

## **Repositioning Adult and Non – Formal Education for Sustainable National Development: Issues, Challenges and Agenda for 2020 and Beyond in Nigeria**

**Adamu Zubairu Evuti & Ann E. Umeh**

*Department of Science Education, School of Technology Education,  
Federal University of Technology Minna*

**Email:**[adamuzubairu@futminna.edu.ng](mailto:adamuzubairu@futminna.edu.ng)

### **Abstract**

The paper examined the issues and challenges of repositioning adult and non – formal education for national development in Nigeria. The paper highlighted on a number of issues of repositioning adult and non – formal education in the Country. Interestingly, some of the prevailing issues explored in the paper include repositioning adult and non - formal education for sustainable entrepreneurial initiatives, repositioning adult and non-formal education for wealth creation and employment generation. The paper which equally highlighted on the agenda for future action in repositioning adult and non-formal education for sustainable national development in Nigeria identified establishment of National Commission for Entrepreneurship Education, development of relevant curriculum, availability of human and material resources as well as adequacy of funds as critical areas of concern in the initiative. Some of the recommendations include: A strong political will should be demonstrated to reposition adult and non-formal education with a view to making it responsive to contemporary local, national and global challenges; the curriculum of adult and non-formal education must in addition to national demands reflect local challenges and needs for adult learners in Nigeria among others.

**Keywords:** Development, Non-Formal education, Adult education, Issues

### **Introduction**

The issue of repositioning adult and non – formal education is very important in addressing the prevailing issues and challenges that affect this critical area of Nigerian educational sector. Adult and non – formal education as an important area of Nigerian educational sector focuses on provision of functional education to youths and adults both in the formal school system and outside the formal school system in the Country. Essentially, the scope of Adult and non – formal education has widened in recent time to address certain contemporary national and global challenges. Precisely, the scope of Adult and non – formal education includes, functional literacy education, functional numeracy education, remedial education, vocational education, education for disadvantaged groups and people with special needs in the society, distance education, centre for open distance learning (CODEL), community development, adult education administration, environmental adult education, consumer education, health education, prison education, on – the – job training, in-service training, pre-retirement education and nomadic education among others.

Britain (1989) rightly noted that Adult and non – formal education which also includes training for people in employment, the provision of education for people in employment or workers education becomes highly imperative in order to enable people to keep abreast with recent technological changes and research findings. This will ultimately enhance the efficiency, productivity and effective service delivery of such people in their various work places in the contemporary society.

Interestingly, education as an important human enterprise continues throughout life. This type of education which continues throughout life is simply referred to as life – long education in the society. Nzeneri (2002) observed that it is in adult education that a lot of emphasis is placed on life – long education. Britain (1989) stated that it has become increasingly known that education

is a process which continues throughout adult life. The implication of this is that without Adult and non – formal education for adults, the life of adult population will not be meaningful in the contemporary global environment. Consequently, Adult and non – formal education which offers an opportunity for adult population to learn throughout life contributes significantly to sustainable national development in Nigeria. However, this is not without certain challenges. There is, therefore, an urgent need to reposition Adult and non – formal education in order to make it highly responsive to certain human challenges which impact negatively on people's contributions to sustainable national development in Nigeria. The idea is basically to identify issues of common concern that will help reasonably to stimulate sustainable national development in the Country.

### **Issues of Repositioning Adult and Non – Formal Education in Nigeria**

The prevailing issues of repositioning adult and non – formal education in Nigeria are stated as follows:

1. Repositioning adult and non-formal education for sustainable entrepreneurial enterprises in Nigeria.
2. Repositioning adult and non-formal education for wealth creation.
3. Repositioning adult and non-formal education for employment generation for the teeming population.

### **Repositioning adult and non-formal education for sustainable entrepreneurial enterprises in Nigeria**

Understandably, an increasing number of student graduate from Universities and other institutions of higher learning every year leading to various qualifications of the educational institutions concerned awarding degrees, HND or OND and NCE as the case may be in Nigeria, Adult and non-formal education as a distinct department in various Universities contributes significantly to enhance production of manpower that will help in promotion of sustainable national development in Nigeria as a developing economy.

Many of the courses offered range from sciences (Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics), Arts, Social Sciences, adult education administration, distance education, literacy education, distance education, environmental adult education, extension education, vocational education, on – the – job training, consumers education, nomadic education and others.

The scope of adult and non-formal education has increased very tremendously in recent years in the contemporary global environment. Britain (1989) stated that the scope of adult and continuing education has broadened in recent time to include the development of the individual through physical, cultural and craft promotion, basic education in literacy and numeracy, consumer education, education for disadvantaged groups and people with special needs notably the disabled, pre – retirement education, consumer education, ethnic minorities and health education. However, the scope of adult and non-formal education or adult continuing education goes beyond these identified areas.

Additionally, adult and non-formal education or adult continuing education as the name implies in various institutions of higher learning in Nigeria also focuses on provision of training for people who are already in employment. This obviously enables such people to keep abreast with the technological changes or technological development and research findings. Essentially, it can be seen that certain initiatives are taken to explore the possibilities of improving opportunities for adult learners to engage in meaningful academic enterprise to acquire relevant knowledge and skills which will ultimately enhance their capabilities for effective's service delivery in the society.

Fundamentally, efforts should be made to reposition adult and non-formal education in Nigeria to be responsive in meeting the demands of contemporary global work environment and needs of Local people. The area of focus in this circumstance should be specifically on promotion of professionalism, industrial and commercial competences. This can, however, be achieved by mandating the relevant departments in the Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics to design academic programmes that will enable people, especially the middle manpower in the Country to update their knowledge and skills for effective service delivery in their various work places in the Country.

Interestingly, adult and non-formal education should be repositioned in Nigeria in order to be able to face the numerous challenges in the temporary global environment which is characterized with teeming young adult unemployed population. Aruma (2010) rightly asserted the entrepreneurship education stimulates concerns, especially among the unemployed members of various communities in the contemporary world, because of the idea of globalization. Indeed, entrepreneurship education programme should be established as part of the programme of studies in repositioning adult and non-formal education in Nigeria.

The idea is basically to reposition adult and non-formal education with the ultimate aim of widening people's access to opportunities to contribute meaningfully to sustainable national development in Nigeria. Consequently, the existing widened social and economic gap between the rich and the poor should be reduced very considerably in the society, because of the intervention of entrepreneurship education in addressing certain prevailing challenges in the society. Aruma (2010a) noted that entrepreneurship education focuses on narrowing the ever widening social and economic differences which exist between the rich and the poor in the contemporary society. Indeed, with the knowledge of entrepreneurship education people can now acquire the right knowledge and entrepreneurial skills to remain relevant in contributing to sustainable national development in Nigeria.

It is pertinent to remark that the idea of repositioning adult and non-formal education through the promotion of entrepreneurship education is essentially to encourage establishment of community development projects and community development enterprises or initiatives in certain critical areas of Nigerian developing economy. Aruma (2010a) emphasized that the relevance of entrepreneurship education to national economy must respond to educational needs as well as community development and national development needs of specific areas in Nigeria. Ngwu (2006) observed that the establishment of non-formal education projects will promote agriculture and food production, industry, manufacturing and handicraft trades in many parts of Nigeria with the ultimate objective of responding to the peculiar educational and development needs of the various areas concerned in the Country. There is an urgent need to reposition adult and non-formal education in Nigeria in order to encourage people democratic participation in promoting collective resolve that focuses on stimulating sustainable national development in the Country. Aruma (2010a) rightly suggested that if entrepreneurship education is to make appreciable efforts in promoting national development in Nigeria that it should focus on combining business training with vocational education, agriculture, technical and managerial skills in order to make entrepreneurship education more result – oriented. Ultimately, this will obviously enable people to promote a true enterprise culture in a developing economy like Nigeria which will certainly stimulate a strong resolve for sustainable national development in a Country that is very much in need of such development essentially, repositioning adult and non-formal education for promoting entrepreneurship education is an important strategy of enhancing sustainable national development in Nigeria.

### **Repositioning Adult and Non – Formal Education for Wealth Creation**

The concept of wealth creation simply means a process of changing the state of something to

another preferred state in order to enhance its economic values in the society. Indeed, enhancement of the economic values of any particular things from its original state or present state to a new state or form certainly adds values to with its attendance improved services, more attractive financial rewards or economic rewards. The transformed goods in a new state or form can be useful for human consumption in the society. Additionally, the goods in the new changed state or form can equally be useful for livestock production, agro-based industrial use among others.

Essentially, the goods in their new state or form usually stimulate wealth creation, income and employment generation. Indeed, the economic values and rewards are usually high enough to stimulate sustainable national development. Aruma (2008) remarked that adult and non – formal education helps to prepare people to face challenges of life in the society and contributes remarkably to the development of their own various communities. He further noted that this becomes important since peoples active participation in acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills promotes sustainable national development. Consequently, adult and non – formal education should be repositioned to explore efficient ways of partnering with relevant institutions through institutional support with a view to offer the required training to the teeming young adult population in the society. This will certainly help them to learn possible ways of adding values to numerous goods that can be in their original state or a processed form waiting to be turned into wealth creation for use in the society. The issue of repositioning adult and non – formal education for wealth creation deserves urgent attention in Nigerian economy that is over laboured with much relevance on crude oil production as the main source of the Country's revenue for a number of years now. The economy must certainly be diversified in order to guarantee sustainable national development in the Country. The diversification of Nigerian economy calls for urgent attention to the development of non-oil sector's of Country's economy.

Aruma (2010a). To promote wealth creation in a developing economy like Nigeria requires reforms for wealth creation that can impact positively on the economy. Aliogo (2009) and Aruma (2010a) identified reforms for wealth creation through diversification of production in agricultural and solid mineral sector's as very critical for the economy. Repositioning adult and non – formal education for wealth creation requires adequate institutional support in order to make the initiative more result – oriented in promoting sustainable national development.

### **Repositioning Adult and Non-formal Education for Employment Generation for the Teeming Population.**

\* A high rate of unemployment characterizes Nigerian economy in recent time. The managed Nigerian economy cannot guarantee generating adequate employment for the teeming population in the Country. The managers of the economy and all key players in the management of the economy and education sector that help to train the teeming unemployment young adult population including adult educators who train adult learners should explore possible ways of repositioning adult and non – formal education in Nigeria. The idea for this is basically to reverse the unimaginable trend of the high rate of unemployment which cannot guarantee a healthy environment. An idle mind can easily see kidnapping and youth restiveness as quick ways of being engaged in doing indecent jobs for the purpose of survival in the society. This, however, presents a social challenges to adult and non – formal education. Consequently, repositioning adult and non – formal education will certainly explore means of collaborating with federal ministry of labour and productivity to seek possible ways of creating paid jobs for the teeming unemployed young adult population in Nigeria. According to Pratt and Boyden (1985) project establishment should try as much as possible to increase the number of employment opportunities in the society. This obviously becomes more relevant when employment opportunities are available to the local population in the country.

Adult and non – formal education can evolve structural changes through appropriate policy

frame work that will enable the sector to enjoy adequate government and institutional support including cooperate organizations in the training of adult learners who will be job creators instead of job seekers in the society. This will involve both public and private sectors of the economy on order to widen the choices and opportunities open to adult learners. The concern of the government is to ensure that business can operate successfully and also create jobs for people in the society. Britain (1989) stated that the government can take action to enhance the employment opportunities in the labour market by encouraging better training as well as removing any regulatory obstacle that hinders employment of young people in the society. This structural employment strategy can only yield the required dividends when the government employs strong political will to enforce the policy on both public and private sectors of the country economy.

The issues of repositioning adult and non-formal education should focus on exploring viable employment opportunities in Nigeria developing economy. Britain (1989) noted that government's employment strategy promotes an economic and industrial condition in which business usually operates very well through creation of employment opportunities in the society. Indeed, the enabling environment must be created if the opportunities for job creation are to be achieved. The creation of opportunities for viable economic, financial and industrial environment which usually help to promote employment creation and successful business are important areas of focus for repositioning adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. Aruma (2011a) rightly remarked that this will usually promote more opportunities for employment and widen the access of people to viable economic initiatives which will create wealth, reduce poverty level through generation of appreciable income as well as employment in the society. The concern of any economy developed or developing economy is the promotion of employment opportunities for its people in the contemporary global environment.

### **The Challenges of Repositioning Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria**

The challenges of repositioning adult and non-formal education in Nigeria are the following:

#### **1. Poor funding of adult and non-formal education.**

The issue of sourcing for adequate funds for adult and non-formal education has caused a serious concern to adult education and other key players for many years now in Nigeria. International seminar on new adult education policies (2000) stated that international experts agreed that the current funding of adult education is not adequate in various parts of the world. Aruma (2011b) noted that poor funding has made it difficult for effective implementation of adult and non-formal education for many years now in Nigeria. The non – challant attitude of Nigerian political office holders and politicians has undoubtedly, denied education in general as well as adult and non-formal education in particular reasonable budgetary allocation for effective service delivery in the country. Okediran (2006) stated inadequate financial resources as one of the problems that militate against adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. There is need to reverse this trend of poor funding of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria which has been generally classified as very poor in a richly endowed country like Nigeria. Omolewa (1991) noted that the funding of adult and non-formal education has however remained lamentably very low. Sadly enough in spite of the continued appeal from adult educators for increased funding of adult and non-formal education; the situation remained the same in a country that is richly endowed with abundant human and material resources, especially the huge deposited of oil and gas in commercial quantity. Regrettably, the poor involvement of the three tiers of government in Nigeria in adult and non-formal education has undoubtedly, impacted negatively on the sector that focuses in promoting the adult learning for meaningful socio – economic transformation of the country. Indeed, in repositioning of adult and non-formal education, there should be adequate involvement of both public and private sectors of Nigerian economy including other relevant stakeholders in funding of this important area of the country's educational sector.

The cooperate social responsibilities of corporate organizations in oil and gas exploration and exploitation as well as other companies outside the oil and gas sector of the economy should be sought adequately in financing of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. This will help to ensure that the goals of adult and non-formal education as rightly stated in federal republic of Nigeria (2004) will hopefully be achieved in the country. There should be salary cut and emolument of politicians and political office holders who take reasonable proportion of Nigeria's annual budget. Understandably, the National Assembly alone in Nigeria takes about one quarter of the country's annual budget which represents about 25 percent of the budget. Lawal and Olayinka (2010) noted that Nigeria labour congress (NLC) decried 25 per cent funds for National Assembly as recently revealed in the country. Therefore, drastic salary cut of the members of National Assembly including other politicians and political office holders will obviously translate to saving more funds which can be used to service other areas of the economy such as education in general and adult and non-formal education in particular.

### ***2. Poor Public Perception of Adult and Non-Formal Education***

The challenge of poor public perception of adult and non-formal education is considered as another serious challenge of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. The poor public image of adult and non-formal education as an area of study for the old people is, undoubtedly, partly responsible for its poor choice as an important area of study in Nigeria Universities. Aruma (2011b) remarked that a lot of people in Nigeria lack adequate information about many opportunities which adult and non-formal education offers in the society. There must be adequate information about adult and non-formal education in order to stimulate significant interests of people in the field as an important area of study that offers many opportunities to the teeming number of people seeking for admission into the Universities in the country. Pratt and Boyden (1985) were of the view that publicity for literacy education promotes successful literacy programme in the society. Certainly, adequate public enlightenment about adult and non-formal education is very important in influencing people's choice of study in the society.

Essentially, repositioning of adult and non-formal education will start with refocusing of public image on adult and non-formal education as an important area of study that offers many opportunities to people in the areas of community development, human capital development, environmental adult education, entrepreneurship education, extension education among others. The repositioning of adult and non-formal education should focus on encouraging initiatives to improve opportunities for adult learners in the contemporary global environment.

### ***3. Poor Institutional Support.***

Poor institutional support is a serious challenge in repositioning of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. It is appropriate to take certain initiatives to improve opportunities for adult learners in adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. Kidd and Titmus (1989) noted that there must be some organizations in order to provide learning opportunities to adults. The department of adult and non-formal education in many Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education including adult education centres, Local government education authorities (LGEAs), state and Federal Government as well as non – governmental organizations (NGOs) both locally and internationally should collaborate very closely to explore the opportunities which institutional support offers to people in the society. Fasel (2000) rightly advocated for partnering across organizational boundary in this type of initiative. This kind of arrangement is usually very rewarding since it offers a number of opportunities notably provision of adequate funding of adult and non-formal education, exchange programmes, inter – project visits among others. This creation opportunities for improved learning environment in adult and non-formal education in the society. The provision of a strong institutional support for adult and non-formal education will ultimately widen people's access to opportunities to contribute to national development. Aruma (2011a) regretted that Nigeria, like a number of other less developed countries failed to

establish substantial support which will guarantee widening access to opportunities for people in the society. Essentially, repositioning of adult and non-formal education requires certain policies that will encourage institutional support in the country. Kidd and Titmus (1989) stated that many countries collaborate with non – governmental organization (NGOs) to promote adult education. Consequently, adult education requires adequate collaboration between the three tiers of government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria for effective service delivery in the system. This implies that partnering is critical to promote effective teaching and learning in adult and non-formal education in the society.

#### **4. Poor Political Will and Commitment.**

The concept of political will is the concerted effort or collective resolve of people in government to do things that will obvious improve the peoples living condition in the society through appropriate reforms and policies. Todaro and Smith (2009) defined the concept of political will as a determined effort by people in political interestingly, the people in government or authority must demonstrate strong will power and commitment to enhance socio-economic well being of the governed people through appropriate institutional frame work and reforms. In the context of this paper, necessary institutional structures and facilities must be put in place to create a conducive learning environment for adult learners in Nigeria.

Sadly enough, lack of political will is one of the problems that hinders national development in Nigeria. Consequently, advocating for repositioning of adult and non-formal education without demonstrating strong political will and commitment to support the initiatives through adequate funding enhancement of infrastructure and learning environment will not yield and meaningful result. Lack of political will has indeed impacted negatively on many development initiatives in Nigeria.

#### **5. Poor Infrastructure**

Additionally, poor infrastructure is, indeed, another major challenge which confronts repositioning of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. A case in point is the non-availability of steady power supply which has hindered the development of Nigerian economy to a certain extent. The issue of power supply is now a serious concern to state and federal government in Nigeria.

Aruma (2010a) rightly noted that the concern of both the state and federal government in Nigeria is to generate adequate power supply for distribution in the country so as to promote the development of the economy. Repositioning of adult and non-formal education without adequately addressing the issue of power supply cannot achieve the expected dividends in training people who will be ready to work diligently to stimulate national development. The issue of repositioning adult and non-formal education for sustainable national development without adequate infrastructure notably improved power supply, enhance information and communication technology (ICT) among others cannot guarantee widened access to global knowledge that will be very vital for sustainable national development.

#### **Agenda for Future Action In Repositioning Adult and Non-Formal Education For Sustainable National Development In 2020 And Beyond In Nigeria.**

The agenda for future action in repositioning adult and non-formal education for 2020 and beyond in Nigeria are highlighted as follows:

1. Establishment of National Commission for Entrepreneurship Education:  
The establishment of National Commission for entrepreneurship education will help to co-ordinate various entrepreneurship initiatives of adult and non-formal education, and other departments in the Universities as well as the rest institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. This will promote effective co-ordination of this new area of study in Nigeria.

2. Curriculum Development: Essentially, the curriculum development in adult and non-formal education should reflect local challenges and needs of adult learners as well as national demands. This will make the curriculum development in adult and non-formal education to remain relevant both locally and nationally in addressing the prevailing issues and challenges concerning national development in the country.
3. Availability of Human and Material Resources: the agenda for future action in repositioning adult and non-formal education should reflect local challenges and needs of adult learners as well as national demands. This will make the curriculum development in adult and non-formal education to remain relevant both locally and nationally in addressing the prevailing issues and challenges concerning national development in the country.
4. Availability of Funds: Adequacy of funds must be guaranteed in order to secure a firm future for functional adult and non-formal education in Nigeria, there must be an upward review of budgetary allocations to education in general; and adult and non-formal education in particular in Nigeria for more funds to accrue to educational sectors in the country.

### **Conclusion**

Repositioning of adult and non-formal education becomes imperative in order to make is a result-oriented academic enterprise in Nigeria. This will open more opportunities to many adult learners to be bold and more courageous enough to initiate a lot of ideas that will enhance their entrepreneurial interests in contributing meaningfully to sustainable national development through wealth creation, income and employment generation in the society. This remains a serious challenge to Nigeria educational system in general as well as adult and non-formal education in particular which have suffered greatly from challenges of poor funding, challenges of poor public perception, challenges of poor institutional support, challenges of poor infrastructure and lack of political will to drive the noble ideas of repositioning the entire sector. Indeed, adult and non-formal education can be repositioned adequately enough if these challenges can be addressed properly by the government of Federal Republic of Nigeria as a key stakeholder in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders in education industry both locally and internationally. The government must, however, demonstrate strong commitment to repositioning adult and non-formal education by increasing budgetary allocation to this important area of the country's educational sector.

Fundamentally, adult and non-formal education with a refocus on helping adult learners to develop themselves is an important strategy to enable them to contribute to sustainable national development in Nigeria. The focus of repositioning of adult and non-formal education is to make it an equal pattern in developing Nigeria economy. This can, however, be achieved through the development of the entrepreneurial potential and capabilities of youth and adult population in Nigeria who will ultimately be job creators instead of job seekers as well as active players in wealth creation instead of destruction of wealth in their desperate efforts to contribute their own quota to sustainable national development in the country.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the prevailing issues and challenges of repositioning adult and non-formal education for sustainable national development the following recommendations are made:

- a. A strong political will should be demonstrated at various levels of governance to reposition adult and non-formal education with a view to make it responsive to contemporary local, national and global challenges as being explained in Nigeria. This political commitment will, undoubtedly, enable the government concerned to inject more funds into the age long neglected area of the country educational sector.
- b. There should be collaborative efforts by all relevant stakeholders in adult and non-



formal education to reposition it in view of the contemporary trends, especially the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) which advocated widening peoples' access to quality education that will be relevant to the country. It is therefore, through provision of high quality education that adult learners who are engaged in adult and non-formal education programmers notably in-service education, on-the-job training, community development, environmental adult education among others will be fortunate enough to acquire the right education that will help them to contribute significantly to national development in Nigeria.

- c. There should be strengthened collaboration to encourage institutional support for adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. This will certainly promote a lot of initiative to improve opportunities for adult learners in adult and non-formal education in the country.
- d. Entrepreneurship education should be established as part of the programme of studies in repositioning adult and non-formal education for sustainable national development in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education as a new area of study in adult and non-formal education should focus on widening peoples' access to opportunities to contribute meaningfully to sustainable national development.

### **References**

- Aruma, E.O. (2008). Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. From the perspectives of Adult and non-formal Education. Development of Adult Education and Extra-moral Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Aruma, E.O. (2010). The Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Enhancing the Capabilities of Adult Learners. Journal of Research Development University of Nigeria Nsukka Nigeria.
- Britain (1989). An Official Handbook London; Central Office of Information.
- Fasel, D.K. (2000). Partnering in Action Oxford; How to Book Limited.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). National Policy on Education 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Lagos; NERDC.
- International Seminar on New Adult Education Policies: key Issues in Hinzen, H. (Ed). Adult Education and Development. Bonn; Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association Pp315-319.
- Kidd, J.R. and Titmus, C.J. (1989). Introduction In Titmus C.J. (ED), Lifelong Education for Adults; An International Handbook. Oxford; Pergamon Press PLC.
- Pratt, B. and Boyden, J. (1985). The Field Directors Handbook; an Oxfam Manual for Development Workers. Oxford; Oxford University Press.
- Todaro, M. and Smith, S. (2009). Economic Development, Tenth Edition. London; Addison Wesley.