life in general and thus becomes a socially important event for the active women, some of whom travel great lengths by bus to attend. In ABC Riberalta, the association now has a successful cooperation project with the local vocational education centre. The joint venture creates new opportunities for people to learn new skills. The Riberalta chapter also works with theatre workshops and puts heavy focus on exploring democracy and fighting illiteracy.

Study-circles in crafts and handiwork for women dominate the activities at most ABC chapters, simply because it is something that is needed and heavily sought after. The local ABC activists use the meetings to explore what other needs might exist in the community, and also introduce topics such as sexual rights and women's rights. In Guayaramerin, ABC works with housing organisation JUVEC, in order to reach more people and facilitate social progress in the local community

LEARNING POST 2015

A brief background on the Millennium Development Goals

Fourteen years ago, the UN (United Nations) launched something akin to a roadmap for the preferred global development in 2015. The MDG (Millennium Development Goals) spans eight different areas, all somewhat relevant for NFIL:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality rates
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

Accompanying these goals, the UN also released six more detailed goals in the field of education, under the heading “Education for All”:

- Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- Ensure that by 2015, all children – particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities – have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of

good quality

- Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes
- Achieve 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 – especially for women – and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
- Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

Reading the above goals two things spring to mind as obvious and self-evident. Firstly, the objectives described are the utmost basic necessities for achieving a future of equality and universal quality of life. Secondly, with only one year to go until the official deadline – the world will not going to meet these outcomes by the agreed date. Although there has been notable progress in a number of areas – and indeed some of the objectives and sub-objectives have been met - in the majority of the countries in the global



South the objectives have not yet been met.

So, it's "back to the drawing board" for humanity. But what will be the strategies and approaches in the inevitable retake on the MDGs? In the discussion that is already underway⁹ it is vital to emphasise the importance and potential of NFIL.

Formal education is not the universal answer for all learning needs – and furthermore, NFIL has the potential to bridge the different goals, taking the holistic approach by seeing the comprehensive picture at both a macro and a micro level. The way NFIL is formed and shaped by the specific individuals, their specific approach to each other, the specific context surrounding them and the specific needs of the situation. NFIL can best be described as a 'universal, custom-made, global, local solution.'

The post-2015 discussion

As the world draws closer to the deadline for the current MDGs, everyone is eager to 'get in on the discussion' of what happens next. SOLIDAR believes the focus for future goals must be a slightly different in approach. **There were certainly strengths and benefits with the soon-to-be-expired MDGs – they provided a heightened sense of focus, they provided measurable goals and they worked well for raising awareness on important topics.** However, the focus points were often limited and it could be argued that the MDGs dealt more with the **effects of global injustices**, rather than the

actual causes or finding long-lasting solutions.

SOLIDAR believes that future goals must provide further context – looking at the world as intertwined, where the actions of one group greatly affect another group. We must dare to question the constant focus on growth that defines political discussion in the western world. Simply put, all issues cannot be solved with increasing trade and commerce. In the spirit of this briefing, **SOLIDAR believes that the future goals must focus directly on empowering vulnerable groups and on attacking the causes of poverty, oppression and injustices head on!**

Currently, the world is facing unprecedented challenges, with changes in climate, areas with increasing poverty, rising inequalities and a new wave of xenophobia and racism in countries affected by the economic crisis. It is vital to understand that these issues are linked and that one cannot be addressed without the other.

Goals should be global in scope, but they should also keep an eye on local context and reality. **Human rights (including economic, social and cultural rights), equality and social justice must be the core of future discussions. It is vital to focus on empowerment and social participation for vulnerable people.**

Furthermore, in defining the future, we must strive to reach a balance that creates social equality, environmental stability and sustainable economic development, where resources are sometimes redistributed to ensure welfare – instead of the blind belief

⁹ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/beyond2015-news.shtml>



that economic growth is the all-encompassing solution, providing 'trickle-down' effects that magically transfer the riches of the wealthy to poor, starving and vulnerable people.

With all this to consider, creating a future path post-2015 is not a task to be taken lightly and the final roadmap must be the result of a democratic discussion with all stakeholders represented (or as many as possible). At SOLIDAR, we again emphasise the need to focus on empowerment and democratic, social participation and equality measures. We believe NFIL is one of the most important goals for securing that focus.

Why NFIL matters in the MDGs discussion

Returning to the overview of the MDGs at the beginning of this section, from the case studies included in this paper, it is easy to imagine how NFIL can be beneficial for many of these topics. When the areas listed above are analysed, knowledge can often be found at the centre. Other measures might provide temporary solutions, of course – and in many cases such actions are needed as well. For long-lasting effects, however, NFIL is often a necessary ingredient.

Taking a closer look at the different headings:

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

To permanently eradicate poverty and hunger, people need tools for self-sufficient solutions. As with the women teaching each other new skills in the ABC workshops in Bolivia, new knowledge can

provide these avenues. With NFIL, the power and right to define the direction of the solution is up to the affected groups – but the tools and the prerequisites can be created in cooperation. When the immediate crisis gets temporary alleviation, NFIL can be used to share skills for agriculture, commerce, resource-building and other things that the participants themselves deem necessary for progress.

Achieve universal primary education

As discussed in the SOLIDAR briefing paper #63, "Empowering people through NFIL"¹⁰, NFIL can often act as a stepping-stone or a bridge to other forms of education. One great obstacle for school-attendance is illiteracy. Left behind for a few years and it becomes hard for an older child to take part in the formal education on offer. NFIL provides avenues for tackling illiteracy while also engaging in other venues. Given the appropriate tools and setting, people can share their knowledge in study circles or through one-to-one tutoring. For children who might be working or heavily involved with other tasks, NFIL offers a way to prepare for a situation where they might be allowed to attend formal school. Other factors are needed in combination, but simply providing schools will not be enough for those already left behind.

Promote gender equality and empower women

As demonstrated by the case study with Home-Based Women Workers in

¹⁰ See here : http://solidar.org/IMG/pdf/63_empowering_people_through_nfil.pdf



Pakistan, NFIL is an obvious tool to achieve this goal. A leaflet with information or a one-time-only workshop for an hour will not have the long-lasting effect of a repeated study-circle or conversation group. In our case study, women help empower themselves, they are aided by the power of organisation, their beliefs growing stronger as it is fuelled by the person standing next to them – by the shared experience. With NFIL, the network and organisation needed to create change is built alongside the sharing of knowledge. Knowledge is power – and there is power in numbers.

Reduce child mortality rates and improve maternal health

As with many of these topics, NFIL is not the only tool needed here. But knowledge of both contraception and pregnancy care can be shared both informally and non-formally, through study-circles, workshops or in other forms. As part of a broader set of measures, NFIL is an important part of the solution.

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Information play a vital part in fighting all kinds of disease. Understanding the information – and believing in it – is equally important. Taking mutual steps to act in accordance with that information, based on your own local context, is what will create long-lasting change. For the two latter steps, we believe NFIL offers well-suited tools. Again, it is important to see the whole situation, wherever this topic is to be addressed. Is there misinformation about? Do people need a chance to analyse and examine the information for

themselves? What setting is needed in order to do that? Is there a threat scenario linked to talking about the topic? NFIL means staying in the local context and building solutions with the affected people for long-lasting effects.

Ensure environmental sustainability

When creating sustainable production chains with fair terms and conditions, NFIL is one of the ingredients that can lead to long-lasting results. Figuring out how local production can be profitable while remaining sustainable demands both cooperation and understanding of the relevant process. For long-lasting impact, information is not enough. The undertaking must begin within the local context and with time and resources spent on residents defining the challenges themselves. As demonstrated in our paper, NFIL is ideal for scenarios like these. As part of a bigger solution, NFIL is vital to green development.

Develop a global partnership for development

Global cooperation is all well and good but if it is created in boardrooms and at high-level meetings, the chances are it will remain at the theoretical level. NFIL offers possibilities for workers and learners to learn about and discuss global issues and – through collaboration between different NFIL-providers – they can also seek contact with similar groups across the world. Imagine all levels of a production-chain participating in NFIL with the help of new digital solutions! New collaborations could be formed this way, perhaps creating global co-ops. For the present, NFIL offers groups of people from different



parts of the world a chance to communicate and get to know each other within the context of a single subject or a topic.

NFIL as part of “Education for all”

As mentioned above, there are six specific goals in the field of education under the heading “Education for all”. NFIL is not something that should be viewed as a substitute for formal education – instead the two can often complement each other. The goals above were probably created with formal education in mind, but NFIL can play a part as well. Let’s look at the goals one by one...

Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

No matter where in the world we might live, some children experience difficulties in school based on their preferred learning style, in combination with other factors – like home environment, social situation and health. Simply put, many children and adults alike need more than reading, writing and memorising to stimulate learning.

Briefly touched upon in SOLIDAR briefing paper #63, in NFIL there is a long tradition of working with pedagogy for different ways of learning. It is believed that there are at least seven learning styles dictating how different people best go about absorbing and applying information. The three major learning styles are auditory, visual and kinaesthetic. Most people use a combination of these for everything from informal to formal learning.

However, we all typically have a preferred learning style, and naturally we might also have problems with one of the others. The style any of us prefer is somewhat random but our adolescence and the informal educational environment in the home influence our preferences. In formal education, the visual learning style is the norm. Being able to absorb information through passive means, such as reading and attending lectures, and then memorising that information for a test or a project is not suitable for everyone. In NFIL more focus is put on the kinaesthetic learning style - actually doing something practical in order to learn, often in collaboration and discussion with others, transforms the information to knowledge by linking it to a concrete purpose and result. For others, listening to information and then reciting it out loud, perhaps to a rhythm or with music playing in the background is the best method for turning information into knowledge.

Based on this line of reasoning, NFIL can supplement formal education in finding solutions for children that are falling behind or experiencing difficulties concentrating.

Ensure that by 2015, all children – particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities – have access to, and finish free and compulsory primary education of good quality

This deadline is no longer very realistic, and although this goal is all well and good, it could be complemented by mentioning NFIL as another form of learning that should be available to everyone, no matter where they might live. As described in



SOLIDAR briefing paper #63, NFIL is often a stepping-stone to formal education and we believe it would be beneficial to recognise this in future MDGs.

Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes

For this goal, all that is needed is for policy makers and organisers to realise that NFIL is very much a part of “appropriate learning” – and should always be included in the educational portfolio on offer.

Achieve 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 – especially for women – and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

For literacy, NFIL is a key component. Returning to education – or enrolling for the first time – can sometimes be a daunting experience. NFIL offers ways to learn to read and write that might feel less formal and demanding. And, as previously mentioned, this can then in turn be a stepping-stone to other forms of education. **Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality**

This is a complicated goal. The power structures in our societies that create different starting points for men and women – and girls and boys – cannot be eradicated simply by providing new quotas or legislation. The mechanisms behind

gender oppression need to be addressed as well. As seen in our examples, NFIL can provide safe environments that empower people, as well as discussion points where citizens can examine and re-evaluate their community. Legislation and quotas are needed but NFIL provides parallel initiatives that help stabilise change. It also changes attitudes over long periods of time.

Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence for all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

This goal is a bit vague. Quality assurance can be done in a number of ways – and NFIL is notoriously hard to evaluate in short timeframes. For the true effects of citizen initiatives like the ones in the examples in this document, it is sometimes better to return to the community some years after the initial activity. SOLIDAR believes that long lasting change takes time, and that this must be considered in future quality evaluations.

UNESCO advocating for a holistic vision

In the current state of the debate, there is a clear consensus¹¹ on the need for a clearly defined, balanced and holistic education agenda regardless of the structure the future post-2015 development framework may take.

¹¹ UNESCO Concept note on the Post-2015 education agenda here: http://en.unesco.org/post2015/sites/post2015/files/UNESCOConceptNotePost2015_ENG.pdf



UNESCO advocates a single clearly-defined global education agenda which should be an integral part of the broader international development framework. In addition to being a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 development agenda, education should also be integrated into other development goals as an important means for their implementation, thereby highlighting the interaction of education with other goals.

UNESCO reaffirms a humanistic and holistic vision of education as fundamental to personal and socio-economic development. The objective of such education must be envisaged in a broad perspective that aims at enabling and empowering people to meet their basic individual needs, fulfil their personal expectations and contribute to the achievement of their communities and countries' socio-economic development objectives. In addition to the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, the content of learning must promote understanding and respect for human rights, inclusion, equity and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the content of learning should foster a desire and capacity for lifelong learning and learning to live together. All of these are essential for the realisation of peace, responsible citizenship, and sustainable development.

Within its 'Imperatives of education for the post-2015 agenda' UNESCO recognises that lifelong learning is a central principle for the post-2015 education agenda. It provides flexible life-long and life-wide learning opportunities through formal, non-formal and informal pathways including harnessing the potential of ICTs of creating a new culture of learning. To that

end, another goal is put forward: **Ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030.**

More precisely, the following relevant sub-indicator is proposed under the title “**Skills for life and work.**” ‘All young people and all adults should have equitable access to lifelong learning opportunities to develop skills for life and work and towards the fostering of personal and professional development.’ This objective should be monitored by a set of targets that measure the extent of equal opportunities provided to all young people and adults to acquire knowledge and skills over their lifespan. These measurements should be innovative; they should contribute to and/or assimilate change both in society and the workplace; they should include acquisition of transversal (transferable) skills, and the ability to learn to live together and become global citizens; they should include equal opportunities to access and complete technical and vocational education and training (formal and non-formal), relevant to the world of work as defined by national qualifications systems and they should **ensure recognition and certification of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning.**

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EDUCATION

ECA, ILO*, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNICEF state¹² that social protection can play in social and economic development, and recommend that the post-2015 framework should contain an objective that ensures the inclusion of all groups in development and society through extending adequate social protection. The post-2015 debate needs a renewed and comprehensive focus on poverty, income distribution and social inclusion.

70% of the global population has no access to comprehensive social protection. Social protection programmes tackle multiple dimensions of poverty and deprivation (decent work, education, health care, food security, income security) and can therefore be a powerful tool in the battle against poverty and inequality. Social protection can play a fundamental role in creating more inclusive and sustainable development pathways. In the absence of social protection, people, especially the most vulnerable, are subjected to increased risks of sinking below the poverty line or remaining trapped in poverty for generations.

Essential social security guarantees

The Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I) that was launched by the United Nations system Chief Executives Board for Coordination in April 2009, recognises the importance of social protection as a necessary component of a comprehensive development strategy that addresses poverty, inequality and social exclusion,

¹² Social protection: A development priority in the post-2015 UN development agenda, read it here: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/16_social_protection.pdf

and at the same time it seeks to invest in people as a prerequisite for sustainable and fairly shared economic growth. In 2012, at the International Labour Conference, ILO members (governments, workers and employers representatives) adopted the Recommendation 202 on National Floors of Social Protection. With the adoption of this international standard, they committed to ensure that all people 'resident' in their countries should have access to at least the following four essential social security guarantees:

- guaranteed access to goods and services constituting essential health care, education and other social services;
- basic income security for children with the aim of facilitating access to nutrition, health, education care and any other necessary goods and services;
- basic income security for persons in active age unable to earn sufficient income;
- basic income security for people in old age.

Social protection and Education go hand in hand

The UNDP Human Development Report 2013¹³ recognises that individual achievements in health, education and income, while essential, do not guarantee progress in human development if social

¹³ UNDP Human Development Report 2013 here: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/14/hdr2013_en_complete.pdf



conditions constrain individual achievements and if perceptions about progress differ. At the same time, few countries have sustained rapid growth without impressive levels of public investment — not just in infrastructure, but also in health and education. In other words, education, health care, social protection, legal empowerment and social organisation all enable poor people to participate in growth.

The 2013 Report makes a strong case for policy ambition. An accelerated progress scenario suggests that low Human Development Index (HDI) countries can converge towards the levels of human development achieved by high and very high HDI countries. By 2050, aggregate HDI could rise to 52% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 36% in South Asia. Such policy interventions will also have a positive impact on the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Failing to implement ambitious universal education policies will adversely affect many essential pillars of human development for future generations.

NFIL as part of the national development strategies

In recent decades, the world has developed into an 'information and knowledge society' that requires qualifications, skills development and lifelong learning. The formal education system however alone cannot deliver all these. In order to develop ambitious universal education policies, non-formal and informal learning and training processes need to be given a far higher priority and the potential for non-formal learning must also be better supported.

The following areas can be tackled in development cooperation and international cooperation by promoting non-formal scope for training and skills development¹⁴:

- Development of new educational policy concepts aimed at promoting synergies between formal and non-formal education;
- Development of approaches to validating, accrediting and certifying skills acquired through non-formal learning;
- Promotion of non-formal education provision in a wide variety of extra-curricular contexts;
- Strengthening local education landscapes as part of local policies for young people, adults and education and training.

¹⁴ Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on Education quality, more here: <http://www.giz.de/expertise/html/10926.html>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Non-formal and informal learning is a strong driver for change and social justice that deserves higher priority within the development debate. It should be part of the holistic approach to promote social protection, decent work and inclusive development.

Currently, almost 202 million people are unemployed around the world, an increase of almost 5 million whilst vulnerable employment accounts for almost 48% of total employment. Persons in vulnerable employment are more likely than wage and salaried workers to have limited or no access to social security or secure income. In fact, only 20% of the world's population has adequate social protection coverage while with only 2% of global GDP all of the world's poor could be provided with a social security.

In the perspective of SOLIDAR, non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) is a powerful tool to empower those furthest away from formal education and the labour market and those vulnerable people that have a precarious employment and income position to participate in society and inevitably at the labour market.

In order for NFIL to work as a force for positive change in developing countries and in order to reach targets similar to the ones suggested in the MDGs, SOLIDAR recommends the adoption of a more holistic approach to education. Purposeful non-formal and informal learning is best achieved through initiatives driven by the local community, with participation and democracy as key pillars - a bottom up approach where people define their own needs and goals based on local circumstances.

To that end SOLIDAR recommends the following:

1. **Include NFIL as a driver for change in all post-2015 MDG discussions.** NFIL should be viewed as equal to all other forms of education, sometimes being the best choice for a given situation and sometimes being a good alternative or complement.
2. **Design NFIL development efforts to build local learning societies.** NFIL activities should be created for and together with the people it is intended for. Local NGOs, social networks and associations are key, as well as informal meeting points where citizens can define both problems and solutions.
3. **Strengthen NFIL methodologies in development to empower vulnerable people and precarious workers.**
4. **Recognise NFIL within active labour market policies in development.** The acquisition of skills, competences and knowledge is recognised as a key component of employability. 70% of all job related learning takes place in informal and non-formal contexts.
5. Ensure the inclusion of NFIL within the **National Development Strategies together with** access to essential services such as essential health care and education and income support measures.



6. **Enable NFIL activities to be democratic and based on participation.** Any non-formal and informal learning that hopes to advance democracy must also be democratic in construction. In other words, both the methods and the end goal must be full and equal participation.

7. **Include NFIL Stakeholders in discussion for global aid.** To reach beyond the narrow approach to bridge the skills mismatch, other education practitioners need to be brought into international discussions on promoting participation and active labour market policies.