

## REPOSITIONING ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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### Abstract

*This work discusses repositioning Adult and Non-formal Education in Nigeria Through Entrepreneurship. A critical look at adult and non-formal education concerning Entrepreneurship knowledge in Nigeria, undoubtedly reveals certain prevailing issues and challenges which the sector has to contend with in the country. Adult Education needs to be repositioned through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship skills of Adults cannot be overemphasized. Therefore adults must be equipped with relevant knowledge and life skills in this present dispensation. The work among other things discussed the concept of Adult and Non-formal Education, Scope and forms of Adult and Non-formal Education, Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria and The objective and focus of Entrepreneurial Education. The work revealed that adults must be equipped with relevant knowledge and life skills if they must be relevant in the society. The paper therefore recommends among others that adequate funding of adult and non-formal education programmes is required to improve service delivery by adult educators.*

**Keywords:** Adults, Entrepreneurship, Education, Skills, knowledge.

Education is an instrument for social change or a veritable tool for solving societal problems and for achieving societal goals and aspirations. Education as an agent of change is the backbone of any developing country which provides solid vehicle for the transformation and empowerment of the individuals and the society. Adult education is an integral part of education in Nigeria. According to United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Ugwegbu (2003), adult education is the process by which men and women alone, in groups, or in institutional setting seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skills, their knowledge, their sensitiveness, any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways. Adult education is the education provided for adults based on their social, political, cultural and economic needs or problems. These definitions of adult education underlie the fact that the adult populace form the human resource for national development and to contribute effectively in nation building and transformation, need to be given the required education. Adult education is change-oriented. It is the type of education planned to bring about positive change to the adult who will invariably bring positive change in the society. It is in view of the important role of adult education that this paper advocates for its repositioning through innovation. People must develop first before the nation can develop. He stressed that we must educate adults since children will not have immediate impact on the economic development of the nation. According to Egwu (2012), Nigeria is currently undergoing rapid changes economically, socially, politically, culturally

and technologically and to meet the challenges in the fast changing world, adult education becomes a vital instrument for a society undergoing such changes. The curriculum of any educational system of a society reflects the subjects and subject matter which the society wants to inculcate in the citizenry in order to attain its needs, goals, and aspirations. The dynamic nature of the society is reflected in the curriculum of the educational system of the society. Changes in the needs and aspirations of the society call for changes in the curriculum in order to meet those needs and aspirations.

### **Concept of Adult and Non-Formal**

Many people who are ignorant in the field of adult learning have misconstrued and misconceived adult and non-formal education as mere literacy and remedial education whose main focus is the adult who must be given a second chance to learn formally. This narrow view was jettisoned since the 1930s and 1940s and substituted with a comprehensive description of adult and non-formal education to cover the wide range of activities, institutions and agencies and to include content as wide as life. by adult education it does not mean literacy Education alone. Adult Education is more than literacy or remedial Education to 'fill the gap'. It is something people need and want as long as they are alive and regardless of the amount of their previous education. However, new variants have continued to emerge as adult and non-formal education has been transformed from its association with certain learning opportunities to mean all responsibly organized learning opportunities such as seminars, workshops, etc., which enable people who are considered to be adults in their communities to enlarge and interpret their own living experiences (Indabawa & Mpotu 2006). UNESCO, in her international conference in Nairobi, Kenya 1976 as reported in Nzeneri(2010:10) defined adult education as: the entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level and method, 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 perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. This implies that irrespective of the setting, content, level and method adult and non-formal education seeks to empower adults with requisite knowledge and skills for personal improvement and maximum participation in the development of their communities. Furthermore, in different countries of the world, adult and non-formal education programmes are designed to meet divergent needs such as welfare and employment oriented activities aimed at serving the needs of the economy. In other words, adult and non-formal education activities should be relevant to the daily lives of the adults and according to learners' readiness to learn so that these adults can be helped to become self-reliant individuals. Essentially any organized learning or educational activity outside the structure of the formal education system that is consciously aimed at meeting the specific learning needs of people who are considered (regarded) to be adults in the community or their society constitutes adult and non-formal education. The contemporary emphasis on adult learning which includes adult education must be broadly construed to refer to all learning activities undertaken by adults throughout life. It includes non-formal learning through which adults acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge, through non-formally organized education. It also incorporates informal learning by adults from their day to day experiences through

interaction with family, neighbours, colleagues at work, or through the mass media (Becqueline and Raymaekers, cited in Indabawa and Mpotu (2006:5). Based on these conceptualizations, adult and non-formal education denotes all activities despite their contexts which are meant to develop the capacities and capabilities of people who are considered as adults. These learning activities should be organized around the felt needs of these adult, learners to enable them acquire requisite life skills to extricate them from their poverty stricken conditions.

### **Scope and Forms of Adult and Non-Formal Education**

Adult and non-formal education could take divergent forms as diagrammatically presented here. Some forms of adult and non-formal education programmes related to eradication of extreme poverty and hunger Basic literacy Functional literacy Vocational education Home management Entrepreneurial skill Agricultural extension Education Development Education Family planning Education Environmental protection Education Computer literacy Health Education Women Education Skill acquisition Child Welfare and Child Protection Education Cooperative management Education Population Education. Akpama, S.I. and Arikpo, C. 2002 The diverse forms of adult and non- formal Education programmes depicted in this diagram are meant to equip adults with divergent knowledge, attitudes and skills to cope with the ever changing demands of our dynamic society since according to UNESCO( i) Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. Education has a vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and controlling population growth (UNESCO 2003:7). (General comment 13, on the right to education, Article 13 of the international covenant on Economic, social and cultural rights) ;( ii) it could be inferred from this paper that adult and non-formal education must be viewed and treated as an economic and social empowerment right which should be properly streamlined and funded to enhance the emancipation of adults from the clutches of poverty, dehumanization and hunger.( Iii) it must also be stressed that reducing adult illiteracy alleviates poverty and strengthens the demand for education. Studies show that as long as parental illiteracy persist hunger and poverty stricken conditions will prevail and less number of children will enroll and complete primary school programmes. Therefore ample opportunities must be created for adults to access education which has been aptly described as a socio-economic empowerment tool.

### **Entrepreneurial Education in Nigeria**

In 1998, UNESCO World Conference recognized the value of entrepreneurial Education and advocated cultivating entrepreneurship and skills in higher education as a development strategy for many emerging economies. The UNESCO report highlighted that through EEd students are able to gain experiences that give them the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. This presupposes that EEd goes beyond formal classroom teaching to incorporate training to increase students' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes for business creation. Tulgan (1999) outlined the functional basis of EEd as education and training which allows

students to develop and use their creativity in entrepreneurial development of the country. In 2006, the government of Nigeria announced the introduction of EEd as entrepreneurship studies, to be integrated in the University curriculum as a compulsory course for students irrespective of area of specialization Okojie (2009). Effectively, the implementation started in the 2007/2008 academic session. In pursuance of the full implementation of EEd, most of universities established a coordinating center for entrepreneurship education to support students' training. The Nigerian University Commission (NUC) was given presidential directives by the Ministry of Education to supervise and coordinate the programme of introducing EEd in Nigerian institutions of high learning (Okojie 2009). At inception, EEd was harped as the panacea for youth unemployment and a catalyst for sustained private sector-led growth. EEd was introduced to provide students in tertiary institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures.

### **The Objective and Focus of Entrepreneurial Education**

The objective of Entrepreneurial Education (EEd) was to continuously foster entrepreneurship culture amongst students and faculty with a view of not only educating them but to also support graduates of the system towards establishing and also maintaining sustainable business ventures (Bloom, Canning and Chan 2005). EEd as a form of education is a process of adjustment. It involves the development of the social and economic efficiency of individuals by progressively upgrading their thought pattern and eventually, their way of life. Mauchi et al., (2011) reported that the objective of EEd is to provide individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them. Oduwaiye (2009) reported that EEd focuses on assisting trainee students on how to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self-reliance rather than depending on the government for employment. EEd seeks to empower students with new skills to be able to harness opportunities, be self-reliant and become job-creators and not job-seekers on graduation. It was also to provide the needed prop to boost private sector investment to curb the problem of unemployment among school leavers. EEd inculcates new ideas to life through investments, creativity and value adding innovations (Nwosu and Ohia 2009). At introduction in most European universities, EEd was focused to develop entrepreneurial capacities and mindsets of students (Wilson 2008). This purpose driven nature of EEd influences the curricula provisions of institutions in Europe. Lee and Wong (2005) assert that EEd is a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society and therefore the teaching should be focused on elaborating this role. Also, Osuala (2010) summarize the objectives of EEd in Nigeria to include : 1) provision of meaningful education for youth which could make them self- reliance and subsequently encourage them to self-dependent 2) providing graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business 3) providing graduates with training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society 4) providing graduates with enough training in risk management to make risk bearing possible and easy 5) stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area 6) providing graduates enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities and 7) providing small and medium sized companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who have receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant for business management. The focus of the EEd is to produce

entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur is someone who ventures, by taking risks, into a business involving planning, organizing and coordinating use of materials and money to make a profit by producing goods or rendering services (Singh and Sharma 2011). An entrepreneur is someone that is never satisfied with the status quo, someone who is willing and able to convert new ideas or invention into a successful innovation.

### **Repositioning Adult and Non-Formal Education through Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

It is a grim reality that the number of people living in poverty and hunger in developing countries like Nigeria is still growing. The magnitude of the problem can be viewed in two figures: half the world's population is poor (living on less than two dollars per day) and 1.2 billion people get by on less than one dollar per day (Torres, 2003). Therefore, all the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) are related to reducing poverty. But we know and therefore have a sound basis to fear, that there will be no reduction in poverty and hunger unless all development initiatives are deliberately doubled or tripled both quantitatively and qualitatively, and accompanied with radical changes in the variables which impede development and globalization. Most MDGs are concerned with adult and non-formal education, how to eradicate poverty and hunger, promote gender equality, empower women equally, reduce child mortality, and improve material health, how to combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases and how to ensure environmental sustainability. The rational question is, how can these be achieved with dominantly illiterate and poor adults and hungry children: Ouane (2009) asserted that it is only with an informed, literate and active citizenry that we can meet the challenges of our society effectively and this can only happen by ensuring that adult learning and education form the main focus of policy and action of governments at all levels. If literacy and education are missing, then all development efforts are hampered (Ouane, 2009). Therefore, in order to combat poverty and hunger we must aggressively encourage inculcation of income generating skills and employment creation through effective teaching of adults who have been rightly described as the readiest agents of socio-economic transformation. Adult and non-formal education practice should be maintained in Nigeria to equip adults with requisite capacities since their roles are critical to the realization of the millennium Development Goals which partly focus on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. According to Biao (2008) and Ouane (2009) adult learning and education comprise a powerful way to move towards alleviating poverty, and hunger improving health, promoting peace and democracy, fostering inclusion, achieving environmental awareness and helping people to adapt to the socio economic and political advances our societies are facing. A critical analysis of some of the Millennium Development Goals shows that most of the goals are focused on the adult population, thus the extent to which these goals would be achieved by 2015 is related to the knowledge and activities of the adult population now and in the future. For instance, in Goal 1, which emphasizes eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the target audience is the adult population of the society. In fact, it is the adults who must harness available resources to conquer poverty and subsequently eradicate hunger. Therefore, through adult and non-formal education programmes such as agricultural extension education, vocational education, empowerment programmes, capital formulation and loan utilization, co-operative education etc. adults could be equipped with requisite knowledge and skills for the actualization of this goal. Research findings consistently validate a strong correlation between Education and development in all its ramification. Education of adults therefore

indisputably yields enormous benefits which in turn alleviate poverty and reduce hunger in the under listed ways. i. Adult and non-formal education equips adults and young people with knowledge and skills which remove barriers to entrepreneurship and improve livelihoods. Adults who are literate actively participate in a diversity of business activities and are protected against being cheated and manipulated in the market place. ii. Functional adult literacy programmes provide immediate work oriented skills which empower its beneficiaries to engage in productive and remunerative employment which in turn alleviates poverty. Akpama (2001) asserts that apart from its productive and redistributive functions employment is indeed the best weapon to combat frustration, social tension, poverty and hunger. Therefore, in order to ensure sustainability, poverty alleviation programmes must be fine-tuned to incorporate contemporary functional literacy skills for adults as a basis for improvement of the socio-economic conditions of our urban and rural based impoverished adults. Also, adults who are introduced to agricultural extension services improve their productivity and thus generate more income. Functional literacy skills acquired by adults through agricultural extension services help adults to accept and apply new technologies meant to improve crop production, income generation and thus conquer hunger. iii. Beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education on health related matters acquire knowledge and skills for improved family health. Healthy people become vibrant and aggressively create wealth which lifts them out of poverty and hunger.

### **Conclusion**

Relegating adult and non-formal education to the background through poor funding would be tantamount to glossing over the insightful thought of a writer who cautions that: an excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because it is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water. In essence, when governments at all levels treat with levity the issue of adult illiteracy eradication, the attainment of other seeming noble policies of government would be impeded.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Government at all levels ought to improve funding of adult and non-formal education programmes as a basis to eradicate illiteracy which hampers entrepreneurial thinking among the adults.
- ii. Adult literacy centres must be properly and adequately equipped to facilitate efficacious instructional service delivery.
- iii. Adult education facilitators must be trained and retrained for improved instructional delivery
- iv. Adult education professionals must reform the curriculum to reflect the needs of learners and our contemporary realities
- v. Budgetary allocations to adult education by the federal, state, and local government must be improved upon if adult and non-formal education must be vitalized through entrepreneurship and innovation in Nigeria.

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