

Community Based-Learning and Grassroots Innovation for Sustainable Adult Education in Nigeria

Rose Eyefujinrin EBOHON, Ph.D

*Department of Adult and Non-formal Education,
Federal University of Education, Kontagora Niger State.
eborose123@gmail.com*

Abstract

Every community all over the world, whether urban or rural, developed or developing, has experienced and is still experiencing one form of problem or another, which can be observed from a different perspective. Community-based Learning and grassroots innovation for sustainable Adult Education is a transformative approach in the learning process in adult education programmes that involve inclusive participation, which is designed towards problem-solving in a particular community, based on the challenges they are facing. In a globalized setting, it will help to offer localized models for sustainable solutions for the immediate environment. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the role of community-based learning and grassroots innovation in managing the already debilitating school standard of Nigeria today. Again, it will also encourage the dependence on local knowledge, as well as active participation, thereby getting an opportunity for lifelong learning. This study is basically based on library and internet materials from primary and secondary sources. The paper, therefore, recommended that governments at all levels need to be committed to delivering of competitive and high-quality standard education that will be based on solving the community problems locally.

Keywords: Community-based, Learning, Grassroots, Innovation, Sustainable, Adult Education.

Introduction

Basically a community is a shared territory, which means that there are people or members of a group occupying a territorial area within which they live and develop their way of life. Community refers to the group of people who share common characteristics, interests or goals and are often connected by geographical location, culture, profession, religion or social ties. Shitu, (2023) is of the view that community comprises of all the people living within a specific geographical area of land such as village, town, city a neighborhood or even a whole state.

Community brings together like-minded people with similar characteristics and common interests. In most cases, these common interests are established or enshrined in community laws and customs. This is because every community has its customs, traditions (dos and don'ts), and so for the people to succeed and remain strengthened, community members must work for the common interest of the community as against personal interest. This brings us to the issue of rural development, which is of paramount interest to any government. It is not surprising today that successive governments of Nigeria have often found it necessary to solve the problem of marginalization in development between the urban and rural areas. Without the proper funding of community education by the government, the gap will continue to be widened between urban and rural development. Community learning is the type of education demanded to ensure the tone of confidence, tone of respect, and particular independence, as well as to guard moral rights and achieve social equality. Community learning is essential in stimulating community members to laboriously share in social conditioning, fund or induce employment, increase their inflows, and ameliorate the quality of life. Adult and community learning has come a stepping gravestone for public development. According to Finden (2013), the climate of change in the political, profitable, and artistic affairs of Nigeria has been tracked to adult and community development.

Community development engagement through community-based learning helps to deal with engagement that seeks to engage the community to achieve sustainable outcomes and an equitable decision-making process for future prosperity. This process is very important because it equips people with authentic learning experiences that promote community engagement and help them to cultivate interpersonal skills. Community-grounded learning (CBL) is learning that incorporates the community and immediate terrain into the tutoring approach. It can be done in numerous different ways, but the overall thing is to integrate the community into academic literacy, which is the crux of this paper.

Theoretical Framework

There are so many theories open to/for this research. This study will be combining Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy and Robert Chambers (1983) Participatory Development Theory, who argued that putting the last first was the only way to achieve community development. Since the acceptance of participation has come wide. These theories provide strong foundations for understanding community-based learning and grassroots innovation in the context of sustainable adult education in Nigeria. Freire's theory emphasizes that education should be a tool for

liberation rather than domination. Critical Pedagogy advocates a dialogical process in which learners are active participants who critically engage with knowledge and concrete meaning from their lived experiences.

According to Freire (2007) this theory is, in fact, the external form of knowledge overload in acts, which takes on the abecedarian property of knowledge- its intentionality, while participatory development emphasizes a bottom-up approach where communities play an active role in shaping their own educational and developmental processes. This theory assumes that sustainable outcomes are only possible when local knowledge, indigenous innovation, and community participation are freely integrated into development initiatives. Participatory Development is a process through which socio- profitable programs and institutional reforms that will have long- term goods over a society are designed and enforced with the effective participation of citizens throughout the designated society or community.

The combination of Critical Pedagogy and participatory Development Theory provides a comprehensive lens for analyzing community-based learning and grassroots innovation. Freire's perspective focuses on empowerment through critical reflection and dialogue. Like in the Nigerian situation of adult education, this framework highlights the importance of dialogue, problem-solving, and reflection as means of empowering individuals and the community. By bringing learning situations within the socio-economic reality of grassroots communities, adult learners are not only recipients of knowledge but also innovators who can generate sustainable solutions to local challenges. Participatory development theory, on the other hand, emphasizes collective action and local ownership. If this theory were applied to sustainable adult education in Nigeria, it means that communities can move beyond dependency on external intervention to self-driven models of education that are innovative, relevant, and sustainable.

In this theoretical framework, adult education becomes both a process and an outcome: a process of dialogue, reflection, and participation, and an outcome in the form of community-driven innovations that enhance livelihoods, build resilience, and sustain lifelong learning opportunities.

Conceptual Clarification

Community-Based Learning

The provocation for why community grounded learning is an approach in education comes from the establishment belief that all communities have ingrain values that can and do

enrich learning gestures. Within the immediate terrain, there are coffers and means that can be used to give life, hands-on gestures for scholars that cement learning objects as real and important chops. Community-based learning can be set up at all situations of education. It's important to engage adult beforehand so that they can develop connections that enhance their overall literacy gestures, and it's important to engage scholars as they get older because it keeps them motivated when they can see a part for themselves in the larger social environment. Because community-grounded learning can be done at any position, preceptors can fluently incorporate strategies into any class. According to Ossai (2021) community-based learning as a community partnership, benefits everyone participating in it. She further categorizes the beneficiary into three:

- A. Scholars are engaged in authentic literacy gestures which increase their understanding of their community and businesses in their community as well as original requirements and issues. The programme helps to develop particular chops, interests, strengths and increased mindfulness on how these can be used to profit their learning and planning for their future.
- B. The Schools Community cooperation creates ways for school to unite with families and community members in support of education. It provides fortified literacy openings for scholars and preceptors and foster new ways of allowing about their own practices as they come more apprehensive of community service, coffers and openings
- C. Community mates and Business Community mates are suitable to give back to their community through supporting education and scholars.

Grassroots Innovation

This concept refers to locally driven, community-based problem-solving approaches where ordinary people especially those in rural or marginalized communities proffer solutions to their own problem using community based solution. The whole idea is to develop practical, low-cost and context specific solutions to addressing the challenges of the rural people, such as; social economic and environmental issues. Grassroots innovation emerged from the knowledge, creativity and the peoples' experiences. It is a new idea, solution or practices that emanated from the ordinary people at the community level, often outside formal institutions, research centers, or corporations. The whole concepts emerged as a result of looking for solutions through the needs, creativity and local knowledge of the people.

Grassroots inventions, help to give in-service and on- the- job vocational and professional training for different orders of workers and professional in order to ameliorate their chops. It is a very useful idea for man power development that will help bridge the gap between the rural community and the urban community. Manpower development is a vital factor for a country's profitable, political, scientific and socio-artistic metamorphosis. The position of capital development of a nation can be caught on through the deployment of grassroots invention into educational system and the impact of wisdom, technology, women and youth commission and good healthcare delivery and productivity. According to Dode and Bassey(2014) force development is the nonstop process of perfecting chops Grassroots innovation denotes a process of education and training through which human resources available in the community are enabled to acquire modern/relevant skills for optimal performance and subsequent improved productivity.

Sustainable Adult Education

Sustainable connotes taking cognizance of the needs of the future in our present activities or actions. It is the practice of ensuring that the activities of man geared towards meeting his needs do not affect the interest of the future generations. Sustainable adult education is a place where adult preceptors conserve, save and exploit their literacy terrain to meet the requirements of the present and unborn generations. Adult education is a process of general, specialized or vocational knowledge, as well as chops, values and stations which take place out of the formal education system with a view to remedying early crunches of mature people or equipping them with the knowledge and artistic rudiments needed for their tone- fulfillment and active participation in the social, profitable and political life of their societies. Adult education plays a major part in social development.

It's now extensively admitted that growth wouldn't reduce poverty unless poor people are suitable to laboriously share in the growth process and similar participation can come effective to a large extent through adult education (Olayinka, Adebayo & Onifade 2021). A sustainable Adult education is the education that is well planned, built or modified to promote sustainable living. Sustainable adult education is a programme that is designed for lifelong learning initiatives to equip adults on the knowledge, skills and values that promote personal development, community growth, and long-term social, economics and environmental sustainability. This concept goes beyond traditional Literacy or vocational training by

integrating the principles of sustainability such as equity inclusiveness, environmental stewardship, and future oriented thinking skills into adult learning practices.

Community-Based Learning and Grassroots Innovation for Sustainable Adult Education

Community-based learning and grassroots innovations are two serious factors that can be deployed into adult education practice/programme that will make it sustainable. Education in the first place is considered as one of the effective tool for the growth and development of any nation. Adult education must be one of those component that can liberate the citizens' ignorance, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve and increase learning beyond the traditional schooling and aid in gaining new forms of knowledge, skills and attitude . The development of any nation depends on the nation's ability to develop her community through various means such as social, economic and political empowerment of the citizenry. According to Chuke & Okoye (2024) development is an essential aspect of a community that cannot be neglected. In a more people oriented development, people should be given more authority to take charge of all facets of their existence, including social, political and economic wants.

There are many ways to utilize community-based learning to achieve community development. A community can not develop without proper community education which is the catalyst behind meaningful development in any giving society. Furnishing wealth of knowledge and gests is making societies communities competent for development using and incorporating community based-learning through grassroots innovation to foster growth. The central focus of community development is on the mobilization of community resources both human and material towards the attainment of a rich and balanced community life. It derived special image from the emphasis it gives to the involvement or participation of the people (Omoruyi, 2008). Community based learning approach seeks to make progressive change or development at the grassroots level of a given community through a people oriented and locally based activities. Community-based learning and grassroots innovation is to further help boost community education. This is a type of education that focuses on restructuring of profitable, social political and culture performance and practice of communities thereby bringing about rapid-fire profitable, social and political metamorphosis. nonetheless, the metamorphosis process will be apparent in the collaborative literacy handed to the community through their life gests , ideas and artistic dogma embedded in the people) According to Olori, Dimkpa & Olori (2015) they affirmed that community education makes use of community literacy coffers and exploration to

bring about community change. The change cannot be liberation of individualities from recession and backwardness. Community education is one of the most important factors in bringing about changes in societies communities. Community education grounded on community- grounded literacy and grassroots invention will thus come a foundation for freedom which brings about total emancipation of the millions from imprisonment boxed on them by ignorance and ignorance thereby, erecting in them confidence and support for every meaningful progress and growth, because they were part of the results to their problems.

Communities-based learning and grassroots innovation succeed with the following strategies:

- i. **Community Integration:** The initiative of the learning outcomes originate from local communities, often responding directly to pressing needs such as energy, water, health, education and agriculture.

The whole idea is to bring the community into the classroom and the classroom into the community. Community integration can be achieved by inviting community members to lead a class or to tutor scholars. preceptors can also plan to visit original business, planter and other enterprises to learn onsite what has been bandied in the classroom

- ii. **Community participation:** This allows students to actively participate in community awareness programmes. Participants not only learn about the issues, but they also provide a service by sharing the information with the community with an inclusive concepts, emphasizing the involvement of the women and youths who feels marginalized in the whole scheme of things to generate far reaching solutions to their challenges.

- iii. **Service Learning:** This is analogous to volunteering, but it integrates meaningful community service with reflection. Actors are anticipated to not only laboriously share in a significant way but also spend time reflecting on the reason that the design is demanded in the community, what they've learned and how they've changed as a result of the design. Its generally one design over a specified quantum of time in order to gain in- depth gests and learning This will make them align with local traditions, values, and practices, making adoption and sustainability much more easier, as well as making use of locally available materials and indigenous knowledge to reduce costs.

Looking at the above strategies to be able to have sustainable adult education, community based learning and grassroots innovation must first be considered as a lifelong learning initiatives. Lifelong education is fundamentally not only for the competitiveness and economic

prosperity but also for social inclusion, employability, self-fulfillment and empowerment of the people. Nzeneri in Ukwuaba and Ayogu (2020) pointed out that lifelong education as an education concept emphasizes that education is lifelong, an agent for liberation from ignorance, unemployment, a tool for adjustment, for self and national development. The focus is on the community of learning, that is, learning as a life-time pursuit that start at birth and only terminates at death.

Soni (2012), is of the view that lifelong education is all acquiring and streamlining all kinds of capacities, chops, knowledge and qualifications from there school times topmost retirement that will enable adaption to the knowledge- grounded society. She went further to state that it encompasses formal and non-formal education and training, tone motivational literacy and tone- funded literacy. As long as an existent is alive literacy is taking place. Mortal beings continue learning throughout life in order to acclimatize to changing terrain they meet in life.

The thing of adult education are to increase the quality of life of an individual and enable him her to realize his/ her eventuality for tone- consummation; to raise the standard of living of the families, communities, societies and nations; to promote peace and collaborative harmony in the multi-cultural global and to enhance the pace of development and weal of the individual nations and the transnational community as a whole. Adult education provides the literacy which is demanded for the accession of chops needed for sustainability using different approaches, ways and maters which are suitable to the target followership. Through these different programmes, it provides lifelong and continues literacy and development of capabilities and freedom for people to learn at their own time and peace. According to Ekwealor(2021), all these can spark sustainable development on colorful situations of the social, profitable and indeed ecological position.

For adult education to be sustainable it must have the following features:

Lifelong Learning Approach: It must be a continuous project and not limited by age, formal schooling or occupation. It should be designed for on-the-job training at the work place, meant to improve the participants' occupational competence

Community Oriented: It must be rooted in a local knowledge, culture and practices. It must be able to promote community-based learning and grassroots innovations through participation in community development.

Sustainability Integration: It should be able to link education with the sustainable development Goal (SDGs) particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), so as to encourage environmentally friendly practices, social Justice and economic empowerment

Empowerment and capacity Building: Their programmes should be able to strengthen individuals to make an informed decisions that will improve his livelihood and make him contribute to societal resilience. It should also be able to provide tools for entrepreneurship, digital literacy and civic engagement

Inclusivity: The programme should be able to carry everybody along. Ensure that, women, youths, rural dwellers, disable persons all have access to educational opportunities.

Conclusion

This paper examined the imperatives of communities based learning and grassroots innovation for sustainable adult education in Nigeria. Adult Education is a transmission process of general, technical or vocational knowledge, as well as skills, values and attitudes for communities and societal transformation. It is basically a powerful tool for manpower developments, poverty reduction, civic and social engagements. Adult education should be vigorously pursued so as to have an all round development in Nigeria. It has essential capabilities to contribute to structure of social capital, fostering social addition and combating both direct and circular or less egregious costs of social rejection. thus, there's great need to enhance mindfulness and reorientation of these issues and make adult education not only visible but sustainable.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions on community-based leaning and grassroots innovation for sustainable adult education, the following recommendations are hereby suggested

- ❖ That government at all level ready to be committed to delivering of competitive and high quality standard community learning that will be grounded on working the community problems locally.
- ❖ There should be establishment of further center of adult learning/ adult education programmes in the country so that everybody will have easy access to education and

therefore come more functional on the job performance and make them affordable to all interested adult learners. These programmes should be acclimatized to learners requirements and bournes.

- ❖ Nigerian government at all levels should promote lifelong learning and emphasize on the importance of countries for individuals to engage in containing education programmes. This can be achieved through initiatives and programmes, such as professional development programmes, employer sponsored training and recognition of prior learning

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