
RE-ENGINEERING ADULT EDUCATION FOR THE NEEDS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA THROUGH GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

AMAKA V. OKANUME-ONAH
*Department of Educational Psychology,
College of Education, Zing,
Taraba State.*

And

EUCHARIA C. EZEONWUKA
*Department of Educational Foundations,
College of Education, Zing,
Taraba State.*

Abstract

Achieving and promoting sustainable development is a responsibility saddled on all and sundry. In education sector, every segment of this sector (adult education inclusive) is devoted to achieving this noble course. Of course, adult education is designed to provide basic literacy for a huge member of the society through informal, formal and non-formal forms. In this wise, adult education is meant to reduce illiteracy, poverty, health-related diseases so as to ensure sustainable development of individual and society at large. This paper therefore reveals the gap created by not infusing guidance counselling in adult education programme in Nigeria and argues for proper use of guidance counselling in adult education programme in its bid to achieve sustainable development. Among others, the paper recommended active participation of all stakeholders in the education sector to give concerted efforts to adult education programme.

Key words: Re-engineering, Adult education, Sustainability, Guidance, Counselling.

In recent time, the importance of guidance counselling in education programme and indeed adult education has been accorded great attention. Although, guidance counselling in adult education is yet to gain professional practice when compared with other learning programmes (See Raschauer & Resch, 2016); rather public and private organizations of adult education, employment agencies, other government agencies, counselling firms, human resources departments within corporations, regional networks, NGOs among others offer guidance counselling services. It means that adult education has not been given priority attention to contribute to national development.

Globally, education is regarded as an instrument for development. In the same vein, education in Nigeria is an instrument 'par excellence' for effecting national development (FRN, 2011). Adult education which is an aspect of education has the potentiality of contributing to development through the empowerment of individuals politically, socially and economically. According to Omolewa (2011) and Aderinoye (2007) adult education is an organized and sequential learning experience designed to meet the felt needs of the adults. Nzeneri (2012) opined that it is in adult education that emphasis is placed on lifelong learning, education as a process and agent of liberation, a tool for adjustment, for self and national development, for cultural awareness and integration, for conscientization and group dynamism. For him, adult education is "any education given to adults based on their social, political, cultural and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society.

In other words, adult education is an empowerment strategy through which adults can uplift themselves socially and economically to enable them participate fully in the personal and national development. Sustainable development is an essential component of an adult education programme in every society. World Commission on Environment and Development cited in Audu (2017) described sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development must involve an all round development of the individual and the society.

On the other hand, the goals of sustainable development could be better achieved through the provision of adult education. In view of this, International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), cited in Onyishi (2010) observed that the essence of sustained and integrated balanced development is to achieve social, economic and political justice that leads to the liberation of mankind and in so doing eradicate such scourges as mass poverty and mass illiteracy. Therefore, every nation has the preoccupation of providing sustainable development for her citizens.

It is evident that adult education concentrates on programmes and strategies that will help reduce poverty and facilitate individual and community development. Jorge (2016) argued that educational processes like adult education are geared to strengthen popular organization, citizenship movement, the popular economic sector and local community development. This points to the fact that adult education is a

viable tool for achieving sustainable development. However, if adult education could achieve such a laudable objective, why is guidance counselling not given full place in this system of education? Put differently, to what extent can guidance counselling improve on adult education so as to attain sustainable development in Nigeria?

Concept of Adult Education

Adult education can be said to be any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfillment as a lifelong learner (Free, Encyclopedia, 2017). Merriam, Sharan and Brockett (2007) defined adult education as a practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. This system of education reflects a specific philosophy about learning and teaching based on the assumption that adults can and want to learn, that they are able and willing to take responsibility for that learning, and that the learning itself should respond to their needs.

Merriam and Brockett (2007) maintained that different motives drive by what one needs or wants to learn, the available opportunities, and the manner in which one learns, characterized adult education. The learning happens in many ways and in many contexts just as all adults' lives differ. Specifically, adult learning can be in any of the three forms identified by Bruce (2016):-

- **Formal:** Structured learning that typically takes place in an education or training institution, usually with a set curriculum and carries credentials.
- **Non-formal:** Learning that is organized by educational institutions but with no credential. Non-formal learning opportunities may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations and groups.
- **Informal education:** Learning that goes on all the time, resulting from daily life activities related to work, family, community or leisure (e.g. community baking class).

Therefore, the centrality of adult education is to empower people for change and development. This is why the developmental roles of adult education according to Nyerere (2006) incorporate anything that enlarges man's understanding, activates them, helps them to make their own decisions and to implement those decisions for themselves. Similarly, the aim of education including adult education according to Fafunwa cited in Onyishi (2010) includes the development of practical skills, character training, teaching, respect for elders, teaching the values of honest labour, inculcating a sense of belonging and community spirit and promoting cultural heritage. This makes adult education the least conventional branch of education, the one with the greatest degree of heterogeneity and the one that is most closely associated with social and political development (Rivero, 2013).

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has been variously conceived in terms of vision expression (Lee, 2003), value change (Clark, 2009), moral development (Rolston, 2004), social reorganization (Gore, 2012) or transformational process (Viederman, 2004) toward a desired future or better world. The core idea was defined most influentially by The World Commission on Environment and Development cited in (Audu, 2017) as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In its broadest sense, this normative abstraction has been widely accepted and endorsed by thousands of governmental, corporate, and other organizations worldwide.

The basic principles underlying sustainable development can be separated into a social, economic, and ecological dimension. The economic growth is used as a determinant for development. No country can achieve a sustainable economic growth if the environment is worsened, if the prosperity is not fairly distributed and if growth of the human resources has not taken place. Therefore, the economic dimension reveals that economical growth shall carry on with: respect to the environment; growth of the people's health and education; and a fair distribution of prosperity. The social dimension points out the importance of resources, power and influence being fairly distributed and that people can feel security and can participate. The social dimension is therefore a requirement for economic growth. The environment dimension means that considerations are taken for the social and economical development. These three dimensions are integrated with one another as they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

From the above, concerted efforts ought to be geared towards sustainable development with special attention to the three basic components of sustainability, i.e economic, ecology and social participation. There is no doubt that sustainable development seeks personal development of an individual or people with which national development could be attained. Sustainable development engages people in negotiating a sustainable future by collectively making decisions and acting on them accordingly. While it is generally agreed that sustainable development include basic education for community members (Huckle & Sterling, 2008), Tilbury and Wortman (2010) highlighted essential skills for sustainable development as follows:-

- **Envisioning-** being able to imagine a better future. The premise is that if we know where we want to go, we will be better able to work out how to get there.
- **Critical thinking and reflection-** learning to question our current belief systems and to recognize the assumptions underlying our knowledge, perspective and opinions. Critical thinking skills help people to learn to examine economic, environmental, social and cultural structures in the context of sustainable development.
- **Systemic thinking-** acknowledging complexities and looking for links and synergies when trying to find solutions to problems.

- Building partnerships- promoting dialogue and negotiation, learning to work together.
- Participation in decision-making- empowering people.

Guidance Counselling

Guidance is the process used to induce positive functionalities into abilities, interest, attitudes, aptitudes, and at the same time, turn around weaknesses. In this sense, it involves provision of direction or advice as in a decision or course of action, showing the way; setting and helping to drive, lead, assist, pilot and steer ideals into individuals by counselling professionals to enhance the achievement of goals (Egbo, 2015). Denga in Egbo (2015) defines guidance as a cluster of formalized services through which help is given to individuals in situations where adjustment, planning, interpretation of information, and choice are needed. That is, guidance involves rendering assistance to individuals or group of people to enable them direct themselves and relate their needs effectively to requirements, demand and opportunities of social, educational, occupational and psychological situations.

Technically, Arbuckle, Peter and Farewell in Sani (2014) clarify the term guidance by pointing out the distinctive features implicit in the word as guidance is used as:

- (a) A concept (mental image)
- (b) An educational construct (intellectual synthesis) and;
- (c) Services (actions taken to meet a demand).

As a concept, guidance denotes the utilization of a point view in order to help pupils understand themselves; and as a service, it refers to the procedures and process organized to achieve a helping relationship. Similarly, Egbo (2015) define guidance as a process, developmental in nature by which an individual is assisted to understand, accept and utilize his abilities, aptitudes interest and altitudinal patterns in relation to his aspirations. In this context, guidance can be construed as an organized helping relationship meant for student clients to re-define issues and use same to achieve full adjustment in and outside schools in order to be useful to selves and the society. It is both a process and procedure for achieving full adjustment among people for sustainable self development.

However, counselling is seen as an interactional process meant to enhance redefinition of stand for positive adjustment on particular issues of life. Sani (2014) defines counselling as a relationship in which one person (a professional counsellor), endeavours to help another (a client with problem) to understand the counsellor and solve his adjustment problems. He itemized as follows that:

- a. Areas of adjustment are often indicated, (example, educational, vocational and personal- social counselling);
- b. Reference is usually for helping normal counselees, but creeps imperceptibility into the fields of psychotherapy;

c. While everyone occasionally undertakes counselling, the word is preferably restricted to professionally trained persons.

From the above, counselling is an in-depth interaction between the professional counsellor and the counsellee that focuses basically on areas of nurturing and healing emotionality, problems management, decision making, crises management, and support and life skills training. Egbochuwku (2008) defines counselling as a facilitative two way collaborative exchange of ideas with a supportive relationship that enables clients to explore their problems. Hence, counselling aims at assisting clients to better understand himself in relation to the present and future problems.

To this end, guidance counselling is used to describe situations where a trained counsellor strives to steer a troubled client out of the typified problem. It is a helping relationship meant to ensure a sustainable adjustment and development of the individual clients. In this paper, guidance counselling is defined as a servicing box which is meant to enhance the optimal development of the school children in areas of academic, vocational aspirations and in resolving personal social problems.

Adult Education and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Considering education as a potent tool in achieving national development in Nigeria (See FRN, 2011); adult education which is one of the recognized Nigerian systems of education helps towards attaining sustainable development. For Umezulike (2006), adult education is meant to improve the individual and subsequently, the society in which the individual lives in. The improvement of individual here implies acquisition of skills, values and knowledge which will sustain him in future and enable him contribute to his community, thereby bringing about sustainable development.

Conference on Lifelong Learning, Higher Education and Active Citizenship (2007) described adult education as a lifelong process. It reaffirms that only human centered development and a participatory society based on full respect of human rights will lead to sustainable and equitable development. To inform and effect participation of men and women in every sphere of life is needed if humanity is to survive and to meet the challenges of the future. The communiqué at the conference maintains that adult education is a powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development for democracy, justices, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflicts is replaced by dialogue and culture of peace based on justice. The conference holds that the potential contributions of adult education in sustainable development should be built upon the creation of our informed and tolerant citizenry, economic and social development, the promotion of literacy, the alleviation of poverty and the preservation of the environments is enormous and should be built up for achieving sustainable development.

The above indicates that the objectives of adult education which include to develop the autonomy and the sense of responsibility of people and communities, to

reinforce the capacity to deal with the transformations taking place in the economy, in culture and in society as a whole, and to promote co-existence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in their communities, to take control of their destiny and society in order to face the challenges ahead, are meant for sustainability of development. In this wise, adult education is not just a basic right education, but it is indeed one of the building blocks of human development. It is a foundation for progress in areas such as human capital, health, nutrition and the development of institutions and democracy.

Hence, the role of adult education in sustainable development can be comprehended through the complex interaction existing between all its forms and the economic, social and cultural determinant factors of African development (Seya, 2015). The author stresses that the economic role of adult education in development is apparent in its contribution to human capital formation, and other aspects of society. It is obvious that adult education contributes significantly to the success of each of the three basic elements of sustainable development (i.e economic, environment and social participation).

Put differently, sustainable development can be enhanced through peoples' participation in adult education programme, which will bring about well-paid job opportunities, labour productivity, health-care, sexual and reproductive health services, the development of new medicines, sanitation, and nutrition which will improve peoples' standard of living and productivity and at the same time reduces sickness, poverty, mortality rates, diseases that devastate poor people, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other parasites. Thus, adult education is any education given to adults based on their social, political, cultural and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society. It could be deduced that adult education is an indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development. But what does a guidance counsellor offer to adult educator in succeeding in this task?

Duties of Guidance Counsellor in Adult Education Programme towards Sustainable Development in Nigeria

In recent years, guidance counselling has been at the forefront of European lifelong learning policies (see Commission of the European Communities 2007; European Universities Charter on Lifelong Learning 2008). Guidance counselling is said to be "a range of activities such as information, assessment, orientation and advice to assist learners, trainers and other staff to make choices relating to education and training programmes or employment opportunities" (European Parliament of the Council cf. Brooks/ Burton 2008). Thus guidance counselling may include:

- i. Counselling (personal or career development, educational guidance);
- ii. Assessment (psychological or competence/performance related);

- iii. Information on learning and labour market opportunities and career management;
- iv. Consultation with peers, relatives or educators;
- v. Vocational preparation (pinpointing skills/competences and experience for job seeking);
- vi. Referrals (to learning and career specialists).

It can be inferred that guidance counselling is a diverse set of activities that encompass practices of informing, consulting and also training adult learners. It can actually occur in specific organizations providing adult education, across individual providers of service and also in the workplace, communal centers or other facilities. It implies that it is not confined to a two person face-to-face interaction but can involve group sessions or telephone and online services (OECD/European Union 2010). (See Fig i).

It should be noted that guidance counselling is infused into adult education programme so as to enrich the programme and help adult learners achieve their intention of participating in the programme. In support of this, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2010) described guidance counselling as a range of activities designed to help individuals take educational, vocational or personal decisions and carry them out before and after they enter the labour market. In recognition of its (guidance counselling) importance, the Centre for Autonomous Learning (2009) offered the services in various forms, for example, it can be developed and implemented as a completely independent activity, aiming to provide guidance support to adults in all phases of the education process, prior to participation, during the education process and afterwards. Or it can be implemented as a part of the education process where the teacher/educator assumes the role of the counsellor and mentor, who guides adults on their learning path and helps them achieve concrete education/learning objectives. It can be dedicated to attainment of learning objectives in specific forms of education; e.g. counselling in Centres for Independent Learning and Knowledge Exchanges.

In order to enable adult learners achieve their aims, guidance counselling was incorporated into adult learning programme with different models of reaching out to adult learners. McGivney (2011) highlighted four possible models as thus:

1. **Satellite model:** foundation of smaller branches of major centres in smaller local communities;
2. **Peripatetic model:** provision of guidance in different education environments, such as day-care centres, homes for the elderly, local community centres, hospitals, prisons etc.;
3. **Detached outreach model:** establishing contact with people outside institutions (e.g. in the street, shopping malls, restaurants etc.);
4. **Domiciliary outreach model:** visiting of people at their home.

In all the models, five key areas are essential for effective realization of adult education programme. They are;

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- The development of lifelong guidance systems;
- The broadening of access to guidance across the lifespan;
- The strengthening of quality-assurance mechanisms for guidance services, information and products, especially from a citizen/user perspective;
- The refocusing of guidance provision to develop citizens' career management skills;
- The strengthening of structures for policy and systems development at national and regional levels.

Again, guidance counselling has numerous responsibilities to carry out to promote sustainable development via adult education, ranging from choice of course to nature of career demands and future development of the learners. McGivney (2011) listed the duties and responsibilities to include:

- a. Provides general educational and career development assistance for each adult learner as assigned; evaluates previous educational experiences, advises the sequence of courses most appropriate to the learners' ability and goals; acquaints them with course requirements for graduation/completion; develops a realistic career plan for them.
- b. Represents the centre in community forums for the purpose of maintaining ongoing community support for educational goals, establishing school/community partnerships and/or assisting with issues related to centre environment.
- c. Assists in activities related to participant registration and orientation.
- d. Supplements centre staff efforts by providing counseling services to adult participants including English as a Second Language and Migrant Education students, in areas of academic achievement, behavior and health.
- e. Counsels with parents of participants as assigned or specified in the project procedures.
- f. Assists and participates in staff development activities, meetings or other in-service as designated.
- g. Maintains and reviews data to assist and develop appropriate services.

See (fig. 1) for conceptual interface between Counselling in Adult Education and Sustainable Development

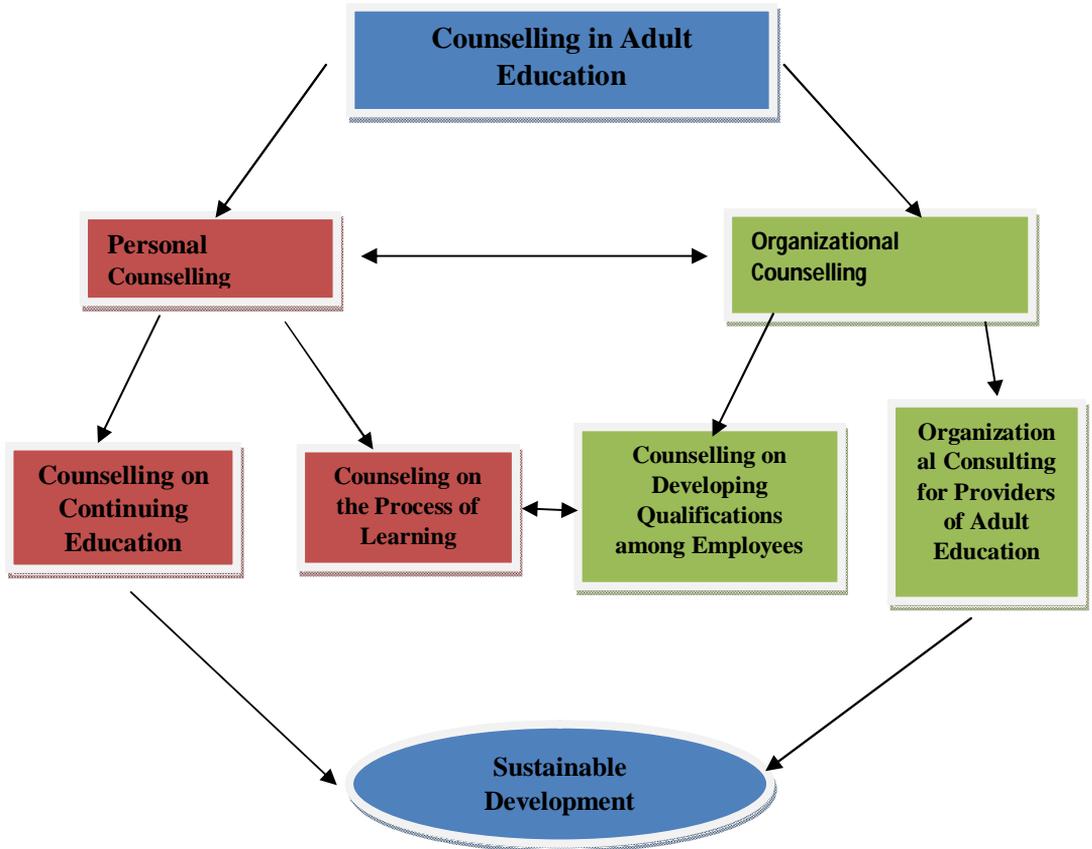


Fig 1: Showing Interface between AE, GC and SD

Source: Raschauer and Resch, (2016).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident from the above that guidance counselling is a necessity for realization of adult education programmes especially in achieving sustainable development. The paper underscores the role of adult education towards developing individual learners as well as society at large. Hence, adult education accommodates the three basic elements of sustainable development in its operation, thereby developing, improving and changing adult learners' perception of world around them and ensuring sustainability of personal and societal development.

Recommendations

Based on the review of this paper, the following recommendations are made to scale up adult education towards achieving sustainable development:-

1. Government at both the national and state levels should draw policies that will make adult education effective and more so make good provisions for adult education in their budget.
2. Adult Education centres should be gifted with a professional guidance counsellor and well equipped with learning facilities to attract participants.
3. Adult Education Centres should be adequately funded by the government to enhance procurement of infrastructures and learning materials and equipment.
4. Non-Governmental Organizations and philanthropists should support government in funding, providing learning and infrastructural needs that will make adult education effective.
5. Community participation in Adult Education programme should be encouraged by the government for Sustainable Development.
6. Seminars/workshops should always be organized by all stakeholders to sensitize and enrich participants, instructors, adult educators and other stakeholders in adult education.
7. Staff development for teachers as adult education sustainers should be encouraged by the National and State agencies for adult education.
8. Awareness creation especially on the concept of Adult Education and its role in sustainable development should be invigorated by Media Specialists.
9. Adequate access to Information and Communication Technology should be provided for adult guidance counsellor to deliver effectively.
10. Distance-based and open learning system of education should be encouraged by institutions to make education accessible to adult for the development of their potentials towards sustainable national development.

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