

GUIDING INSPIRATIONS FOR RESHAPING POLICY DESIGN, PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND INCREASE INVESTMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper discussed comprehensively the inspirations that should guide scholars, practitioners, education policy makers in Nigeria in reshaping policy design, programmes implementation, and increase investment of adult education in Nigeria arising from the identified challenges confronting adult education practice in the country. It began with a discussion of the challenges confronting adult education practice in Nigeria which necessitated the advocacy for reshaping adult education in Nigeria. It identified UNESCO's International Conferences on Adult Education and the various recommendations put forward at each conference, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the five adult education targets contained in the Agenda, the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for implementing the adult education targets in the Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2015 UNESCO Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE), and the 2015 Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century Report by the European Association for the Education of Adults as the five cardinal inspirations which should be relied upon in reshaping adult education practice in Nigeria. The paper recommended that scholars, practitioners, and education policy makers should be inspired and guided by these five cardinal inspirations in the process of reshaping adult education in Nigeria especially in policy design, programmes implementation, and increase investment.

Keywords: Guiding inspirations, adult education, policy design, programmes implementation, increase investment

Introduction

Adult Education, which UNESCO aptly tagged adult learning and education (ALE), has had a long evolutionary journey from obscurity to

global recognition. At emergence, adult education was not recognised as a distinct field of study and practice and no concrete actions were taken by countries towards its promotion.

However, with passage of time, began to accord global attention and recognition to adult education through the international conferences, which brought stakeholders across all the continents of the world, to discuss the importance of adult education to humanity (Ojokheta & Edeh, 2024). The UNESCO's organised International Conferences on Adult Education, globally called the CONFINTEAs (from the French, *Conférence Internationale sur l'Education des Adultes*), have established themselves as one of the most influential forums in the international Adult Education arena (Knoll, 2014; Ireland, 2014).

In a similar vein, several global education policy documents have been initiated where adult education was prominently discussed. Invariably, the UNESCO International Conferences and the global education policy documents should serve as inspirations for reshaping adult education practice in all countries. However, adult education has not been correctly captured in the official national education policy of Nigeria and this has considerably affected its practice. There is, therefore, the urgent need to reshape adult education and its practice in its entirety in Nigeria in line with the key resolutions put forward at these International Conferences and the specifications of the global education policy documents. This paper is written to draw the attention of scholars, practitioners, and educational policy makers in Nigeria to the key resolutions put forward at the UNESCO's International Conferences on Adult Education and the specifications of the global education policy documents which should serve as the guiding inspirations for reshaping adult education in Nigeria.

The Challenges Confronting Adult Education Practice in Nigeria

The challenges confronting adult education practice in Nigeria, which necessitate the need to reshape it, have been adequately summarised and discussed by Ojokheta, (2020) to include the following:

1. Narrow vision of Adult Education often limited to literacy-

The definition, in policy document, of Adult Education in Nigeria is still largely restricted to literacy (alphabétisation) or adult basic education (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning CONFINTEA VI: Mid-Term Review Report, 2017). In this report, Nigeria was not listed as having a broad or truly comprehensive guiding definition of Adult Education in line with the 2015 UNESCO's Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education. Besides, Section 4 of the revised 6th edition of the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) deals with Adult Education. However, its conceptualisation is misinforming and misleading.

The title given to this section- Mass and Nomadic Education- shows lack or improper understanding of Adult Education by the drafters of this document. Adult Education was perceived as mass and nomadic education. The specific recognition giving to nomadic education gives a false representation of adult education as a discipline. The section gives the impression that adult is concerned with just two activities-mass literacy and nomadic education. Unfortunately, mass and nomadic education is a form, part, or component of the discipline and can, therefore, not represent the entire discipline.

Sub-section 66 of the section gave a myopic and short-sighted description of adult education as "the equivalent of basic education given to adults, children and youths of formal

school age, outside the formal school system". Adult education, in this context, is regarded simply as basic education while sub-section 68 of the section equated Adult Education with illiteracy as contained in the statement "in order to promptly eradicate illiteracy". To the drafters of the section, illiteracy is what adult education is all about. This is absolutely misleading and erroneous. Adult education means much more than illiteracy or basic education.

2. Narrow vision of the objectives and scope of Adult Education

In the same Section 4 of the revised 6th edition of the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), the goals of Adult Education were narrowly and misleadingly captured. Many programmes universally classified as adult education programmes are not seen as such in the policy document on education in Nigeria. This significantly shows why adult education continues to suffer in terms of quality, programme implementation, and budgetary allocation. Besides, sub-sections 69-71 specified only one ministry and one agency saddled with the responsibility of promoting adult education in Nigeria- the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education with its states and local governments' apparatuses. This essentially shows lack of knowledge and understanding of the comprehensiveness of the forms and components of adult education by the policy drafters. A detailed knowledge of the discipline would have shown that all government Ministries, Parastatals, and Agencies (MDAs) should have been involved in promoting adult education in Nigeria since the discipline covers the entire activities of mankind.

3. Absence of a very strong political commitment statement on Adult Education

The revised 6th edition of the National Policy on Education, of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) shows that there is no strong political commitment statement on Adult Education in Nigeria. The only political statement in the policy document is on literacy, mass and nomadic education and not on Adult Education in its entirety.

4. Non-existing well-articulated policies for the development of Adult Education

There is no comprehensive policy development on adult education in Nigeria which clearly articulates the roles and contributions of adult education to the development of societies across sectors as recommended by the UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education of 2009.

5. Poor responses to international declarations on Adult Education

There are dearth of comprehensive action plans or framework for action for implementing international declarations on Adult Education in Nigeria. For example, the UNESCO General Conference decided, at its 37th session in November 2013 (37 C/Resolution 16) (UNESCO (1976), that the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education should be revised to reflect contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges, as set out in the Belém Framework for Action adopted by the 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, (2009) and to give renewed momentum to strengthening Adult Education

(UNESCO, 2015). It is sad to note that till date, no framework of action has been instituted or put in place in Nigeria in response to this international declaration.

6. Absence of a good governance framework on Adult Education

There is no good governance framework established in Nigeria on Adult Education in line with the UNESCO Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education of 2015. The main challenges as regards this include lack of multi-sectoral participation and engagement, low levels of accountability, low transparency, low levels of awareness of active citizenship, and weak role of civil society.

7. Poor benchmark for resource allocation to Adult Education

Adult Education is grossly under-funded in Nigeria. The financial framework for action which was developed at the International Conference on Financing Adult Education for Development convened in Bonn, Germany, 23-24 June 2009 recommended the allocation of a minimum of 6% of GNP to Adult Education, reserving half of this for Adult Literacy Programmes (UNESCO, 2009). Unfortunately, this recommendation has not been implemented in Nigeria as Adult Education is still grossly under-funded with less than 1% of the GNP allocated to it.

8. Lack of standardised data on participation in adult education programmes

Knowledge about participation in adult education programmes and the outcomes of participation are imperatively difficult to obtain in Nigeria. Aitchison, (2012, 2013)

lamented that “in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa, there remains something of a data desert in regard to research and data on Adult Learning and Education and even when research is done and data are collected, it is often unavailable for comparative purposes”. The dynamics of participation in Adult Education in Nigeria is harmed by the inadequacy of information and statistics due to the absence of a well-developed knowledge-management system for the collection, analysis and dissemination of both quantitative and qualitative data on participation in adult education programmes.

9. Lack of support for building research capacities and interventions in Adult Education

Research, particularly action research, on evidence-based impacts arising from Adult Education is not only less supported but is also not well-communicated. For example, the interaction between Adult Education and society, particularly as regards dimensions of life such as work, physical and mental health, and social well-being is grossly less-supported by policy makers. While there are researches in these areas, especially from the universities, significant proportion of such researches are not known to the policy makers. This is probably due to their myopic knowledge and understanding of what Adult Education is all about, what it represents, and what roles it can play in human development.

10. Absence of national report on Adult Education

There is no known institute or centre charged with coordinating or taking stock of the monitoring process at the national level and reporting periodically on progress in Adult Education in Nigeria. At the global level, the UNESCO Institute for

Lifelong Learning (UIL) coordinates this monitoring process through the publication of Global Report on Adult Learning and Education [GRALE], (UNESCO, 2016). This type of institute is needed in Nigeria. The challenges confronting adult education in Nigeria, as discussed above, demand that adult education needs to be reshaped particularly in the areas of policy design, programmes implementation, and increase investment. The inspirations which should guide scholars, practitioners, education policy-makers, and other key stakeholders in adult education in Nigeria are discussed below:

Reshaping Adult Education in Nigeria: The First Guiding Inspiration

The first UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA 1, was held in Elsinore, Denmark from 19-25 June, 1949 (UNESCO, 1949a). The theme was simply '*Adult Education*' while the aim was '*Description and critical analysis of the whole field*'. The cardinal recommendation of the conference was that "*Adult Education was for all living souls and everybody has a role and responsibility in promoting it*" (UNESCO, 1949b).

The second UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA II, was held in Montreal, Canada, from 22-31 August, 1960 (UNESCO, 1960a) with the theme as: "*Adult Education in a Changing World*". The conference recommended that Adult Education should be considered an integral and organic part of each national educational system and, consequently, that appropriate attention and resources be granted to it and that governments should include it in any plan for the extension of education (UNESCO, 1960b).

The Third UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA III, was held in Tokyo, Japan from 25 July-7 August, 1972 with the theme: "*Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Education*" (UNESCO, 1972a). It was at this conference that lifelong education gained international visibility and also emphasised that the major task of adult education during the Second Development Decade of the United Nations was to seek out and serve the forgotten people (UNESCO, 1972b). In conclusion, the Conference emphasised that: "Learning is lifelong and education must engage the active commitment and participation of adults to improve living conditions and the general quality of life Social improvement and adult education are thus complementary (UNESCO, 1972c).

The fourth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA IV was held in Paris, France from 19-29 March, 1985. The theme of the conference was '*The Development of Adult Education: Issues and Trends*' (UNESCO, 1985a). The conference reaffirmed the importance of the right to learn which includes: The right to read and write; the right to question and analyse; the right to imagine and create; the right to read one's own world and to write history; the right to have access to educational resources; and the right to develop individual and collective skills. The conference called on all countries to implement this right and make a determined and imaginative effort to bring about the intensive and specific development of adult education activities, so that women and men, both individually and collectively, can equip themselves with the resources necessary for development (UNESCO, 1985b).

The fifth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA V, was held at the Congress Centrum in Hamburg, Germany, from 14-18 July, 1997 with the theme: “*Adult Learning as a right, a tool, a joy and shared responsibility*” (UNESCO, 1997a). The cardinal declaration of the conference was the perception of adult education as more than a right. Adult education was perceived as:

The key to the 21st century; it is both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society. It is a powerful concept for fostering sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice. Adult learning can shape identity and give meaning to life

The conference also called on Member States, bi- and multilateral agencies, non-governmental and civil society organizations, social movements and the private sector, to, among others:

- Include adult education and learning in all development initiatives and social programs as an essential contribution to economic prosperity, sustainable development, social cohesion and solidarity;
- Recognise adult learning as an investment and not solely an item of social consumption, let alone merely a marketable product;
- Increase funding for adult learning, as a consequence, to an equitable share of the 6% of the Member States’ gross national product to be invested in education set as a benchmark by the Agenda for the Future (UNESCO (1997b))

The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA VI, was held at the Hangar Convention Center, Belem do Para, Brazil from 1 to 4 December 2009 with the theme: *Living and learning for a viable future: the power of adult learning* (UNESCO 2010; Henschke, 2010). The key recommendations of the Conference were the identification of five priority areas for action (*policy framework, governance framework, financing framework, participation, inclusion, equity framework, and quality framework*) which countries must adopt in the promotion of adult learning and education (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2010b; UNESCO, 2011).

1. Policy Framework – UNESCO Member States were called upon to, among others: (a) Develop comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies for adult learning and education that address learning in a wide range of spheres, including the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental; (b) Design specific and concrete action plans for adult learning and education which are integrated into national development plans; and (c) Develop or improve structures and mechanisms for the recognition, validation and accreditation of all forms of learning by establishing equivalency frameworks.

2. Governance Framework - UNESCO Member States were called upon to, among others: (a) Create and

maintain mechanisms for the involvement of public authorities at all administrative levels, civil society organisations, social partners, the private sector, community and adult learners' and educators' organisations in the development, implementation and evaluation of adult learning and education policies and programmes and (b) Promote and support inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation.

3. Financing Framework - UNESCO Member States were called upon to, among others: (a) Seek investment of at least 6% of Gross National Product (GNP) in adult learning and education; (b) Expand existing educational resources and budgets across all government departments to meet the objectives of an integrated adult learning and education strategy, and (c) Create incentives to promote new sources of funding from the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), communities and individuals, without prejudicing the principles of equity and inclusion.

4. Participation, Inclusion and Equity Framework - UNESCO Member States were called upon to, among others: (a) Promote and facilitate more equitable access to, and participation in, adult learning and education by enhancing a culture of learning and by eliminating barriers to participation; (b) Create multi-purpose community learning spaces/centres and improving access to, and participation in, full range of adult learning and education programmes for women, taking account of the particular demands of the gender-specific life-course: and provide adult learning and education in prison at all appropriate levels.

5. Quality framework - UNESCO Member States were called upon to, among others: (a) Develop quality criteria for curricula, learning materials and teaching methodologies in adult education programmes, taking account of outcomes and impact measures; (b) Improve training, capacity-building, employment conditions and professionalisation of adult educators, e.g. through the establishment of partnerships with higher education institutions, teacher associations and civil society organisations; (c) Elaborate criteria to assess the learning outcomes of adults at various levels; and (d) Lend greater support to systematic interdisciplinary research in adult learning and education, complemented by knowledge management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and good practice.

6. Monitor the implementation of the Belem Framework for Action - UNESCO Member States were called upon to, among others: (a) Regularly collect and analyse data and information on participation and progression in adult learning and education programmes; (b) Establish a regular monitoring mechanism to assess the implementation of adult learning and education programmes; and (c) Monitor collaboration in adult education across disciplines and across sectors such as agriculture, health and employment.

The Seventh International Conference on Adult Education, *CONFINTEA VII*, with the theme *Adult learning and education for sustainable development: A transformative agenda*, was held in hybrid form, physical and online, in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco from 15 to 17 June, 2022 (UNESCO, 2022). The key resolutions of the Conference were documented in what is now globally

called Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) as follows:

1. Establish frameworks and governance arrangements for adult education or ALE - It urged countries, among others, to create a culture of lifelong learning for all; establish multi-sectoral platforms for adult education or ALE; promote continuing professional development of workers through dialogue between them and employers in their organisational structures; and mandate employers to invest in adult education or ALE in the workplace.

2. Redesign adult education or ALE systems through the following means: Countries were urged, among others, to (1) strengthen the role of government in establishing mechanisms and regulations and in allocating financial and human resources to support structures for adult education or ALE; (2) recognise the need to regulate, incentivize, stimulate, coordinate and monitor adult education or ALE as a public and common good within the public education provision; (3) recognise the increasing diversity of adult education or ALE providers as a result of the emergence of complex learning ecosystems; (4) strengthen adult education or ALE at the local level; and (5) establish community learning centres with qualified adult educators.

3. Ensure improved quality of learning in adult education or ALE - Countries were urged, among others, to make adult educators become professionals and upskill their capacities through pre-service, in-service and continuing training, in association with universities and research institutes; improve their working conditions, including their

salaries, status and professional development trajectories; develop adult education or ALE competency framework for the professionalisation of adult educators and the enhancement of their qualifications; and conduct research, especially participatory research, to guide policies and practices aimed at supporting programme designers, teachers and participants in adult education or ALE.

4. Increase funding of adult education or ALE - Countries were urged, among others, to increase public funding and resource mobilisation for adult education or ALE; ensure the contributions of wide variety of stakeholders, including various ministries, employers and other private actors, local governments and learners, in the public funding of adult education or ALE; and develop a funding formulae for adult education or ALE.

5. Promote participation inclusion and equity in adult education or ALE – Countries were urged, among others, to recognise adult education or ALE as human right which extends to the right to participation as an enabler of empowerment; recognise linguistic diversity, inclusion, accessibility and equity as priorities in increasing access to adult education or ALE; among indigenous people, marginalised or disadvantage individuals, under-represented and vulnerable groups and communities; set ambitious benchmarks for participation of diverse group of learners, especially the vulnerable populations and adults currently unreached, in both non-formal and formal adult education or ALE programmes; and develop reliable, valid, transparent and gender-sensitive information systems in adult education or ALE for tracking learners' participation and retention progress

and for facilitating exchange of knowledge among government agencies and non-governmental institutions, academia, civil society.

Reshaping Adult Education in Nigeria: The Second Guiding Inspiration

Adult Education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Adult Education, and its numerous roles, is explicitly or implicitly addressed in *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Transforming the World* approved by the United Nations (United Nations, 2015). There are four targets directly or indirectly relating to Adult Education out of the 10 targets associated with one of the goals- SDG 4- *'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all'* (UNESCO, 2015)). The four targets are:

Target 4.3 called on all countries to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university by 2030.

Target 4.4 called on all countries to ensure substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship by 2030.

Target 4.5 called on all countries to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations by 2030.

Target 4.6 called on all countries to ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.

To achieve these targets, countries were urged to establish a sector-wide and multisector approach for formulating adult education policy and plans, as well as for budgeting, by strengthening collaboration and coordination among relevant ministries, including those dealing with education, health, social welfare, labour, industry and agriculture, as well as with civil society, the private sector and bilateral and multilateral partners, supporting decentralized provision in practice.

Reshaping Adult Education in Nigeria: The Third Guiding Inspiration

The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action - UNESCO together with UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR organised the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 19 – 22 May 2015, hosted by the Republic of Korea (World Education Forum (2015). At the Conference, countries were urged to strongly promote quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education. This included equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and higher education and research, with due attention to quality assurance.

In addition, the provision of flexible learning pathways, as well as the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education, is important. Countries were further urged to ensure that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire life skills, and that they are provided with adult learning, education and training

opportunities and special measures and increased finance must be set-aside to address the needs of adult learners and of the millions of children, youth and adults who remain illiterate.

Reshaping Adult Education in Nigeria: The Fourth Guiding Inspiration

UNESCO's 2015 Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) - UNESCO developed the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*, universally known as *RALE*, and was approved at the 38th Session of UNESCO General Conference in November 2015 (UNESCO, 2015a). The Recommendation supports the Education 2030 Framework for Action, reflects global trends, and guides the transformation and expansion of equitable learning opportunities for youth and adults. The Recommendation takes a comprehensive and systematic approach to adult education or ALE and defines three domains of learning and skills namely (1) literacy and basic skills, (2) continuing education and vocational skills, and (3) liberal, popular, and community education and citizenship skills. It also provides a comprehensive definition, aim and objectives of Adult Education or ALE. The definition of adult education or ALE was captured thus:

Adult Learning and Education is a core component of lifelong learning. It comprises all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and world of work. It denotes the entire body of learning processes: formal, non-formal, and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the

society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interest and those of their communities, organisations, societies. Adult learning and education involves sustained activities and processes of acquiring, recognising, exchanging, and adapting capabilities. Given that the boundaries of youth and adulthood are shifting in most cultures, in this text, the term "adult" denotes all those who engage in adult learning and education, even if they have not reached the legal age of maturity (UNESCO 2015b, p.6).

The aim of adult education or ALE in the Recommendation, is to: equip people with the necessary capabilities to exercise and realize their rights and take control of their destinies. It promotes personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies, communities and environments. It fosters sustainable and inclusive economic growth and decent work prospects of individuals. It is therefore a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being and contributing to sustainable learning societies (UNESCO 2015b, p.8).

The objectives of adult education or ALE in the Recommendation were also documented as, to:

1. Develop the capacity of individuals to think critically and to act with autonomy and a sense of responsibility;
 2. Reinforce the capacity to deal with and shape the developments taking place in the economy and the world of work;
 3. Contribute to the creation of a learning society where every individual has an opportunity to learn and fully participate in sustainable development processes and enhance solidarity of people and communities;
 4. Promote peaceful coexistence and human rights;
 5. Foster resilience in young and older adults; and
 6. Enhance awareness for the protection of the environment (UNESCO 2015b, p.8).
- i. Adult education can help change lives and transform societies – it is a human right and common good.
 - ii. Adult education provides many opportunities to equalise societies on a larger scale.
 - iii. Adult education at its best connects people, helps to reduce loneliness or feelings of isolation within communities; it can instill a sense of empowerment through the joy of learning and/or help people get back to work or positively change direction.
 - iv. Adult education is the life blood for conversation in any vibrant community and local economy.
 - v. People who participate in adult education have more trust in the political system, participate more in society, by voting, by volunteering or taking active roles in communities.
 - vi. Life skills for individuals. Adult education helps to enhance life skills for individuals which make adult learners feel healthier, lead healthier lifestyles, build new social networks and experience improved well-being.
 - vii. Adult education provides many opportunities to equalise societies on a larger scale and to create fairer societies as well as more economic growth.
 - viii. Workplace learning is one of the key drivers for adults' participation in lifelong learning. At the top of enormous digital changes, adult education can help in closing the digital gap.
 - ix. From environmentally friendly consumption and transport to energy efficiency, citizens need a lot of information and innovative spaces to develop new lifestyles, new projects, and new approaches. Adult education can

The UNESCO's definition, aim and objectives clearly show that adult education is much more than literacy as erroneously captured in Nigeria's National Policy on Education. It shows the broadness of Adult Education as stressed by Elias & Merriam, (1995) that "the field of Adult Education generally professes to serve the broad purposes of social justice, individual self-development, workforce preparation and advancement for individuals and organizations".

Reshaping Adult Education in Nigeria: The Fifth Guiding Inspiration

The report of the European Association for the Education of Adults, (2015) entitled *Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century* document the dividends of participation in adult education (EAEA, 2015). These dividends, which demand greater investment in adult education, include:

help provide the information, the debate spaces and the creativity.

In line with this report, UNESCO (2015) aptly summarised the dividends of investing in Adult Education thus:

- i. Adult Education helps developing the capacity of individuals to think critically and to act with autonomy and a sense of responsibility;
- ii. It reinforces the capacity to deal with and shape the developments taking place in the economy and the world of work;
- iii. It contributes to the creation of a learning society where every individual has an opportunity to learn and fully participate in sustainable development processes and enhance solidarity of people and communities;
- iv. It promotes peaceful coexistence and human rights; (e) foster resilience in young and older adults; and
- v. It enhances awareness for the protection of the environment.

Conclusion

The challenges confronting adult education in Nigeria necessitate the need to reshape it in terms of policy design, programme implementation, and greater investment. The starting point of reshaping adult education in Nigeria is that adult education should be perceived as more than a right, a major building block of a learning society, and a powerful concept for fostering sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice. Therefore, adult education must be properly contextualised in line with UNESCO 2015 Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE),

a sector-wide and multisector approach should be adopted in the development of comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policy for adult education, the existing educational resources and budgets across all government departments must be expanded to meet the objectives of adult education, inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation for adult education programme implementation must be promoted in order to foster a culture of learning throughout life, develop quality criteria for curricula, learning materials and teaching methodologies must be developed in adult education programmes, employers should be mandated to invest in adult education in the workplace, more equitable access to and participation in adult education must be promoted; adult education should be considered an integral and organic part of each national educational system and appropriate attention and resources be granted to it.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward to reshape policy design, programme implementation and greater investment in adult education in Nigeria:

1. Inauguration of technical teams to reshape the priority areas for action in adult education - There are five priority areas for action in adult education. They are: policy design, governance framework, financing framework, participation, inclusion, equity framework, and quality framework. Therefore, the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), the government parastatal promoting adult education in Nigeria, in conjunction with the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE), umbrella body of adult education scholars and practitioners, should convene five special technical teams

comprising adult education scholars in higher education institutions and practitioners in government parastatals and agencies, NGOs, CSOs, private sectors, education organisations, among others, to develop comprehensive framework on each of the five priority areas for action in adult education in Nigeria so as to meet global specifications and standards.

2. Inauguration of expanded technical committee to harmonise the development frameworks - After the development of the frameworks by the technical teams, an expanded committee should be inaugurated by NMEC to harmonise the action recommendations contained in the five developed frameworks and produce a comprehensive document for adult education in Nigeria.

3. Presentation of the comprehensive document to the Federal Ministry of Education for implementation - The leadership of NMEC and NNCAE should seek audience with top officials of the Federal Ministry of Education for the presentation of the developed comprehensive document on adult education for policy direction, programme implementation, and greater investment in adult education in Nigeria.

4. Presentation of the comprehensive document to major stakeholders in adult education in Nigeria - NMEC is also urged to convene a special workshop of major stakeholders in adult education in Nigeria (comprising parliamentarians, public sector authorities, private sector, non-government organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOS), Civil Society organisations

(CSOs), government ministries, parastatals, and agencies (MDA), philanthropists, educational organisations, media organisations, among others) for the presentation of the developed comprehensive document for multi-sectoral, inter-ministerial, and inter-agencies cooperation and collaboration in promoting adult education in Nigeria.

5. Presentation of the comprehensive document to UNESCO - NMEC is also urged to present the developed comprehensive document to UNESCO, through its Abuja office in Nigeria, for publication, possible funding of programmes, regional and international collaboration.

6. Publication of the comprehensive document in NMEC website - NMEC is further urged to publish the document in its website and sensitise all stakeholders to visit the website for more knowledge and research on the reshaped adult education in Nigeria.

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