

## **Getting Things Done: an Agenda for Education and Resocialization of Adults**

It bears repeating that poverty reduction is not merely an educational matter; and yet it is education that must serve as the instrument of priority for ideological re-direction, and structural change in politics and economy at all levels from the global to the local. That would imply education of the governing classes and their bureaucracies, and, of course, of the leadership at all levels of the civil society. That is a serious challenge for all adult educators all over the world.

Adult educators, of course, must not keep on talking to other adult educators, but must develop collaborations with all others who are engaged in counseling and guidance, education and extension, and enculturation and socialization of adults. It is particularly important for adult educators to learn to work with religious leaders and preachers. Fundamentalism in the religious communities of all religions around the world has acquired alarming proportions. The events of the last few years should show us all the dire consequences of leaving matters of the soul to the uneducated, narrow-minded, self-proclaimed men of God claiming to be the chosen messengers of their superior God, preaching the only true religion – conditioning and brain-washing impressionable young men and women to die for “The Cause”. As adult educators we need to teach the equal sacredness of all religions of the world, of the glory of the Almighty One, unknown and unknowable, named variously as Ishwar, Buddha, Jehovah, God, Allah, Waheguru, Mungu, and much else by different peoples – depending on the accidents of their birth in particular families and in specific ethnic and language communities.

## **The System of Adult Education**

To mobilize, socialize and educate all stakeholders involved in poverty reduction projects, adult educators must create a system of adult education and training that interfaces with the totality of the existing world system of politics and economy and fulfills the needs of lifelong

education of politicians, civic leaders, bureaucrats, community leaders, heads of families, individuals, and adult educators themselves! At the upper levels of the system, their work will be of advocacy for structural changes and expansion of appropriate programs of poverty reduction and adult education. At the lower levels in sub-national regions, districts, communities, families and with individuals, adult educators must engage themselves directly in the roles and tasks of actual mobilizing, socializing and instruction of individual adults and groups of adult learners.

In the following, we will provide a sense of what needs to be done, and what adult educators should do at various levels of the system.

### **At the international/global level: the agenda for adult education for poverty reduction**

Adult educators must reinvent themselves as activists in behalf of the poor and the excluded everywhere in the world. They must lobby for peace and insist that the "dividends of peace" are allocated not to tax reduction for billionaires, millionaires and the upper classes who can easily afford to pay their due share for nation building, but instead to poverty reduction, arresting HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and the education of adults (and children).

Adult educators should lobby for the United Nations system to assume and deliver more effective governance globally and engage more aggressively in the tasks of nation building across the world.

Indeed, the UN System should become the mechanism for the transfer of wealth from the super-rich North to the abjectly poor countries and communities in the South. The rich nations of the world must fulfil their promise of contributing 1 per cent of GNP to development assistance to the developing world, and should in fact continue to raise this proportion. The receipts of the "Tobin Tax" (a proposed tax on international capital transfers to stem currency speculation and attempts to distort market conditions in poor and weaker nations) should also flow back to the poor through the UN family of institutions.

Adult educators at the international level need particularly to work to persuade UNESCO to resume its historical role in the promotion of adult education worldwide. At its inception in 1946, UNESCO rightly proclaimed itself to be an Adult Education Organization for the World. Half a century later, the passion seems to have cooled and indeed leadership for adult education has shifted to others relatively rich in resources but lacking in commitment to adult education.

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the international level also require the attention of adult educators. Adult educators must establish and articulate their presence at the global level, using institutions such as the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). The ICAE has a long and distinguished history and needs once more to resume its role with even greater strength than ever before.

The major professional task facing adult educators is promotion of adult education itself. Adult educators have to emphasize and reiterate the role of adult education in relation to formal education and indicate that basic formal education for children by itself will not bring about socio-economic development.

Formal education prepares children for future life as citizens and workers. Adult education prepares adults to participate in life and work, and politics and praxis now. Recent evaluations in Uganda and elsewhere have shown that adults who went to school when young are coming back to adult literacy classes to refresh their literacy and numeracy skills and to learn development knowledge which they never got at school and which they are not getting from anywhere else.

### **At the national level: the agenda for adult education for poverty reduction**

Adult educators at the national level have to continue to play their historic role as progressives, carrying the label of liberalism with pride. Their interest should cover both the urban and the rural; and they should insist that the wealth produced by modernization of the urban

economy is put to the service of the rural economy, which should also be modernized, using appropriate technology.

Adult educators must help in the discussion and definition of development in the context of their own country. Democracy, human rights, equitability should all be non-negotiable. Poverty reduction may demand land reform, transfer of assets among classes, and the recognition of the state's obligation to provide basic education and basic health for the nation's peoples. The welfare state should not be a dirty word!

The institutional and action agendas for adult education at the national levels will be similar to the agenda at the international level. First and foremost, adult educators will have to assume an important advocacy role in behalf of adult education. In doing so, adult educators will have to remind the politicians and policy actors in their countries that the democratization and modernization promised to the peoples of the world in almost all of the world's constitutional documents, are not possible without education. Traditional knowledge with all its virtues by itself will never give us a knowledge-based society at this point of time in the history of human civilization. We will need "modernizing" education both in schools for children and in out-of-school settings for adults to enable them to participate in the political, economic and cultural processes of societies.

To give the necessary visibility to adult education, it may be necessary to establish separate ministries of adult education in each of the developing countries. A National Commission of Adult Non-formal Education may be necessary to bring together all the governmental institutions that provide "education to adults" in literacy skills, in citizenship, health, agriculture and cattle farming, and to communicate any other body of knowledge needed for livelihood and participation in local institutions.

Equal attention should be paid to the creation and maintenance of a civil society. Adult educators must establish a presence in their

nation's capital. Every country should have an active adult education association, with its roots going deep into communities through a network of community-based organizations (CBOs) all around the nation.

Universities have to serve as the nourishing grounds for adult educators. They have to train generations of adult educators to teach facilitators to guide adult classes, and supervise adult education work. They must train functionaries who can design adult education programs and produce materials needed for a whole array of appropriate adult education programs. Finally, they have to train cadres of evaluators and researchers who can fulfil all of the R&D needs of adult education in the country.

#### **At the provincial/state level: the agenda for poverty reduction**

Except for small island microstates, most countries will consist of provinces (or states, or districts) organized on the basis of historical, geographical, or ethnic realities. Provincial programs of adult education will have to be contextualized without, of course, becoming discontinuous with the national and international agendas. It is important to note, however, that in developing plans for poverty reduction at these levels, we will need to become indigenous: we will have to use alternative concepts of development, new definitions of poverty and relative poverty, and to assume a morality of frugality to be able to work within existing scarcities that we often face in poor countries.

NGOs at the provincial level should work to encourage the development of local adult education institutions at the community and school levels. They should also undertake directly the work that cannot realistically be conducted at the local levels: to do advocacy with the government for expanding adult education programs for poverty reduction; to train field workers/facilitators; to produce training materials for facilitators and instructional materials for learners; and finally to help develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the levels of centers, communities and districts.

**At the district level: the agenda for poverty reduction**

A district typically is of a size that is suitable for establishing networks and patterns of participation in zones and communities to make democracy real in the lives of people; and to undertake district level economic opportunity analyses for improving the economic conditions of the people. The results of such an economic opportunity analysis can then be shared with both the providers of development services and with home makers, farmers and workers. Skills needed by individual adults and groups to avail of the new economic opportunities can be taught and matched with small credit schemes.

It is also at this level that the core of a system of monitoring and evaluation of adult education for poverty reduction will have to be established.

**At the community level: the agenda for poverty reduction**

With modernization, integration of economies, availability of work outside the community, and availability of public transportation having become the common realities in our lives, the concept of community itself has changed. Adult educators to be helpful at community level, must begin with a socio-economic analysis of the community, paying due attention to the porous borders of today's communities. The community analysis should show the causes and structures of poverty in the community. Communities may be poor because of their geographical location in regard to distance from the main road or the railway station. Within the community, there may be structures that keep people in poverty for reasons of caste and creed, and denying land and demanding labor.

Enlightened community leadership can create communal work for improved conditions in the communities. Also, several programs that have promise for poverty reduction can be planned, such as: child care centers, feeding and schooling projects for the HIV/AIDS orphans, reproductive health seminars, establishment of a hospice for the terminally ill, etc.

### **Within the family: the agenda for poverty reduction**

Families in addition to being locations for enculturation and socialization are also important economic units. Gender is an important factor in the political economy of the family. Most of the families in the world are male-headed, and the male is considered the bread winner, irrespective of the contribution of the female in growing and preserving food. The females in the household are kept "poor" because in many cultures they are not allowed to inherit property. They are disadvantaged in many other ways. They eat only after the males have eaten and thereby are apportioned lesser amounts of food and some nutritious food is totally withheld from them. Customarily, they may be denied access to both education and health, thereby seriously affecting their life chances and opportunities.

With a worldwide chorus of voices in favor of women's development in our times, adult educators do have a chance to work for poverty reduction of women, presently living in double jeopardy. It is now being said that national development is indeed women's development; and poverty reduction of women is poverty reduction of the family. There are several important things that can be done for poverty reduction in the family. Women, for example, should be the recipients of educational (and material) inputs for family spacing, helping children stay at school, maintaining family health, and growing vegetables and preserving food. Women should also be assisted with marketing of produce and craft objects that they may want to produce to sell.

Community leaders should work strenuously to organize community opinion against excessive drinking and use of drugs by men; huge expenditures on dowry, weddings and funerals; and against incurring debts and borrowing from predatory money lenders. In a poor family, widows become the walking dead, and the disabled may suffer from terrible neglect. Special attention should be paid to this. To succeed in what is proposed above, both men and women would need to be sensitized and organized. For this, organizing "family focus groups" seems like an important initial strategy.

## **Individual Praxis for Poverty Reduction**

The first challenge for adult educators at the individual level is what Paulo Freire called conscientization – consciousness-raising – that is, helping adult men and women who may be resigned to the condition of their poverty, to become aware and understand the political economy of their own poverty. Only by understanding these structures, can the poor avoid their own exploitation at the hands of officials, preachers, shopkeepers, money-lenders, and middle men.

Related with the above ideas is the need to inform these individuals about the development services made available in the area by government functionaries and NGOs, but which are not being accessed by individuals in rural and urban areas. These issues have often not been faced because they are considered too sensitive to handle but they must be boldly encountered. Small family norms must be discussed and how and where to get help for contraception should be talked about as well. HIV/AIDS and other venereal diseases must be discussed, pointing to the consequences of unsafe sex for the individual personally and for spouses and children in the family.

Most importantly, adult educators must work with all relevant others in the community (and within the larger district boundaries) to create remunerative work and other means of livelihoods. All opportunities for self-employment within the community should be explored. Adult educators should remember that if people do not have work they will invent corrupt work such as thieving, drug pushing, prostitution, etc. In too many cases poverty is induced or accentuated by bad habits of excessive drinking and smoking. These problems should be discussed forthrightly and social disciplines imposed if possible.

**Is there hope?**



*The following paper presents a summary and discussion of the findings of a study conducted in various communities of Nsukka in Enugu State, Nigeria. Its purpose was to investigate how poverty can be eradicated through women's participation in adult and non-formal education (ADE/NFE). The paper recognises that the Literacy Education Programme, vocational education (acquisition of skills), agriculture and health extension services, and loan schemes, are major components of ADE/NFE that will help to eradicate poverty in the area of study. It further regards the creation of learning centres and effective full participation by women in the Adult Education Programme as necessary factors. Data was analysed from two sources, a structured questionnaire and oral interviews. Jonathan C. Onyishi is employed in the Department of Veterinary Parasitology and Entomology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Nigeria in Nsukka.*

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## **Eradication of Poverty through Women's Participation in Adult and Non-formal Education: A Study of Nsukka in Enugu State of Nigeria**

Adult and non-formal education refer to efforts at improving the provision and implementation of development programmes which have a basic education or training component. Such programme provision usually takes place outside the formal education system. When the educational process is non-formal, it means that the rigid forms of

traditional schooling such as regimented curricula, classroom arrangements and set syllabus are not strictly maintained. The educational programme is more flexible and diverse, and is adapted to the particular needs and circumstances of learners.

Adult and non-formal education are indisputably lifelong education in developing countries where most of the populace are illiterates, especially in rural communities. Womenfolk form the majority of this level of illiteracy. Lifelong education is a comprehensive concept which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning extended throughout the life span of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social and professional life. The informal aspect is experienced by all and influenced by parental, social, economic, political, socio-cultural and educational background. The National Policy on Education (1981) specified that adult and non-formal education consist of functional literacy, continuing, vocational, aesthetic, cultural and civic education for youths and adults outside the formal system. Non-formal education therefore proclaimed strategies calling for a stronger, more integrated and more community-based approach to rural development to meet the basic needs of the poor.

There is a need for centres for Adult and Non-formal education to be established in all communities, especially vocational education centres where women and young drop-outs should learn various skills which include tailoring, hair-dressing, weaving, soap making, pomade making, bakery, bag making etc. Other community programmes of instruction in health, nutrition and family planning, and co-operatives, are important in poverty eradication and therefore should be more effective and implemented.

The problem is that government has not been very responsive in implementing these important programmes in the area of study and the state in general. Women, therefore, depend on not quite sustainable farming, petty trading and paid jobs for a living. The young ones go out hawking along road sides, market places, motor-parks and other public places. As a result, they continue to remain in abject poverty.

The young ones jump into prostitution and other immoral acts which are unhealthy to our national development.

Findings of a study which assessed the progress made so far in Enugu State of Nigeria in the implementation of the Action Plan to eradicate illiteracy show that the implementation of the Action Plan in the state is yet to mature. There are no literacy training centres for grass-root literacy workers. Material development and production, sponsored by the government, are inadequate. Existing agencies such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Reconstruction (MAMSER), Better Life for Rural Women/Family Support for Women are not involved in literacy programmes. Publicity and mobilization are not encouraged and literacy and numeracy materials are very scarce. The writer advocates the system of "Each One Teach One" to educate the women folk at the grass-roots, which means that those educated should teach the illiterate.

Participation is vital and of paramount importance in any adult and non-formal education programme. Women should be encouraged to participate fully in the programmes. If this noble objective of poverty eradication is to be achieved, women learners should not only participate, but should learn to implement and practise the skills they learn often. For any successful programme, full participation by the target group is important. Full participation of women in adult and non-formal education could be encouraged and actualized through awareness creation and motivation, which involves funding and remuneration. Also monitoring and evaluation should be effective. The time and schedule of lessons should enhance women's participation in the literacy programme. Past experiences reveal that women fail to participate in the adult and non-formal education programme due to conflicts between their domestic duties and the programme. Traditional rulers and the Town Union should assist in waiving some cultural norms which may inhibit women's participation in adult and non-formal education programmes.

## Findings

Various questions were provided in the questionnaire distributed to respondents. They were requested to tick YES or NO as the answers selected. The findings in this study are as follows:

- a) Receive loans from Bank: This is to know whether women receive loans from the bank for their business or not. 150 (100 %) of the respondents answered No, signifying that women do not receive loans from banks.
- b) Collect loans from Women's Associations: The findings show that women collect loans from Women's Associations, which they formed for self-help. 130 (86.7%) answered YES, while 20 (13.3 %) responded NO.
- c) Generate funds from monthly contributions: It was found that women generate funds from monthly contributions which they organise for self-help. 145 (96.7%) of the respondents indicated YES. 110 representing 73.3 % revealed that loans are collected from individuals, while 40 (26.7%) answered NO.
- d) Participation in adult and non-formal education: The findings reveal that the majority of the women participate fully in the ADE/NFE programme with 130 (86.7%) answering YES.
- e) Achievement of their learning purposes: 130 representing 86.8% indicated YES, signifying that they achieve their learning purpose, only a small number 20 (13.3 %) responded NO, signifying that they do not achieve their learning purpose.
- f) Reasons for not participating. Various questions were posed to respondents as follows:
  - Centre not available -120 (80.0%) indicated that centres were available, while 20 (13.3%) answered No.
  - Centre very far from home -150 (100%) revealed that centres were not very far from home.
- g) Programme has no purpose – The findings show that the ADE/NFE programme achieves its purpose. 148 (96.7%) of the respondents answered NO, which indicated that the programme had a purpose, while only 2 (1.3%) answered YES.

- h) Teachers are not available -145 (96.7%) of the total respondents revealed by answering YES that teachers are not available. Only an insignificant number of 5 (3.3 %) indicated that teachers were available.

On types of skill available and taught in the centres, various skills were listed for the respondents to select.

The findings revealed that **weaving skill** is being taught in the centres. This had 150 representing 100 % respondents answering YES. 145 (96.7%) responded YES showing that **sewing skill** was included in skills at the centres. Only 5 (3.3%) indicated NO. **Hair-dressing:** 150 (100%) indicated that hair dressing was taught at the centres. **Soap-making:** 150 representing 100% of the respondents indicated YES showing that they learn soap-making. **Bag-making:** 135 (90.0%) replied YES, confirming that soap-making is one of the skills taught in the centres. Only an insignificant number of 15 (10.0%) responded No. **Pomade making:** The findings show that pomade making is learned in some of the centres but not taught in some, 50% respectively. **Bakery:** 113 (75.3 %) of the total respondents answered YES, which signifies that bakery is among the skills taught in the centres, 37 representing 24.7% responded No, showing that it is not taught in their centres.

## Conclusion

This paper summarises the findings of a study on how poverty can be eradicated through women's participation in adult and non-formal education in Nigeria.

From the findings, it shows that women participate in ADE/NFE programmes. The programme, apart from literacy education, runs various skills which could sustain an individual and make her life comfortable. However, this paper found out that women after learning these skills, like hair-dressing, sewing, soap-making etc., could not set up on their own due to lack of finance, and inability to obtain loans either from

government or from banks. It is suggested that banks should try as much as possible to encourage this group of people by granting them soft loans to establish their own business. When these acquired skills are used reasonably for establishing business enterprises, people become self-employed and can give employment to others. Moreover, government should take ADE/NFE programmes very seriously and fund them adequately,

More learning centres should be established especially in rural communities, where the majority of illiterates reside. The author invites Government, NGO, (Non-governmental organisations) and philanthropic individuals to encourage ADE/FE programmes in rural communities, and similarly to motivate participants to discourage school drop-out.

Poverty eradication can only be real, if non-formal education programmes are seriously taken care of and effectively implemented by government.



Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik CD-ROM, 100 Karikaturen aus der Dritten Welt