

The Input of Regional and International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Towards the Development of Adult Education in the Developing Countries

M. Borode

Department of Educational Foundations and Management,
Faculty of Education, University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
e-mail: matthewborode@yahoo.com

(Received: 20-7-2011 / Accepted: 29-7-2011)

Abstract

This paper set out to examine the contributions of Regional and International non-governmental organizations to the development of adult education in the developing countries. There are some non-governmental organizations which have contributed immensely in the areas of funding like the World Bank while others influences other NGOs through the organization of both regional and international conferences on the propagation of adult education, e.g. UNESCO, UNDP, and ADEA. provide materials and experts to further the course of adult education. Recently some of these international NGOs like UNDP, UNICEF and World Bank provide counterpart funding towards the development of an aspect of adult education in the developing countries.

Keywords: Adult Education, Contributions, Non-Governmental Organizations, Experts, literacy, Funding.

Introduction

Apart from the government participation in organizing and financing of adult education programmes in the developing countries; non governmental organizations has contributed immensely to the furtherance of adult education in Africa south of the Sahara. NGOs are intermediate organizations dealing with development issues through participation. They are universally recognized as active role players in development programmes. A good number of them (both local and international) have demonstrated the effectiveness of their programme delivery through the success they have recorded in mobilizing community participation in community development projects. NGOs do not pose themselves as competitors to the government but rather,

as partners to affect successful outreach to the programme they are committed to undertake.

Non-governmental organizations have played a vital role in the development of Adult Education in Nigeria. In 1959, the federal government of Nigeria invited an international firm of management consultants, which has its headquarters in London, to organize some courses in supervision and management for the Nigerian foremen, supervisors and junior managers from private companies, government department, parastatals and financial institution including the central bank. This assignment turned out to be one of the true Adult Education programmes sponsored and developed by the federal government. The content of the courses was truly adult education oriented and not just a continuation of courses designed for school and college systems. Many who took the advantage of the courses, through the nomination and sponsorship by their organizations rose to very high positions in their establishments.

In the early years of University of Ibadan, Nigeria; the department of extra-mural studies was created and did a lot of work in literacy programmes all over the country. The department has now developed into a full-blown Department of Adult Education, so much that UNESCO, using it as an NGO, was able to establish an institute of adult education in 1964. Among other things, it was to carry out research experiments and evaluation studies and promote new approaches and studies in Adult Education. According to Olagbemi (1995), this project was of particular importance to adult education as it was set to tackle the problems through teaching, research, and production of qualified personnel for Adult Education work.

Again in Nigeria, during the decade beginning in 1970, the federal government embarked on the task of formulating a new National policy on Education which was published in 1977. In it and for the first time, Adult Education was recognized as a driving force for development. This new attitude and approach served as boost to the development of Adult Education. Further channels were then provided for NGOs to disseminate their findings, provide more services and expand their research work: this led to the expansion of Adult Education programmes in Nigeria. The following NGO's will be considered in this paper UNESCO, UNICEF, WB, UNDP, AALAE, PALAAE, ALECSO, ICAE, ADEA, GCE & ANCEFA.

UNESCO:

UNESCO is the specialized international organization for education, science and culture within the United Nations system. It is the only international organization that deals with education in a holistic manner, including all levels and modalities, and integrating education culture and science. This places UNESCO in a unique position for assuming and leading the educational revolution required, especially by the developing countries.

UNESCO has continued through its regular, participatory and operational programmes to assist member states through the launching of the regional programme in 1984 for the eradication of illiteracy in Africa. Assistance of all kinds was provided since 1964 after the EWL (Experimental World Literacy Programme) to Tanzania, Guinea, Mali, Sudan and Ethiopia as well as providing support after Jomtien to other countries such as Cote d'voire, Malawi, Madagasca, Mauritius, and many others.

It has stand up as the international agency that has historically and consistently advocated for adult education and the fight against illiteracy. It plays a leading role in organizing international conference on the development of adult education such as Tokyo, 1972, Paris 1985, Hamburg 1997, Brazil 2009. It was UNESCO that pushed adult education on the EFA (Education for all) agenda in the preparation for the Jomtien conference. There are two bodies within UNESCO that deals with Adult Basic Education.(ABE). (1) The literacy and non-formal Education section and (2) The UNESCO institute for Education (UIE, based in Hamburg. Also, the International Literacy Institute (ILI), created in 1994 and based in Pennsylvania, USA, is also associated with UNESCO, although it is not part of UNESCO.

UNESCO is not a funding agency; but an intellectual agency which can offer intellectual inputs, such as UNESCO professional chairs, and technical backstopping by programme specialist and consultants.

UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund)

UNICEF’s mission focus is on the improvement of primary health education and social development. It also center on protecting the rights of children, which can only be accomplished with and through adult who protect or violate those rights at home, in schools, in decision making at the various levels. However, the notion of “children first,” leads in the practice of UNICEF to children only. If adults come into the picture, it is women adults. The family has gradually vanished, priorities turn children into girls, adults into women and women into mothers.

UNICEF’s proposed “Educational revolution” (UNICEF 1999) comprises five key elements namely learning for the life

- Accessibility, quality and flexibility
- Gender sensitivity and girls’ education
- The state as key partner
- Care of the young child.

All these focus on schools and around girls as the magic bullet. UNICEF is a funding agency but at present tends to supply materials rather than the raw cash because of misappropriation of resources by the receiving educational agency. It is very much involved in educational programmes related to street children, gender issues and non-formal primary education. In Nigeria, through the agency for adult and non-formal education, government established vocational centers and child-welfare centre in some local governments.

WB (World Bank)

The World Bank is not a specialized institution in education. It is a bank whose interest in adult education is rather recent. Its 1995 education policy document had marginal references to adult education, drew conclusions to its “poor record” but did not include it among the “six key areas” to be supported in the future, and announced a specific policy paper on adult literacy. The announced paper on adult literacy came out six years later. (Oxenham and Aoki 2001), but this and the other recent world

bank studies, especially by its African Region Department, contradict the poor record statement and the 1994 literature review on which this statement was based.

As a result of the Beloisya project initiated in 1998, World Bank support for adult education in the area of literacy, basic education, basic education and training and continuing education is on the discussion agenda with the governments. Programmes/pilot projects are being supported in all these areas, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Literacy programmes have also been supported in Indonesia and Bangladesh. (WB/Adult Outreach Education Website).

World Bank publications on adult education include: Adult Continuing Education: An integrated part of lifelong learning (Fretwell and Colombano 2000). Engaging with adults (Lauglo 2001). Adult literacy in Uganda: An evaluation (Carr-hill 2001). Basic education and livelihood opportunities for illiterate and semiliterate young adults (World Bank 2001). Skills and literacy training for better livelihoods. A review of approaches and experiences (Oxenham et al. 2002) etc. The Bank has also commissioned two major studies on educational programmes designed for younger and older adults, especially women, who have not had the benefit of primary schooling and who are unable to use the skills of reading, writing and calculation to access and use information that could enable them to improve the quality of their lives.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

The UNDP defined human development as something much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and live protective, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. And it is thus much more than economic growth, which is only a means- if a very important one- of enlarging peoples choices. Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities – the range of things people can do or be in life. The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and to be able to participate in life of the community. Without these, many choices are simply not available and many opportunities in life remain inaccessible.”(UNDP 2001).

The Human Development Index (HDI), as calculated by UNDP, includes three dimensions.

- A long and healthy life.
- Knowledge
- A decent standard of living.

Knowledge is strongly associated with education and with literacy in particular. Knowledge deprivation is defined as exclusion from the world of reading and communications, as measured by the adult illiteracy rate.

Adult literacy rate has a two-thirds weight in the definition of a country's education index, while the remaining one third correspond to the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio.

It assists in accessing funds to project implement factors and consultants who are undertaking research in Adult Education at national levels. Its philosophy is one of co-ordination of UN activities through networking and playing the role of a clearing house. The agency's interests in Adult Education is closely tied to the programmes of poverty alleviation, women in development and human resource Development through the use of Technical support services (T.S.S) work out at national level. In Nigeria, it assists in the Women in Development Programme (WID) which focuses on removing the constraints on the improvement of Nigerian women. (UNDP1993).

PALAAE (Pan-African Association for Literacy and Adult Education)

This is another regional NGO in Africa. It was established at the initiative of the World Bank in 1998 and evolved from a donor to African Education (DAE) organization. It was also in a network and a partnership with African ministers of Education, International agencies, education specialists and researchers. ADEA's eleven working groups are engaged in advocacy, analytical work and capacity-building.

The working group on Non-formal Education seeks to improve learning and training systems in Africa by encouraging the development of a coherent vision and appropriate advocacy strategies that will enhance the role status of alternative approaches and forms of learning, (ADE/WGNFE 2009 website). Adult Education is one of such alternative modality.

ICAE (International Council for Adult Education)

This was created in 1973 and had its headquarters in Toronto. It remains active as a major global NGO network focused on Adult Basic Learning Education (ABLE). It represents today, more than 700 literacy, adult and lifelong learning associations; it has seven regional member organizations as well as national and sectional members in over 50 countries. ICAE's mission is expressed as follows:

“To promote the use of adult learning, as a tool for informed participation of people and sustainable development. In the emergence of knowledge-society, the ICAE promotes lifelong learning as a necessary component for people to contribute creatively to their communities and live in independent and democratic societies. Adult and lifelong learning are deeply linked to social, economic and political justice; equality of gender relations; the universal right to learn; living in harmony with the environment; respect for human rights and recognition of cultural diversity, peace and the active involvement of women and men in decisions affecting their lives. (ICAE webpage).

Its current programme includes gender and Adult Education, International Literacy Support Service and Information and Communications. ICAE is currently assisting the newly born regional associations in Africa. It is highly committed to Adult Learning in both Africa and Arab region.

GCE (Global Campaign for Education)

This global NGO was launched in October 1999 by three international NGOs-Action Aid, Oxfam and Global March on child labour – and Education International (the world's largest federation of educators), it includes CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) from 80 countries.

GCE posits education as a fundamental human right that state governments are responsible for providing and believes that only world-wide mobilization of civil society will force the implementation of the action. The Global Education Campaign stands for:

- Free and compulsory, quality public basic education for all children for at least eight years, and a second chance for adults who miss out.
- Increased public expenditure on education to at least 6% of GNP, and new resources through aid and debts relief for the poorest countries and
- A global action plan for basic education to mobilize political will and new resources in support of national education plans to realize the 2015 targets. (Global Education Campaign website).

The Global Campaign for Education is a coalition of NGOs and trade Unions working in over 100 countries for the right to free, good quality education for all. GCE is a member of the UN Girls' Education initiative, the Global call to Action against poverty and the Global coalition on women and AIDS.

IIZ/DVV (Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association)

IIZ/DVV is not a donor NGO (Hinzen 2000) but a highly specialized institution with extended grassroot work in the developing countries. IIZ/DVV has been in the frontline of Adult Education, in all its modalities and fields and has been a strong lobbyist for it in international Fora. The journal; Adult Education and Development were initiated in 1973 and published in several languages. This remained as one of the most important knowledge and information instruments in Adult Basic Literacy Education worldwide. IIZ/DVV has helped both the developed and developing countries to exchange and disseminate experiences about adult education together. It has organized series of developmental conferences in the developing countries and provided scholarship for students to undertake Adult Education courses in some African higher Education. The organization is based in Germany.

SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency)

SIDA is one of the few international NGOs that has retained a consistent role Vis-a-vis Adult Education in its cooperation framework, providing technical and financial support within a broad, evolving and holistic vision of education where education is understood both as a human right and a basic need, contributing to and within the frame work of democracy, citizenship and social development and contributing to the overriding goal of poverty reduction, gender equality and sustainable development.

SIDA's support on Adult Education can be seen in its commitment to support the EFA agenda and to ensure lifelong learning, including formal and non-formal education, and literacy education. SIDA also believes that the central issue of development cooperation is to contribute to developing knowledge in the partner countries. It believes that this development cooperation shall facilitate the participation of poor countries and in this process raise the general level of education, which can be of crucial importance for economic and social development. SIDA has funded a large part of Adult basic education in Africa and other developing countries. Examples of these abound in Botswana, Tanzania and Namibia.

Conclusion

Apart from these International and Regional NGOs, there are numerous National NGOs which serve the interest of each country at eradicating illiteracy and furthering the course of learning and research in Adult education. They were either established by the religious bodies, philanthropist or some economic enterprises.

The NGOs both at the International, Regional and National levels had been able to assist in the development of Adult Education in the provision of funds, provision of materials, provision of experts, provision of training facilities for both short and long term higher education courses, and provision of opportunities for both developed and developing countries to exchange visions, knowledge and views about how the scope and goals of Adult education could solve the needs of the various people in their domain. It is the responsibility of each nation in the developing countries to tap the provisions by these NGOs to propagate the development of adult education in their domain.

NGOs have succeeded in bringing into the education movement, significant groups of learners around the world who are excluded from education or stay away from the formal system because it does not correspond to their learning needs and expectations. The fact that they are close to the grassroots and flexible in their approaches has allowed NGOs to propose 'tailor made' education, thus giving proof that alternative approaches to the formal education system are not only a reality, but serious and valid.

References

- [1] ADEA (Association for the development of Education in Africa), News Letter, 12(3)(2000)(Paris, <http://www.adeanet.org>)
- [2] Carr-Hill R Ed, *Adult Literacy Programs in Uganda: an Evaluation*, (2001), Washington: The World Bank.
- [3] D.H. Fretwell and J.E. Colombano, "Adult Continuing Education. An integral part of lifelong learning. Emerging policies and programs for the 21st century in upper and middle income countries", World Bank discussion paper, (2000), Washington D.C.
- [4] ICAE: International Council for Adult Education: <http://www.web.net/icae/index.html>.retrieved 2009.
- [5] IIZ-DVV (Institute for Internal and Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association). (2001). The Adult Education conference and DVV, Adult Education and Development, No 57.Bonn.
- [6] J. Miller, From Jomtien to Dakar: Meeting Basic Learning needs – of whom? Adult Education and Development, DVV, 55(2000), Bonn.

- [7] J. Langlo, Engaging with Adults. The case for increased support to adult basic education, in Sub-Sahara Africa. Africa Region Human Development, working paper series, (2001), Washington D.C. Africa region. The World Bank.
- [8] M.A. Omolewa, Adult Education Practice in Nigeria Ibadan, (1981), Evans Brothers.
- [9] J. Oxenham, signals from Uganda: what an evaluation suggests for Adult education, Adult Education and Development, 55(2000), Bonn IIZ-DVV.
- [10] J. Oxenham and A. Aoki, Including the 900 million Washington, D.C., (2001), World Bank.
- [11] J. Oxenham, A.H. Diallo, A.R. Katahoire, A. Petkova-Mwangi and O. Sail, Skills and literacy training for better livelihoods. A review of approaches and experiences. Washington: Africa Human Development sector, African Region, (2002), The World Bank.
- [12] Paalae (Pan African Association for literacy and Adult Education) (2001). "PAALAE's Educational Action Towards a True African Rebirth". Request proposal. International ICAE document.
- [13] R. M. Torres, life long learning, a new momentum and a new opportunity for adult basic learning and education in the south, Supplementary to Vol. 60(2003), IIZ-DVV.
- [14] Sida Swedish International Development Agency (2001), Education for All: A Human Right and a basic need. Policy for SIDA's Development Cooperation in the Education sector. Stockholm.
- [15] E.E. Uko-Aviomoh The Contribution of NGOs Towards Female Vocational Education in Nigeria in Management of Primary and Secondary Education in Nigeria, (2004), Codat Publications: Ibadan, Nigeria.
- [16] UNDP. (2001) Human Development Report. "making new technologies work for human development". New york. <http://WWW.undp.org.retrieved.2009>.
- [17] UNESCO.(1972). Final report. Third international conference on Adult Education (Tokyo) Paris. <http://www.unesco.org/education/information/pdf/25/>.
- [18] UNESCO (1985). Final report. Fourth international conference on Adult education. Paris.
- [19] UNESCO (1997). Status and trends. Adult education in a polarizing world Paris.
- [20] UNESCO(2000) Reason for Hope: the support for NGOs to education for all. Thematic studies. Education for All 2000 Assessment. Coordinated by the collective consultation of NGOs on Education for all. Paris.
- [21] UNICEF. (1993).reaching the Unreached; Non-formal Approaches and universal Primary Education. New York. UNICEF, education cluster. <http://www.unicef.org>.
- [22] UNICEF. (1999). Basic Education: A vision to the 21st century. Innocent global seminar summary report. Florence. Innocent center.
- [23] World Bank (2000). The World Bank's Partnership with civil society. Washington, D.C: social Development NGO and civil society unit.
- [24] World Bank (2001). "Beloisya: Basic Education and Livelihood opportunities for illiterate and semiliterate young adults. Proceedings of a workshop, World Bank. Discussion paper. <http://www.worldbank.org/education/adult outreach>.