

CURRENT PLANNING ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Planning is the secret behind all success in human endeavour. Therefore proper planning in Adult Education is very important as it can transform African countries to become developed within the shortest period of time. This paper discussed the concept of educational planning, stages in planning and finally, the major constraints to planning with a view to find lasting solutions to the problems highlighted.

Importance of planning in education cannot be over emphasized therefore, in African countries, there is the need for proper and effective planning so as to satisfy the demand for better education which aims at providing manpower for development.

Educational planning entails conscious, deliberate systematic and rational decision making process designed to influence future course of action in school system with the ultimate aim of making the most efficient and effective use of the limited resources for the attainment of educational objectives.

The essence of planning is to provide guidelines for plans implementation and evaluation as well as assess problems encountered in the process and make systematic modifications where necessary until the set goals are achieved

This paper discusses the concept stages and importance of planning in education , the concept of adult education, and its constraints.

The Concept of Educational Planning

Planning is generally believed to be a device for ensuring rational control of the future (Carden and wildausky 1974). Its sole aim is to make the future different from what it would have been without intervention. In other words, if one has hope for the future and wishes to influence its character, it is therefore necessary to plan.

The term planning according to Ovwigbo (1999) connotes a process that involves the selection of fact and assumptions that are related to the future, with the aim of visualizing and formulating the desired outcome to be attained. Peretomode (1995) defined planning as a process which essentially involves deciding in advance, the specific future course of action to be adopted with a view to optimizing the use of limited organizational resources towards desirable and specified goal attainment.

Academic Scholarship

Coombs (1972) sees educational planning as the application of a systematic rational analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of the society. Educational planning as a human activity is concerned with preparing sets of decisions to ensure the achievement of future development goals and values through effective use of the resources available for education (Adesina 1981). It is believed that the process dwells on the conscious attempt made by governments at any level, to link the development efforts to their educational systems. In short, it is a process of preparing a set of decisions for action in future (Sanda, 2007).

Generally all the above definitions show that educational planning aims at planned transformation of the education system to ensure maximum realization of the goals expected of the education industry or enterprise.

The Concept of Adult Education

Adult education has large theoretical boundary that everything and anything can be taught in it. In view of its broad nature, adult education defies a single meaning. Knowles (1980) defined adult education as

A discrete system of all the individuals, institutions and associations concerned with the education of adults and perceives them as working towards the common goals of improving the methods and material of adult learning, extending the opportunities for adults to learn, and advancing the general level of our culture.

Perhaps the broadest and most frequently cited definition was developed by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Social, cultural Organization) and formally approved in 1976. It state that:

...the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development

Adult education thinkers take different views as to what adult education should be. Adult education is viewed by some thinkers as a political struggle and by others as an avenue for economic advancement (Edwards, 1995).

Importance of Planning in Education

Planning in education is very important because of the following reasons.

1. Education is planned so that the limited educational resources of a society can be rationally allocated among the various competing educational demands and programmes.
2. It regulates implementation of educational plans by controlling deviation that may occur in the process
3. Educational planning gives direction, facilitates, controls and provides the basis for evaluation
4. Educational planning regulates the rising cost of education by designing measures that control educational expansion
5. Educational planning minimizes wastes in financial, human and material resources within the educational system.

Stages in Educational Planning in Africa

For effective planning the following stages are of paramount importance.

Survey Planning

As the name implies, the existing necessary data and information should be organized and analyzed to show the existing state of educational development and areas of need. Here the opinions of the public and other stake holders are sought, harnessed and deliberated upon with the view to determining the educational needs of the society.

Defining of Goals and Objectives:

At this stage, the goals and objectives to be pursued and achieved are defined clearly. This is done so that the government will have a clear blue print of the educational needs of the society.

Programme Design:

At this stage, the goals defined earlier are being programmed in order to assist the government. This is done with the view to choosing the most effective programme for implementation.

Programme Implementation:

When the most effective and efficient programme must have been identified for achieving the educational needs, the next thing is implementation of the programme. At this stage, human and material resources are required for effective management of the programme

Evaluation:

Here, the programme is evaluated to see the extent to which the identified goals and objectives have been achieved.

The Major Obstacles to Effective Planning of Adult Education in Africa

Although planning aims at creating a condition under which the population will be able to improve their living conditions and where other activities can flourish and resources properly utilized. There are problems which limit the achievement of these objectives. These problems vary in severity from one country to another. Until these problems are identified and solutions sought, the planning endeavours of adult education will continue to be a matter of trial and error. The problems are many but below are some of them are:

Shortage of Funds

In many countries the fund which is supposed to be voted for adult education is diverted to other sectors of the economy. In addition to this, most of the adult learners cannot generate enough funds to carry out their planning programmes. In Nigeria for example, the adult education programme under the jurisdiction of local government area depends on federal government grants for their operation. Under this arrangement, adult education activities suffer from inadequate and uncertain funding. This problem has been there since colonial period as Omolewa (2007) opined that we know that funding has remained a major constraint to the furtherance of Adult Education.

Poor Staffing

Planning at the local level should rest on the local government staffs that are familiar with the needs and priorities of the local environment. Unfortunately, the local governments lack the qualified staff to carry out the required planning activities. The practice in Nigeria for example is to attach local government areas to some urban centres for the purpose of directing and planning in the local government areas. By this practice, the local governments are often forgotten and hardly do they get the opportunity of benefiting from knowledge of professional or trained planners.

It is evident that there is lack trained and qualified manpower to plan adult education programmes as Muhammad (1986) posited thus “lack of trained and qualified personnel at all levels has been a major obstacle to planning educational programmes at federal, state and local levels of Nigeria’s education”.

Shortage of Equipment

Another obstacle to the planning of Adult education in Africa is the acute shortage of equipments for completion and analysis of data, Muhammad (1986) observed that, “a chronic shortage of equipments (such as calculators, typewriters, duplicators, stencils etc) which are generally in short supply in Nigeria for compilation, analysis and predictions has similarly constrained the work of planners and administrators”.

Conflicting of Planning Programmes

Adult Education planning programmes especially in Nigeria are mounted by the three tiers of government the federal, state and local. These programmes though geared towards improving the literacy level of the people are sometimes conflicting and involve

repetitions. This results from lack of consultation and improper flow of communication between various levels of government. In Nigeria at present, there are many mechanisms for integrated planning involving all the levels of government which are interested in planning Adult Education.

Lack of Commitment by the Governments

Since the attempt by the colonial government in the 1950s and the efforts by the first African governments after independence to around 1970, lack of commitment by the African leaders is evidently clear. This can further be brought out when one looks at the annual budget where grants are assigned to different or various organizations. The percentage of the money assigned to Adult education is so meagre and reduces each year.

Lack of Data

Lack of data is one of the major constraints militating against effective planning of Adult education in Africa. Fredriksen (1982) in Muhammad (1986) posited that. Lack of key data and incomplete coverage of existing data are serious obstacles to efficient planning and monitoring of educational systems in developing nations. For example, how can a country's progress towards targets such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) be assessed if, due to incomplete coverage of data, we do not know how many children are attending school. How can future school enrolment, teacher requirements, and costs be projected if one does not know how many of the children of school going age have already entered school

In most African countries, the statistics of those that are educated and those not is not known. Hence and it is only when you know the exact number of illiterate adults that you can plan how to educate them.

Problem of Collection and Banking of Information

Generally, Africans are ignorant on the value of collecting and storing of information. Many people also rarely attach much value on the collection and banking of information. Officers collect information with laxity without attaching much importance to it; hence, organizations lack good data storage. Those organizations that attach much importance to it, sometimes burn the relevant data to cover fraudulent activities.

Frequent Change of Government

Frequent change of government in Africa has caused a serious havoc against effective planning. It has become the habit and practice of African governments that whenever there is a change of government, the new government will discontinue with all the plans of the former government no matter how important such plans are. This has caused a serious setback to educational planning.

Inconsistency Educational Systems

Frequent change of educational systems or policies is another constraint to educational planning in Africa. The constant change in educational system/policies in African countries serves as a great constraint to educational planning.

Wars, Migrations and other Natural Disasters

Wars migration and other natural disasters like earthquake are problems that cause a great setback in educational planning in Africa. In some African countries like Sudan, Congo Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda have been affected by war. There is no peace in these countries, planning is not possible because it is only when there is peace that any planning can be done.

Lack of Awareness on the Part of the Public of the Benefits Accruable to Adult Education

Many Africans are not properly informed of the benefits of Adult education programmes and the various governments do not help matters as they have scattered adult education programmes into several ministries as can be found in ministry of education, ministry of agriculture and ministry of information. Not much in terms of publicity has been done to help the growth and development of this important aspect of our lives. There is hardly proper advertisement, handbill, posters, etc calling on people to come forward to reap the fruits of adult education.

Rising Cost of Education

The rising cost of materials is another obstacle to educational planning. The constant inflation and high rise of materials which is due to political and other pressures cause unprecedented rise in students' enrolment and as such, the facilities required and the services demanded increase such that the budgetary allocation does not possibly keep pace with the costs, making planning exercise in futile (Sanda 2007).

Poor Techniques of Data Collection and Storage

In most African countries data are collected through the use of files, books and simple manual practices replete with difficulties.

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion it is pertinent to state here that effective planning is very important for every programme to succeed. It serves as the basis and foundation to the success of any programme. It is only by efficient and effective planning that wastage could be reduced to the barest minimum and resources would be directed to the right areas. Thus as the Hausas say Wanda aka mara yayi hankali yafi wanda aka Haifa dashi that is experience is the best teacher, it is left for African countries to either plan their adult education programmes so that they prosper or else they continue in their backwardness.

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