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Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for sustainable development in Africa: How to design and implement an effective response through education and training systems

Sub-theme 1
Common core skills for lifelong learning and sustainable development in Africa

Common core skills for lifelong learning.
Which capacities, knowledge and skills must be acquired, and how? Contribution from the perspective of the Pedagogy of the Text.

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

1.   This study is a response to the questions put by ADEA, i.e., how can the education system design and implement an effective response to the challenges of sustainable development in Africa and, more particularly, what core skills are needed for lifelong learning? While questioning and supplementing certain concepts in the conceptual framework (in particular sustainable development and skills), the study acknowledges the pertinence of different elements, including the calls for greater internal and external efficiency in education and the changes that this implies in terms of policy and pedagogical paradigms. It argues that these transformations can only be achieved if a critical attention is paid to quality and, consequently, to the pedagogical approaches that constitute it.

2.   Produced by a team of eighteen professionals (from universities, NGOs, government and cooperation agency), this research is based on six case studies as well as conceptual and theoretical contributions. It describes the key principles of an innovative approach, the Pedagogy of the Text (PoT), examines how this is put into practice in different programs in Africa and Latin America, and analyses the results in terms of learning and the effects on learners and communities. It shows that PoT permits a quality education that fosters lifelong learning. It draws conclusions as to the elements that should comprise the core of basic education (for children, young people or adults) in the African context. It also argues that this core should not be restricted to a list of skills (know-how) but should also include the acquisition of knowledge and the development of increased mental capacities such as logical reasoning and conceptual thinking, critical judgment, voluntary memory, etc., and that it should take into account the multilingual and multicultural dimension of Africa and be able to be adapted to specific contexts. It also identifies obstacles and makes suggestions with a view to working towards a high quality education system that promotes sustainable development, including social justice, not only in pedagogical but also in policy terms.