

Universal Basic Education and Adult/Non-Formal Education in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study set out to investigate the universal basic education and implementation in Nigeria, with the aim of pointing out that and non-formal Education have not been giving the proper place it deserves in the policy. The write up clearly indicates that U.B.E programmes, center on the primary and Junior Secondary Education in terms of funding, procuring of materials, Execution of projects and training of manpower with little or no emphasis on the adult and non formal aspect of the programme. The universal Basic Education Commission is therefore implored to consider the other aspect of policy for full implementation

Key words: Universal basic education, funding, adult and non-formal education, primary education, priority

INTRODUCTION

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme for the republic of Nigeria was launched on the 30th of September 2000 by the president. This follow the declaration of Dakar 2000 which was the expansion of the world education conference held in Jomitten 1990 (EFA) where it was mandatory that all the participatory nations should make education available for all the deserving individual. The programme was conceived as a response to the need to reinforce participatory democracy in Nigeria by raising the level of awareness and general education of the populace (UBEC, 2005).

Universal Basic Education in Nigeria includes both formal and non formal education. Matins *et al.* (2004) reiterated that within the formal sub-sector, basic education embraces all the forms of education giving to the individuals from primary level to the Junior Secondary School level. It also include adult and non formal education programmes, where basic functional literacy education, post literacy programmes, in form of continuing education for early secondary schools leavers and for those who have not benefited from formal school systems, for both youth and adult citizen. The present state of Universal Basic Education implementation in Nigeria provide a vivid picture that the emphasis is on the primary and Junior Secondary level with little emphasis, if any is placed on the adult and non-formal education aspect of the programme. The three tiers of government has up to this moment failed to make adequate provision for the adult and non formal education as expected. The national policy on education 4th education (FRN, 2004) reiterated that the Basic Education shall be of 9 year duration, comprising 6 years of primary education and 3

years of Junior Secondary Education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall also include adult and non-formal education programmes and primary and junior education levels for the adult and out of school youths. It also specify that the specific goals of Basic Education all be the same as the goals of the levels education to which it applies (i.e., primary education, junior secondary education and non formal education).

The policy statement specifies that adult basic education, continuing education, remedial studies meant for adult and youths who have not stepped the school wall, or have left the school early, are also inclusive. The Jomitten (EFA, 1990) was implemented basically on the formal educational system in the country, but did not reach its goal, that's why in a decade later Darker, 2000 education summit, tends to evaluate the positions of the different countries since Jomitten, education for all. This study is an attempt to examine the basic issues in Universal Basic Education as related to adult and non formal education so as to provide broad information for the implementers.

UNIVERSAL BASIC AND ADULT EDUDCATION LEARNING NEEDS

Josef (2000) reiterated that the commitment of Jomitten was to Basic education but the focus was on basic learning, needs and competencies. Basic Education in whatever form has to meet this basic learning needs. Basic competencies are those required for the literacy and for learning throughout life by whatever means. Basic here means the very early stages of a process that need to continue and grow in other words, basic competencies mean the mastery of the 3Rs, practical knowledge,

problem solving and the life skills. Basic competencies mean not only school based knowledge, attitudes and skills, but also the ability to manage functional tasks and day-to-day demands, regardless of whether such competencies were developed through formal or non formal education, or through personal experience in diverse informal learning situations.

Education for young people and adults is much more than basic education. However, having the learning needs of all young people and adults in focus is the logical follow up to quality primary education for all. It then implies that learning of and training for life skills must be within the reach of everybody, whether or not the successfully completed the circle of primary schooling, from a lifelong learning perspective this are of equal relevance.

The provision of equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults requires a system of life long learning integrating general education and vocational training and re-training, social and cultural learning needs. It calls for more and more systematic ways, to continue after literacy classes for youths and adults, for entry points from out of school courses into the formal set-up and thus a systematic approach to value and credit learning outcomes from the diversity of non-formal education and skills training.

Abidoye (2004) reiterated that the eradication of illiteracy has been seen as an illusion while somehow stigmatizing people who are unable to read, write and count. Becoming literate and the underlying values and assumptions, were taking from the contexts of generally literate societies. The post- literacy phase was commonly recognized as a danger time for participating learners, who will quickly loose their literacy skills, if there is then nothing to read and write and no reason to use these skills.

Young people and adults therefore need skills to earn a living and to maintain or manage their livelihoods. Yet with more than 20 million people (young and adults) in Nigeria who are not literate and still manage their daily survival without literacy skills; I strongly felt that they will do better if they could read and write.

Universal basic and adult/non-formal education: The way forward: The 1990 conference in Jomtien created a very broad definition of basic learning needs for children, youths and adults, including literacy, numeracy and problem solving instruments for further education and learning necessary for survival and the successful management of life and work. However, the implementation of Jomtien goals via basic education policies as concentrated very much on primary schools

and therefore on children only. It was then generally referred to as Universal Primary Education (UPE). Universal Basic Education is the outcome of Chris Duke *et al.* (2006) which therefore, encompasses other forms of Basic Education.

Early childhood care and Education, followed by primary schools, were rightfully placed at the start and the heart of the 6 Dakar goals, with the declared aim of access and completion achieving good quality for all children's education and schooling are of free standing importance for themselves. At the same time, they correspond to the next two goals, which should a well be taken in their fullest sense and in a coherent and integrative way. These are:

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes; achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Unity and peace are important pulling the different strands, age levels and members of a family apart for target purposes may not only create artificial competition between different important elements, but also undermine the efforts made, especially for the literacy of the young and very young, if these are not connected to women's and family literacy and community learning Vera *et al.* (2006).

Universal Basic Education cannot be achieved in Nigeria with traditional mentalities and strategies, even if resources are injected, time tables are delayed and new technologies are incorporated. Ensuring Universal Basic Education implies a new mind set, a new conceptual and operational frame work that integrates education and politics, education and the economy, education and culture, education and citizenship, education and social policy.

Universal Basic Education according to Rosa (2000) can only be attained by adopting a genuinely expanded and renewed vision of education which trusts and invests in people, their capacities and potential, in the development and synchronization of resources and efforts of society at large to work together, to make education a need and a task for all.

This means providing a learning environment in which all educational and cultural resources of a given territorial and social community are pooled and leveraged to meet the basic learning needs of its members-children, youths and adults. As a matter of policy, both at the federal, state and local government levels the following should be included in the policy among others:

- Involving children, youths and adults, enabling inter-generational and inter-peer learning, acknowledging the importance of adult education (parents, educators of all types, members of the community and adults in general) for the education and well being of children and youths and liberating the potential of youths as educators and active agents of their own education of school change and of family and local community development.
- Ensuring positive discrimination strategies so as to make sure that economic, social, educational and cultural differences among communities do not become a source of inequality.
- Nigerian government at the 3 tiers of administration must abide with the commitment of Dakar, 2000 by ensuring that adult literacy must be integrated with a wider process of community development and empowerment. The right to education starts from early childhood and continues through adulthood into old age. Government must commit themselves to reducing adult illiteracy by 50% by 2015.

The Table 1 reveal what the UBE in Nigeria is expected to be.

Table 1: Universal basic education

Restricted version (conventional) UPE	Expanded version UBE
Directed at children	Directed at children, youths and adults
Takes place in schools	Takes place inside and outside schools
Restricted to a period in a person's life	Life long and begins at birth
Equates with primary education or a pre- established level of education	Is not measured by the number of years of Study or certificates attained but what is Effectively learned
Responds to the teaching of specific subjects	Responds to the satisfaction of basic learning needs
Recognizes only one type of knowledge acquired in the school system	Recognizes the validity of all types of knowledge including traditional knowledge
Is uniform for all	Is diversified (basic learning needs are Different in different groups and cultures, as are the means and modalities to meet such needs) e.g. Nomadic, fishermen and farmers' education.
Is static (change takes the form of periodic school and curriculum reforms)	Is dynamic and changes with the passage of time (education reform is permanent)
Supply-driven (institution school system and administration)	Demand-driven (students, family, social demands)
Is the responsibility of the education Ministry (education as a sector and a sectoral responsibility)	Involves all ministries and government bodies in charge of education (requires multi-sectoral policies)
Is the responsibility of the government	Is the responsibility of the government, The NGOs and the whole society, thus Demanding consensus-building and co-ordinations of actions

Source: Coraggio and Torres (1997) la educacion segunel Banco Mundial. Un analisis de sus propuestas y metodos, (Education according to the world Bank. An analysis of its proposal and methods), Buenos, Aires, CEM-Mino and Davila Editores.

Thus demanding more support for adult and non-formal education should not be misinterpreted as giving less importance to basic schooling, but is a call for a necessary and better balance of the 2.

FUNDING ISSUES IN UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION COMMISSION AND ADULT/NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The funding of Universal Basic Education in the areas of classroom construction, provision of instructional materials, the training of teachers and researchers at the literacy level was centered on the primary education alone up till 2004/2005 school years in some states of the federation and extended to other states in 2005/2006 school years to include Junior Secondary Education. Thereby changing the structure of education in the country from 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4 systems (UBEC, 2005).

The government, both at the federal, state and local government and even the international donors agencies concentrated much on the provision of the 9 years basic education. The various commission set up to implement the programme in Nigeria focused more on the funding of formal aspect of universal basic education and neglect the adult and non formal education aspect.

Government has been funding the capital project for the successful implementation of the programme in the nation's primary school since the 1990s. Most of the Education Trust Fund ETF fund has been diverted to the provision of exercise books, rulers, pencils, ball point pens, erasers, school bags and first aid kits at exorbitant cost. The figure available on government spending was only on the formal education aspect of the programme. Most of the state governors and the implementers did not know the importance of the various forms of adult and non-formal education for the young and adult population.

The funding of the UBE programme also focuses on the training of teachers and regular payment/promotion of the human capital involved on the formal aspect of universal basic education little or nothing for adult and non-formal education.

The available funds should be spread over all the programmes even though the major emphasis being on primary and junior secondary schools, more than 40% of the UBE fund should go to adult and non-formal education aspect, from the federal government down to the local government level.

There are cases of double funding in the primary school aspect as against the concentration of providing the second chance education for the early school leavers and those who did not have the opportunity to attend formal school system. The literacy Enhancement Assistance Programme (LEAP) which was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is a typical example. The project was aimed at improving the quality of literacy and numeracy in primary and Islamiyya schools as against adult literacy classes.

Most adult and non-formal education programmes are self financing Borode (2003). What the government needs is to provide the initial capital for some of the programmes. Also some adult education programme do generate funds from the proceeds realized from the training section of the programme e.g. the vocational training institutions and other livelihood educational programmes in Nigeria.

The adult basic education should be funded by the government with more than 30% of UBE fund allocated to this aspect of adult and non-formal education. The facilitators (teachers) should also be given priority in government expenditures, in terms of training and payment of their honoraria. The operators should be warned of not diversifying the funds to private projects.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the UBEC should know that adult and non-formal education learning is not a waste of money and other resources. The present spending habit of the commission is somehow premised on the wrong notion that it is best to spend on children education rather than on adults who are believed to learn with much greater difficulty than the children. We must realize that adult makes policy for the children and what is spent to fund their education is of a great economic benefit to the nations.

Adult and non-formal education has not received the attention it deserves from the current universal basic education programme in Nigeria. The commission should see adult and non formal education as central to development and part of main stream educational planning and provision. The present position of under funding adult and non formal aspect of the programme by the commission should become a thing of the past as early as possible.

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