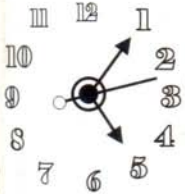




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Organisation and Management of Literacy Programmes

Deborah Adetunbi Egunyomi

and

Abiola Adiat Omokhabi

Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract

Organisation and management of literacy programmes are very germane to the success of literacy delivery. It is against this background that this paper examined strategies that Nigeria needs to put in place for the revitalization of literacy programmes. The paper concluded that for education to enrich an individuals' knowledge and develop his/her potentials to prepare for future challenges in an ever-changing world, education, particularly literacy, ought to be effectively and efficiently organised and managed.

Keywords: Literacy, Organizing, Strategies, Management, and Literacy Programmes

Introduction

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in the community and the wider society (UNESCO, 2003). The connection between literacy and development is illustrated by the fact that the world's poorest countries are the ones with the

highest illiteracy rates, meaning that literacy liberates untapped human potential and leads to increased productivity and better living conditions (Bamgbose, 1991). This was further reaffirmed by Joseph Stiglitz in Kigoni (2013), a past president of the World Bank and a globalization researcher, when he strongly stated that; "What separates the developed from the less developed countries is not a gap in resources but a gap in knowledge, which is why investments in education and technology are so important." Barton (2008) says literacy is a broad discipline that is part of our everyday living.

All humans make sense of their own lives, they talk about what they do, and they explain and justify their actions, their feelings, their intentions and thoughts. This suggests that literacy impinges on our everyday lives and there is need for its promotion by the government and non-governmental organizations. This view is expressed by DVV International (2009: 11) saying:

There is need for provision of resources to create literacy centers instead of limiting ourselves to those created by NGOs. The local authorities to which this responsibility was transferred do not have enough resources. If the population is not literate, there is very little participation in the development of the area. It is really the obligation of our governments in order to invest in adult education in order to respect the agreements that they have ratified. Literacy cuts across everything and each ministry should have a literacy department.

Thorton (2006) indicated that literacy is a basic foundation and an instrument for change and development in the society. It is a beacon of hope reflecting the life cycle of a single human being in their own world. Literacy raises critical awareness of citizens so that they become subjects, rather than objects, of the world. Freire (1970) also said that with literacy, there are no themes or values of which one cannot speak, no areas in which

one must be silent. We can talk about everything, and we can give testimony about everything in the world including those we have never encountered. Literacy keeps us informed about what is happening in the world and makes us aware of our own prejudices and blind spots with best ways to resolve them.

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in 1990 to eradicate illiteracy among Nigerians through the organisation, monitoring and assessment of adult literacy in the country. The commission is meant to facilitate the achievements of Education for All (EFA) of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and the Vision 2020. In its quest to achieve these objectives, the commission has introduced various non-formal and continuing education programmes with a view to taking care of the disadvantaged, marginalised and hard-to-reach children, youths and adults. The Federal Government of Nigeria established the Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education in 1990. The agency functions under the National Mass Education Commission (NMEC), which is a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Education. All the states and local government areas throughout the country have branches of the Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education.

Hill and Mcshane (2008) posited management as the art or act of getting things done through people in organizations and that managers perform their functions through the processes of planning, organizing, directing, reporting, staffing, co-ordinating, budgeting and leadership in order to attain organizational objectives. The above functions characterize all modern organizations including adult literacy institutions.

Meaning of Organisation and Management

An organization is an entity comprising multiple people; such as an institution or an association, that has a collective goal and is linked to an external environment. Management (or managing) is the administration of an organization, whether it is a business, a not-for-profit organization, or government body.

Management includes the activities of setting the strategy of an organization and coordinating the efforts of its employees (or of volunteers) to accomplish its objectives through the application of available resources, such as financial, natural, technological, and human resources.

Organisation of Literacy Programmes

Adult literacy institutions consist of all the organizations which offer various forms of adult literacy programmes such as: traditional literacy, basic literacy, functional literacy, information communication literacy, vocational literacy, environmental literacy and tourism literacy (Obal, 2010 in Arikpo, 2012). All these forms of literacy programmes and others are being managed either in homes, government agencies, non-governmental and some international partners through various structures and strategies. The importance of institutions and structures in the management of adult literacy education informed Omolewa (1985:98), who pointed out that 'the twin issues of institutions and structures are most crucial to the effective delivery of adult education services in any country'. This is because of the nature and target of adult education work which covers a variety of clientele from the grass root level to the most sophisticated elite. Thus the rural dwellers and farmers are as important as the urban dwellers and top managers in the planning and execution of adult education work. Since the programme started, it has reached many people in the 36 states of Nigeria and in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) under the supervision of the State Agencies for Mass Education. A state usually selects those areas that are relevant to the needs of its people. The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC, 2007) ensures the delivery of literacy in Nigeria through the provision of the following core contents of the National Adult Literacy programme:

- Basic Literacy
- Post Literacy

- Vocational Education
- Continuing Education

These programmes were designed to help facilitate the provision of basic education in the target communities especially amongst the adults and empower them with skills to claim their human rights as well strengthening the capacities of the target communities.

Management of Literacy Programmes

In management, policy objectives must be well spelt out before management functions like those listed above are carried out. In the case of adult literacy education in Nigeria, the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal education sets policy objectives to guide the application of management functions by institutions for the achievement of programme objectives. The functions of management are the adoption of the use of management principles and techniques to arrange both human and material resources in the organization. These include decision-making, planning, staffing, co-ordinating, controlling, stimulation and approval, (Egunyomi, 2000).

Programmes and Strategies

The NMEC programmes and strategies are designed to enable adults and youths to acquire skills and knowledge and be able to mainstream into the formal sector. The programmes are:

a) **Basic Literacy** (*Equivalence of Primaries 1-3 of the formal system*) provides reading, writing, numeracy, and skills for adults and youths who did not have an opportunity for formal education. Basic literacy lasts between 6-9 months.

b) **Post Literacy** (*Equivalence of Primaries 4-6 of the formal system*). This non-formal education (NFE) type is organised for graduands of basic literacy who want to acquire more knowledge and for those who for one reason or the other dropped out from formal school between primaries 1-3. The concept of post-

literacy is based on the assumption that newly literate persons quickly relapse into illiteracy if they do not have any meaningful way of using their skills. The Post-literacy stage usually lasts for 2-3 years. From this level, a learner can proceed to any higher equivalent in the formal system.

c) **Functional Literacy:** This form of literacy is “work-related”, and is mainly intended to promote literacy through the familiar objects and acts of the learners’ professional or vocational calling. That is, providing the skills of reading, writing and computing tailored towards the learner’s occupation for better economic productivity.

d) **Vocational Education/Work-related Skills:** This is a non-formal education programme designed to equip the learners with vocational or work-related skills such as livelihood, computing, work readiness, entrepreneurial and small business management. The duration, which depends on the trade or craft, may be jointly agreed upon between the organisers and the learners. In some cases, it may last up to twelve months, eighteen months, or beyond depending on the types of trade or craft enrolled for by the learners.

Strategies

There are many learning strategies used to address illiteracy in the country, prominent amongst them include:

Each One Teach One: The birth of Each One Teach One (EOTO) strategy of learning is attributed to Frank C. Laubach, (NMEC/UNICEF, 2010), who first practiced it in the Philippines for religious objectives. The Each One Teach One strategy was introduced in Nigeria during the inauguration of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) in 1991, for the purpose of using it to eradicate illiteracy in the country.

Literacy by Radio: Literacy by Radio is a process of promoting the learning of reading, writing and computing through a radio programme. Literacy by Radio is equally a strategy for the effective delivery of basic education to a large number of learners scattered over a large location/area.

REFLECT: REFLECT is an acronym which stands for Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques. It is Action Aid's contribution to literacy and community development in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2004). The REFLECT methodology applies the use of participatory techniques that help to generate discussions and analysis on critical issues that are of concern to the community (Pwol, 2006).

Target Groups

The target groups of literacy programmes in Nigeria can be deduced from the mandate and objectives of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education. Its mandate is to provide basic literacy, post literacy, vocational and continuing education to the following target groups:

- Adults and adolescents (15 years and above) who have never been to school and cannot read or write;
- Adults and adolescents (15 years and above) who are above school going age but have not achieved the competencies of reading, writing and numeracy;
- Early school leavers who could not stay to achieve permanent literacy for effective work;
- Adults/youths requiring rehabilitative education (including prison inmates) for example, *yandaba* in the North, *area boys* in the South-West and out-of-school boys in the South-East and South-South of Nigeria;
- School age children and youths (6-14 years) not enrolled in the formal school system.

These target groups could be found among:

- Women in purdah
- Rural women
- Peasant farmers
- Market women and men
- Out of school children and youth
- The girl-child and out-of-school boys
- Street children with no fixed addresses
- Traditional Qur'anic school children (the *Almajiris*)
- Adult Nomads/migrant folks
- Physically challenged children/youths
- Illiterate drivers
- Illiterate workers/semi-skilled workers (road-side mechanics, artisans, etc.)
- Illiterate/semi-skilled junior workers in public and private sectors
- Prison inmates requiring rehabilitative education. (Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria, 2010).

Strategies for Effective Organisation and Management of Literacy Programme with a View to Revitalizing the Programme

Judicious Resource Allocation and Utilization: The government, has already spent a sizeable proportion of funds, more fund is still required to make the basic literacy programme as efficient and effective as it should be. All levels of the government are aware of the need to provide more money for basic literacy programmes in all states. Thus, the government should provide money in good time, disburse and control such funds under the normal financial provisions for accountability.

Training and Retraining of Literacy Managers and Instructors: The Agency for Mass Literacy has a policy on the

regular training and retraining of literacy managers in the field of personnel administration, centre management, financial management and supervision to enable them effectively organise and manage the implementation of basic literacy programmes in the state. Furthermore, the State Agency for Mass Literacy focuses on instructor's in-service training that will address the issue of specialization and staff development in the literacy system.

Effective Organization and Management of Curriculum and Instruction: Curriculum is the reconstruction of knowledge and experience, systematically developed under the auspices of the school to allow the learner to increase his/her control of knowledge and experience (FME, 1993). Therefore, the most important area in this direction is that, the instruction programmes of the basic literacy scheme are well done by the managers and the Agency. This should be done without compromising standards. The Agency, through collaboration with UNICEF, should develop curricula for Basic and Post-literacy levels as well as those for Integrated Quranic Education and Child Education and monitor instructors to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum.

Proper Management of Staff Personnel: The teaching and non-teaching staff of the Agency are being monitored. The instructors need to be assigned responsibilities based on qualifications, attitude and experience. The agency must ensure that instructors of basic literacy teach subjects for which they are qualified. Besides, the issue of staff motivation and productivity are very essential. Appropriate stimulation and encouragement and compensation of staff members as they work is desirable. Instructors' performance should be appraised. These strategies or efforts are geared towards achieving better results in making basic literacy relevant to the needs of the society.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to establish the various strategies that Nigeria needs to put in place to ensure the proper organisation and management of literacy programmes for the achievement of development goals. It can be seen from the discussion that the country needs these strategies for the effective organization and management of basic literacy programmes with a view to revitalizing the programme in order to produce citizens for global competitiveness.

Recommendations

- There is also the need for Counsellors to be employed for the literacy programmes to encourage participants to remain on it.
- For attendance at literacy programmes to improve, there is the need for improved remunerations for the instructors.
- The importance of ICT cannot be over-emphasised; as a result, government and other stakeholders need to invest in this if the products of adult and non-formal education are to fit into the modern world of work and further education.
- All stakeholders in Adult and Non-Formal Education need to intervene to ensure that teaching and learning materials and facilities are provided for the centres in adequate and sufficient quantities.
- There is the need for stakeholders to meet at the national level to ensure collaboration in programme planning and execution among various providers for synergy and efficiency, as well as standardization in programme planning and delivery.
- There should be massive capacity building activities like in-service trainings, workshops, etc, to up-date Adult and Non-Formal Education teachers. This will contribute to the achievement of ANFE objectives.

- The private sector should contribute adequately to the funding of Adult and Non-Formal Education because it also enjoys the services of its graduates.
- Clients need to be involved in programme planning and delivery. (ADEA, 2008).

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