

## CHAPTER 2

### LEARNING NEEDS OF THIRD WORLD COMMUNITIES

#### 2.1 Introduction

What has happened in modern society to confront traditional education with demands for change? According to Wedemeyer (1981:35) modern society has experienced the following:

- a. a population "explosion",
- b. a knowledge "explosion",
- c. an increase in the complexity of all facets of life,
- d. an increase in the educational requirements of almost all occupations,
- e. an acceleration of the rate-of-change in nearly all occupations, particularly as related to job-knowledge technology,
- f. an increase in the probability that substantial numbers of workers of nearly all classes must face periods of personal obsolescence during their lifetimes - obsolescence which will not be removed without personal retraining or re-education,
- g. an increased mobility of almost all citizens - an advantage in following certain job or educational opportunities, but a disadvantage in that the mobile seeker of opportunity is a disenfranchised citizen who has lost his roots in a community, who may now become a person without strong social, religious, political, economic, or educational ties to a "place" or a culture,



- h. an increase in the number of learner groups that must be served by education, as a result of social, economic and technological changes that have in recent years brought to women greater freedom from home and family duties than ever before, and to some men, periods free from the necessity of gainful employment,
- i. in addition, members of sub-cultures within our society, have special needs that may not be met by conventional instruction, but cannot become useful members of society without adequate education.

Coombs (1985) states that the most prolific breeder of new human learning needs throughout the world since World War II has been development itself. By development is meant different forms of technological, social, economic and cultural changes and advances. He says: *"Although the aggregate increase in the number of learners has clearly had a sizable impact on world educational requirements, it seems evident that the increase in the lifetime learning needs of the average learner resulting from these dynamic development factors has been an even greater cause of the explosive growth of overall learning needs"* (1985:57).

The changed context of education has presented society with new categories of learners, new needs, new subject matter, and new educational objectives.

## 2.2 Learning needs of Third-World communities

By using relevant literature and presenting a number of learning need structures, an attempt will be made to give an indication of the broad spectrum of learning needs that exist among socially disadvantaged individuals and groups.

### 2.2.1 The learning needs of socially disadvantaged adults

According to Kaye and Harry (1982:9-10) it would seem that the following areas are of relevance:

- **functional literacy and numeracy skills**, related in the first instance to everyday needs of a practical sort (reading newspapers, following instructions, filling in forms, keeping account of household expenditure, shopping, etc.)
- **social coping skills** needed to survive in, and overcome the complexities of modern society (in, for example, seeking employment, finding out one's rights in housing, social services, health care, and taking action to obtain them)
- **parental and family education** aimed, for example, at helping parents to understand and participate in the educational, physical, and psychological development of their children
- **consumer education and domestic economy**, aimed at helping people to learn for themselves how to go about getting the "best buy" for the goods and services which they require, and at providing information and guidance on, for example, balancing a housekeeping budget, and at carrying out basic repair and maintenance tasks in the home
- **community education:** provision of help and information which will enable members of a community as a group to take actions to improve their situation through mutual co-operation (e.g. action to obtain improved health, educational, and employment provision)



- the raising of levels of awareness about existing opportunities for formal and non-formal education and for professional and vocational training, including the breaking down of any psychological barriers which seem to prevent many members of disadvantaged groups from using the existing provisions
- preparation for vocational and professional training associated, for example, with re-conversion to new or different employment sectors
- provision of elementary and secondary education equivalent facilities in specific subjects for adults who, for whatever reason, missed out on schooling provision during their childhood.

#### **2.2.2 Social learning needs of Black adolescents in South Africa**

Groenewald (1986:71-72) did research to identify the social learning needs of Black adolescents in South Africa. The priority order of learning needs are grouped together per category:

##### **A Communication between parents and children**

- Motivation by the parents on the importance of a good education
- To understand the expectations of parents
- The necessity of maintaining family discipline by the parents

An interesting feature in this category is the adolescents' first choice of the "motivation by the parents on the importance of a good education". The second choice illustrates the communication gap between parents and children. The remaining choices emphasise the need of young



Blacks for better guidance by their parents on various matters.

**B Technological Skills (learning more about)**

- To improve one's general scientific knowledge
- How to drive a car or motor cycle
- How to use computers
- Computers in general
- Electricity

**C School-based programmes**

- Study methods
- Prescribed books at school
- Language courses
- Biology
- Physics and Chemistry
- Mathematics
- Accountancy
- Geography
- History

The need for sound study methods is an important factor in achieving academic success. One possible reason why prescribed books are rated very highly may be the use of prescribed books in the official languages and the difficulty for Blacks to understand the cultural milieu of these books.

**D Personal development**

- Personal rights, privileges and responsibilities
- Development of self-image
- Self-defence
- Understanding oneself (aspirations and expectations)
- Personal relations



- Greater involvement in the community
- Understanding one's fellow men
- Social etiquette
- How to handle retarded people
- Marriage

In this category personal rights, privileges and responsibilities were the first choice. It is probably the rate of change in the Black communities that is the underlying motivation for this choice. The development of a self-image, the second choice, forms an integral part of a search for identity.

#### **E Financial matters**

- How to save and spend money responsibly
- How to draw up a budget
- Conditions of service (e.g. pension fund, unemployment benefits, etc.)
- Insurance: its nature and functions
- What the informal business sector is
- What the small business sector is

#### **F Prevention of crime**

- Abuse of liquor
- Assault and murder
- Abuse of drugs
- Theft
- Rape
- Arson

#### **G Individual care**

- How to improve personal hygiene
- Skin and hair care
- Latest fashions



-           **Make-up**

Adolescents are usually concerned about what other people think about them, which is probably why personal hygiene is rated as first choice. The rest of the items are not considered very important compared to other learning needs.

**H           Vocational guidance**

- Different types of professions and their requirements
- Selection of school subjects for various professions
- Background information about various professions
- Information about university and technikon training
- Information about other training possibilities

**I           Informal educational programmes**

- How to improve quality of life
- Road safety
- Disciplining of children
- Taking care of children
- Different cultures in South Africa
- The nature of wild life
- Historical events in South Africa
- Unemployment
- Foreign countries
- Cars and aeroplanes
- Mining and the processing of minerals
- Historical buildings in South Africa

**J           Domestic affairs**

- How to buy good clothes and shoes
- Cooking
- Housekeeping
- Gardening



- Repair of domestic appliances
- Sewing
- Woodwork
- Welding

**K Health matters**

- Family hygiene
- Prevention of diseases
- Nutrition
- Community hygiene
- Identification of diseases
- Immunisation
- Baby care
- Family planning

**L Professional help**

- Where to get medical advice and treatment
- Where to get legal advice
- Where to get psychological advice and treatment

**M Music (learning about)**

- Modern music (jazz, soul)
- Pop music (rock)
- How to play various musical instruments
- Classical music (symphony orchestra)
- Choral music (choirs)
- Traditional music

**N Recreation and leisure time**

- How to use leisure time constructively
- Learning about hobbies
- How to take care of pets





**O Political programmes**

- How to improve Black education
- Problems in the Black community
- Current affairs
- Political developments
- Relations between Blacks and Whites
- Unrest and violence

**P Sport**

- Rules of different games
- Value of participating in games

**Q Religious programmes**

- Learning about the Christian religion
- Bible stories
- Learning about non-Christian religions

**R Improvement of community facilities**

- Clinics
- Libraries
- Housing
- Sport facilities
- ↑ Parks
- Roads

Groenewald (1986:74) went further and listed the twenty most important learning needs, which are grouped together under separate headings.

**1 Education**

- Motivation by the parents on the importance of a good education



- How to improve Black education

## **2 Self-development**

- Personal rights, privileges and responsibilities
- Development of self-image
- Self-defence
- Understanding oneself (aspirations and expectations)

## **3 Professions and training**

- Different types of professions and their requirements
- Selection of school subjects for particular professions
- Background information on particular professions
- Information about university and technikon training
- Information about training possibilities

## **4 Health matters**

- Family hygiene
- Prevention of diseases
- Where to get medical advice and treatment
- Nutrition
- Clinics
- Community hygiene
- Identification of diseases
- How to improve personal hygiene

## **5 Quality of life**

- Libraries
- How to improve the quality of life
- Housing

## **6 Current problems and affairs**

- Problems in the Black community
- Where to get legal advice
- Current affairs

### **2.2.3 Basic goals and skills that are important for functional literacy**

Di Perna (1982:9-10) reports on the University of Texas study on adult competency and lists basic goals and skills that are important for functional literacy:

#### **Occupational knowledge**

- to identify sources of information (for instance, radio broadcasts, newspapers, and so on) that may lead to employment,
- to be aware of vocational testing and counselling methods that can help prospective employees to understand their job interests and the necessary qualifications,
- to know attributes and skills that may lead to promotion.

#### **Consumer Economics**

- to manage a family economy and to demonstrate an awareness of sound purchasing principles,
- to be able to count and convert coins and currency, and to convert weights and measures using measurement tables and mathematical operations,
- to be aware of the principles of comparison shopping and to be aware of the relationship between price and quality of different brands, and between "first" and "second" quality, and to be able to substitute economy for quality (and vice versa) according to



- personal need,
- to collect information about different types of insurance and to be able to select the best insurance for the individual and his or her family,
- to know the recourses that are available to the consumer in the face of misleading or fraudulent products, service claims or tactics.

### **Health**

- to insure good mental and physical health for the individual and his or her family,
- to develop a working vocabulary about health, especially for accurate reporting of symptoms and following a doctor's directions in applying treatment,
- to understand how basic safety measures can prevent accidents and injuries and to recognise potential hazards, especially hazards related to home and occupational safety,
- to understand federal control of various drugs and items for health protection and to understand how public reaction influences this control.

### **Government and Law**

- to promote an understanding of the society through government and law and to be aware of governmental functions, agencies, and regulations defining individual rights and obligations.

### **Community Resources**

- to understand that community resources, including transportation systems, are used by individuals in a society to obtain a satisfactory lifestyle,
- to understand how and when to apply for community



- services, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Supplemental Security Income,
- to be aware of the people and agencies in the community whose job it is to register and act upon citizen complaints,
- to develop a familiarity with transportation schedules and to calculate fares.

#### **2.2.4 Educational programmes according to personal needs**

Lowe (1975:55) presents the following classification of educational programmes according to personal needs, which has been widely invoked, as relevant in most circumstances:

##### **Remedial education**

- fundamental and literacy education - a prerequisite for all other kinds of adult education.

##### **Education for vocational, technical and professional competence**

- this may be to prepare an adult for a first job or a new job, or to keep him up to date on new developments in his occupation or profession.

##### **Education for health, welfare and family living**

- including all kinds of health, family, consumer, planned-parenthood, hygiene, family relations, child-care, etc.

##### **Education for civic, political and community competence**

- including all kinds of educational programmes about government, community development, public and international affairs, voting and political



education, etc.

#### **Education for self-fulfilment**

- including all kinds of liberal education programmes, education in music, the arts, dance, theatre, literature, and arts and crafts, whether brief or long-term.

#### **2.2.5 Minimum essential learning needs of rural children and teenagers**

Coombs (1985:54) states that the following essential learning needs are defined within a particular society, and that the details would differ and would have to be defined in terms that are adapted to local conditions:

- **Positive attitudes**, towards cooperation with one's family and fellow human beings, towards work and community and national development, and, not least of all, towards continued learning.
- **Functional literacy and numeracy**, sufficient (a) to read with comprehension a national newspaper or magazine, useful agricultural, health, and other "how-to" bulletins or manufacturers' instruction sheets; (b) to write a legible letter to, for example, a friend or to a government bureau requesting information; and (c) to handle important common computations, such as the measurement of land and buildings, agricultural input costs and revenues, interest charges on credit, and rental rates on land.
- **A scientific outlook and an elementary understanding of the processes of nature** in the particular area, as they pertain, for example, to health and



sanitation, raising crops and animals, nutrition, food storage and preparation, and the environment and its protection.

- **Functional knowledge and skills for raising a family and operating a household**, including the essential elements of protecting family health, family planning where appropriate, good child care, nutrition and sanitation, cultural activities and recreation, care of the injured and sick, intelligent shopping and use of money, making clothes and other consumption goods, house repairs, and environmental improvements, and growing and preserving food for family consumption.
  
- **Functional knowledge and skills for earning a living**, including not only the skills required for a particular local occupation, but also knowledge of a variety of locally useful common skills for agriculture and non-farm use.
  
- **Functional knowledge and skills for civic participation**, including some knowledge of national and local history and ideology; an understanding of one's society; awareness of government structure and functions; taxes and public expenditures; available social services; rights and obligations of individual citizens; and principles, aims, and the functioning of cooperatives and local voluntary associations.

#### 2.2.6 A need structure: Community Education for Community Development

Boone et al (1981:232) extend the concept community education to the concept community education for development. They present the following as needs and



interests of socially disadvantaged individuals and population groups, and also suggest the mode of education through which each of the needs can be met:



Table 1 - Community Education for Development

Needs and Interests		Modes of Education	
<b>Political Subjects</b>	Government Law/Legal matters Crime Prevention Community Leadership International Affairs	<b>Formal</b>	Socialisation Citizenship training Career Preparation Intellectual Development Basic Skills Credentialing
<b>Culture</b>	Arts Forums Festivals Crafts Community Theatre History Human Relations Ethos (Philosophical, Spiritual)	<b>Non-formal</b>	Continuing Education Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training Community Problem-Solving and Development Projects Regarding Needs and Interests of Special Groups
<b>Economics</b>	Home Management Industrial Development Business and Commerce Employment Occupational Training Career Education Consumer Economics	<b>Informal</b>	Family Life "Neighboring" Community Events Social Groups
<b>Health</b>	Sanitation Family Planning Nutrition Physical Fitness First Aid Preventive Medicine		



### 2.2.7 The need to learn problem-solving skills

Fletcher et al (1980:91) say that instead of learning to memorise information selected by the teacher, today's student, of any age, needs to learn among other skills, the following:

- 1 Identifying a problem, i.e. finding out what needs to be known and done in an area where an impasse has occurred.
- 2 Devising strategies for solving a problem.
- 3 Retrieving information necessary to any strategy. This may involve the use of a whole range of resources, printed, visual, or most frequently, other people.
- 4 Classifying and collating information to form hypotheses.
- 5 Testing and modifying hypotheses until a working solution is found.
- 6 Getting things done so that the strategy, planned in this way, is put into action.

### 2.2.8 Learning needs of individuals at various stages in their lives

Calver and Farnes (Kaye and Harry 1982:89) describe the following learning needs within the Open University Community Education programme:



Learning needs in the Community Education Programme	
Learning needs in the illustrative stages of adult life:	Learning needs in the illustrative concerns for each role:
Being single	<u>Parent Role:</u>
Getting married	Child Development
Planning Families	Happy Families
Pregnancy and Birth	Adoption and Fostering
Babies	Schools
Preschool child	<u>Employee Role:</u>
Childhood (5-10 years)	Starting work
Adolescence	Women returning to work
Marriage Problems	Job Change
Middle Age	Unemployment
Planning Retirement	Retirement
Retirement	<u>Consumer Role:</u>
Old Age	Consumer Decisions
	Energy in the Home
	Health Choices
	Food
	Money
	Housing
	Transport
	<u>Citizen/Community Role:</u>
	Governing Schools
	Community Advisers
	Local Councillors
	Race Relations



### 2.2.9 The learning needs of Whites, Coloureds and Indians in the R.S.A.

Calitz and Van Schalkwyk (1986:118) undertook a need survey in the above-mentioned population groups of South Africa and structured the following learning needs:

#### 1 Education and Training

- child-rearing
- parental involvement
- school readiness
- learning problems

#### 2 Law Programmes

- family law
- contractual law
- court procedures
- commercial law

#### 3 Recreation and leisure time

- dexterity
- hobbies
- sport
- holidays

### 2.2.10 The formal and non-formal educational needs of the community of Atlantis

Kamper (1986:64-65) undertook an educational need survey in the community of Atlantis and found the following needs:

#### 1 Counselling themes (in order of preference)

- Drugs / alcoholism
- How to work with money



Career guidance  
Marriage enrichment  
Family planning  
Child care  
First aid  
Hirepurchase contracts  
Road safety  
Caring for babies  
Nature conservation  
Insurance and Wills  
Taxes  
Investment

**2 Indoor sport/physical development/dance classes in order of preference)**

Fitness programmes  
Gymnastics  
Karate/Judo  
Table tennis  
Modern dancing  
Squash  
Ballet  
Volleyball  
Spanish dancing

**2.3 A comprehensive summary of learning needs**

In the light of the preceding recorded learning need structures, the following can be regarded as the most important categories of learning needs that exist in socially disadvantaged communities:

**2.3.1 Functional literacy and numeracy skills**

This need was found to be relevant to the socially disadvantaged adult as well as rural teenagers and children.



These skills relate to everyday needs of a practical sort like reading newspapers; following instructions; filling in forms; shopping; etc.

### **2.3.2 Parental and family education**

Some guidelines for parental and family education: Helping parents to understand and participate in the educational, physical and psychological development of their children; coping with babies; child-care; family planning; family relations; marriage enrichment and school readiness.

### **2.3.3 Consumer education**

Some aspects of importance are: To be able to count and convert coins and currency; to be aware of the relationship between price and quality among brands; types of insurance, its nature and functions; how to draw up a budget; helping people to learn for themselves to go about getting the "best buy" for the goods and services they require, and hire purchase.

### **2.3.4 Domestic education**

Domestic education is aimed at providing information and guidance on balancing a housekeeping budget; carrying out basic repairs and maintenance tasks in the home; housekeeping; cooking; sewing; environmental improvements, and growing and preserving food for family consumption.

### **2.3.5 Social coping skills**

Socially disadvantaged adults need to survive in: The complexities of modern society such as seeking employment; finding out their rights in housing; social services, and taking action to obtain them; personal rights, privileges



and responsibilities; development of self-image; personal relations; understanding their fellow man; and social etiquette.

#### **2.3.6 Raising levels of awareness about existing opportunities**

This must be done for both formal and non-formal education and for professional and vocational training, including the breaking down of any psychological barriers which seem to prevent many members of disadvantaged groups from using such provisions as do exist.

#### **2.3.7 Preparation for vocational, technical and professional competence**

This can be associated with, for example, re-conversion to new or different employment sectors; skills required for a particular occupation; knowledge of a variety of useful common skills for agriculture and non-farm use; different types of professions and their requirements; background information on particular professions; information about university and technikon training; occupational guidance, and information about training possibilities.

#### **2.3.8 Citizenship training**

Promoting an understanding of society with regard to government and law, and to be aware of government functions, agencies, regulations; defining individual rights and obligations; public and international affairs; voting and political education; an understanding of one's society; available social services and the principle, aims and functioning of cooperatives and local voluntary associations; civic participation; insurance and wills; taxes and investments.



### **2.3.9 Health matters**

Family hygiene; prevention of diseases; where to get medical advice and treatment; nutrition; identification of diseases; how to improve personal hygiene; sanitation; preventive medicine; to develop a working vocabulary about health, especially for the accurate reporting of symptoms and following a doctor's directions in applying treatment; to understand federal control of various drugs and items for health protection.

### **2.3.10 Recreation, leisure time and sport**

How to use leisure time constructively; learning about hobbies; arts and crafts; music; arts; dance; theatre; literature and sports activities.

### **2.3.11 Community resources**

To understand that community resources, including transportation systems, are used by individuals in a society to obtain a satisfactory lifestyle; when to apply for community services, such as Social Security, Medicare etc.; to be aware of people and agencies whose job it is to register and act upon citizen complaints.

### **2.3.12 Technological skills**

How to drive a car or motor cycle; use of computers; know about computers in general; improve one's general scientific knowledge and the basics of electricity.

### **2.3.13 School-based programmes**

This can include the following:

Study methods; language courses; drugs and alcoholism;



first aid; road safety; nature conservation; remedial education; prevention of crime; individual care and the processes of nature.

#### **2.3.14 Educational needs**

The following formal, non-formal and informal educational programmes can be presented to meet the needs and interests of socially disadvantaged individuals:

Formal educational programmes: socialisation; citizen training; career preparation; intellectual development; and basic skills.

Non-formal educational programmes: continuing education; apprenticeships; on-the-job training; community problem solving and non-formal development.

Informal educational programmes: family life; neighbouring; community events and social groups.

#### **2.3.15 Problem-solving skills**

The identification of a problem; devising strategies for solving a problem; retrieving information necessary for any strategy; finding a workable solution; putting the strategy into action.

### **2.4 Synopsis**

From a review of the most important learning needs, it becomes evident which of those needs are specific to milieu-deprived individuals and communities. These learning needs can readily be accommodated in the integrated strategy that will be dealt with in the next chapter.