

FUNDING A BANE FOR ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION DELIVERY IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES FOR ACCESS AND QUALITY

BY

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Abstract

The paper examined the funding a bane of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria: challenges and prospects. The concept of adult education was discussed and programmes of adult and non-formal education were highlighted. The main objectives of funding in adult and non-formal education which include amongst others to: provide access and equal opportunities for Nigerians to acquire education irrespective of social, cultural, economic and religious differences; ensure adequate investment in education that would facilitate acceleration of national development. The paper went ahead to explain the main sources of funding of adult and non-formal education which includes federal, state local governments amongst others. Issues and challenges in funding were discussed which include poor payment of facilitators; lack of adequate instructional materials; poor or inadequate monitoring and evaluation of programmes amongst others. The paper went ahead and highlighted the implication for access and quality. The paper concludes that proper funding of adult and non-formal education will help in solving the perennial challenges confronting the corporate existence of the country. Lastly the recommends that allocation of 2% of the consolidated revenue to adult and non-formal education; allocation of 10% of the entire basic education budgets of the states and 5% of the local governments; and also 25% of the education development levies as charged by states and local governments to adult and non-formal education.

Keywords: Funding, Bane, Adult, Education, Non-formal, Challenge, Access and Quality

Introduction

Funding education, including adult and non-formal education, is a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and Local Governments. Historically, education in Nigeria enjoyed adequate funding by the Federal government up till 1975. It is very clear that all of the government programmes were tied to the budget, which in itself is largely derived from the sale of oil. However, sequel to the downturn in the international oil market in the 1980s, educational finance suffered a setback. Financing education is a means by which short, medium and long range planning can be achieved through mobilization of both human and capital resources (Balami, 2002). The overall public spending on different levels and types of education can be influenced by the federal government of Nigeria through policy pronouncement and acting as the leader in financing education, e.g. through direct deductions from the statutory allocation. It is essential that the recognition of the right to education throughout life should be accompanied by measures to create the conditions required to exercise this right. The challenges in providing adult and non-formal education cannot be met by governments, organizations or institutions alone; the energy, imagination and genius of people and their full, free and vigorous participation in every aspect of life is also needed. It is therefore necessary that all available human and materials resources must be tapped to the fullest. The major challenges facing adult and non-formal education in Nigeria include the availability, allocation and utilization of the limited resources (Krester & Owojuyibe, 2014).

The realization of the benefits that can accrue to the funding of adult and non-formal education underscores the need for consistent and adequate financing of adult and non-formal education programmes. Funding adult and Non-formal education should be seen in relation to the benefits that drive from reinforcing the competence of adults through repositioning of its funding mechanism in Nigeria (Ukwuaba, Ali, & Hussain, 2020). Educating adults would contribute to their self-reliance and personal autonomy, to the exercise of their basic rights and increased productivity and labour efficiency. In addition to positively translated into higher level of education and wellbeing of the future generation.

Adult and non-formal education has suffered a serious neglect in funding and has resulted in low productivity and increase in diseases in the country.

Concept of Adult Education

Adult and Non-formal education in Africa began with the creation of man on the continent. It was imperative for those forebears in Africa to provide education for the adult population so as to ensure the survival and development of skills, integration, group cohesion, social values and acceptable attitudes (Omolewa, 2000). The concept of adult education is difficult to define because people define it from different perspectives. However, scholars agreed that it is an education that has adults as its clientele. This also brings us to another concept of who is an adult? Different parameters are used in defining adulthood amongst which is biological, chronological, historical, psychological, economical, political and social amongst others. Nzeneri (2002) defines an adult as one who is physically and psychologically matured and is socially, economically and politically responsible. According to Adesanya (2005) the term adult is difficult to define because it varies from one society to another and has changed over time. The boundaries that determine who is considered an adult can depend on actions (i.e. legal age to fight war, drive a car and vote amongst others), activities (i.e., age that one can begin to work) and /or responsibilities (i.e., marriage age, age to begin supporting family). UNESCO (1976) gives a recommendation of who an adult is: it is a person regarded by the as such by the society to which he /she belong.

As articulated in the CONFINTEA V documents:

adult education denotes the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, where by people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society (UNESCO, 2009 cited in Umar, Eshak, Bichi, & Aujara, 2010:131).

UNESCO (1976) cited in Nzeneri (2010:10) defines 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, universities as well as in apprenticeship, where by persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

The above definitions is encompassing in the sense that it has not only define adult education, but has gone to the extent of talking about its scope and content. Adult education is usually refers to any form of learning undertaken by or provided for mature men and women outside the formal schooling system (Seya, 2005). The main targets are specifically defined as youths (girls and boys over 15 years of age, but sometimes younger) as well as women and men, generally poor or socially disadvantaged. According to Seya (2005:97) adult education is seen as:

a transmission of process of general, technical or vocational knowledge as well as skills, values and attitudes, which takes place out of the formal education system with a view of remedying early education inadequacies of mature people or equipping them

with knowledge and cultural elements required for their self – fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies.

Adult education deals with adult human materials and it gives joy, fascination and enthusiasm. Working with adults establishes confidence and impressions which allows the learners to realize their dreams. The fact that formal schooling is an unquestionable priority in the education sector, does not justify adult education being left out. To make children compete with their parents in the education process is dangerous as it make create a break between two entities that are mutually dependent. A child's schooling performance is largely determined by the level of education of his or her parents. Therefore trying to achieve primary education at the expense of adult education defeats it own purpose. As long as poverty remains a distinctive feature in Nigeria, adult education will impose itself as an unavoidable ingredient of development process (Seya, 2005). The unsatisfactory performance of the formal system of education provides support to the argument that adult education is needed to remedy the situation.

Programmes of Adult and Non-Formal Education

The programmes of Adult and Non-Formal Education as presented in the National Benchmark for NFE in Nigeria are as follows:

1. Basic Literacy – this is a literacy programme designed for people that had never had the opportunity of attending any form of school for the purpose of acquiring how to read, write and calculate simple arithmetic's. The duration of the programme is determined by the number of contact hours which may last between six and nine months and fours hours per week. It is equivalence of three years of lower basic education.
2. Post Literacy-This is the literacy programme organized for graduands of basic literacy who wants to acquire more knowledge. It is an equivalent of six years of primary education, based on the psychological maturity and readiness of the learners. The duration may last between 12 months to eighteen months. It is like middle basic education that is primary 4-6 and has nine hours contact per week.
3. Continuing Education-this is an educational programme designed for post literacy graduands who wants to acquire Junior or Senior Secondary School Certificate or an individual who wants remedy inadequacies in their educational pursuits. It is either called Extra-Mural, Open and Distance Education Learning, Remedial Education, Industrial Education, Workers Education, Labour Education, Prison Education amongst others.
4. Vocational Education-this is a Non-Formal Education programme designed to equip learners with vocational skills. The duration depends on the trade or craft may be jointly agreed between the organizers and the learners (NMEC/UNICEF, 2010).

Objectives of Funding Adult and Non-formal Education

The main objectives of funding adult and non-formal education are:

- i. To provide access and equal opportunities for Nigerians to acquire education irrespective of social, cultural, economic and religious differences.
- ii. To ensure adequate investment in education that would facilitate acceleration of national development. (NMEC, 2010)

Sources of Funding Adult and Non-formal Education in Nigeria

According to the policy guidelines for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education (2017) Adult and non-formal education is funded through subvention from the federal government which is grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the non-formal education in the country

1. Federal government: budgetary allocations
2. State governments: budgetary allocations
3. Local governments: budgetary allocations

4. Religious bodies: establishment and running of schools
5. Private sector: establishment of schools, endowment funds
6. International Development partners: capacity building, procurement of instructional materials.

Table 1: Federal budgetary allocations to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education

YEAR	Appropriation	Releases
2015	370,000,000.00	185,000,000.00
2016	1,375,828,656.00	493,886,998.00
2017	1,140,828,656.00	570,414,327.91
2018	678,988,837.00	203,696,651.10
2019	965,481,652.00	220,467,981.44
2020	2,056,120,503.00	?
Total	5,587,248,304.00	1,673,465,958.45

Source: National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education

The table 1 above showed the trend of funding of Adult and Non-formal education in Nigeria for the period of six years. It revealed that 50% of the appropriation bill was for all the responsibilities of adult and non-formal education for 2015 fiscal year. In the subsequent year 2016 there was sharp decrease in funding, only 35% of the capital appropriation was released to fund adult and non-formal education programmes for the year. However, in 2017 fiscal year, 50% of the appropriation was also released. There was a decline in funding and 30% was released to this section. 22.8% of the appropriation capital was released in 2019. While in the 2020 fiscal year the corona virus pandemic came with its ugly head that brought almost everything to stand still with most almost all the academic institutions closed for more than nine months. It is evident that the only 36.9% of the total capital appropriation to adult and non-formal education in the year 2015-2019 were released to fund adult and non-formal education programmes in Nigeria.

Issues in Funding Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria

If really Nigeria is committed in attaining Education for All then there is the need to consult widely and come up with a reliable, workable funding mechanism. The present situation in the country calls for a concerted efforts and commitment in addressing the social ills that bedeviled the country that ranges from insurgency, armed robbery, the recent kidnapping and cattle rustling that almost found in all parts of the country. Olejede and Dairo (2008) revealed that the UNESCO recommends that 26% of the national budget of the member nations should be allocated to the formal education while 6% of it should be given to adult and non-formal education. It is quite unfortunate that the allocation budgeted for education has never meet up the recommendations. Also when you look at the annual budgets, there are inconsistencies in the budgetary allocation and the amount of releases, this underscore the effort of the government in giving attention to the sub-sector. Education Trust Fund was established 1993 to support in funding of education sector similarly when you look at the sharing formula you will that there is a bias and not given adequate attention to adult and non-formal education. The sharing formula is as follows:

- i. Tertiary institutions 40%
- ii. Primary Schools 20%
- iii. Adult and Non-formal Education 5%

Challenges of Funding in Adult and Non-formal Education

The following were observed as challenges in proper funding of Adult and non-formal education:

- i. Poor payment of facilitators
- ii. Lack or inadequate instructional materials
- iii. Poor or inadequate monitoring and evaluation of programmes
- iv. Lack of training and retraining of staff and facilitators

- v. Inadequate advocacies, mobilization and sensitization of key stakeholders
- vi. Establishment and maintenance of non-formal education centres
- vii. Management and research activities
- viii. Lack of accurate and reliable data

Implication for access and quality

1. Poor funding: at all levels of governments are one of the most serious constraints militating against the successful implementation of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria, which seriously affects the programmes in terms of recruiting qualified and training of the facilitators, as well as the procurement of good working materials for the learners
2. Corruption: when funds meant for a programme are diverted into another uses or used for a project not meant for it. Adult and Non-formal Education sector are used as a conduit pipe for siphoning public funds.
3. Lack of commitment: inadequacy of physical and instructional materials in government owned adult education centres is indicative of the neglect and marginal status of adult education programmes.
4. Lack of clarity: there is no clearly guide lines on how the 5% of the Education trust fund allocation to Adult and Non-formal education sector is being shared, as there is no evidence on the use of the funds in the sector.

Conclusion

The benefits of proper funding to adult and non-formal education cannot be overemphasized, because it is the type of education that remedies the inadequacies of the formal education system and accommodates all and sundry. Going by what is happening in the country the only remedy to this insecurity challenges, kidnapping and banditry confronting corporate existence of the country is through the proper funding for adult and non-formal education, it contributes to self-reliant and personal autonomy of learners. It has been observed that the adult and non-formal education is seriously underfunded and something has to be done in order to reverse the ugly trend through the deployment of various strategies so as to achieve the desired result.

Suggestions

In view of the forgoing the following recommendations are made:

1. At least allocation of the 2% of the consolidated revenue to Adult and non-formal education.
2. Allocation of 10% of the entire basic education budgets of states and 5% of the local governments to adult and non-formal education
3. 25% of Education Development Levies as charged by states and local governments to be dedicated to Literacy and non-formal education operations.
4. Agencies providing adult and non-formal education should coordinate their activities to avoid duplications.
5. There is a strong need for all adult and non-formal education agencies to be very creative in mobilization and advocacy to all relevant stakeholders for proper funding of the subsector
6. Government should encourage all the private organizations to dedicate some percentages as tax to fund adult and non-formal education.

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