

Empowering Trainers of Adult Education Personnel in Nigeria

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Abstract *The paper set out to explore how trainers of adult education personnel are empowered. It also examined the forms and importance of training to adult education personnel. Empowerment is conceived as outward and inward activity. Empowerment means giving power or entitlement to people, helping them acquire capabilities or qualifications, establishing structures which enable them to have more control over decisions affecting them. Some of the means of empowering trainers of adult education personnel examined are: funding, membership of professional association, participation in conferences, undertaking research, and acquisition of knowledge of Information and Communication Technology. Besides, traditional training technique, e-training, workplace training and corporate universities are some of the training forms of adult education personnel. The importance of using mentoring, presenting training modules, corporate training and Information and Communication Technology for adult education personnel was reviewed. The recommendations made include: need to make fund available, by the government for the training and retraining of adult education personnel; management of agencies on adult education enjoined to fund the training and retraining of their personnel and imbibe the use of mentoring technique for training of their workers; university based adult education Scholars encouraged to make their research findings available to end-users; and workplace training technique should be incorporated into the training programmes of adult education personnel.*

Keywords: *adult education, Empowering/Empowerment, university*

1. Introduction

Adult learning has become a significant component of education policies and programmes in developing countries, Nigeria inclusive. The National Policy on Education (2004) devoted section 6 for mass literacy, adult and non formal education. In this section, the roles of all tiers of governments (Federal, State and Local) on adult and non-formal education are outlined. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria also describes the direction government will take on adult and non-formal education. This shows that great importance is attached to adult learning by the government. Preece and Singh (2003) stated:

Education for all cannot be achieved by primary schooling alone- adult and non formal education (ANFE) is a key complimentary resource in the form of basic education, literacy, alternatives to formal schooling, enlisting parents in more effective support for children, making primary schooling more participatory, developing complementary vocational training and local income-generation activities. In particular, ANFE offers a means for facilitating continuing primary, secondary or even higher education among those who have acquired the basics but missed the opportunity for further learning and the chance to stay abreast of a changing economy.

One observes that the role of adult and non-formal education in ensuring that all people in the society are educationally catered for cannot be underestimated. Based on the foregoing, the personnel charged with adult and non-formal education programmes need to understand its dynamics in order to be able to achieve the goals in mind.

Society keeps changing, perhaps due to globalization, science and technology and the advancement in the area of information and communication technology. Every person in the society needs one form or the other aspects of adult and Non-formal Education (ANFE) even if such person possessed one level of formal

education, either at pre-employment, during employment or retirement period. The need for patronage of ANFE is accentuated by the various world conventions ratified by the government and goals set for itself by the Nigerian government. These are Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA), Vision 2020 and seven (7) Point Agenda. The vision 2020 and 7 Point Agenda of Yaradua/Jonathan administration is basically for progress, advancement and development for the nation. By the year 2020, the administration envisioned Nigeria as a nation that will be one of the twenty largest economies of the world. Similarly, on assumption of mantle of leadership as president of Nigeria, Alhaji Musa Yaradua proclaimed 7 point agenda of his administration which include Critical Infrastructure, Niger Delta, Food Security, Human Capital, Land Tenure Changes and Home Ownership, National Security and Intelligence, and Wealth Creation. The incumbent President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan has promised to continue pursuing these goals.

In pursuit of declarations contained in the National Policy of Education, as it affects adult and non-formal education, the 1999 constitution, various conventions and goals enunciated above, educational institutions such as Department of Adult Education in Universities, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), National Commission for Adult and non-formal education, Division of Adult Education in both States Agencies for adult non-formal education and Non-governmental organisations are set up. In these organisations, some provide leadership, guidance and training, while others are end-users. The former could be categorised as trainers and the latter could mean personnel in adult education business.

The thrust of this paper is of paramount importance in view of dynamism prevalent in human endeavours in our society. Thus, answers are provided to questions asked: How are the trainers of adult education personnel empowered? Who are to carry out the empowerment? What forms of training programmes are available for adult education personnel? Of what importance is training to adult education personnel?

2. Empowering/Empowerment

The Microsoft Encarta Dictionaries (2007) define the word 'empower' as: give power or authority to somebody; and to make more confident or assertive; to give somebody a greater sense of confidence or self-esteem. Empower is seen by the New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language (2004) as to delegate legal power to, authorise a person or to enable a person carry out an assignment. Similarly, Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (1999) looks at 'empower' as empowering someone to do something, that is, to give them authority or official permission to do it.

Based on the foregoing, empowering or empowerment is an outward activity whereby permission from higher authority is given to a person, through the instrument of official directive, statute book or act of parliament, to carry out an assignment. Also, it is an inward activity in the sense that when permission or authority is given, what will enable one to internalise it and become self-confident, assertive and exhibit self-esteem is acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitude and relevant literacies.

Furthermore, Preece and Singh (2005), quoting Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (2000), wrote:

Empowerment includes giving power or entitlement to people, helping people acquire capabilities or qualifications, establishing structures which enables individuals and groups to have more control over decisions that affect them, giving people voice and skills to access and utilise what they are entitled to.

Medhurst (1999) observed that there is a way we can deal with global risks, either ecological risks, health hazards, economic crises, or cultural dangers without active and informed citizenship. People need to enhance their capacity to take initiatives and to acquire new skills. It is necessary to provide learning opportunities for the present generation of adult men and women. It has become clear that the learning capacity of human beings, the unfolding of human potential and the opportunity to continue learning throughout life are central to the task of shaping the century and the new millennium. That is why both the

trainers and adult education workers need to be empowered so as to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities to humanity.

3. Trainers of Adult Education Personnel: Agencies and Organizations in Adult Education Industry.

Three levels of manpower are commonly identified, namely: high, middle and low level manpower. One of the responsibilities of high level manpower is to map out strategies and formulate policies and programmes that will lead to the attainment of organization's objectives. While the execution and the implementation of such policies, strategies and programmes is left to the middle and low level manpower. For any programmes to be properly executed and implemented, the high level manpower members of management have to do proper mentoring,

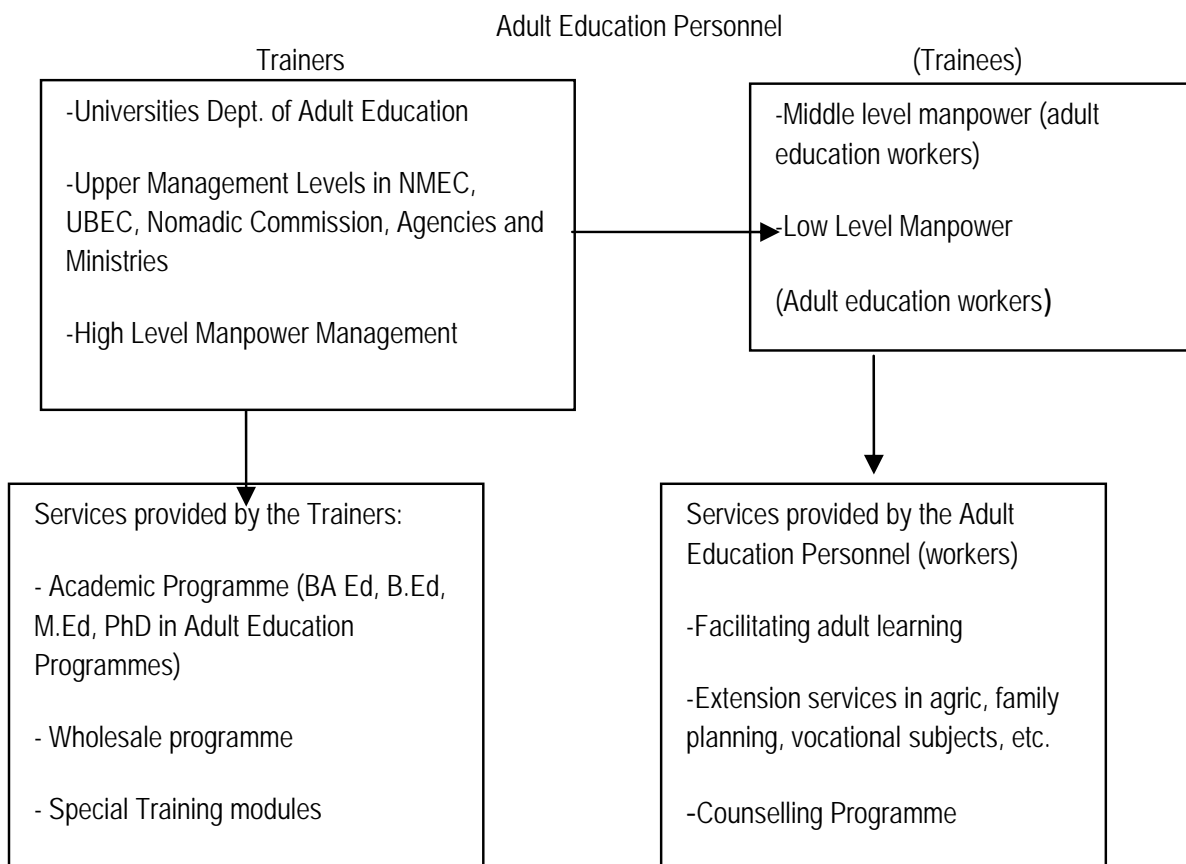
In adult and non-formal education industry, all these three tiers of employees work together in order to meet the aspirations and needs of the clientele. Both the high and middle level manpower are found in the University based adult education departments, National Commission for Mass Education, National Commission for Nomadic Education, Universal Basic Education Commission, Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE), Research Institutes, Division of Adult Education in the Federal and States Ministries of Education and States Agencies for Adult and Non-formal Education. Some Ministries like Agriculture,, Health, Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Cooperatives and Industries, Adult, Technical and Vocational Education, among others do offer services in the area of adult and non-formal education.

Besides, Religious bodies and other Non-governmental organisations serve as trainers of adult education change agents. What we might call the low level manpower and even the middle level provide services and execute the programmes and policies formulated by the management when they get to the grassroots.

Meanwhile, Mbalis (2005), citing a number of Scholars, identified three groups of adult educators, namely: the firing line level; the programme director level; and the professional leadership level.

- i. **The firing line level:** This is likening to middle and low level manpower. According to the scholar, this level plays critical role in the adult education process and programme. This group includes educators that involve grassroots workers, teachers, planners of adult learning programme, learning experiences, learning resources providers and performance evaluators. However, it should be added that without receiving adequate training in the rudiments of adult and non-formal education, this group of personnel might not be able to perform.
- ii. **The programme-director level:** This group also falls within the purview of high level manpower. They are adult educators who plan, organize, control, make decisions, train, lead and evaluate adult education activities or programmes. In addition, they coordinate the activities of agencies with adult education interests, and contribute ideas that guide policy formulation.
- iii. **The professional leadership level:** This level is also high level manpower which consists of adult educators, especially the university based adult education scholars, who develop new knowledge, prepare programme materials, and introduce modern techniques of doing the job, train adult educators and lead research investigations.

Figure 1: Trainers and Adult Education Personnel



Source. Developed by Hassan, M.A. Empowering Trainers of Adult Education Programme in Nigeria

4. Forms of Training for Adult Education Personnel

Less than a decade ago, continuing training was viewed either as a means of career progression or helping organisations to make ad-hoc adaptations to new technological developments (Cedefop, 2002a). Training courses were often seen as a reward or an incentive for industrious employees, especially for those with management responsibilities. These perceptions have changed dramatically because of two important factors: investment in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and globalization. This inform the need for those who work in adult and non-formal education environment to expose themselves to training and retraining programmes.

Meanwhile, Cedefop (2002a), Cedefop (2002b), and Jurich, and others (2002) identified four major forms of training which include: workplace training technique, e-training, traditional training and education and corporate universities.

- (a) **Traditional Training and Education:** This is a face-to-face mode of training which can be modified quickly with good trainers. Such training may have a limited audience or access compared to e-training. Cost pressures can become intense, particularly for senior personnel.
- (b) **E-training:** This form of training can provide better equivalent or better outcomes (retention of knowledge, demonstrably better skills, or higher levels of problem solving, at the same or lower cost than traditional training. The training programme in the e-training is structured to respond to the needs of trainees. They access it whenever they are. The e-training appears to be more in use in developed countries than developing economies like Nigeria.

- (c) **Workplace Training:** This form of training presupposes that learning content must be based upon the concrete learning needs of the organisation using it. In some cases, the computer is an appropriate multimedia learning desk. Colleagues and supervisors can often have a role as trainer or coach. Many benefits can be seen in workplace oriented learning. These are:
- i. reduces the time that employees are unavailable for work;
 - ii. brings down travel costs;
 - iii. requires less investment in learning equipment (multimedia computers, internet connections);
 - iv. provides a quicker response to current needs; and
 - v. provides problem-solving exercises in day-to-day work situations that improve employee competences.
- (d) **Corporate Universities:** This form of training is defined as the strategic umbrella for developing and educating employees, customers, and suppliers in order to meet an organization's business strategies. This method of training has three basic objectives; to develop corporate citizenship, provide a contextual framework to the organization, and build core workplace competencies among employees. The traditional means for delivering a corporate education has been the classroom. However, many organizations, especially in the developed world, using it are embracing the internet as a medium of instruction because it offers many advantages over-face-to-face teaching.

5. The Roles of Trainers in the Training of Adult Education Personnel

Training of implementers of adult and non-formal education personnel cannot be over-emphasized. Most of the adult education personnel are employed in one agency or organization or the other. Thus it behoves on the trainers in those establishment to provide training programmes to those personnel in order to sharpen and prepare them for the task of facilitating adult learning. The trainers could employ some of the following:

- (a) **Mentoring:** Braimoh (2008) opined that learning is a continuous phenomenon and therefore, no one, irrespective of age, position, riches or popularity will wish to stop learning. It is not knowledge acquisition that is restricted to four walls of classrooms that is being referred to. Mentoring is seen as helping, guiding and empowering the young ones in the organization. It involves the high level manpower or members of management sharing their ideas, experiences and technical know-how with the middle and low level workers so that the objectives of the organization will be achieved.
- (b) **Presenting training modules:** An expert on human resources could be consulted on training theme. This could be in form of training modules or special training programmes. The university based adult education scholars could be also approached for this kind of training programmes or special training modules or special training programme. It could take place in the workplace or outside the work environment, depending on the costs and mutual agreement of trainers and organisers of training programmes.
- (c) **Corporate training:** The need of organisers of adult education programmes determines whether to use corporate training or not. Whatever training programme that is to be put in place, it should be based on the aspirations and needs of the organization demanding for it.
- (d) **Information and Communication Technology:** The changes in the society and the ways of living of the people call for acquisition of knowledge in information and communication technology by all adult education personnel. This will enable them to have access to plethora of available information on the internet.

6. Empowerment of Trainers of Adult Education Personnel

The role of training in improving the performance of beneficiaries cannot be over-emphasized. In providing the training programme, certain things have to be put in place: these include sponsorship, organiser and the recipients. Organisers of training programme need to be empowered to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in

their job. This can take the form of funding, participation in the conferences, research, belonging to professional associations, and knowledge of information and communication technology.

- I. **Funding:** The issue of funding is an important aspect of organising training programme or special educational programme. Both local and foreign donors may be explored in order to source for fund. The management of the organisation demanding for training may provide financial and material resources for a training programme. At times, the beneficiaries of a training programme may provide for fund. When fund is available, the organisation handling such training programme has thus been empowered.
- II. **Participation in Conferences:** Whether one is working in the university-based adult education departments or in agencies/organisations in charge of adult education programmes, one need to attend conferences, workshops, and seminar to update one's knowledge, skills, attitude and literacies in the areas of adult and non-formal education if one wants to remain current. Doing this will equip one to face the challenges ahead in promoting the course of adult education.
- III. **Research:** The University is known for teaching, research and community service. Making fund available for carrying out research is sine qua non to progress and advancement in the field of adult education. The university based adult educators should embark on rigorous research in order to discover some hidden knowledge necessary in this and next Century. Those at the upper level of management in agencies/organisations on adult education rely on the research findings coming out of universities Departments of Adult Education. The reason is that these managers are overwhelmed with the administration and management activities of their agencies.
- IV. **Membership of Professional Association:** One of the most popular professional associations for adult educators in the country is Nigerian National Council for Adult education. Belonging to this association and other related bodies is very imperative on any adult education trainers, wherever they are working. This will enable them to share ideas, views, knowledge and current information in the field of adult and non-formal education
- V. **Access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**
Scholars and adult educators should be conversant and have knowledge of ICT. This will afford them the opportunity to access certain information, which ordinarily, their trainees may not have access to. Human beings are not static and so the society. Therefore, trainers of adult education personnel have to move with time so as to be in-depth in their field of study.

7. Recommendations

Thus far, we have seen that all the levels of manpower need one form of training or the other in order to make them relevant at all times. Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There is the need, on the part of government, to make available adequate fund for the training and retraining of adult education personnel in order to equip them to face the challenges of adult education and its being responsive to the 21st Century society.
- ii. The management of various agencies and organisations should be encouraged to fund the training and retraining of their personnel so as to keep them abreast of their workplace and global developments.
- iii. It is recommended that the management imbibe the use of mentoring technique to update the knowledge and skills of their personnel. In doing so, the management is enjoined to make themselves available to do truthful and trustworthy mentoring for their workers.
- iv. The University-based adult and non-formal education scholars are encouraged to make available their research findings available to end-users in order to advance knowledge, skills and attitude.
- v. The training technique that appears to be in vogue is workplace training method. All the stakeholders in adult and non-formal education are encouraged to imbibe it.

8. Conclusion

Empowering both the trainers and the trainees is important in the present dispensation. Both of them, no doubt, will be able to update their knowledge, skills and attitude and discharge their respective duties to the public. Although, three levels of manpower were identified in the paper, one discovers that in some agencies, the three distinctive levels may dovetail to one another in terms of performance of duties. What is important is that certain people should train others in order to provide relevant and useful contents in adult and non-formal education, using adequate andragogical approaches. The policy implication of this exposition on actors in industrial relations (employers, government, employees, and mass media) environment is far reaching. The need to undertake training and re-training of scholars, trainers, upper, middle and low level manpower is stressed. That shows that nobody should be left untrained.

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