

# Adult Learning & Education – System Building Approach (ALESBA)

Toolkit for Implementation

## Phase One – Consensus Building



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## **Adult Learning & Education – System Building Approach (ALESBA)**

### **Toolkit for Implementation**

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- The team that conducted an assessment on the supply-side of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) service delivery in 2018. Not only did this peer review produced substantial baseline information on the system in Ethiopia, but it also tested the tools of Phase Two in the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA).

- The team that conducted the demand assessment on the needs and interests of ALE learners in 2019/2020. The findings provided a basis for further analysis in Phase Two and informed Phase Three.

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Sonja Belete



**W**hen the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, it was a moment of celebration for the education sector. For the first time, the global community accepted that learning is lifelong and that enough opportunities to learn should be provided to people of all ages, sexes, social and ethnic groups. This development nurtured the hope that decision-makers and key stakeholders would broaden education policies, and place greater value on Adult Learning and Education (ALE). However, while it is obvious that several improvements have been made, ALE remains the most neglected sub-sector in many national education systems.

A key challenge many government and non-government adult education institutions face is the lack of a system to develop, fund, monitor, and support ALE at a national, regional and local level. While many countries have more or less sophisticated systems in place for primary and secondary schooling, higher education, and sometimes vocational education, the same cannot be said for ALE.

DWV International has more than 50 years' experience in supporting the establishment and improvement of ALE systems. One lesson learnt from these efforts is that isolated interventions bear a high risk of failure. The same is true for processes that are mainly based on foreign expertise and copy-paste schemes.

With this background in mind, DWV International's team in East/Horn of Africa, under the leadership of Sonja Belete, started a process of developing a holistic model

for sustainably improving ALE systems. These booklets present the methods and experiences that have been developed over time. We called it the "Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach" (ALESBA), and it is based on several simple truths:

- Sustainable system building is a time-consuming, long-term process, that demands a great deal of patience and flexibility.
- Ownership is the key. Local actors should shape the process and create the system. External expertise can be useful, but should not lead the process or impose (quick) solutions.
- System building demands consensus building between the key partners. This factor is essential for success and should be established from the beginning and maintained throughout the process.

Sonja Belete and her team developed the ALESBA in a bottom-up manner, mainly based on experience from Ethiopia and Uganda. Meanwhile, the approach has been taken up by ten other countries in Africa. The process was shaped by the principles of action learning to ensure that formats and tools were developed and further updated during the journey. Learning-by-doing is a key success factor of the approach and should be used throughout the implementation of the process. ALESBA is an approach, which can guide stakeholders in the complex task of system building, at the same time it is open to improvement, adaptation, and modification!

We wish you great success in building and reforming ALE systems, and hope our experience can contribute to your work!

Uwe Gartenschlaeger

# Abbreviations

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<b>ALE</b>	.....	Adult Learning and Education
<b>ALESBA</b>	.....	Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach
<b>CSOs</b>	.....	Civil Society Organisation(s)
<b>CLCs</b>	.....	Community Learning Center(s)
<b>ESDP</b>	.....	Education Sector Development Plan
<b>FAL</b>	.....	Functional Adult Literacy
<b>GRALE</b>	.....	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education
<b>ICOLEW</b>	.....	Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation (Uganda)
<b>LAMP</b>	.....	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
<b>M&amp;E</b>	.....	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MIS</b>	.....	Management Information System
<b>MGLSD</b>	.....	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (Uganda)
<b>MoE</b>	.....	Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)
<b>NGO</b>	.....	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>PRA</b>	.....	Participatory Rural Appraisal
<b>REFLECT</b>	.....	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
<b>SBA</b>	.....	System Building Approach
<b>ToT</b>	.....	Training of Trainers
<b>ToF</b>	.....	Training of Facilitators
<b>TVET</b>	.....	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

# PHASE ONE – CONSENSUS BUILDING

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**An adult education system encompasses all those who participate in the provision, financing, regulation and use of the learning services. The delivery of adult learning and education services relies on service providers such as government and civil society with the support of other role-players such as academic institutions (universities and colleges, etc.), multilateral organisations and donors to play their roles and carry out responsibilities as per their mandates.**

It is becoming increasingly clear that governments cannot meet the continually growing demand for services by acting alone. There is a need to co-operate and seek support from other sectors of society including NGOs, universities and the private sector, etc. The cross-cutting and integrated nature of adult learning and education (ALE) also require sector-wide approaches involving a variety of government sector offices (e.g., education, agriculture and health, etc.) based on the scope and definition of ALE services in a particular country.

Strengthening adult learning and education systems for improved service delivery means moving beyond providing isolated inputs, more trained facilitators, and learning spaces, etc. Inputs and resources need to be used more effectively to accelerate learning. Strengthening the system means aligning the enabling environment, institutional arrangements, management and technical processes through a series of interrelated actions. Among others, it entails reforming the relationships of accountability among the various stakeholders in the system so that these relationships are clear, consistent with mandates and functions, measured, monitored and supported. It also means establishing mechanisms for communication and a clear feedback cycle. Relationships of accountability are a key lever that makes a system work (World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020, 2011). It means, first of all, recognising the many service providers and stakeholders and the roles they have in the system.

The relationships between these stakeholders, whether contractual or informal, connect them and their resources and ultimately make service delivery possible. These stakeholder relations and structures can take several different forms, such as:

- Highly centralised systems where power and control over resources are at the centre of government.
- Fully decentralised systems where local authorities have considerable autonomy.
- De-concentrated systems which spread autonomy across the levels of governance with different mandates at different levels. This is also similar to federal systems.
- Horizontal relationships and structures can vary from more integrated approaches, structures and systems of ALE to structures where different parts of ALE belong to different systems, e.g., TVET to the TVET sector, literacy and basic education to another, agricultural skills training within agriculture, etc.
- Within the above, many systems are collegiate in that certain functions are carried out by autonomous or semi-autonomous bodies financed through the state. Public-private partnerships are common in many countries and are used to deliver adult education and other services.
- There are also systems that involve substantial independent management relying on private, community, NGOs or charitable bodies to deliver services and funded by a blend of state and non-state sources. Here the state's role is largely regulatory while actual delivery is performed by other entities (DEVCO B4 Education Discussion Paper, 2014).





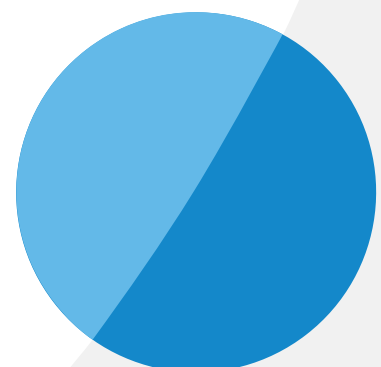
Irrespective of the form or structure that stakeholder relationships take, it is acknowledged that these relations are never straightforward and often come with different perceptions regarding roles and responsibilities. Each country's history contributes to the perceptions stakeholders may have about each other. These perceptions can create tension and conflict which affects the effective delivery of ALE services. To strengthen the system for improved service delivery it is important to start a process of consensus building among stakeholders about what kind of system is needed to deliver different services according to the needs of defined target groups and what each stakeholder's role and responsibility will be.

Considering the complexity of stakeholder relations, consensus building is not a once-off step, but rather a crucial intervention conducted throughout the full duration of adult learning and education system building across all the five phases of the process. This booklet unpacks the conceptual understanding and principles of consensus building among stakeholders as a crucial ingredient for successful adult education system building. It outlines a roadmap for consensus building which includes the following steps:

- **Preparation:** A preparatory period to convince stakeholders to engage in adult learning and education system building.
- **Start-up:** Start-up activities of consensus building include visioning exercises, conducting a stakeholder analysis, planning for other phases of system building, etc.
- **On the way:** Important consensus building considerations for the duration of the system building phases, e.g., teamwork, partnerships, risk management, influencing and negotiating, etc.

The structure of the booklet is practical in nature to capacitate users to facilitate the consensus building phase. The booklet describes the process of consensus building and provides a set of tools that can be used for different purposes. It is a guide and the users of the toolkit are encouraged to be innovative and use tools from different approaches to reach the objective of consensus building among stakeholders for a strengthened adult learning and education system.

The approach also acknowledges that the stakeholder relations in each country have their own character and consensus may be further developed in some countries than others. This will influence the time it may take to build sufficient consensus to embark on system building. Although the users of the service are part of the system, the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA) concerns itself primarily with the stakeholders on the supply side of service delivery during the consensus building phase. Tools and instruments to address the interests and needs of the users on the demand side are addressed in Phase Two.



## 2. UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF CONSENSUS BUILDING

**Consensus means “overwhelming agreement”. Consensus should be the product of efforts made in good faith to meet the interests of all stakeholders. A significant consensus building exercise needs to be undertaken with various sectors and stakeholders to create understanding that:**

- The existing ALE system may need improvement and strengthening.
- The ALESBA has the potential to guide the process of system strengthening and service delivery optimisation.
- The current roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders need to be unpacked and new relationship structures and accountabilities may have to be considered.
- The current status of the system needs to be assessed and blockages in service delivery need to be diagnosed to find root causes.
- Alternative system designs need to be explored with leverage points to optimize service delivery.
- There should be the will and commitment among stakeholders to pilot and test a new system design with the intention of up-scaling and roll-out.

The key indicator of whether or not consensus has been reached is that after every effort has been made to meet any outstanding interests, everyone agrees they can live with the final proposal (UNDP Public-Private Partnership for the Urban Environment, 2005). Consensus requires that a proposal is framed after listening carefully to the interests of all stakeholders. Interests are not the same as positions or demands – what people say they must have. Rather, interests are the underlying needs or reasons why people take the positions they do.

Consensus building is all about stakeholder relationships, potentially conflicting positions and interests and therefore needs careful facilitation. Like any relationship, it takes

patience, effort and time. It can be painful but it is a necessary process. Translating objectives into grassroots realities is a challenging participatory exercise which requires flexibility, trust and understanding. It is not possible to wait for the ultimate consensus before embarking on the ALESBA, but sufficient agreement and commitment among the majority of key stakeholders should be reached to start with the long-term process of system building. During the implementation phases of the approach, new conflicts and concerns may arise and may have to be dealt with using a variety of tools and mechanisms. Consensus building, therefore, runs like a thread throughout the ALESBA.

Experiences in the East/Horn of Africa region have shown that the exercises conducted by all stakeholders during Phase Two (Assessment and Diagnosis) contributed to consensus building. By being active participants in assessing the status of the current system all stakeholders witness the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system and their own role in the process. Creating a safe environment to analyse the findings without accusation and blame, contributed to an eagerness to engage in action to do something about the challenges and blockages within the system. This strengthened consensus about the need for system building.

To facilitate a productive and successful consensus building process some key principles should be considered as ground rules for all stakeholders in the process:

- **Participation and Ownership:** All stakeholders should be actively involved as partners in every phase of the ALESBA. A system building partnership should be created instead of individual stakeholder orientations. All stakeholder partners are responsible for implementation and making meaningful contributions. All stakeholders own the successes and challenges within the system.
- **Communication:** Partners educate each other and spend time discussing the history of an issue, their perceptions and concerns and ideas for solutions. All partners in the ALESBA are kept informed, all processes are documented and shared. Successes are celebrated through an ongoing process.



- **Compatibility and mutual agreement:** Stakeholders seek to find compatible and complementary goals and objectives for the system. These are often found in national policies and strategies. They don't have to be the same, merely compatible. Decisions are made by mutual agreement. This requires careful facilitation until everyone agrees the best decision has been reached.
- **Conflict management:** Conflicts are managed as early as possible in the process.
- **Credibility and transparency:** Credibility of stakeholders leading the system building process and the transparency during the process are critical ingredients for the long-term success of system building.
- **Action Learning:** All stakeholders learn from the process while implementing, generating knowledge and understanding beyond what one stakeholder already knows.

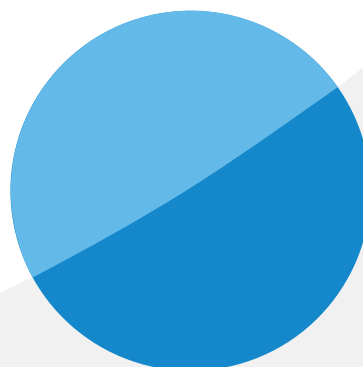


- **Systems thinking is embedded within the ALESBA.** Therefore, stakeholders should be cognisant that they are starting a new way of thinking and working. Systems thinking requires a mindset change that tests our mental models and how we traditionally think about problems. It is a structured approach that emphasises examining problems more completely before developing and implementing solutions. A common definition and understanding of problems are important for consensus

building. Root causes are uncovered so that leverage points can be discovered and multiple options can be identified and weighed against each other to find implementable solutions. Systems thinking strives to develop stakeholders' sensitivity to the interdependency of the entire system and the consequences (intended and unintended) of actions (CPS HR Consulting).

The principles and techniques of systems thinking which are elaborated in the first booklet of this toolkit (Introduction to the Approach and Toolkit) and the booklets dealing with the remaining phases (Two to Five) should be embraced during consensus building, especially during the preparation and start-up phases so that the foundation can be laid for the more complex tasks in Phases Two to Five of the ALESBA. By employing the mindset and tools of system thinking, stakeholders should build a shared perception of problems and challenges, avoid being at cross-purposes, enhance collaboration and foster a learning environment and increase idea generation.

When using a systemic lens to analyse complex problems, is useful to map the dynamics of the system and how the relationships between the system components affect its functioning, as well as what interventions can lead to better results. This includes mapping the institutional arrangements, which is one of the four major elements in the conceptual framework of the ALESBA. Stakeholders are the drivers of ALE system building as well as all the elements and building blocks within the system. Building consensus is a key ingredient for success. The next section unpacks the process of consensus building and outlines a roadmap for starting Phase One and supporting consensus throughout the other phases of system building.



## 3. THE ROADMAP OF CONSENSUS BUILDING

As already described, consensus building is not a once-off step or phase in the ALESBA, instead, it runs through all the phases. However, there are specific activities to be undertaken at the beginning of the process, when stakeholders consider using the ALESBA. Phase One of the approach concerns itself with two major sub-phases/activities namely:

- 1) Preparation to start with the ALESBA and therefore Phase One (Consensus Building)
- 2) Start-up activities for consensus building

Once sufficient consensus is reached to embark on a long-term process of system building and all necessary start-up activities are completed, some tools and mechanisms may be needed on the way during Phases Two to Five of the ALESBA to ensure stakeholders have reached consensus about the process during implementation. Section three of this booklet elaborates the process of consensus building while section four covers different tools than can be used in the process. Therefore, the two sections are closely connected and users of the toolkit should refer to the tools in section four to design their own process based on the contents in section three.

### Phase 1

Preparation

ALESBA

### Phase 2-5

ALESBA

On the way....

Driver



# Phase 1



### 3.1 Preparation for Phase One

Cooperating on a multi-stakeholder level to build a sustainable ALE system may not seem like a desirable option at first. Most organisations prefer to stay on paths they know or work in smaller clusters with like-minded partners and stakeholders. How does a collaborative process start then? Who can or should start it? How do we prepare for a structured start-up of Phase One of the approach? We first need to do some preparation work as outlined below.

#### Find a champion or driver

Potentially any stakeholder can introduce the concept and approach. DVV International country offices that are familiar with the ALESBA and have relationships with a

wide range of stakeholders are in a good position to introduce the approach and start the initial discussions before embarking on a more structured process. However, government, development partners or other NGOs and even universities that are familiar with the approach can also start the discussion about the status of the adult education system in a particular country and what the ALESBA can offer to improve the system.

What is needed is a champion or driver to start the process. Any individual, group, network or organisation that has realised separated, uncoordinated actions create redundancies and missed opportunities to use resources more effectively, or improve service delivery, can play this 'champion/driver' role. The champion needs to be aware of the current system and its shortfalls and have an



orientation and/or training in the ALESBA. For other stakeholders to be interested the champion ideally should have a credible reputation in the field of adult education. This implies proven technical experience and skills in the sector and a known value base that will create trust with other stakeholders. Consensus and partnership regarding system building will not take place or succeed without the drive and commitment of a few organisations and individuals. Stakeholders may decide to select a task force or management team among themselves to drive the process.

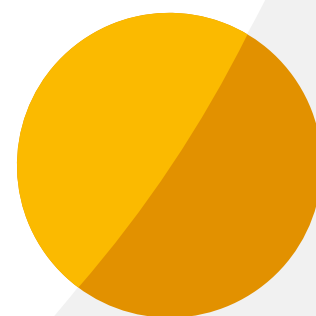
#### **Identify a crisis, a catalyst or entry point**

Experience has taught us that it is beneficial to have a catalyst or crisis opportunity that can spark interest and highlight the need for ALE system building. Although this is not a prescribed pre-condition, it is useful to be aware of these conditions and to use them to mobilising interest in system building.

It is widely acknowledged that it often takes a crisis before partners understand the need to co-operate to solve a particular problem. The lack of water or a health service often brings about action. Although it is hoped that progress can be made in the absence of a crisis, the complacency that keeps organisations on their usual paths is usually only broken by the pressing need to work together – such as in a crisis.

Unfortunately, adult education services seem to have less of a sense of urgency and it may require a directive from a Prime Minister, President or Minister to move ministries into action. These directives often do not come from adult literacy concerns directly but may be linked to the roll-out of policies, civic education or related cross-sectoral needs identified at higher levels. The demands from the youth for skills and jobs in many countries, especially in Africa, can be translated into a crisis itself. Unemployment and poverty levels have resulted in protests and conflicts in many countries. Adult educators have an opportunity to make the link between the lack of or insufficient ALE services and the lack of skills and unemployment.

In the context of ALE, it is more often a catalyst that may spur action and co-operation between stakeholders. As mentioned above, it can be a directive from a senior government official or politician or a sector such as agriculture that may highlight the need for integrated adult learning and education services. Countries' commitment to reach the SDGs and Agenda 2030 may also act as a catalyst. Whatever the case may be, it is useful to have an entry point to bring stakeholders together and raise awareness regarding the current status of the system and the potential of embarking on a structured ALE system building process. The entry point does not have to be a crisis or catalyst, but stakeholders will need to make a compelling case to mobilise sufficient energy and interest in improving the state of affairs in the country.



#### Start preparatory activities

The organisation(s) which initiates and motivates for an ALE system building process should be familiar with the ALESBA toolkit and seek guidance and training if needed. It should also be very familiar with the sector and major stakeholders. Usually, the driving organisations that introduce the approach will already have well-established relationships with many stakeholders and can be trusted as honest facilitators of the process.

Suggested activities during the preparation phase include the following: *Test the water!*

Have a series of bilateral or small group meetings with a diverse range of stakeholders in the ALE sector within the scope of the existing system and programmes/projects in the country. These individual meetings can be used to introduce the ALESBA and 'test' level of interest in the approach. Information can also be collected about the views of stakeholders on the performance of the existing system, and areas of discomfort, etc.

#### *Gather information for the start-up phase!*

Gather sufficient information either through a series of meetings, mini or larger workshops and/or through literature reviews on topics such as:

- Who are the key stakeholders?
- What are their views about the current adult education system and service delivery?
- What is the current scope and context of ALE programmes and projects in the country?
- What are stakeholders' views about roles and responsibilities in the system?
- What are the perceived major challenges in the system?
- What is the understanding of the goals and objectives of the ALE system?

Information on these and other topics may assist in making decisions for designing the start-up process and activities of Phase One. For example, if there is an existing conflict between specific groups of stakeholders it may not be productive to start with a big inclusive workshop. Rather hold a series of smaller workshops with selected groups to find a way to bring together all the key role players.

It is assumed that the champion who initiates the process may have some funds available for the preparation and start-up of Phase One. If possible, the implementation of the five phases should be incorporated within existing plans and funding as a new means/approach to reach objectives. Alternatively, a funding strategy should be considered to raise funds for the implementation of all the phases. The start-up phase may also be used to gather more resources based on the interest and commitment demonstrated by other stakeholders.





There is no specific set of activities to prepare for the start-up phase of consensus building. Each country context is different and depending on the level of existing consensus, stakeholders may start directly with the start-up activities such as outlined below. The demarcation between preparing for and starting Phase One is also not fixed and activities and processes will flow depending on the responses from stakeholders. Therefore, preparation activities flow into the more structured start-up activities with specific outcomes supporting the next phases of ALE system building.

## 3.2 Start-up of Phase One

By the end of Phase One, all the major stakeholders should agree that the current system has challenges in delivering quality ALE services and there is room for improvement. They should also agree and commit to embark on a longterm process of structured system building by using the framework, phases, tools and processes of the ALESBA. Based on the understanding that an ALE system relies on different stakeholders to deliver services, stakeholders must agree on roles and responsibilities within the system building process.

The time taken to reach a stage of agreement and consensus depends on the existing stakeholder formations and relations at the time of first engagement with the system building approach. Therefore, it is not possible to allocate time boundaries for Phase One or any other stage in the system building process. However, a list of activities and processes can be suggested

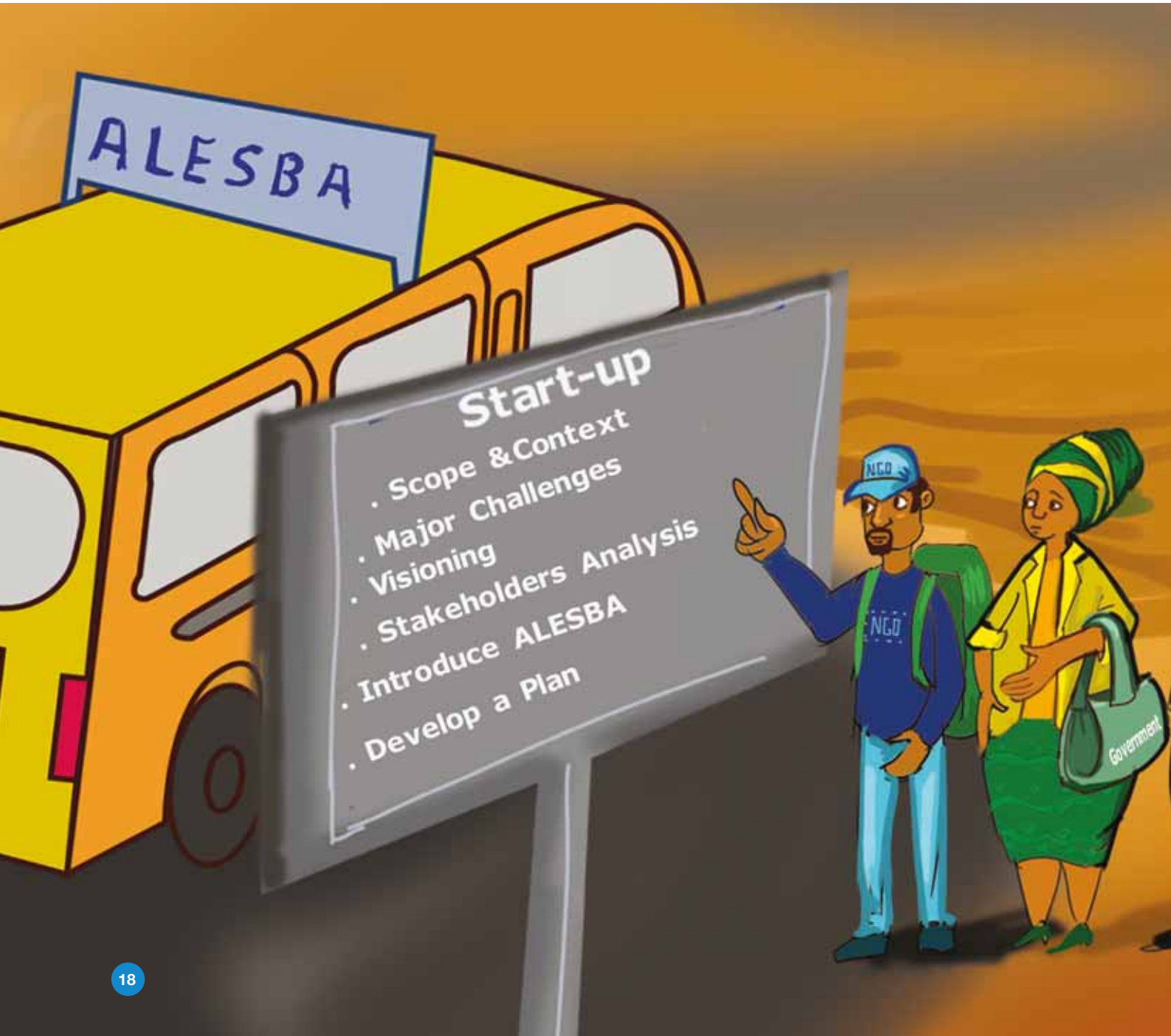
to facilitate the process of consensus building. These activities and processes are a guide and suggestions. Every country has to adapt the activities within the consensus building process based on their own status and needs. Once preparation activities are completed the following major activities and events can contribute towards starting a process of consensus building:

- Define the area of focus or the scope and context of adult learning and education programmes and services that need system strengthening. (*What are we focusing on?*)
- Unpack and agree on the major challenges and gaps within the existing system. (*Why is it necessary?*)
- Conduct a stakeholder analysis exercise to determine the interests, roles and responsibilities of different role players. (*Who will be involved?*)
- Conduct a preliminary visioning exercise regarding what the system should look like and what kind of services it should deliver. (*Where are we going with this?*)
- Introduce the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (*How will we do it?*)
- Develop a plan with milestones and responsibilities for the implementation of the approach and strengthening the system. (*When are we implementing it?*)



These activities can be facilitated in the form of meetings and workshops. Certain activities can be combined within three to five-day workshops with all stakeholders at the initial stages and further meetings and/or workshops can deepen understanding and unpack issues and concerns further in the interest of building consensus among stakeholders. The orientation of senior management and decision-makers are vital to gain commitment towards the process. The design of Phase One should consider

how to bring these senior figures from stakeholder organisations on board since they are usually not able to attend longer workshops or meetings. This may be through shorter workshop sessions or meetings and then continuing the more detailed processes with technical experts. However, the involvement of senior management and decision-makers should occur throughout the process and during all phases of system building. It is important to understand that the process cannot be rushed and



stakeholders may need time between activities to absorb the process, and hold discussions within their own organisations and networks to formulate their views.

Consensus building is not about completing the list of activities instead, it is about using these activities as part of a process to build consensus and understanding. Within this process, there may be misunder-

standings and conflicts and some of the listed activities may take longer than others. The sequence of activities is also not prescribed, but they have been presented to indicate a flow and logic within the process.

The activities are also iterative with cross-referencing taking place throughout the process. Each country will use the approach to design their own process and may add activities as needed to reach consensus. The indicator that sufficient consensus has been reached, and that stakeholders are ready to proceed to Phase Two, will be an overwhelming agreement between the majority of stakeholders after every effort has been made to accommodate different interests among them to proceed with ALE system building. This level of consensus will be deepened in the remaining phases of the process.

Keep in mind that every stakeholder will come to workshops and meetings with different interests, expectations and goals. The suggested meetings and workshops can be facilitated by the champion(s) or a consultant. Please note that whether facilitated by one or more of the stakeholders or a consultant, the facilitators of these workshops should be trained in the ALESBA and should be familiar with every phase to tie all outcomes together.

As emphasised above, it is recommended that stakeholders conduct most activities by themselves and if consultants are brought on board it is only in a facilitatory capacity. The principles of consensus building and systems thinking covered in section two of this booklet should be referred to. The activities and processes outlined below also build capacity in the ALESBA.



### i. Define the scope and context of the adult learning and education system

**Outcome:** The definition of the scope and context of adult learning and education programmes/sub-sector that will be addressed.

When it comes to strengthening the system for improved ALE service delivery, the current context and scope of ALE services in a country has to be considered. There may be an existing definition and concept for the national ALE programme, e.g., in Ethiopia the Ministry of Education has adopted IFAE (Integrated Functional Adult Literacy) which combines literacy with non-formal skills training, life skills, etc. In Uganda, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) is implementing the ICOLEW (Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation) programme with six components of literacy, life skills, community development, business skills training, livelihoods skills training and financial literacy through Village Savings and Loan Schemes (VSLA). Naturally, these integrated programmes require the involvement of more than one government sector office. Local and international NGOs may implement projects with similar elements but may use different methodologies and modalities.

What is important during the beginning phases of consensus building is not which programme, project or methodology offers the best service, but rather that, within the context of this myriad of programmes and projects and the definition of ALE in the country, there is an intention to embark on an ALE system building process. This may require stakeholders to unpack and list all existing projects and programmes, consider the cross-sectoral elements, target groups, similarities, difference, etc., as well as exiting definitions and national goals for ALE in the country. Once the wider context has been visualised, stakeholders have to conduct a scoping exercise to define the scope and focus area for the ALE system building process.

#### Refer to the tools:

- Historical timeline and trends analysis.
- Mapping the range and extent of ALE programme interventions.

### ii. Unpack and agree on the major challenges affecting the existing system and service delivery

**Outcome:** Major challenges within the existing system of ALE service delivery are listed and clustered.

Stakeholders will be aware of the challenges in the existing system that hinder the achievement of service delivery. During the start of the consensus building phase, it is not necessary to conduct an exhaustive cause and effect analysis of the problems and challenges. But agreement is needed on the core problems and challenges for the following reasons:

- It provides the rationale for why system building is needed in the first place.
- It provides a basis to formulate a vision for a future system.
- It represents the views and perceptions of different stakeholders that need to be taken into consideration for consensus building.

The facilitator should avoid stakeholders taking this step too far and remind participants that a comprehensive assessment and diagnosis of the system will be conducted in Phase Two. Brainstorming and clustering of similar challenges from different stakeholder perspectives are sufficient at this stage. If time allows preliminary cause and effect diagrams can be drawn to explore the benefits of systems thinking and outline the way forward during subsequent phases.

#### Refer to the tools:

- Battery tool
- Cause and effect analysis

### iii. Conduct a preliminary visioning exercise

**Outcome:** A preliminary vision that describes what the new ALE system will look like and how it will contribute to national goals and service delivery.

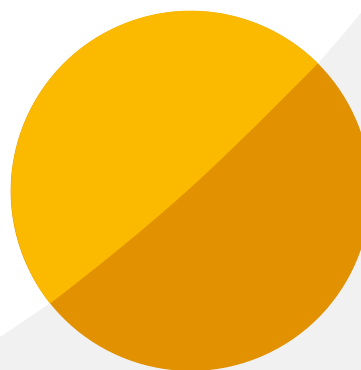
Although the phases in the system building process have to be completed to have a clear vision and plan for a new improved system, it is useful to include a preliminary visioning exercise during the start-up phase of consensus building. This exercise will provide stakeholders with an opportunity to express different views and build consensus about where the process may take them. It also will create energy and optimism that binds the group together. The vision will be revisited after the assessment and diagnosis of the current system and consideration of alternatives and the design of a new system, conducted in Phase Two and Three of the approach. The vision statement should describe the desired future situation after building a sustainable ALE system. Stakeholders also may decide to include a mission statement defining the core objectives and approach to reach those objectives.

Visioning is a technique used to assist stakeholders to develop a shared vision of the future. It can be used in activity planning, organisational change and formulating development strategies, e.g., for an improved service delivery system. It involves assessing the current status and where the group wants to go. It is usually completed after the problem analysis. The results of the problem analysis help to define the current status of the education system (DFID, 2002).

A useful starting point for visioning is to use the national vision, development plans, policies and strategies and sector development plans in the country. Participants can review the priority national goals for the identified system building focus area. These goals can be a starting point to define country aspirations for a future system. It will also create debate about the likelihood of achieving these goals and what hindrances might exist. The stakeholders can debate whether the achievement of these goals is within their control and why or why not. Finding compatible goals is a good starting point. They can formulate the change they would like to see in the coming years. It is important not to get bogged down by the current performance of the system, but rather maintain a focus on how the system can be transformed. The facilitator can use different techniques to arrive at a shared vision among the stakeholders.

#### Refer to the tool:

- Conduct a preliminary visioning exercise



#### iv. Conduct a stakeholder analysis

**Outcome:** Key stakeholders identified, including their current and potential future roles in the adult learning and education system building process.

A stakeholder can be defined as any individual, community, group or organisation with an interest in the outcome of a programme, either as a result of being affected by it or being able to influence the activity. Three types of stakeholders can be identified namely:

- Key stakeholders: Those who can significantly influence or are important for the success of the activity.
- Primary stakeholders: Those individuals and groups who are ultimately affected by an activity as beneficiaries (either positively or negatively). This group represents the target group of the activity.
- Secondary stakeholders: All other individuals or institutions with a stake, interest or intermediary role in the activity. This includes government offices at all levels, NGOs, donors, universities, etc.

In the context of the ALESBA, the stakeholder analysis during the consensus building phase is more concerned with the secondary and key stakeholders. There is overlap between these groups. The primary stakeholders are acknowledged at this stage in terms of analysis of the problems and whether their needs may be met or not. More attention is allocated to this group during Phase Two of the process by conducting a demand assessment to identify their interests and needs.

In the context of the ALE sector the most important stakeholders usually include the following:

#### Government

The government ministry or ministries and departments that are responsible for implementing ALE. Considering the cross-cutting nature of ALE, several sector ministries may be involved from national to local governance levels. There are different roles that government may play depending on the structures and history of ALE in the country. Some of the roles or combination of roles are: (Oxenham, 2008)

- Government as a monopolist that asserts a monopoly over all literacy and ALE programmes and assuming full responsibility.
- Government as licensing authority where the government assumes some responsibility but may also issue licenses to other agencies/organisations to deliver services at their own costs, provided they accept the curricula and instructional materials and methods approved by the government.
- Government as a parallel worker where the government runs its own literacy and ALE programmes but at the same time permits other organisations to undertake initiatives of their own, using their own resources, materials and methods. This option exists in countries where government and NGOs implement parallel programmes and projects.
- Government as a provider of subsidies, running their own programmes and simultaneously offering to subsidise other agencies, either as subsidiaries using the approach and methods of government or offering programmes of their own design subject to government approval.
- Government as a supervising contractor where in addition to implementing their own programmes, the government may decide to contract qualified non-profit organisations and appropriate private for-profit enterprises to implement programmes subject to the standards of government.
- Government as a sponsor where the government may set up a foundation or similar institution to promote and implement literacy/ALE programmes on its behalf.

In general, the role of national/central government can be seen as providing the policy framework, developing implementation guidelines, providing regulations and quality assurance and supportive supervision, monitoring and evaluation. The role of departments or lower-level government structures, e.g., regional and local government, are usually described as taking responsibility for implementing policies, generating plans and ensuring service delivery takes place.

#### **Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

The previous section may imply that the roles of local or international NGOs will depend to a large extent on the government's policies and framework. Although the specific role government plays and the structure and regulations that they apply will affect the roles NGOs can play, NGOs also have options regarding the potential roles they play in ALE service delivery. Two of these options are:

- As service providers: NGOs can provide services with donor funding to complement government's efforts. NGOs can offer a broad spectrum of services in different sectors, usually in the form of projects with a specific timeframe for implementation. This role can often be perceived as a 'gap-filler', complementing and reaching out where the government cannot. It is often argued that NGOs have a comparative advantage over the government because of their ability to innovate and experiment, flexibility to adopt new methodologies, and their linkage with grassroots communities (Banks, 2012). It can also be argued that NGOs are not in a position to roll out large scale, long term programmes and services.
- As advocates: NGOs can play an advocacy role to ensure the government delivers services effectively to citizens and target groups. This role has often led to hostile relationships between governments and NGOs, with some NGOs assuming a more aggressive 'watch-dog' role. It should be emphasised that there are different forms of advocacy and support for the government for improved service delivery, e.g., through capacity building, joint implementation and evidence-based influencing, etc.

#### **Universities**

Universities have a key role to play in the training and capacity building of adult educators. Having skilled adult educators and system managers contributes to the effective delivery of services. Universities provide different certificate, diploma and graduate courses for adult educators. These courses are often linked to community outreach services where students can gain practical experience and simultaneously contribute time and effort. Universities also conduct research which contributes to policy formulation, strategic planning and development of the ALE sector at large. The expertise of university staff plays a role in advisory services to other stakeholders in the ALE sector.

#### **Development Partners**

Development partners can include international NGOs, bilateral/multilateral donors and multilateral organisation such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank, etc. International NGOs can play roles as outlined in the section on NGOs but they can also provide both financial and technical expertise in the process. Development partners can support:

- Analytical processes;
- Enable government to formulate policies and strategies;
- Support pilot projects;
- Build capacity; and
- Provide funding, etc. (OECD Development Centre, 2019).

It is important that development partners, whether as pure donors or as providers of both technical and financial support, value the role of system building in achieving short and long-term objectives and sustainability. Therefore, these stakeholders should be included in all the system building phases starting with consensus building.



#### Other Stakeholders

Other potential stakeholders can include:

- Community-based organisations (CBOs), which play a crucial role in presenting the voice of learners.
- Networks that have a strong role in advocacy and promoting ALE.

The stakeholder analysis is intended to explore who the stakeholders are and to understand:

- Their scope of work and existing role in the ALE sector.
- Their interests in ALE system building.
- Existing relationships between stakeholders and potential conflicts and risks that may affect the process.
- Potential future roles they may play in system building.

When conducting a stakeholder analysis, it is important to understand the political economy dynamics that exist between stakeholders that may influence the motivations and behaviour of service providers. Political economic analysis examines the underlying interest, incentives, motives and relationships between actors. It is often described in terms of the difference between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ governance. In other words, the difference between what is supposed to happen and what actually happens. When considering the political economy issues that operate in education systems, it is important to understand how these underlying issues affect service delivery and can either support or hinder successful system building (DEVCO B4 Education Discussion Paper, 2014).

#### Refer to the tool:

- Stakeholder Analysis

#### v. Introduce the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA)

**Outcome:** All stakeholders are oriented in the ALESBA with its conceptual framework, underlying principles, objectives phases, tools and methods.

During consensus building, stakeholders have to be introduced to the full contents of the ALESBA as presented in the booklet ‘Introduction to the Approach and Toolkit’. Stakeholders have to relate their own reality and roles to the principles, conceptual framework with elements and building blocks, and different phases of the approach. They have to be convinced that the approach and systems thinking have value for system building in their country and their own role in the process. Tools are available in section four to contextualise a country’s existing system within the framework in the ALESBA.

It is also useful to expose stakeholders to systems thinking and the paradigm shift required during the process of system building. Different exercises can be conducted to raise awareness about how systems thinking affects the way we work and analyse our situation. Stakeholders should be encouraged to view situations from different angles and more honestly.

PowerPoint presentations on the ALESBA are available as part of the toolkit and the facilitator of the consensus building process can also compile their own presentations and handouts based on the first booklet in the toolkit.

#### Refer to the tool:

- See the Adult Education Africa – Moja platform for PowerPoint presentations: [www.mojaafrica.net](http://www.mojaafrica.net)



#### vi. Develop a plan with milestones and responsibilities for the implementation of the approach and strengthening the system

**Outcome:** A preliminary plan is available, indicating the major activities, milestones and responsibilities to implement the five phases of the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach.

Once an agreement is reached to start the ALE system building process, it is useful to draw up a preliminary plan that outlines each phase of the approach and selected key activities and milestones across a potential timeline. Stakeholders have to be assigned different roles and responsibilities in the process. A template for this milestone plan appears in section four of the toolkit. The plan will be revised and updated from time to time as the process and phases of SBA unfolds. Stakeholders may also decide to form a task force or management team to drive the implementation of the plan. This group can be comprised of representatives from different stakeholders. It is important to not only design a plan, but a transparent process with opportunities for meetings, analysis and reflection among stakeholders as well as ground rules for operating the partnership. See the next section for important considerations during the implementation of the plan and phases of ALESBA.

#### Refer to the tool:

- Develop the milestone plan

### 3.3. On the Way (Phases Two to Five)

Once sufficient consensus has been reached to use the ALESBA, stakeholders will continue with Phase Two of the approach which focuses on assessment and diagnosis of the current system. If well facilitated, Phase Two can provide multiple opportunities for consensus building which can be carried forward to the remaining phases of system building. However, every phase of the ALESBA should be managed with care not to lose the consensus and enthusiasm for the process. A partnership orientation and teamwork can assist in the process while conflict should be managed promptly. Influencing and negotiating skills may be needed to engage stakeholders when disagreements arise. The system building process is affected by both the internal and external environment and risks should be managed in order not to derail the process. It is useful to not only focus on the contents and outcomes of the phases and process, but also to check from time to time how stakeholder partners feel about the process and the level of consensus. The next section unpacks each of these key considerations for the duration of the system building process. Suggested tools are available in section four.

#### Partnership

The term 'partnership' is used to broadly describe a wide variety of institutional arrangements designed to share and exchange resources and information and to produce



results that one partner alone cannot achieve. These may range from informal gatherings to sharing experiences to the creation of new structures and even organisations to deliver new expanded or improved goods and services. Partnerships change over time as goals, relationships and contexts change. Therefore, it is useful to think about partnering as a process rather than as an outcome, because of its dynamic nature (DFID, 2002).

Some of the reasons for partnering include: (Belete, 2006)

- Single sector approaches have not worked and wider collaboration is needed for sustainable development.
- More resources can be accessed by drawing on the technical, human, financial and physical resources of all partners.
- New partner networks offer better opportunities of engagement and capacity to influence policy, strategies and systems.

This is especially true across the phases of the ALESBA. During the initial stages of consensus building, individual stakeholders are still exploring their roles and responsibilities and have to commit to a new process and approach to working together with new technical methodologies, tools and orientations. The process of system building will change each stakeholder on an institutional level, as well as partners in the bigger objective of system building. What is important is that a partnership is needed to bring system building and strengthening to life. Stakeholders have to commit to being part of a new entity (an ALESBA partnership) with its own vision, values, ground rules, objectives and implementation plan, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms. Therefore, the partnership for ALESBA may go through different stages.

Stakeholders may decide to form a partnership during the stakeholder analysis workshop (depending on the level of consensus reached), or existing networks, coordination bodies and structures may already exist.

If existing structures or bodies will drive the system building process, these structures must take time to orient themselves regarding the new task with new rules as described above. In other cases, it may take longer to form a partnership structure that can drive the process and more consensus building processes may be needed. During the formation of the partnership for system building, the following decisions will need to be made:

- Who are the stakeholders – now called partners?
- What are their expectations?
- What will be their roles and responsibilities in system building – and what will be their roles and responsibilities in the partnership (driving the process of system building)?
- What are the objectives of the partnership and the vision statement (formulated during the consensus-building phase)?
- What kind of structure will the partnership adopt, e.g., are there technical committees, a task force, etc.?
- What are the principles and ground rules for being a partner?
- What will the process of partnership look like, e.g., how often do partners meet, what are their communication and documentation strategies, etc.?
- How will partners be held accountable and what happens if a partner does not perform?
- How do partners commit time, resources, and human capacity, etc.?
- Are tasks and responsibilities to implement the system building implementation plan with milestones clearly allocated?
- How will action-learning and reflection on the system building process take place, etc.?
- How will conflicts be resolved?

Partners may decide to record these issues in a document that will be distributed to all partners and can even sign a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the partner arrangement. This agreement remains relevant for the duration of all phases in the system building process.



### Teamwork

Teamwork is a primary means to implement activities. It is understood that within the broader partnership for system building, teamwork will take place between all partners but also within smaller groupings of partners based on expertise, roles and responsibilities within the process. Teams come in different shapes and sizes and can be multi-disciplinary, multi-culturally and formed across institutions and sectors. Irrespective of the structure of the partnership, roles and responsibilities and ground rules stipulated teams have their own dynamics, especially if a group of individuals from different organisations and sectors come together for the first time to implement a joint task.

Team members each have their own personality and carry their organisation's values and objectives as a responsibility. Some team members may act as observers to see what is expected from them, while others may want to dominate the process. Initially, roles and expectations may be unclear, but gradually the process of team development occurs as team members establish their roles, find ways of doing things and become familiar with the team's dynamics. At times cross-organisational teams or cross-sectoral teams can form such a strong bond and allegiance to the objective of the task that it becomes difficult to distinguish which sector or organisation team members come from. This is the ultimate stage of team performance and transformation.

Generally, the following stages of teamwork can be identified:

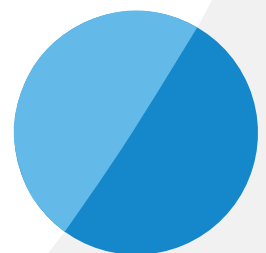
- **Forming:** Team members are oriented regarding their roles, tasks and the objectives of the team. They get to know each other as individual personalities and also from an organisational perspective. Team members may act with the necessary caution at this stage until they are more familiar with the team dynamics. Behaviours may be polite and superficial.
- **Storming:** As teamwork evolves, team members will feel more confident to show their personalities and insist on their organisation's perspective. At this time conflict may occur within the team.
- **Norming:** Irrespective of conflict, teamwork has to continue and team members will eventually find a way to deal with conflict and different personalities within the team. The team will start to form their own norms and focus on the task. This may need good team leadership and the interventions of several team members to get the team on track.
- **Performing:** The team becomes productive and proud of their achievement and perform to carry out all tasks required.
- **Transforming:** Team members become immersed in their task and are transformed in the way they see themselves as part of the task they performed successfully. This may also be the stage where teams have to dissolve because the task is completed. It is useful to capitalise on this stage of teamwork and assign new tasks or roles to teams that reach this stage.

The value of teamwork should not be underestimated during the system building process. Teams that work well together can leverage actions that may influence other processes and stakeholder perceptions.

### Conflict management

Although stakeholders may try their best to build strong consensus, consider all ground rules, clear roles and responsibilities, etc., to facilitate a productive process of ALE system building, conflict may still arise between different stakeholders, individual team members, etc. It is important to deal with conflict as soon as it arises to avoid escalation and impact on the overall process. Some guiding principles for conflict management are:

- Identify the source for the tension, grievance and conflict as soon as possible.
- Understand the conflict by conducting a wider analysis and involve key stakeholders in developing an understanding of the context and potential historic causes of the conflict.



- Focus on the central issues of the conflict and do not digress.
- Identify stakeholders that have the influence and credibility/trust to engage the conflicting stakeholders or team members.
- Engage in dialogue and discussion with those involved in the conflict.
- Use influencing and negotiating strategies.
- Formulate potential conflict solutions and/or reduction strategies.

Take care to:

- Disagree with ideas, not people.  
Do not accuse or blame.
- State the problem as a shared problem.
- Not to compromise too quickly. Quick compromises may mean that the root causes of the conflict have not been adequately explored.

#### **Influencing and negotiating**

Influencing and negotiating are important skills across all the phases of the system building approach and help stakeholders to move from an existing system to an improved system. Influencing is not about motivating or obliging others to do what one stakeholder wants them to do, nor is it about turning into a partnership of subservience because one partner may have access to more resources than another. Nor is negotiating about creating sides in which one partner waits for the other to give way. Rather influencing and negotiating is about the recognition that progress may be made bigger or constrained by certain actions from partners.

There may be circumstances where it has to be made clear how much value can be added to conduct activities or processes in a specific way or make certain decisions about system building blocks and how to put them in place. It may also be necessary to show the consequences when activities are not done in a certain way and the risks that may unfold.

The champions or drivers, whether they are one or two key stakeholders or a task force/management team formed by the partners, have to use a variety of influencing and negotiating skills to ensure the system building process moves forward. This is not the task of a consultant, but a task of the partners who are all the owners of the system building process. A consultant may add value with skilled facilitation and communication techniques to create a scenario where all partners can express their views and go through a process of dialogue until they reach consensus.

Effective influencing and negotiating takes place by: (DFID, 2002)

- Stressing the worthwhile nature of an action in the long term.
- Asking for partners' help in solving a problem.
- Giving recognition for ideas, achievement and contributions.
- Providing opportunities for collaboration alongside each other.
- Sharing information, being open and setting objectives with all parties involved.
- Being flexible and considering different options.

#### **Risk management**

A range of possible gaps, misunderstandings and lack of capacity can hinder the formation and continuation of successful partnerships. There may be long-standing mistrust between certain stakeholders or a lack of understanding of one another's interests and needs.

Underlying political and institutional obstacles can complicate matters further. These gaps can lead to lengthy discussions to resolve the problem. Therefore, it is useful to conduct a risk analysis during the consensus building phase to be prepared for any risks that may arise during the phases of implementation (UNDP Public-Private Partnership for the Urban Environment, 2005). The analysis can be used by stakeholders to:

- Identify the types of risks (e.g., political, institutional, implementation, financial and environmental risks).
- Analyse the risks involved.
- Seek means to eliminate, reduce or mitigate the risks.
- Allocate risk management to those stakeholders who can influence them.
- Share the remaining risks.

Certain risks will be within the control of ALESBA partners, e.g., risks that occur because of poor planning, not executing tasks on time, lack of accountability, etc. Other risks can come from the wider system within which the system building process takes place and which are part of what should be changed, for example, a poor policy environment, lack of political will and commitment, institutional weaknesses, etc. In the context of the ALESBA, these 'risks' are the core business of the system building process.

Therefore, risk analysis within the context of the ALESBA refers to the kind of risks that can derail the system building process over time, e.g., partner commitment, funding for the process, change of government, commitment to the process, staff turnover in partner organisations and so forth. The probability of the risk should be analysed as well as the potential impact it may have on the process of system building. Strategies to avoid, minimise or mitigate these risks should be developed, preferably in Phase One, and continuous monitoring of risks should take place during the system building process with action taken as soon as risks are identified.

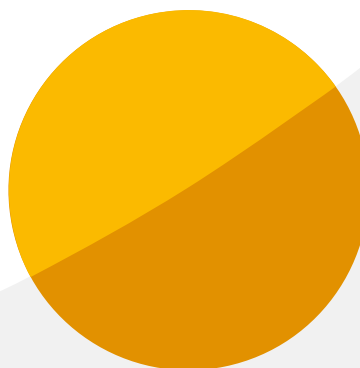
#### **Periodic monitoring of consensus among stakeholders**

As already mentioned, the level or status of consensus should be monitored or checked periodically for the full duration of the system building process across all phases. Consensus among partners remains a key ingredient for the success of system building. It is important to not only focus on the tasks and activities of system building and whether the milestones are reached on time, but also to consider how partners feel about the progress and their role in the process. Successes and milestones should be jointly owned and celebrated and credit given where it is due, while accountability should also be enforced within the ground rules of the partnership.

Therefore, the drivers of the process should find time and space to allow partners to voice their opinions on:

- The progress of the system building process and successes and challenges.
- Their perception of their own role in the process.
- Their opinion on partnership relationships and how the partnership is managed.
- Recommendations regarding how they would like to continue in the partnership.

This kind of session can be done during partner meetings or workshops during the process. A session or a day should be allocated on a quarterly or bi-annual basis to assess the system building process as well as the partnership. Different tools and techniques can be used to assess the level of consensus among partners or to focus on specific issues within the partnership.



# 4. TOOLS FOR THE CONSENSUS BUILDING PHASE

This section elaborates a selection of tools that can be used during the start-up of Phase One and for the duration of the implementation of the ALESBA, as consensus building is an ongoing process. Users of the toolkit are encouraged to use their own tools and experiences with an emphasis on participatory and visual tools that will create a common understanding and build consensus. The suggested tools are presented as per the steps during the start-up of Phase One. All tools have to be contextualised

as per the needs of different countries and ALESBA partner formations. Note that all the tools and processes described in this booklet are iterative and the findings generated by one tool may be used to influence or deepen analysis when using another tool or facilitating the next steps in the process. More tools, case studies, experience sharing and PowerPoint presentations are available on the Adult Education Africa – Moja platform: [www.mojaafrica.net](http://www.mojaafrica.net)

## 1. Define the scope and context of the adult learning and education system

**Outcome:** The definition of the scope and context of adult learning and education programmes/sub-sector that will be addressed.

Two different tool options are presented below. Users of the toolkit can select the most appropriate option or use both tools within a sequence or combination as per the context and needs of the group.

### Tool 1: Historical timeline and trends analysis

**Aim:** To discuss the main changes that have occurred in the ALE sector and the level of impact these events have had over time on stakeholders and actors, as well as women, men and youth.

**Materials required:** flipchart sheets, markers, tape, and post-it notes (two different colours of post-it notes if possible). And provide a place to present the results, e.g., a large wall.

### Steps in the process:

#### i. Getting started

Tape two or three flipchart sheets end to end on a wall. Draw a line down the middle of the flipcharts. Write “then” at the beginning of the line and write “now” at the end of the line. Write “challenging events” on the left-hand side of the line and “positive events/ achievements” on the right-hand side of the line.

#### ii. Drawing the timeline

Explain the purpose of the historical timeline, in particular why an understanding of past events is important to analyse the present, using some relevant examples.

Ask the participants to record key events that have occurred in the adult learning and education sector on post-it notes, such as the enactment of key legislation, the commencement of influential adult literacy programmes, campaigns or the release of research data, etc. (If available, use different colours of post-it notes to denote challenges vs achievements.) Paste the post-it notes in chronological order on the timeline. Place challenging events below of the line and

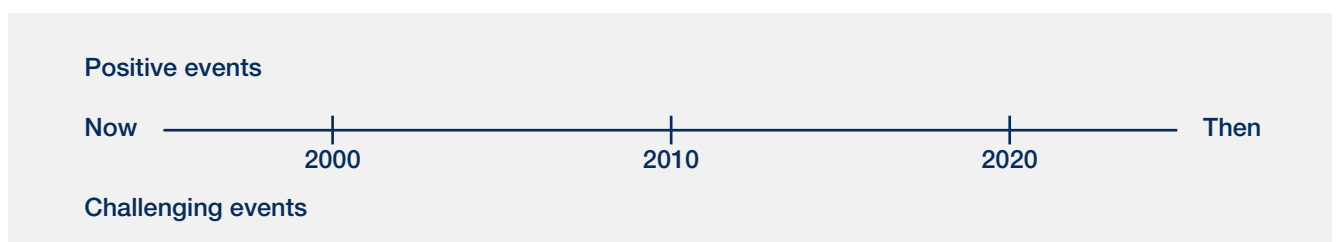


Figure 1: Example of a Historical Timeline diagram (Ward)

positive events above of the line. Discuss the reasons why participants feel each event was challenging or positive.

Write relevant dates along the timeline to help participants arrange the post-it notes chronologically. Keep asking probing questions until the group feels they have included all notable events, achievements, and challenges.

### iii. Group discussion

Discuss the implications of the events and any connections between them. As these issues are being discussed, problem areas and new insights can also be explored. Once the discussion is complete, summarise the key points and conclude the exercise.

Exercise adapted from “Time Line” (Coninck, 2000).

## Tool 2: Mapping the range and extent of ALE programme interventions

**Aim:** Identify the types and focus of the key ALE programme interventions across the country.

**Materials required:** flipchart sheets, markers, tape, post-it notes, and coloured cards. And provide a place to present the results, e.g., a large wall or table.

### Steps in the process:

#### i. Getting started

Tape several flipchart sheets together to form a square. On the flipcharts, draw a large outline of the country in which you are working. Include major cities and a few key landmarks. Tape the map to the wall.

#### ii. Drawing the map

Ask participants to use markers, symbols, post-its, or coloured cards to indicate the location of current ALE programme initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders in the country at present. Include specific programmes implemented by the government, non-government organisations, universities, development partners, and other stakeholders.

Record details regarding key ALE programme interventions on separate cards or post-its and paste them onto the map, such as:

- Name of programme/project/service;
- Implementing partners/actors;
- Timeframe of intervention;
- Aim of the programme/ intervention;
- Target locations/communities (if relevant);
- Target groups (e.g., gender/age, etc.) and the number of beneficiaries (if relevant).

Once the map is complete, summarise the key points that have emerged. Discuss any new insights or lessons that have emerged during these exercises. Key questions to be answered during the analysis and discussion to determine the scope for ALE system building are:

- What are the main focus areas of all the programmes/ projects/services on the map? E.g., mostly adult literacy, or non-formal skills training or integrated programmes. The answer to this question will determine the major scope of existing ALE interventions.
- Who are the main target groups addressed by these interventions?
- Do the current interventions address the needs of these target groups?
- What has changed over time? Refer to the historical timeline and trends analysis.
- Do the ALE interventions reach all parts of the country equitably?
- Considering the answers to these questions and the wider discussion, what should be the focus area and scope of the ALE system building process, e.g., adult literacy, an integrated approach/focus considering which elements of ALE (skills training, civic education, etc.)?
- Which stakeholders play major or complementary roles in the process? Refer to the section on stakeholder analysis.

Emphasise that the analysis of the context will be used in the next step of the process, which will start to unpack and agree on major challenges within the existing adult education system and regarding service delivery.

## 2. Unpack and agree on major challenges within the existing system and service delivery

**Outcome:** Major challenges within the existing system of ALE service delivery are listed and clustered.

Two tools are presented namely the Battery Tool and the Cause-and-Effect analysis. Once again users may select one tool or use both in a sequence or a combination of the tools to reach the outcome described above.

### Tool 1: The Battery Tool

**Aim:** To identify key strengths and challenges within each element of the ALE system.

**Materials:** flipcharts, markers and post-its.

#### Steps in the process:

##### i. Getting started

On a flipchart, draw four batteries and label them:

- Enabling environment, b.) Institutional arrangements,
- Technical processes, d.) Management processes.



Figure 2: Example of Battery Tool diagram (Ward)

##### ii. Describing a 'full' battery

Remind participants of the building blocks within each of the four key elements of ALESBA. Introduce the metaphor of a battery and energy levels, by using an example of a mobile phone, car battery, or torch. The idea is that a full battery is one that is at its maximum capacity, and so can do its job most effectively. While an empty battery is one that needs charging before it can achieve its purpose.

Divide the participants into four groups and assign each group one of the four 'batteries' or elements of the ALE system. Ask each group to discuss the elements they have been allocated, and to describe what a fully charged battery would look like to them. They should list the key aspects of a fully functioning element on a flipchart to describe how it will function when all building blocks are in place within a well-designed system.

Once participants have had a chance to discuss their descriptions, ask each group to present their responses to the whole group. In plenary clarify or add any supplementary points to the lists on the flipcharts.

##### iii. Group discussion

Using the descriptions of the 'full' batteries for each element, ask participants to discuss the following questions:

- What are the most important aspects of each battery that will keep it fully charged? Address each element one by one and use symbols or stickers to highlight the chosen aspects.
- What is draining each battery at present? And why?
  - *If required, choose 2–3 key draining factors for a more detailed cause-effect analysis in the next exercise. (See cause-effect exercise below).*
- What are the linkages between the other batteries and the factors that are causing the battery power to drain?
- For each battery, what are the three most critical aspects that are causing its power to drain at present? Document the chosen aspects and give reasons for each point.



- How full is each battery at present? And why? List three key reasons for the score allocated to each battery. Ask each group to colour in their battery to indicate how full it is and to present their reasons for the rating to the rest of the group.

#### iv. Determining how to 'recharge' the batteries

Return to the descriptions that participants developed above regarding the 'full' batteries and compare them to the current battery levels. Discuss what is needed to 'recharge' the four batteries:

- What would you like to improve over the next five years regarding each battery to achieve a fully functional element of the ALE system?
- What does a.) the government, b.) civil society and c.) other actors need to do to 'recharge' each battery?
- What support and resources do each group of stakeholders/actors require to ensure the batteries are 'recharged' in a sustainable manner?

Round off the discussion by asking participants to identify and mutually agree the three most important issues to be addressed to 'recharge' the four batteries and achieve a fully functional ALE system to which they aspire. Ask participants to give reasons for their chosen priorities and record responses on a flipchart.

Note: Facilitators can include different types of ranking tools/ exercises to choose priorities if required, e.g., preference ranking, pairwise ranking and matrix ranking. Conclude the exercise by asking participants to summarise the key insights they gained from this exercise and discuss the implications for strengthening the ALE system at different levels across the country.

Exercise adapted from "Using the Battery Tool" (VSO Bangladesh, N.D.).

#### Tool 2: Cause and effect analysis

**Aim:** To analyse the root causes and effects of an issue in more depth, as well as the relationships, and dynamics between different levels of causes and symptoms.

**Materials required:** flipchart markers, and cards.

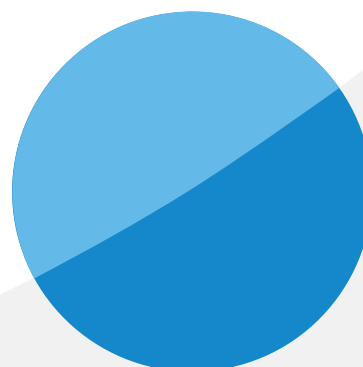
Note the diagram can either be drawn directly on a flipchart sheet and causes and effects identified during the process of analysis and discussion, or the causes and effects can be brainstormed and written on cards and the cards can be arranged on the diagram or problem tree.

See the booklet on Phase 2 (Assessment and Diagnosis), for further details on cause-and-effect analysis and examples of diagrams. Note that this preliminary analysis can be compared with the in-depth analysis once the assessment exercises conducted during the peer review have been concluded. The comparison of the diagrams before and after the system assessment may provide interesting insights for the assumptions stakeholders hold about system functioning and failure.

#### Steps in the process:

##### i. Getting started

Start by explaining the purpose of the exercise and why the image of a tree with roots and branches is useful. Clarify the expected outcome of the exercise. Using the challenges and 'draining' factors identified in the battery exercise above, choose three issues for further analysis. If required, divide the participants into three groups and assign each group a separate issue to discuss. If useful and time permits, divide participants into different



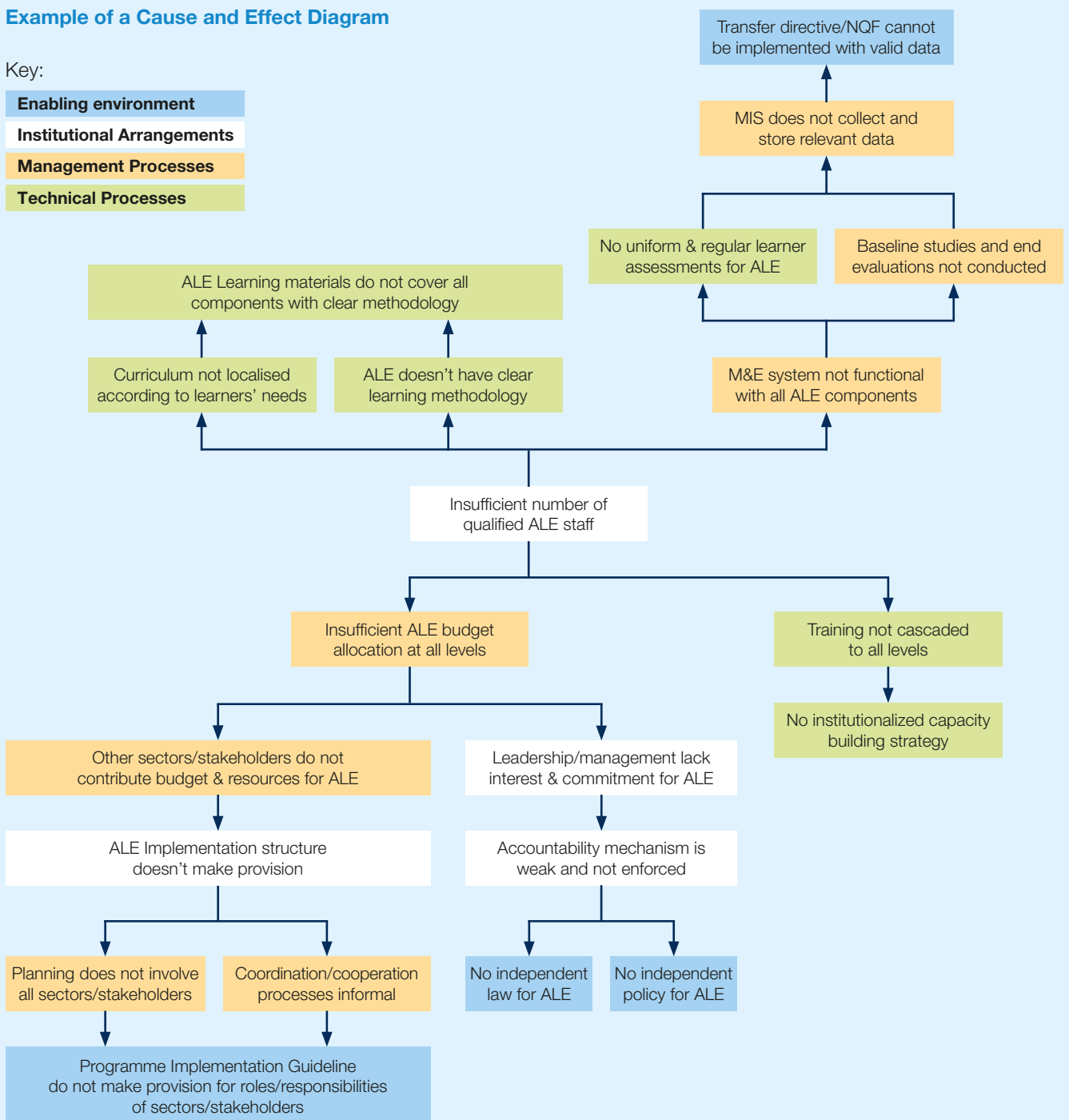
stakeholder groups to get different perspectives on the *same* issue. This can help to surface different views and ideas regarding a particular issue. This

technique is very effective if stakeholders need more time to reach consensus on an especially challenging aspect of the adult education system.

**Example of a Cause and Effect Diagram**

Key:

- Enabling environment**
- Institutional Arrangements**
- Management Processes**
- Technical Processes**



### ii. Drawing cause and effect diagrams

Ask the group to summarise the issue to be discussed in a short phrase (i.e., in not more than 5–6 words) and write the phrase in the centre of a flipchart. Start by discussing how the issue came about. A set of initial causes will be identified. These can be recorded on the flipchart as the 'roots' of the problem.

Continue to ask probing questions and 'why' for each of the initial causes to identify deeper roots of the issue. Lines can be used to show different connections between successive layers of causes. Keep asking 'why' to explore these connections and their implications and to identify the root causes of the issue.

Return to the initial issue and start discussing the effects of the problem. A set of initial results can be recorded on the diagram as 'branches' and 'leaves'. Continue the discussion of effects and plot the results on the diagram.

Use symbols, e.g., '+' or '-' or colours to indicate positive or negative effects. Use lines of different thickness and arrows to indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between different causes or effects.

Avoid taking too much time on this exercise, as a more comprehensive assessment and diagnosis of the system will be conducted in Phase Two. Brainstorming the main causes and effects from different stakeholders' perspectives will be sufficient at this stage.

### iii. Group discussion

Once the small groups have completed their cause-and-effect diagrams, ask them to present their diagram to the rest of the group. Discuss the similarities and differences between the different diagrams.

Conclude the exercise by asking people to reflect on what new insights they gained from the exercise. Emphasise the benefits of systems thinking and outline how this information will be used in subsequent phases of the consensus building process.

Exercise adapted from "Problem Trees" (Coninck, 2000).

## 3. Conduct a preliminary visioning exercise

**Outcome:** A preliminary vision that describes what the new ALE system will look like and how it will contribute to national goals and service delivery.

**Aim:** To jointly develop a vision statement that will guide the development of the new ALE system.

**Materials required:** flipchart, markers, crayons, stickers, and coloured cards.

### Steps in the process:

#### i. Developing a vision of society

Divide the participants into small groups of four or five people. Using the results from the battery tool in the previous exercise, ask the small groups to identify three or four key challenges they will be seeking to address. Ask each group to write these issues on a flipchart.

Ask the participants to imagine a society where these issues have been completely solved and to draw a picture of what such a society will look like. Use the following questions to help people think about their vision of society:

- What kind of society do you want in 10–15 years?
- How have these main challenges been resolved?
- What are women, men and youth able to do differently?
- Which other stakeholders are you working with and how are you relating to them?
- What is the quality of your work?
- What difference are you making in the ALE sector?
- What are the most significant achievements that will have been made?

Encourage people to use colours, shapes, words, and images to represent their vision of the future.

Once everyone has completed their drawings, ask each group to present their pictures to the rest of the participants, and explain what they represent. While people are presenting, ask one of the participants to capture key words and value-related phrases on a separate flipchart, e.g., *all women, equal access, full potential, inclusive and affordable* adult education, etc.

Tape the pictures onto the wall for everyone to see.

### ii. Developing a vision statement

A vision statement describes what a group, organisation or institution desires to achieve in the long term. It depicts a vision of what the context, community, or sector will look like in the future and sets a defined direction for the planning and implementation of development strategies (Corporate Financial Institute, N.D.).

To develop a vision statement after the presentations, ask the participants to study the words and phrases that have been recorded. Give each participant three stickers and ask them to use the stickers to ‘vote’ for those words or phrases that they find most inspiring, by placing the stickers on the flipchart next to the relevant words. Once everyone has voted, circle the words and phrases that received the most votes.

Ask the group to nominate three volunteers who work together to construct a vision statement that reflects the most popular words and phrases chosen by the group.

Present that proposed vision statement to the rest of the participants. Discuss and refine the statement until the whole group is comfortable with the outcomes and own it as theirs.

### iii. Developing a mission statement

If time permits, develop a joint mission statement. This is a statement that describes what the group does, with whom it works, and who it targets.

Divide participants into groups of four to five people. Ask each group to identify the most important individuals or groups who will benefit from the ALE interventions identified in the previous exercise. Ask each group to discuss the following questions:

- What do the beneficiaries stand to gain from the intervention, e.g., a service, product, long term benefits, strengthened adult learning and education system?
- What could they stand to lose, e.g., certain powers, clients, members?
- What could they contribute to the initiative, e.g., support, resources, expertise, political credibility?

From this discussion, generate a mission statement that includes the following:

- Name of the initiative.
- What the initiative will do or provide.
- With whom the initiative will work.
- Who the initiative will aim to target.

Ask the groups to share their mission statements with all the participants. Ask the ‘vision group’ to use the different statements to develop a combined mission statement. Discuss and refine the mission statement until the whole group is comfortable with the outcomes and own it as theirs.

Jointly developing the vision and mission statements allows for collective understanding and is a critical step towards mutually agreeing on an intervention. Thus, this is a critical step in the consensus building process and will influence the remaining phases in the process.

Exercise adapted from “Developing a Vision Statement” (Thaw, 1997).

## 4. Conduct a stakeholder analysis

**Outcome:** Key stakeholders identified with their current and potential future roles in ALE system building

**Aim:** To analyse the range of stakeholders, actors and decision-makers active in the ALE sector, their level of influence, and how they relate to each other.

**Materials required:** flipchart, crayons, markers, stickers, and cards of different colours cut into circles of different sizes. Make sure you have at least 20–30 circles of different sizes and colours.

### Steps in the process:

#### i. Getting started

Clarify the purpose of the exercise, in particular why an understanding of different stakeholder groups and their influence is useful when developing new ALE systems. Explain that a Venn diagram uses circles of different sizes to show the influence of stakeholders and relationships between different groups/stakeholders. Circles that overlap have a commonality, while those that do not are independent. Venn diagrams help to visually represent the similarities, differences, and power relationships between different stakeholder groups.

Ask participants to identify the range of current stakeholders active within the ALE sector, and to list them on a flipchart. Stakeholders include any individual, community, group, organisation, agency or institution with an interest in the outcome of an adult education intervention, either as a result of being affected by it or being able to influence the activity.

Once participants have generated a list of stakeholders, ask them to categorise the stakeholders according to three groups:

- **Key stakeholders:** Those who can significantly influence or are important for the success of the intervention.
- **Primary stakeholders:** Those individuals and groups who are ultimately affected by an intervention as beneficiaries, either positively or negatively. This category of stakeholders represents the target group of the initiative.
- **Secondary stakeholders:** All other individuals, organisations or institutions with a stake, interest, or intermediary role in the intervention. This group can include government offices at all levels, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, UN agencies, and universities.

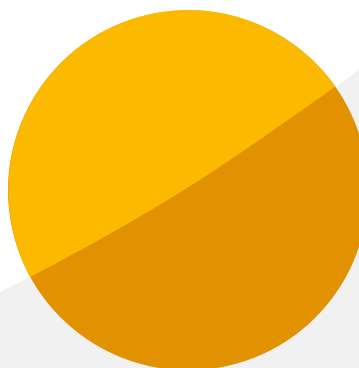
During the consensus building phase, more attention will be paid to the key and secondary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders are acknowledged, but they are not the focus of this exercise. More attention will be paid to them during Phase Two of the adult learning and education system building process.

#### ii. Drawing the Venn diagram

Ask participants to draw a large circle on a flipchart and write 'primary stakeholder' or target group in the middle of the circle. The ALE system and the roles of stakeholders are intended to address the needs and interests of this group.

*Decide on the role/influence of each stakeholder*

Then ask participants to review the list of stakeholders (both key and secondary stakeholders) that they have generated and to write the name of each stakeholder onto a circle



card (one stakeholder per card). As mentioned above, different sizes of cards have to be cut beforehand – maybe three to five different sizes and a number of cards from each size should be available. Before writing the name of a stakeholder on a card, participants should discuss and agree on what is the current role and influence of this stakeholder in the current ALE system and service delivery. If the current role is big and influential, choose a bigger circle to write the name of this stakeholder. If the role is less influential, choose a smaller circle. NOTE the diagram is completed based on current roles of stakeholders – not the role they should ideally play. Therefore, it may be that the government, although an important stakeholder that should play a bigger role in the ALE system and service delivery, may currently play a minimal role and their name may be written on a smaller card. Continue by asking the question ‘What is the current role and influence of this stakeholder on the ALE system and service delivery?’ and select card sizes accordingly. The size of the circle will therefore indicate the current role and level of influence of stakeholders in delivering services to the target group.

#### *Agree on the current relationships between stakeholders*

Ask the participants to place the circles on the flipchart sheet where the circle has been drawn to represent the target group in such a way that shows their relationship to each other. Use the position of the circles or degree of closeness to show the relationship between different groups, organisations and institutions. Touching or overlapping circles indicate that the organisations or institutions are linked or cooperate with each other in some way, while the size of the circle indicates their relative significance within the ALE system. The degree to which the stakeholder delivers services, e.g., size of project/programme/services can be indicated by placing the stakeholder card inside the drawn circle, slightly overlapping or completely outside. The implication may be that an NGO who plays an influential role in ALE system building and service delivery may be placed with a slight overlap on the target group circles, therefore showing that by the size of their circle they play a big role, but their outreach to the target group is limited – maybe because of limited funding, etc.

Draw links or arrows between organisations or institutions to represent the relationships between them. Arrows can be used to indicate the direction of the influence (one way or two way) Lines of different thickness can be used to represent different degrees of power and influence. Use symbols or colours to indicate potential allies, opponents or collaborators.



**iii. Group discussion**

Note that the Venn diagram will only provide limited information. Thus, it is important to discuss and document more details regarding each stakeholder. It is also necessary to understand the power and political dynamics between stakeholders, that may influence their motivations, and behaviour during the proposed intervention (political economy). These dynamics are often described as ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ governance, or the difference between what is supposed to happen in theory and what actually happens in reality. It is critical to analyse

and understand these underlying power dynamics as they will have a profound impact on service delivery and operationalisation of the system. These dynamics can either support or jeopardise the successful implementation of the new adult learning and education system.

Therefore, it is important to ask probing questions to bring out key strengths, challenges and opportunities related to each stakeholder, and to document the discussion by completing the following table after drawing the Venn diagram:

Name of stakeholder	Type of stakeholder (e.g., key or secondary)	Current scope of work and role within the ALE sector	Main interests & motivation regarding involvement in ALE system building	Potential future roles they may play in system building (including levels of skills & capacity)	Other considerations for managing or strengthening relationships with this stakeholder (including potential barriers to their involvement)
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In conclusion, summarise the key points emerging during the exercise and explain how this information

will be used to inform the next step of the process. Exercise adapted from “Venn Diagram” (Coninck, 2000).

**5. Introduce the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA)**

**Outcome:** All stakeholders are orientated in the ALESBA with its conceptual framework, underlying principles, objective phases, tools and methods.

See PowerPoint presentation on ALESBA available on the Adult Education Africa – Moja platform: [www.mojaafrica.net](http://www.mojaafrica.net)



## 6. Develop a plan with milestones and responsibilities for the implementation of the approach and strengthening of the system

**Outcome:** A preliminary plan is available, indicating the major activities, milestones, and responsibilities to implement the five phases of the ALESBA.

**Aim:** To determine a preliminary plan, roles and responsibilities to guide implementation of the five phases of the ALESBA.

**Materials required:** flipchart, markers, and stickers.

### Steps in the process:

#### i. Getting started

Developing an action plan helps to bridge the gap between workshop discussions and implementation. Too many participatory processes end with recommendations that are

not adequately owned, understood or used to improve the proposed intervention. To overcome this problem, a preliminary action plan needs to be based on outcomes and insights generated by the workshop sessions, and by those involved in the consensus building phase.

Start the process of developing a preliminary plan by discussing the following questions with the group:

- What have been the main outcomes, findings or insights generated by the workshop so far?
- What do these findings mean for this intervention?
- What do we want to do or to happen next?
- How will this be done?
- What do we need to do differently?
- What steps need to be taken to build these new insights into our work?

Round off the discussion by completing the following table:

Activities	Outcomes & milestones	Who is responsible	Who is involved	By when	Resources & support required
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Finally, agree creative and interactive ways for documenting and disseminating the workshop proceedings, findings, and preliminary action plan to other interested and affected parties.

Conclude the exercise by outlining the way forward and how Phases Two to Five of the system building process will be implemented.



**The ALESBA toolkit acknowledges and refers to ALE terminology in the following publications:**

- Towards an operational definition of Lifelong Learning: UIL Working Papers No.1 (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015).
- European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2: Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector (National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy, 2008).
- Terminology of European education and training policy: A selection of 130 key terms (second edition) (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2014).



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## **DVW International**

DVW International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. DVV represents the interests of the approximately 900 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest further education providers in Germany. As the leading professional organisation in the field of adult education and development cooperation, DVW International has committed itself to support lifelong learning for more than 50 years. DVW International provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable adult education structures and systems for youth and adult learning and education. To achieve this, DVW International co-operates with civil society, government and academic partners in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. DVW International finances its work through funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Foreign Office, the European Union as well as other donors.

The Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA) is a product of DVW International that can assist countries in building sustainable Adult Learning and Education (ALE) systems that can deliver a variety of ALE services to youth and adults. The ALESBA toolkit covers the conceptual framework of the approach with guidelines and practical tools to implement the approach across five phases.

### **The toolkit consists of the following books:**

1. Introduction to the Approach and Toolkit
2. Phase One – Consensus Building
3. Phase Two – Assessment and Diagnosis
4. Phase Three – Alternatives Analysis and Design
5. Phase Four – Implement and Test
6. Phase Five – Review, Adjust and Up-scale

### **For further information visit:**

[www.mojaafrica.net](http://www.mojaafrica.net)  
[www.dvw-international.de/en/ale-toolbox](http://www.dvw-international.de/en/ale-toolbox)