

# RE-ENGINEERING ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION: AN EXAMINATION INTO ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

*The paper highlighted the importance of adult and non-formal education for the development of both young and old in Nigeria. It defined what the concept stands for, that is, education for people who were not privileged to attend formal education or people who dropped out of the school system or even for people who want to empower themselves more in various areas of endeavor. Nigerian policies towards adult and non-formal education were discussed; how the Tanzanian government enriched themselves through adult and non-formal education was highlighted. An examination into adult and non-formal education were looked into by considering the new dimensions the Nigerian government employed to boost the programmes such as, Basic Education programme, Women Adult Education Programme, Sandwich and Distance Education Programmes, Nomadic education. Hindrances encountered in making these programmes sail through were expressed such as corruption in various forms, nonchalant attitude of the organizers etcetera. Some recommendations were made such as availability of infrastructures for effective teaching and learning. Conclusively, the presenters posed that it requires peoples "WILL" to make this programme succeed for the development of our dear Nation.*

Education helps to organize people's lives in various ways by the knowledge and skills acquired, by the exposure one has embraced during his sojourn on earth, by series of interactions one has engaged himself. An educated man is an asset to his community in the

fact that he can influence a lot of activities which could bring about the development of his community. Social amenities, political awareness, economic efficiency, rural regeneration, development of manpower resources, development of modern man etcetera, can only materialize through functional education. Education elevates people to an enviable height, hence, we have the likes of Emeagwali, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and others too numerous to mention. These sons of Nigeria have made waves in the field of technological advancement and literary works. This notwithstanding, Nigeria with her huge population, still has a lot of people who are illiterates and semi-literates. For these people and others, adult and non-formal education would go a long way to help them discover the potentialities in them and even become employers of labour.

Education is a powerful instrument for empowering people (male or female), because without education the foundation for developing a better future for individuals would not see the light of the day. "Education is the most important instrument of change and any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004: 8). Education as a mobile treasure travels with an individual throughout life, and it enables one to grow and develop and be empowered to achieve one's global aspirations. Education is seen as an instrument "par excellence" for national development and also used as the bedrock for a sustainable development. Therefore it should be embraced with all seriousness.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The Nigerian government places a high premium on education of its citizenry and that was why the Third National Development Plan (1975-80) made provision for adult education for the first time in the history of this country. The Plan took into consideration the establishment of Centre for Adult Education for running Correspondence and Adult Education Courses and to conduct research into various aspects of adult and non-formal education. Adult and Non-formal education consist of functional literacy, vocational, cultural and civic education for the youths and also for adults who have left the formal school system. The National Policy on Education (2004) stated that the objective of adult and non-formal education is to provide functional and remedial education for the youths who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system. It is to provide functional literacy education for adult who have never had the opportunity of obtaining any formal education. It will help them be abreast of what is happening in the society. Another objective is to provide further education for the different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills. Adult and non-formal education provides in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.

*UNESCO (1997:41) defined Non-formal education as any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition*

*of Formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater for persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal programmes do not necessarily follow the "ladder" system, and may have differing durations, and may or may not confer certification of the learning achieved.*

The Tanzanian government adopted non-formal educational programmes either to provide knowledge and skills or for changing of attitude in order to open up a more positive approach towards technical change and progress. The traditional sector, which accounts for the bulk of the working population, is served by the agricultural-extension programme and by the community-development service. The former aims at increasing the output of the peasant farmer through introduction of improved farming techniques. The latter who operates also in urban areas, aims, in addition to its purely social objectives, at preparing the way for the introduction of modern techniques. The programme includes instruction in literacy and in basic health and organization of women's groups and self-help construction projects.

In Tanzania in-service training exists in both the public and private sectors. The civil service, which accounts for some 30 percent of wage employment, has a well-developed system of in-service training spread among the various ministries, most of which have their own training schemes for their employees. In the private sector, some of the larger enterprises have courses for training skilled labour, but this practice is not general. The community-development, agricultural-extension and health services are all represented in the development committees which exist at regional and district levels and which offers a means of co-coordinating the activities of these services. But non-formal education is not planned in the sense of being subject to a centralized planning process relating the various programmes to each other, to available finance and to the needs of the economy.

Actually, in Tanzania, non-formal education is seen not as a whole but as a collection of separate programmes. In essence adult and non-formal education in Tanzania was not without hitches, there were some difficulties encountered along the line such as lack of trained teachers, salary payment, remuneration and of course, lack of interest on the part of the trainers since it would not lead to civil service job (Kings, 1967). The total number of people enrolled in known courses of one kind or another was estimated at 600,000 in 1965, as shown in figure below:

**Table 1. Enrolment in Non-formal Education**

<b>Literacy Classes</b>	<b>569642</b>
Community Development follow-up Classes	16539
District and Farmers training centres	5000
Training within -industry (TWI)courses	189
Civil service in-service training courses	2010
Correspondence and evening courses	5100
Residential adult courses (Kivukoni College)	60
Total	598540

**Adapted from Planning Non-formal Education in Tanzania. HEP.1967**

Adult and non-formal education in Tanzania is not without problems because of the variety of aims and methods involved in educating the people. They had problem of co-ordination both at the planning stage and at the stage of implementation between related non-formal programmes. The second problem was the extent to which division of labour was established between non-formal and formal education. There was the problem of the organization and administration of non-formal education. Teachers were also in short supply because there was no salary as such and the youths who could have helped in the teaching did not find the job attractive since it would not lead them to civil service job. It was meant to be a voluntary service for the school Leavers. All the same, the Tanzanians enjoy the great advantage in literacy teaching of having a national language- Swahili- which means that the problem did not arise of having to choose English and a variety of vernaculars, as often the case in other African countries.

Non-formal education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the 1960s and early 1970s. Fordham (1993) suggested that in the 1970s, four characteristics could be associated with non-formal education as stated below:

- ✓ Relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- ✓ Concern with specific categories of persons.
- ✓ A focus on clearly defined purposes.
- ✓ Flexibility In organization and methods.

Some countries met considerable success with the use of adult and non-formal education, such countries as Russia, Cuba, Somalia, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Nicaragua. They were often quoted as having organized successful mass campaigns- particularly in respect of literacy (Coles, 1987:38). By mid 1970s a number of non-socialist countries were beginning to turn to the idea of mass non-formal education. It was obvious that there remained a large scale and apparently growing problem of illiteracy. It was also clear

that economic and social development depended on bringing about changes in many people's thinking. Faundez (1988) quoted by McGivney & Murray (1991:10);

*"The development process is in fact an educational process or rather it should unfailingly be viewed as such. We cannot therefore conceive of development in the absence of education any more than education in the absence of development".*

### **An Examination into Adult and Non-formal Education for National Development**

Nigeria with a huge population of over 150 million, with different multi-cultural groups, still suffers some setback in terms of literacy, community development, good health and environmental conditions. A country where many of its citizenry can neither read nor write cannot seriously talk about development; in what direction and by whom, if one is to ask. The National Policy on Education (NPE: 2004) stated in clear terms that every Nigerian child is entitled to education no matter where he/she is. The objective of the Nigerian philosophy on education is a guide to the Federal Government in its national planning process. The objectives are as follows:

1. A free and democratic society
2. A just and egalitarian society
3. A united , strong and self-reliant nation
4. A great and dynamic economy
5. A land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens (FME: 7)

For the nation to achieve these objectives, all the citizens must be literate so as to take care of themselves and others in terms of hunger, improved living environment; politics; raising a standard force (military and police) for maximum security and giving the Nigerian child the type of education that will help him discover himself more and more. Some people are illiterates today simply because they had no opportunity to enroll in formal education classes. The Nigerian government introduced series of reforms including Adult and non-formal education programmes to ensure that all adults including the youths are given an opportunity to be literate and assist, in a large scale, in the development of Nigeria. Re-engineering adult and non-formal education in Nigeria is crucial at this point of our development, since, according to Nyerere of Tanzania who believed that people must develop first before the nation can develop. It is human beings that would bring about development through knowledge, skills, exposure which they must have acquired during their interactive sessions.

The Nigerian government is working relentlessly to ensure that education of the masses is given the right boost since development depends entirely on it. Agency for mass/adult education has been established in all the 30 states of the federation including Abuja. Various directorates for public education and enlightenment such as

Directorates of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DEFRI), the National Directorate for Employment (NDE), the laudable Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), War against Indiscipline (WAI), Better Life for Rural Women and the Family Support Programmes were created for the development of the country. These directorates are faced with enormous task of mobilizing the people of Nigeria towards the attainment of our five national development objectives stated earlier in this paper. Citing Ewuzie (in Change in Adult Education in Nigeria, 2012) "We cannot wait for our children according to Nyerere of Tanzania, we must educate the adults since our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten or even twenty years... adults have an impact now".

The Nigerian government has introduced a lot of innovations in adult education in Nigeria starting with Basic Literacy Programme. This programme is run for one month and it was organized and financed by some Local Government Councils in some States of the Federation. Ministries of Education coordinate and supervise the activities of this programme.

The Nomadic Education Programme (under the National Commission for Nomadic Education) NCNE, started in November 1986, after the Yola National Workshop on Nomadic Education, still a good number of the Fulani have not embraced this 25 year old programme. Government has spent millions of naira on Nomadic Education programme, with modified curriculum in English, arithmetic, social studies, and primary science as developed by the Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto. Yet, the measure of educational attainment among the Fulani remains low. Despite N1.04trillion that the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) project had gulped, since 2006, as disclosed by Az-Zubair, the government still cannot develop Fulfulde language which is the mother tongue of the Fulani, to replace English as a medium of instruction in the Nomadic Schools (Nomadic Education and MDG, THE NATION ON SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2011, P. 21).

For the migrant group such as the cattle rearers, the fishermen and farmers, mobile schools or School-on-the-wheel was recommended for them. This is due to the fact that they move from place to place in search of greener pastures for their cattle; the fishermen are involved in on-shore and off-shore fishing therefore they need to be followed around for them to receive education bearing in mind that the national policy on education stated that all sons and daughters of Nigeria are entitled to education no matter where they are found. A group of farmers also move from one farmland to another in search of fertile land so they need to be educated.

Sandwich programme is another avenue for educating adults and young people that are willing to further their education. This programme is organized by various tertiary institutions to enable them acquire more knowledge and skills to boost their work, be abreast with the new development in education sector and the world at large. Interested candidates come for this programme during long vacation and weekends since most of them are committed almost all the year.

Distance education programme is another way of educating adults and youths in Nigeria. This programme is managed by the States Ministries of education and some institutions of Higher Learning. Their medium of instruction is by correspondence, that is, either through the Radio or television. Unsteady electricity might jeopardize the effort of those who are interested in this programme. The people in the rural areas are worst hit since light is very inconsistent and at times it is so faint that one might not be able to make maximum use of it.

### **Challenges**

It is the wish of the Federal government to make all the citizens literate so as to make development faster, but a lot of hindrances work against this laudable effort. Such hindrances include insufficient funds to manage the programme. In the early 1970s, Nigeria was one of the richest countries in the world. Today, the story is different as Nigeria has become one of the 25 poorest countries. Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of oil, but has the third largest number of poor people besides China and India. Sheyin (2007) ascertained that going by available statistics and the criterion of US \$ per day, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria increased from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 46.3 percent in 1985, 65.6 percent in 1996 and 69.2 percent in 1997.

Corruption is another hindrance that has eaten deep into the fabrics of human beings in Nigeria and that puts a stumbling block to all the laudable projects various governments mapped out for the citizenry. Nigeria has depreciated from multi-economy country to mini-economy and this is caused by corruption. According to Sheyin (2007), Nigerian Leaders have been stealing large sum of money huge enough that his commission had already recovered assets worth 5 billion dollars from corrupt Nigerians. Fafunmi expressed that corruption has always been the bane of our development (THISDAY, vol. 17, no. 6132, p.18). He vehemently lamented, "How can we fight corruption".

Non-challant attitude of the organizers hinder the progress of the programme by not mounting intensive supervision to monitor what is happening on ground. Poverty is another area of concern since people who would have showed interest in the adult programme might be financially crunched and so could not take part. If the

programme is completely free no government can carry the responsibility whole and entire without affected to other areas of economy in this country.

Insufficient infrastructures for effective teaching and learning were not provided thereby making the programme not achieve its objectives. Class rooms should not be overcrowded to enable the learners participate actively in the learning process. People in the rural areas do not have equal opportunity as people in the city; effort should be made to mount adult and non-formal education in those areas with much campaign /publicity by their own people.

### **Conclusion**

There is need for a new Nigeria where people would discover themselves through adult and non-formal education; be in a position to help themselves and, of course, be employers of labour.

It requires people's "WILL" to rebrand Nigeria because rebranding cannot come from the blues and implementation of non-formal education is part of rebranding the Nigerian state.

Awareness should take a different dimension with all seriousness as to enable the populace see the need to participate since it would make them more productive in their occupation, for example, they would acquire more bargaining power in their buying and selling.

Re-engineering adult and non-formal education is crucial at this point of our development since, according to Nyerere of Tanzania who believed that people must develop first before the nation can develop. We are equally stating that we cannot afford to wait for the children; that adults have an impact now.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the numerous points cited in this paper we are recommending that there should be massive sensitization on the importance of adult and non-formal education which will pave way for fast development in a developing nation as Nigeria.

Serious publicity should be embarked on for many people to respond to the various programmes mapped out by the government. The problem with Nigeria is that people only work where they will benefit. The interest of the masses is immaterial to many who are fortunate to be where they are.

Amanchukwu (2009) expressed that empowerment of adult women through adult and non-formal education would enhance women's participation in productive activities in the society. Women should be encouraged to possess skills that will make them marketable in the labour force.

Poverty would be reduced if the masses acquire life-long skills which will help them in taking vital decisions concerning hygiene, etiquette, quality of food and communication.

The citizens having known their rights and privileges would help in addressing issues of national concern such as "why don't we have constant light? Parents (in particular) would see the need to equip the classrooms for effective teaching and learning.

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