Managing the Provision of Non-Formal Secondary Education in Tanzania: The Emerging Sustainability Issues

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Abstract

This study examined the management of non-formal secondary education (NFSE)[3]amidst high demand among out-of-school youths to determine its sustainability. Using NFSE as a case, this qualitative study subjected interview and documentary review data to content analysis. The study found no single, well-integrated and accountable organisational structure to engage harmoniously all the institutions responsible for managing NFSE practices. Parallel reporting systems, fragmented institutional linkages and unsystematic coordination of activities were rampart and caused inconsistencies and conflicting roles. Consequently, an uncontrolled number of shadow NFSE providers in the black market mushroomed and threatened its sustainability. Conclusively, NFSE was insufficiently integrated in the education institutional framework hence, lacked critical administrative support. Thus, NFSE practices need to be streamlined under a full-fledged and functional ANFE department for proper coordination and sustainable NFSE provision.

Keywords: *coordination, institutional framework, institutional linkage, organisational structure,*

Introduction

The formal secondary education in many developing countries attracts criticism because it tends to be confined to a particular age-group when the real world is increasingly more dynamic and inclusive. Its capacity to offer learning opportunities

3 This educational endeavour provides secondary education to the youths and adults in the form of open schooling outside the conventional system. It is a strategic intervention induced by the demand of clients, from diverse contexts such as those who missed, dropped out or failed secondary education examinations. Thus, it has the potential of promoting secondary education access at a minimum cost and in flexible schedules.

to all primary school leavers is also so constrained that the transition from primary to secondary education provides no guarantee for the majority of children (UNESCO, 2015) who end up locked out of secondary schools and have to contend with severe cases of unemployment. In the Tanzanian context, formal secondary education fails to provide youths with a second chance to overcome their learning barriers, which include job commitments, personal constraints and dropouts. In fact, the system in place does not condone class repetition or combining work with learning. The alleged failure of formal education to prepare young people for the work life and the failure of many countries to afford the escalating public expenditure also stand out as major reasons for instituting change (Everard, Morris & Wilson, 2004). Against this backdrop and as a result of the increasing emphasis in the global development agendas on the provision of universal education to foster positive and sustainable change, a number of non-formal education (NFE)[4] programmes in many developing countries such as Tanzania have emerged. Moreover, the role and goals of these programmes have systematically shifted from merely dealing with literacy skills and mass campaigns that had hitherto dominated policy and practice in the past to equipping youths and adults with necessary knowledge and skills for employability and further education purposes (Torres, 2004).

In Tanzania, different public and private institutions, as well as individuals are providing NFSE, which has been growing rapidly. Non-formal secondary education (NFSE) started as evening classes and weekend schools to civil servants who wanted to upgrade themselves under the National Correspondence Institute since 1963. On the other hand, the private providers were offering NFSE in the black market until the official introduction of guidelines for the establishment and registration of open schools[5] in 2013. All these providers have largely been motived by the need to address the constraints experienced in the formal education system, and meet the ever-increasing demand for secondary education among out-of-school youths and adults. Such demand is evidenced in the education statistics, which show on average that 30 percent of the primary school leavers have no formal secondary

4 NFE is any organised and systematic educational undertaking outside the framework of formal education system aimed to provide the types of learning selected for particular sub-groups in the population, including adults and children, as an alternative to formal schooling (Torres, 2011).

5 Open school is a model of learning that allows learners to study the designed self-instructional learning materials on their own, while meeting teachers in the face-to-face sessions. In Tanzanian context, however, NFSE as an example operates somehow similar to conventional schools, but without the normal structures and in a more flexible way in terms of age and completion time. On the other hand, open schooling is a flexible process that provides more access to educational opportunities and a philosophy, which makes learning more learner centred.

education acquisition opportunities whereas the gross enrolment rate for Form I-VI has decreased from 37.1% in 2014 to 31.0% in 2018 (URT, 2018). The pass rates in the final examinations have also been unsatisfactory, hence swelling the number of out-of-secondary-school youths and unqualified graduates. This dire situation is coupled with high levels of school drop-out cases and high numbers of adults such as civil servants, farmers, and entrepreneurs with no opportunities to acquire a secondary education. As a result, there has been ineffective transition to work and social life among youths (OECD, 1998). In fact, this situation hints at the failure of the country and the world at large to achieve their education goals, whose conventions they have incidentally ratified.

The high demand has made the number of both private and minority public centres offering NFSE dramatically sprout in different parts of the country. In the meantime, the number of registered private candidates for their national secondary education examinations has equally multiplied. Although NFSE is generally a quick fix, it cannot flourish without being well-integrated in the institutional framework to facilitate its processes crucial for its sustainable provision. Despite different government initiatives evident in policy statements on the need for and commitment to fostering programmes such as NFSE, there is still a huge discrepancy in practice as the government's focus and impetus in terms of the overall management and budgetary allocation are on the formal education sector (Maoulidi, 2011). Moreover, NFSE centres[6] are not fully mapped and regulated, and their exact numbers remain largely indeterminate in the country, which explains their exclusion from government financial and administrative support (Hendry, 2010; Kanukisya, 2012). In fact, this entire environment has brought about unregistered NFSE centres, the absence of uniformity of centres' titles, adoption of different curricula and syllabi and different delivery modalities (URT, 2013a). In such an administrative environment, the academic performance in this programme has, consequently, been quite unpromising for several consecutive years whereas the NFSE centres have been haphazardly rising and falling, hence suggesting that the sustainability of NFSE provision is at stake.

Consequently, there has been a grave concern on the sustainability of NFSE provision in the country. Sustainability in this context entails incorporating the programme activities into the existing institutional framework and maintaining the capacity to deliver the service required and responding accordingly to the emerging

6 NFSE centres are academic units that provide secondary education in a non-formal system. They go by different names such as study centres, learning centres, tuition centres, evening classes and open schools.

needs in an on-going process (Johnson, Hays, Centre & Daley, 2004; Mancini & Marek, 2004). Thus far, there is little evidence on how the provision of NFSE has systematically been organised and managed to ensure its sustainability. Thus, this study aimed to examine the management of NFSE within the country's education institutional framework that would systematically underpin all the NFSE practices so as to determine the sustainability of its provision. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

i. What is the organisational structure for NFSE and how are institutional linkages appropriately established among key NFSE actors to facilitate their sound interactivity in managing NFSE for its sustainable provision?
ii. How are the key roles of NFSE actors coordinated across institutional levels to ensure proper functioning of each component for successful and sustainable provision of NFSE?

The findings of the study contribute knowledge that sets a basis for better understanding of NFE programmes' management from a developing country perspective since NFE constitutes one of the largely unstudied areas at the global level (Aspin, Chapman, Evans & Bagnall, 2012). Since NFSE is a new venture in Tanzania, this study brings to light both the intended outcomes and unintended deviations in managing its provision so as to inform the development and/or improvement of management practices in NFE at large.

Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives

Analysis of theoretical and empirical perspectives underlying the management of NFE programmes and NFSE in particular enabled the establishment of a terrain of relevant themes and empirical evidence important in identifying the key variables that informed this study.

NFSE as a planned educational change

This study is informed by *the educational change perspective,* which is useful in guiding the examination of the change process of educational innovations such as NFSE, by considering the wide scenery of its practices across different institutional levels (macro, meso and micro), their synergy and possible effects. The model by Fullan (2007) suggests that the goals, practices and consequences associated with a specific innovation are largely influenced by the dynamics of such innovation as a process, which involves the interactive participation of different stakeholders at the individual, school, local, regional and national levels. Such multifaceted

interaction aims to establish permeable connectivity, linkages and mutual influence across the levels for a successful innovation rather than striving for alignment (Lasky, Datnow & Stringfield, 2005). This perspective guided the study of NFSE as a planned educational change to understand how it was systemically managed across different institutional levels particularly in practice in terms of structures, activities and administrative support from the central administration to the lower parts to avoid too many fragmented and uncoordinated NFSE practices (Fullan, 2007; Smith, 2002). Thus, the provision of NFSE and how it was embedded in the structures and sustained beyond its beginning was determined.

Institutional framework as a basis for sustainable provision of NFSE

A coherent institutional framework in managing programmes appears to be vital for their development and sustainability particularly in implementing, maintaining and enhancing collectively their activities. It is essential for a systemic coordination of all activities and for effective financial and professional support hence, having a profound effect on the sustainability capacity of an innovation like NFSE (Johnson et al., 2004). Essentially, the framework ought to be designed to facilitate the necessary processes essential in fostering sustainable programmes by considering the key components presented in the subsequent sections.

A well-established organisational structure

To streamline the administrative practices within one structure and eliminate the emerging inconsistencies require governance that demands more integrated, more accessible, more relevant and more accountable structures and processes (UNESCO, 2009). Such an arrangement is a critical option in planning for open and distance education that should be addressed at the national level. Significantly, it also affects the execution of plans and programmes (Mosha, 2006). Organisational structure can thus constitute a pattern of relationships of multiple interwoven, simultaneous ties that bring people under the direction of managers in the pursuance of established common goals (Mullins, 2010). In principle, the organisational structure assigns roles to lower level institutions engaged in service delivery, and embodies the formal description of authority relationships and positions within an institution (Molle, 2007). Taking into account the nature of NFSE, particularly in coordinating its functions, there is a need for a more flexible structure that allows permeability and interaction among different units to avoid conflicting, overlapping and duplication of functions within the system. This key sustainability factor fosters teaching and learning, the ultimate goals and function of all educational institutions (Kiwia, 1994).

In Tanzania, however, education organisational structure particularly that of adult and non-formal education (ANFE) has hitherto been posing a significant challenge

to the effective management of its programmes and to facilitating the delivery of education despite several attempts aimed to improve it. In consequence, there have been cases of mismanagement and failure of the NFSE programme. Moreover, it has been difficult to identify NFE actors, areas of located authorities, and responsibilities for accountability purposes, as organisational structure is one of the control mechanism prerequisites (Mushi & Bhalalusesa, 2002). This ineffective institutional arrangement has empirically been tested to affirm that it is one of the critical challenges to strengthening managerial and institutional capabilities of the most education systems. Hence, it has been threatening the education programmes sustainability in most of the developing countries (Lockheed et al, 1991).

Strengthened institutional linkages

Proper management of education provision requires strong institutional linkages primarily because all systems comprise structures that are represented by entities and sub-units linked together in their interrelationships. Non-formal secondary education (NFSE) with its openness feature requires even more effective linkages among different sub-systems to ensure harmonious relationships thrive (Powar, 2005). Such linkage involves entities, actors, resources and practices which ensure in their relationships that the core functions of the system are effectively executed in each domain. Sink and Smith (1994) contend that for a change to occur in implementing interventions such as NFSE, linkage among entities, as well as across levels of the organisation must be strengthened. Such linkages facilitate co-operation among organisational units that implement an innovation and eventually contribute to its sustainability (Johnson et al., 2004). Although institutional linkage in addressing issues of out-of-school youths has been repeatedly emphasised in Tanzania's local policies, it remains rather weak and partially realised among adult education institutions within the relevant ministry (Bhalalusesa, 2006).

Similarly, collaboration among the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the President's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), as well as between the government and non-state providers has never been strongly established on the ground (Macpherson, 2007). Accordingly, even when a linkage is stipulated in policy documents, it is relatively ineffectual when it comes to adequate application on the ground. This situation has been occasioning serious difficulties in implementing educational plans and programmes in many developing countries. In such countries, components of their education systems have been haphazardly disjointed and poorly organised, hence the unsustainability of the programmes in question (Mosha, 2006).

Coordination of complex institutional activities

Institutional linkage does not guarantee that activities and resources across institutional levels are coordinated effectively to improve education provision (Lasky et al., 2005). It requires proper coordination, which entails presence of a harmonious interaction of functions in overcoming challenges inherent in ANFE programmes. Empirical findings suggest that NFE activities in the African context generally tend to fail as they operate in an uncoordinated fashion within their institutional frameworks due to lack of national coordination units and the absence of full-fledged and functional departments in respective ministries (Hoppers, 2007; Ruto, 2004). In Tanzania, NFE is inadequately organised because its activities are carried out without proper coordination due to limited institutional capacity (Mnjagila, 2011). For instance, there is an assortment of NGOs and individuals providing NFE in an uncoordinated manner, with little or no government control in all aspects of policy and practice (Macpherson, 2007). Such ineffective coordination translates further into inefficiencies and parallel structures (UNESCO, 2010) which affect the quality and sustainability of programmes. From these views, it is apparent that effective coordination is instrumental in ensuring that each component of the organisation functions properly to achieve the set goals. After all, effective coordination brings order, harmony and efficiency by streamlining adult education activities into routine and nonroutine tasks (Mushi, 1983).

Methodology

The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam where NFSE is actively provided. Thus, a case study design suited well this qualitative study as it enabled the researcher to gain detailed information to develop an in-depth understanding of the systemic management of NFSE and its sustainable provision via the perspectives of the key actors who actually practise it. Purposive sampling was applied to select for interview 16 potential NFE managers from MoEST, PO-RALG, IAE, National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) and Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE); Regional Adult Education Coordinator (RAEC), Regional Resident Tutor (RRT), Municipal Adult Education Coordinator (MAECs), and the NFSE centre coordinators. Interview data was complemented by documentary review.

The data so collected was subjected to qualitative content analysis—a step-by-step model of inductive category development, which suited well the study purpose and data material in question. From the data, all the meaningful textual segments were directly coded from the transcribed data and inductively sorted into categories based on their interrelationships. Meanings, patterns and connections were established between categories and sub-categories, and the category system was then interpreted in accordance with the research questions. Such a systematic approach helped the

discussion and formation of a coherent story to support the interpretation before the findings were linked to the abstract world of theory in literature.

Findings and Discussion

The relatively complex nature of managing ANFE system is polycentric with a number of subsystems—each having disparate functions. Thus, in examining the institutional arrangements for managing the provision of NFSE in terms of its organisational structure, established institutional linkages, defined roles and their coordination, there emerged several issues related to its sustainability as presented in the subsequent sections.

NFSE parallel organisational structures

Data collected from interviews and documentary review revealed that the provision of NFSE and its management involved different institutions and actors within the ANFE sub-sector. Their assortment, the nature of their roles and autonomies and the context of NFSE provision at the local level had an influence on shaping a more practical structure in managing NFSE practices. Accordingly, two parallel organisational structures operated concurrently in managing the provision of NFSE in the country that, in turn, determined the linkages and coordination of their activities.

Conventional NFSE organisational structure

In the first instance, data collected from interviews and documentary review indicated that the management of NFSE provision was comprehensively structured to involve the MoEST and its supporting institutions while intersecting with the PO-RALG through its regional and local authorities under the conventional ANFE organisational structure in the country as depicted in Figure 1.

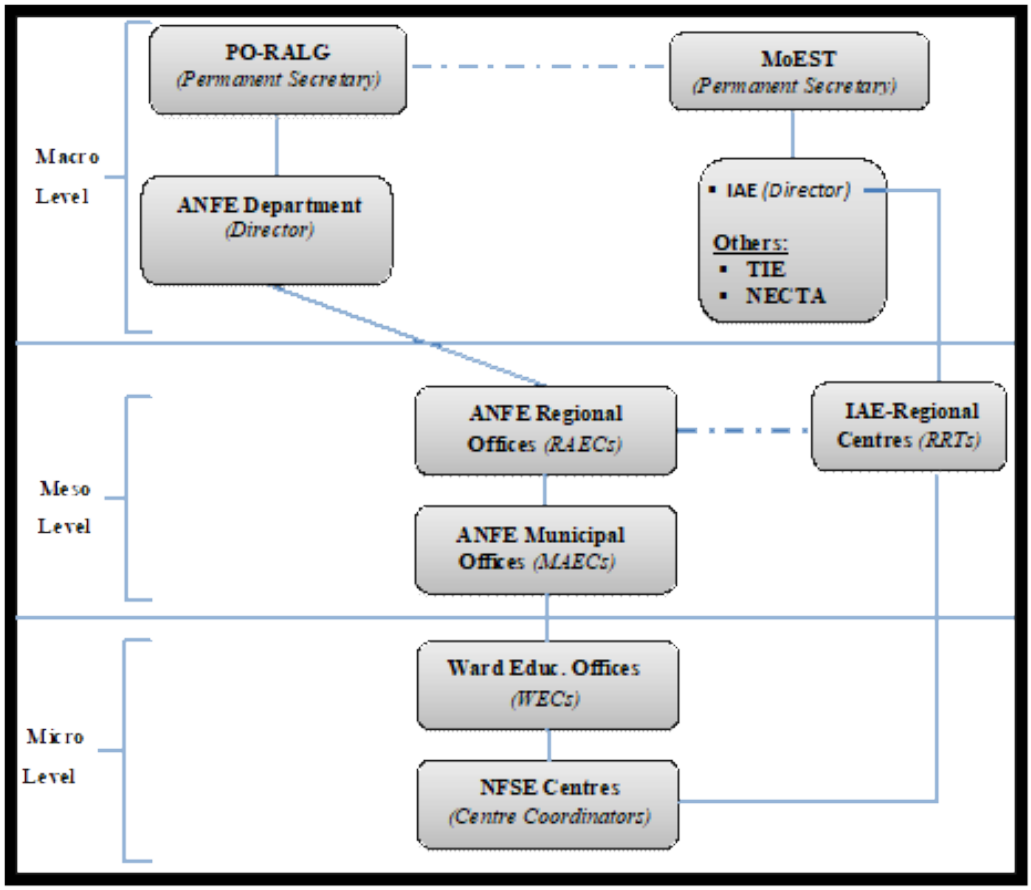

Figure 1. Conventional NFSE organisational structure
Source: URT (1975; 2013b)

Top NFE managers described this organisational structure as ideal in managing all the NFE programmes including NFSE, as it takes cognisance of all the institutions concerned in relation to their defined roles and responsibilities (URT, 2013b). However, NFSE actors at lower levels of operation had different experience and found the structure inflexible in accommodating the specific activities of NFSE and in linking all the parties from the grass-roots level when it comes to the actual governance of NFSE. As NFSE was ostensibly in the hands of two different ministries as depicted in Figure 1, there were parallel reporting systems that made its organisational structure somewhat too complex to operate. Besides, the NFSE governance was still a recent phenomenon and, thus, its institutional arrangement was still taking shape and, indeed, quasi-planned within the conventional ANFE institutional structure. In this regard, experiences by RRT and NFSE centre coordinators confirm that the conventional ANFE organisational

structure was neither specific nor functional for NFSE, but rather, it was too general for other NFE programmes. Thus, there was no single, well-integrated and accountable organisational structure that could harmoniously engage all the parties responsible for managing NFSE in the country. In fact, the situation was somewhat chaotic in the provision of NFSE, which led to its insufficient development and unsustainability. These findings suggest insufficient incorporation of NFSE in the country's institutional education structures. From the *educational change perspective,* the implication is that the provision of NFSE lack critical support from the central administration and other actors to keep the innovation sustainable (Fullan, 2007).

Operational NFSE organisational structure

Open and distance learning (ODL) coordinators from the IAE revealed and later it was confirmed through documentary review that, although the IAE was under the MoEST, it was a semi-autonomous institution mandated to design, institute and manage innovative NFE programmes in the country (URT, 1975). As such, the provision and management of NFSE in the country fell under its organisational structure. Thus, a more specific and operational NFSE organisational structure (Figure 2) was found to be operating concurrently as an alternative.

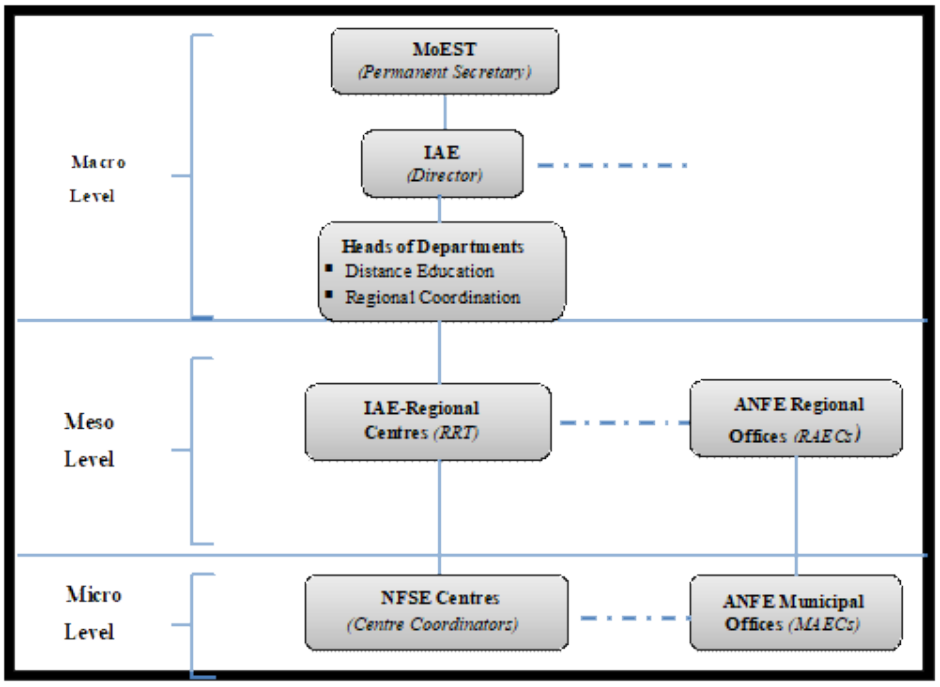

Figure 2. Operational NFSE organisational structure
Source: URT (1975; 2013b)

The study found this operational NFSE organisational structure to be more flexible and managed to connect directly all the key NFSE institutions and actors at different levels. Although the structure involves other institutions out of the mainstream, they played the non-core functions. As such, their linkage and interactions for the case of NFSE governance were simplified and, at some point, non-mandatory. In fact, the reporting system and administrative positions across levels in the mainstream were more straightforward and well-linked than the conventional structure.

NFSE institutional linkages and the functioning of different parts

Effective management of education provision depends on active interaction among supporting institutions which constitute a crucial means for working together effectively and efficiently (Torres, 2009). Under today's education reforms, this aspect requires proper linkage in order to stir more communication and attract more resources across different domains (Lasky et al., 2005; Sink & Smith, 1994). In the course of establishing the level of interactivity and functioning of the NFSE actors within the NFSE organisational structure, complexities of both horizontal and vertical linkages were depicted.

Inter-ministerial weak link and the polarised lower level functions

Figure 1 suggests that the inter-ministerial linkage between the MoEST and PO-RALG was more horizontal and, indeed, weak, fragmented and unsynchronised at the macro level (see the dotted lines). Interview responses reinforced the view that, although their roles and responsibilities related to NFSE were well defined within the institutional framework, their administrative linkage was non-existent. It was further established that there was no full-fledged ANFE department at the MoEST as it used to be in the past. In the meantime, the functioning of the ANFE department in the PO-RALG did not take cognisance of its defined roles related to NFSE and those of their lower units. Arguably, such a weak linkage is largely attributable to the complexity of the conventional organisational structure and autonomies vested in each part, whereby the two ministries work independently.

Consequently, NFSE activities became somewhat abandoned and attended to by none at that level. Local reports on the implementation of ANFE in the country also confirmed that its programmes have continually been constrained by shortcomings, mainly related to inter-ministerial linkage (URT, 2012). Such a weak link was found to affect adversely not only the execution of NFSE activities at their level but also to widen the gaps with the lower institutional levels. It was hence, making them dysfunctional for NFSE activities as in the cases of the RAEO and MAECs. In addition, it reduced efficiency in the NFSE provision, failed in its coordination role and undermined the best use of the resources available which eventually strained prospects for its sustainability.

Fragmented inter-departmental linkage and inconsistencies of NFSE practices

Apart from the IAE being largely responsible for NFSE activities as Figure 2 illustrates, NFSE was a multifaceted programme which involved other semi-autonomous institutions such as TIE and NECTA in curriculum design and assessment of performance respectively. Their horizontal institutional linkage was imperative for a collective responsibility of facilitating proper provision of NFSE to strengthen its capacity and guarantee its sustainability. However, such an important linkage was fragmented as illustrated in both Figures 1 and 2. Officials from TIE and NECTA confirmed that their working relationship in dealing with NFSE was weak and, consequently, this affected the coordination of their activities related to NFSE. This problematical relationship jeopardised the effective and sustainable provision of NFSE as it resulted in critical challenges and complaints in the areas of curriculum/syllabi and study materials, examination formats, as well as assessment and certification procedures. Lockheed et al. (1991) aptly allude to the fact that, when the lines of communication are blocked at the central level of education system, administrative weaknesses generally arise. Such a poor linkage resulted from the complexity of the adopted organisational structures with the ANFE sub-sector in the country being treated as a separate entity from the main education structure. On this basis, institutional management theorists strongly contend that for a meaningful change to occur in any intervention such NFSE, there is a need to strengthen the linkage among entities, within and between levels of an organisation (Sink & Smith, 1994).

Untied linkages and parallel working of the decentralised NFSE units

As both Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, the RAEC and RRT worked at the same level of management with almost similar managerial functions. Their administrative linkage was revealed to be more linear and informal with weak ties (see the dotted lines), whereas the two parties were working parallel and horizontally less interactive. The reason for such a poor linkage could be attributable to the set-up of the organisational structures and the managerial roles and autonomies vested in the hands of each actor, hence resulting in their fragmented and conflicting roles. As a result, a successful and sustainable provision of NFSE was not guaranteed at the micro level. Yet, working towards achieving a set of programme objectives is amplified as a matter of shared responsibility at different levels of public authority, and more importantly between and among them in an interactive way (Molle, 2007).

Parallel vertical communications and the emerging NFSE actors' contradictions

Interviews with NFSE managers revealed that the linkages and communications from MoEST and PO-RALG down to the local levels and vice versa were not in favour of thorough provision and effective coordination of NFSE activities as

envisaged in the institutional framework. In this regard, NFSE managers at the meso and micro levels confirmed that the existing vertical linkage from the central to regional and municipal levels was too indirect, disconnected and contradictory due to the structural complexity of the parallel channels of communication. Despite the slight direct vertical link that can be established from regional to municipal, ward and NFSE centre levels as seen in Figure 1, it was established that NFSE centres were practically less connected to the WECs, MAECs and RAEC than to the RRT. This was the case primarily because the adopted conventional organisational structure was more applicable to other ANFE programmes than the NFSE. Thus, NFSE, as a new intervention, most likely lacked any change in performance within the conventional NFE organisational structure.

On the other hand, the NFSE managers at the meso and micro levels revealed that the established vertical linkage in the operational structure (see Figure 2) was more straightforward and interactive from the IAE whereby the NFSE was basically coordinated, directed towards the RRT and NFSE centre coordinators. Such linkage made the structure more efficient and practical for easy provision and management of NFSE practices in the country. Nonetheless, vertical linkage displayed by the dotted lines in Figure 2 from the RRT to MAECs suggests that their interactivity was somewhat fragmented and only existed when a need arose. In fact, the MAECs were found to play only a subsidiary role and largely functioned outside the mainstream operational structure. However, their linkage breakups generated a bureaucratic system of communication and, inevitably, caused delays in finding solutions to the unfolding challenges at the NFSE centres. These NFSE centres were scattered region-wise but still closely affiliated with the MAECs.

All the findings suggest that institutional vertical linkage to the local levels was weakly established and, thus, stood as a major disturbing challenge to sustainable NFSE provision. Their strong linkage could help bridge the communication and accessibility gaps that existed among the macro, meso and micro levels of authority. From the principles of education change perspective, these findings suggest further that the sustainable provision of NFSE could not fully be guaranteed once there was no a practical programme management whose sustainability depends on the strong interconnection of the sub-systems (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010). The main effects were notable in the contradictions of actions of the various layers involved instead of supporting each other to achieve harmonised institutional goals.

Institutional coordination of activities and the functioning of NFSE units

Through interviews, it was established that several institutions and actors were engaged in managing the country's NFSE provision practices. Their roles were

well-stipulated though some were hardly found to be so in practice, and at some point they were uncoordinated. Other roles overlapped and were conflictual across levels and institutions depending on their established linkages. The subsequent sections analyse and discuss the key roles of NFSE actors and the emerging issues in their coordination at different institutional levels.

Institutional coordination gaps and the compromised financial mobilisation

During interviews and documentary review, it emerged that the MoEST and PO-RALG had a dual role of funding the open and distance learning, including NFSE and strengthening mechanisms for soliciting and mobilising financial resources from other sources. It was revealed during interviews that, such a government commitment was explicitly stated in the policy documents but not in actuality when it comes to execution. Furthermore, there was no full-fledged ANFE department at the MoEST, which could otherwise facilitate proper coordination of financial mobilisation. In the meantime, the same docket at PO-RALG tasked with coordinating ANFE budgets and their implementation was underserved. This was a mere job description, or blanket doctrine for all ANFE practices yet budgets in both ministries were not specifically earmarked for the ANFE sub-sector that covers NFSE. The practice was to lump all education sub-sectors within a single ministry together, with budgetary allocation depending on priority areas mostly basic and formal education (Macpherson, 2007). Thus, NFSE was severely affected as it was largely excluded from all financial arrangements and considerations. All these shortcomings threatened the sustainable provision of NFSE, largely caused by the absence of full-fledged and functional ANFE departments in the two ministries coupled with lack of a national coordination unit for all ANFE activities (Hoppers, 2007). Consequently, such a precarious situation adversely affected the coordination of other activities at the lower levels and reduced access to NFSE, which depends largely on the sustainable financial patterns in realistic budget envelopes (Lewin, 2008; OECD, 2003).

Since coordination of other activities at the meso and micro levels was also affected by the improper coordination at the macro level, the IAE through its regional offices organised and coordinated financial mobilisation activities by soliciting funds from the NFSE learners and providers in form of learners' registration fees, learning material costs, centre registration fee, and centre coordination fee. However, the costs charged affected the NFSE's day-to-day activities and their coordination at the centre level, as all the funds were centralised at the IAE-HQs, downsized and insufficiently released. Equally, it adversely affected the coordination of activities at the regional and NFSE centre levels. Since the public and private financial resources for NFSE were not well coordinated and optimised coupled

with an incoherent partnership, it was even challenging to reach significantly the potential beneficiaries of the programme. In sum, the findings demonstrate that the coordination of funds mobilisation for NFSE at the all levels was vague, a main reason behind the failure to institute change, let alone ensure sustainability (Fullan, 2007).

Conflicting roles and dilemma in adopting NFSE curriculum and study materials

The development of curriculum, syllabi and study material is crucial in maintaining the quality of NFSE. At the policy level, it was revealed to be a shared responsibility between the IAE and TIE, although the IAE was a statutory body responsible for coordinating the development of all NFE activities (URT, 1975, 2013a, 2013b). At the level of operation, the IAE through its Department of Regional Centres' coordination and in collaboration with the Department of ODL coordinated all the NFSE academic and administrative activities undertaken, including the preparation of NFSE study materials (in form of modules) and guides for learners and facilitators, which were later distributed to NFSE centres under the coordination of the RRT. Study materials were, however, tailored from the formal secondary education curriculum and syllabi developed by TIE by redesigning, integrating and modifying the content to meet the requirements of NFSE and its course design of two instead of four years for ordinary secondary education, and one instead of two years for advanced secondary education. In performing such a key role, nevertheless, TIE was a responsible organ for curriculum development as stated by one officer from TIE.

> IAE prepares NFSE study materials by adapting our [TIE] curriculum. This key role requires our expertise although we are not [directly] involved. As a result, it has created a lot of problems during examinations as NECTA sets examinations based on our curriculum, not that of IAE (Interview response from TIEO).

This statement suggests conflicting roles between the parties concerned, which basically might be triggered by lack of strong linkage between the MoEST units as revealed elsewhere, thus jeopardising the coordination of NFSE activities. The emerging inconsistencies and conflicting roles resulted further in dilemmas among NFSE providers when it came to adopting the curriculum, syllabi and study materials, which eventually affected the learners' academic performance. It was apparent that the institutional roles were inadequately coordinated between the responsible units, hence undermining the sustainable provision of NFSE. These findings may imply further that the NFSE institutional arrangements were not well-developed to bring about order and minimise uncertainties in the NFSE provision.

Institutional autonomies and mismatches in administering examinations

Documentary data showed that IAE and NECTA were to collaborate in registering candidates and administering examinations as per designed NFSE curriculum. However, interviews revealed that there was a weak coordination in accomplishing this role whereby the two units worked as independent entities despite falling under the same parent ministry and playing some related roles in overseeing NFSE examinations. In practice, NECTA was solely responsible for registering NFSE learners in their examinations, administering examinations and granting certificates. Nonetheless, IAE through their RRTs as NFSE coordinators in their localities were at least expected to coordinate the exercise of NFSE learners' registration for their national examinations. On the contrary, NFSE centre coordinators raised concerns, with one affirming that "…the IAE is not doing enough in coordinating our activities. Is there no any mechanism to coordinate the registration of our learners in their national examinations?" In essence, coordination of such an activity was one of the key roles of the IAE as part of learner support services necessary for them in open schools. In reality, individual learners were left to their own devices regardless of the difficulties of their learning environments.

Inevitably, there was untold suffering and even chaos in terms of improper information sharing between NFSE providers and learners, as well as irregularities and delays in their registration for national examinations which led to nullifications of their applications at some point besides the learners raising serious complaints. Yet, one NECTA official dismissed this as fairly insufficient measures to establish strong coordination of activities between IAE and NECTA, a situation that led to a fragmented examination registration exercise. Since the effects were imposed on the learners at the centre level, they were all dissatisfied as they paid coordination fees to the IAE but with no satisfactory value for money. Under this circumstance, incremental networking within the institutional framework was found to be lacking. This is an important missing piece in the jigsaw puzzle of realising effective coordination of NFSE activities between agencies (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991).

Regulating NFSE providers and the increasing provision of shadow education

Data obtained through documentary review and interviews revealed that registration of NFSE centres was directly coordinated by the IAE to regulate and facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of NFSE provision. In practice, however, coordination of this exercise involved RRT who in collaboration with MAECs and school inspectors visited the NFSE centres and ascertained their compliance with the set criteria and standards for the establishment and operation of centres before a report was filed with and elevated to the IAE level for endorsement and registration of qualified centres. Their focus was on the availability of teaching and learning materials,

the adopted syllabi, teaching and learning environment such as classrooms and desks, administrative premises, number of facilitators and their qualifications. Since this exercise aimed to regulate and accredit the NFSE centres that met the set standards for easy coordination, it was difficult to reach all the NFSE centres since the nationwide data for all NFSE providers was missing. Furthermore, registration and coordination fees charged to the NFSE centres also affected their turn up rate in registration. Data obtained from Dar es Salaam (Table 1) provides a tentative picture of status of registration of NFSE centres.

Table 1: *NFSE Centres' Registration Status in Dar es Salaam*

	Description	Public	Private	Total
1.	Estimated NFSE Centres in the region	14	221	235
2.	Centres waiting for registration	-	27	27
3.	Registered centres by January 2020	14	37	51

Source: RRT's Office – Dar es Salaam (2020)

This data suggests that out of the estimated 235 NFSE centres billed for inspection related to registration in Dar es Salaam region, only 78 (33%) were actually reached. Of these centres that were reached, only 51 (equivalent to only 21.5% of the projected 235 centres) were registered and thus qualified for NFSE provision. This NFSE centre mapping initiative in Dar es Salaam portrays a picture of poor and unsystematic coordination of NFSE activities in the country. Indeed, the 51 registered centres out of the estimated 235 is so small that a high number of NFSE centres were compelled to provide shadow education in the black market, whose practices are even more difficult to coordinate and regulate. It is evident that other parts of the country where data was not even available might face even more daunting challenges in coordinating NFSE provision than Dar es Salaam, hence raising questions enumerating to the sustainability of NFSE despite the multiplicity of providers.

Monitoring NFSE and the emerging quality threats

It also emerged from data analysis that NFSE actors at different levels within the MoEST and PO-RALG were mandated to make follow-ups, appraise standards, regulate and control the quality of NFSE provision. These activities were to be well coordinated at all levels as a means towards identifying problems, adjusting deviations, controlling quality and maintaining standards in a bid to establish performance indicators of efficiency, effectiveness and impact. It was established during interviews with IAE officials that monitoring and evaluation of the NFSE

programme was solely coordinated at the IAE-HQs and carried out by the RRTs as key players and, at some point, in collaboration with RAEC, MAECs and school inspectors (URT, 2013b). This process was to be done continuously by focusing on the quality of teaching and learning, learners' performance and qualifications of teachers, study materials, learning environment and the state of the centres. These components were useful in generating information essential for determining the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of a particular centre, as well as in pinpointing areas for improvement.

Nevertheless, the findings revealed that due to unsatisfactory coordination of activities across levels, monitoring and evaluation for maintaining NFSE quality faced a number of hurdles: Firstly, the process was still confined to a few registered NFSE centres, hence leaving the majority of unregistered centres without any monitoring despite co-existing with the registered ones. In effect, NFSE in the unmonitored centres was randomly offered in an environment that could not guarantee the achievement of the learning objectives and outcomes as well as the sustainability of this programme. Since the role of monitoring and evaluation is the key dimension in quality assurance and control, its improper coordination could, in turn, raise issues of uncertainty and discouragement to the learners, who were supposed to be motivated by standardised services that are supposed to be provided at the centres.

Secondly, it was found that even the registered NFSE centres, which were basically qualified for undergoing continuous monitoring and evaluation and paid dues for that purpose, were not regularly and systematically attended to. In fact, NFSE centre coordinators were dissatisfied with the entire process, arguing that it lacked specific schedules, it was sparingly and randomly done, and it was informal. The practice adversely impeded the provision of constructive remarks for adjustment and improvement at the NFSE centres, as well as the determination of the achievement of the objectives of the whole programme.

Thirdly, despite somewhat good arrangements for monitoring and evaluation made at some centres, their coordinators revealed that it was difficult for them to make significant improvements, as there was no useful feedback provided to them in the absence of a conclusive report with constructive comments for improvement. These anomalies compromised the quality and hampered efforts aimed to make necessary adjustments at the centre level, a threat to the sustainability of NFSE provision.

Compromised teaching and learning in a centralised NFSE coordination

Since NFSE centres were both public and private, coordination of their activities at the centre level differed. It was revealed that NFSE public centre coordinators were coordinating teaching and learning activities, keeping records and reporting to the RRT and later to the IAE where other centres' activities such as employment and deployment of facilitators, salaries and allocation of learning materials were centrally coordinated. Such centralised coordination seriously constrained teaching and learning due to red tape and delays in attending to and administering the immediate requirements of the centres. Private NFSE centre coordinators, on the contrary, had additional roles of coordinating the availability of teachers, teaching and learning materials and other facilities at the centre. Moreover, coordination at the public centres was by part-time teachers whereas in both public and private centres, all the teachers were part-timers, a situation that adversely affected proper coordination of teaching and learning activities. Although these challenges were attributable to poor coordination at the top level as affirmed by centre coordinators, even the centres' management teams were not well-established such that coordination of activities dwindled. These findings suggest that, problems related to coordination of NFSE were systemic and such complex NFSE activities across levels threatened the sustainability of the programme in the country in the absence of proper and effective coordination.

Conclusions and Recommendations

On the whole, the absence of a well-integrated and accountable organisational structure in managing NFSE provision appeared to imperil the rationalisation of its administrative practices. Hence, the inherent inconsistencies and conflicting of roles among NFSE institutions and actors within the set institutional framework. Moreover, the parallel reporting systems, fragmented institutional linkages and unsystematic coordination of activities across levels result in uncontrolled provision of NFSE largely in the black market. Overall, NFSE is insufficiently integrated in the education institutional framework. Meanwhile, the administrative processes essential for its sustainable provision is not well-established let alone being facilitated despite government stipulations in policy statements. Furthermore, the critical administrative support is largely missing from central to the lower levels, hence resulting in too many fragmented and uncoordinated NFSE practices and, eventually, unguaranteed sustainability of NFSE provision in the country. However, these emerging issues are hardly surprising in the Tanzanian context, as the ANFE sub-sector has been sidelined for so long and treated as a separate entity from the main education structure.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends for NFSE practices to be streamlined in the country's education institutional framework and be coordinated under one coherent, flexible and interactive organisational structure by establishing clear linkages and patterns of relationships among actors from the central to the micro institutional levels. Eventually, inconsistencies in practices will be significantly eliminated. In addition, a full-fledged and functional department within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for ANFE coordination is, therefore, essential to ensure proper organisational and sustainable provision of NFSE in the country.

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