

## Effective planning as a Potent Tool for Implementing Adult Literacy Programmes: Implications for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Gombe State, Nigeria.

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### Abstract

This paper strives towards addressing issues related to planning Adult Literacy Programme. The paper also dealt with the components of functional and responsive adult literacy programme planning and implementation. Planning/development is seen by this paper as a vehicle for effective implementation of Adult Literacy Programme. As the adage goes, effective programme planning brings about responsive implementation. So is the relationship between planning and implementation of a programme which leads to goal achievement. Some approaches and groups of persons to be involved in planning Adult Literacy Programmes were suggested in this paper along with five major suggestions towards the success of Adult Literacy Programmes in Gombe State, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** effective planning, potent tool, implementing, literacy programme

### 1. Introduction:

Planning as a backbone of every task can be said to be an essential ingredient for a success of any programme. Adult education as an old profession has a number of programme under it ranging from Literacy education, Vocational education, continuing education, Remedial education, life- long education, etc. (Omolewa, 1985). Since these programmes (and Literacy education in particular) have to do with people from different backgrounds having different needs, cannot be effectively implemented without effective planning. It has been years from the conception and establishment of state Agencies to provide people with literacy skills. Yet Nigeria is burdened with a static illiteracy rate if not increasing. These are shouldered on the roles planning plays on programme implementation towards goal achievement in the light of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981).

The extent to which planning appears to be a hypothetical activity in Adult Literacy Programme is observable in the Top- Bottom approach to programme planning. That is, the head offices do the planning for whom the design is meant. One of the important arm (instructors, organizers and inspectors) are mostly left out in the process of planning only to be served with the product for implementation. Also Nigeria as a diversely populated Country has variety of problems associated with their geo- political zones and states. Meeting the needs of these diversities with the centrally designed programme can, but render the programme irrelevant to some states. We will like to agree with Oduaran (2003) who asserted that, the Bottom- Top approach to planning Adult Literacy Programmes is the better way of coming out with relevant programme to the people. It could be observed here that, most if not all of the learning materials meant for adult literacy programmes in Nigeria today are developed from the top and passed down to the bottom, which in most cases is not suitable to the context of the adult learner in his locality. Even though, it is often said that planning an adult Literacy (education) programme should begin with situational

analysis, normally done at the grass root. Yet in practice as observed from the materials in use by adult literacy centres in Gombe state and the country at large reverse is the case.

Several literatures have shown the different steps involved in planning Adult Literacy Programme for Adult Learners. Okwuludo (2005) identified six steps in programme planning which includes pre-planning planning plan formulation, plan elaboration, plan implementation and plan evaluation. On the other hand Bozimo (2004) identified situational survey, setting of objectives, content/ activity, implementation and evaluation as the major steps to employ when planning a curriculum for social studies. This paper will subsume the above into the following in the light of what Anyanwu (1998) itemized as the steps in programme

planning in Adult literacy programme using the linear model. Linear model is said to be the simplest of all the models as it consist of specific steps which are arranged in logical sequence. While commenting on this model Kowalski in Anyanwu (1998) asserted that, this model begins with need identification and terminates with evaluation of programmes. To take the reader along this paper here explains what is involved in each step in using this model.

In order to carry the readers along, the authors have defined some of the key concepts in the paper. The concepts are: Planning, Adult and Literacy.

The term planning has been viewed by different authors in different perspectives based on their various stand of writing. Planning is a step by step arrangement of an intended activity to carry out at a given period of time Okwuludo (2005). On the other hand Robinson in Oyetunde and Piwuna (2002) define the term in line with curriculum planning to mean a process of drawing up an educational programme in order to achieve some specific goals and objectives set up for a group of individual.

The term Literacy education has been defined by different authors in various ways. According to Aderinoye (1997), the types includes; traditional literacy, cultural literacy, civic literacy, functional and critical literacy. He added that, adult literacy learners are in categories. The stag illiterate, Neo-literates and post literacy categories. Hence, the need to bear this view in mind when defining the term literacy. It is worthy to note here that several definitions were raised by the UNESCO at different times, to Obi (2006), literacy means the ability to read and write a simple message in any language. This was arrived at in the year 1948 by the United Nations Populations Commission. While Gudschinsky (1973) view it as a person is literate who in any language that he speaks can read and understand anything he would have understood if it had been spoken to him and who can write, so that it can be read, anything he says.

It can however be defined by this paper as any attempt to make adult persons acquire the ability to read, write, compute simple Arithmetic and apply it into their daily lives.

Adult is a concept which is defined by different persons in various ways. It is worth noting here that, an adult in one community may not be an adult in another. For instance in Northern Nigeria where early girls marriage take place, often a girl of 16 years is tagged as an adult while a girl of same age in the southern part of Nigeria is considered a child. Hence, one could be an adult on ground of age, i.e. if he/she is above the age of 18; and one could be an adult based on his responsibility as well as social status. An adult is defined by Pamoja Nigeria as the person who is physically matured, above the age of 18years and holds a social responsibility in his /her society (Pamoja Nigeria 2006).

## **2. Effects of planning on adult Literacy programme implementation:**

Several writers have written on the importance of planning in the implementation programme, as it provides implementers with a logical way of putting the plan into work for goal achievement. The word plan is synonymous to the word design, which refers to a sketch of a thing which the designer wants to develop. Just as an architects make a building plan in order to guide the builders to develop the plan so also in adult education. However the difference is that, while architecture handles environment, education handles humans. Hence making educational planning a sensitive activity equals to that of medicine as a discipline.

In the light of the above, the following has been identified by some writers as some of the effects of programme planning:

It serves as a guide to the implementers.

It is a standard and serves as an indicator for monitoring and evaluation in education.

It helps avoid confusion in the course of programme implementation as sequences are well defined.

It provides basis for generalization as common plan is replicated every where to achieve a defined objectives.

The time bound makes implementers to make good use of time.

Evaluation is done using an instrument to be used on all participants.

## **3. Types of educational planning:**

Planning an educational programme like adult literacy programme just as the formal schooling sector is carried out according to Oyetunde and Piwuna (2002) in three levels; planning could be at national, state/regional and local levels. At the national it takes a very general form with national policy and objectives, Political and cultural values as well as general educational policy in forecast (Oyetunde and Piwuna 2002) so as to provide activities that could lead to achieving the stated goals of the nation at large. Educational planning has been classified into five major types. They are;

### **3.1 Long term plan**

A long term plan is the type of planning that takes some years before it yields the expected outcome, after execution of the plan. This can be very much useful to achieve a long term goal of an educational programme for a period of 10 to 25 years before achieving results/ impacts. This is commonly used in formal school curriculum planning for either primary or secondary schools.

### **3.2 Medium-term planning:**

A medium term plan is a kind of plan expected to yield result within a shorter time limit compared to the long-term planning programme. It is expected to yield result within 4-7 years. That is to say, impact of the programme will be felt at the end of 7 years period.

### **3.3 Short-term planning:**

A short-term plan is a process of designing a programme which does not require more than three years before the expected outcome could be felt by the people. Examples of these are carpentry, welding, building, etc.

### **3.4 Rolling planning:**

A rolling plan may be pointing at the aspect of planning which seeks to accommodate inconveniences and aspects of a plan which need to be perfected for a success of a programme before termination of time schedule. This some times form part of the review and implementation of the programme. This is most common in tailoring, carpentry and trading.

### **3.5 Single purpose planning**

A single –purpose plan is a plan which has a well defined goal to achieve. It is more of accomplishment or completion of an intended aspect of a programme. For instance, a staff recruitment, additional buildings in an organization or learning an additional or separate style in a profession, such as when a tailor goes to learn how to make a different style of coat or bed sheet other than his previous style in use, etc.

In order to carry out a successful adult education programme, in the light of the above mentioned programme types the following considerations were poised by Okwuludo (2005). According to him, planning should be carried out as follows:

The programme should develop the individual participants and the community as a whole.

The programme should be functional/development.

It should reflect the policy of the country.

It should adequately co-ordinate or supervise the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the programme.

It should endeavour to improve the structures, content and methods of the programme in order to meet the taste of the contemporary society and that of the entire world.

## **4. Essential elements in adult literacy programme planning:**

General elements of programme planning according to Anyanwu (1998) which is helpful in guiding a planner in developing a dynamic adult literacy programme are:

- a) A dynamic and continuous process:
- b) Involve those directly affected
- c) Provision for group participation d) Requires long time effort
- e) Conducive learning environment
- f) Contributions of programme goals.

## **5. Approaches to planning adult literacy programmes:**

Planning has been said by Obi (2006) that, planning is done using different approaches depending so much on the purpose of the plan and the type of programme under design as well as the target group for whom the project is planned. For instance, there is a plan for a lesson which is generally called lesson plan. This plan often lasts for a space of 30 minutes to one hour period of implementation. They could be made for a week, month and a term or semester; where an instructor organizes a whole into parts for easy implementation, understanding and goal achievement in education. There are three major approaches to planning Adult Literacy Programmes (Obi, 2006). According to him, planning an adult literacy programme could take the following phases:

Scale of operation of the programme.

Duration of the programme.

Target group to be served.

The Objectives of the programme.

It is worth noting here that, the approaches to effective programme planning in Adult Literacy Programmes are:

1. Educator centered approach,
2. A market principle and
3. The participant centered approach

This paper advances that, the use of the third approach i.e. the participant centered approach to Adult Literacy Programme planning, is much suitable and capable of producing a relevant programme. This approach is advanced due to the fact that it is perfectly in line with the fundamental principle of programme planning in Adult education (Anyanwu 1998). This approach tries to survey the participants need by way of inviting would be – participants or their representatives to identify their educational needs as well as their strategies to use for both implementation and evaluation of the programme.

## **6. Basic components of planning and development of adult literacy programme:**

As the case is with educational planning, in planning adult literacy programme also some basic components of the stake holders needs has been captured. The essential components required for coming up with a balanced and suitable adult literacy programme, has already been inferred by authors such as Oyetunde and Piwuna (2002). These are:

### **6.1 The target community**

A situational analysis is required to identify the target community/communities in order to come up with a programme that will be suitable to the community towards queuing them into the national life. The things consider in the survey should include the type of socio-economic activities of the people as well as their environmental issues affecting them in order to make learning content relevant to them.

### **6.2 Literacy participants**

Participants constitute the target group that the programme intends to touch and impact. To have a good plan of adult literacy programme for these groups, their felt needs must be borne in mind. The felt needs can be drawn by way of asking questions in a form of survey in order to come up with a programme which could have direct link with their needs. The case which makes learning part of their life as learning hangs around matters affecting them.

### **6.3 Resources**

By resources in planning an adult literacy programme it is important to consider who are needed for the programme implementation. Resource are classified into two major groups, ie Human and Material resources. The Human resource put into consideration the capability and functionality of the instructors. This refers to manpower planning according to Akpa (2002) “ which involves manpower forecasting by analyzing the skilled labour requirements of the economy (education sector).” Do they have the adequate knowledge of the subject matter? Are they capable of handling adult persons? Are they trained into methods of teaching adults? These constitute major questions to be raised when considering the personnel or human resource dimension for the success of adult literacy programmes. On the other hand the material resources needed for the success of the programme is an essential ingredient for implementing planned instructions to adults. For instance, there should be locally developed materials for use in the literacy centres, the kind of reading materials should be related to the language of the learners. With this, the issue of availability and relevance of the instructional materials to the adult learner becomes an important point.

### **6.4 Time**

Time as an essential part of human life is very important when planning a programme for adults. This is because the adult persons unlike children have various responsibilities hanging on them which performing such responsibilities require their time and so they may not have enough time to stay in the learning centre. Therefore, in planning a programme for adults, time on the part of the participants should be sensitively agreed upon by the learners along with their learning days. Make sure it is to their convenience.

### **6.5 Availability of fund**

Fund is said to be the backbone of every programme, no planned programme can practically succeed without adequate funding. Therefore, fund should readily be available for adult learning centers through the adult education office in the Local government area. These offices at the local government level are the custodians of adult literacy programmes and being close to the communities can stand to ensure funding of adult literacy programmes for achieving the national objectives of adult education as spelt out in Education For All (EFA), Millennium

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Development Goals (MDGs) and National Policy on Education (1995, 2004 and 1981 respectively).

### 6.7 Design

Here is the stage where the planner selects how learning activities should form the subject matter. These activities can be structured into units so as to provide number of contacts expected to run the programme. Also at this stage decisions are made on what type of instructional materials is needed, what methods and strategies should be adopted for translating the programme to the learners towards achievement of the overall objective of the programme. It is important to say that, it was noted by a researcher called Omojemite in Aderinoye (1997) who conducted a study on five literacy centers in Ibadan, the findings of the research indicated that, withdrawal from the programme lays so much on five major elements. They are:

1. Non- relevance of curriculum contents to the vocation of the learners.
2. Articles of trade were poorly represented in the primer. The timing was not convenient for the learners.
3. The instructors most of the time had no respect for the learners' culture.
4. The language of the instructors (English) was not acceptable to the learners (Aderinoye, 1997).

With this experience in mind the content of the programme and the language of instruction should best be drawn from the learners. Contact hours should be decided by the learners to make for their convenience. It is advanced by Adewomi in Aderinoye (1997) that a literacy course aiming at functional literacy requires one hundred and fifty to three hundred hours. However he added that, these contacts should be carefully organized and planned instructional processes in a „especially“ prepared book (primer) which should be divided into three stages under ideal situation.

### 6.8 Setting up of objectives

Objectives can be categorized into two phases, the general objectives which speak of what the programme meant to achieve or the translation of the educational philosophy of the community, with reference to the National Policy on Education (1982). There will be specific objectives or learning objectives which has to do with the expected behavioural changes at the end of every contact. There should be distinction between programme objectives and learning objectives to guide the implementers in their roles. It is important to note that, objectives should be „SMART“

### 6.9 Need Assessment

This is the first step in designing a programme for adult literacy learners. This involves the process where the designer tries to put down the community educational needs. This is expected that, a connection will be provided between the educational content and the required changes that will enable participants solve their problems. For the felt needs of the participants to be identified there should be an interactive session among the key stake holders (the planners/ experts, participants and implementers, Instructors and organizers of Adult Literacy Programmes).

### 6.10 Budget Building

This stage tries to look into the financial requirement for the implementation of the programme on the part of the organization sponsoring the programme. Even though it has been suggested long ago by educators such as Anyanwu (1998) to make low costing for Adult Literacy Programmes. This paper will like to state that, considering the immediate result expected from Adult Literacy Programmes, more finance allocation should be given to Adult Literacy Programmes to enhance quality programme. The low costing is the reason why illiteracy rate is reducing at a very slow rate in Nigeria and Northern Nigeria in particular. The pegin adage “better soup na money make am” the Nigerian Pidgin English stands right. If government and other sponsors of Adult Literacy Programmes mean business they should enhance the quality of the programme by assigning huge sum to the task of reducing illiteracy in the interest of National progress.

### 6.11 Implementation

This is the stage of translating the theoretical plan into action toward achieving the overall goal at the end of the programme in order to be effective at this stage, equipped personnel with a relevant learning material as well as a good plan for his lesson should be in place. Some light has been thrown on first two already, now the lesson plan is here fore discussed. Need assessment/ survey helps results into planning an articulated literacy programme for adult learners. This is because any literacy programme which is not associated with the essential needs of the people is likely to succeed (Aderinoye,1997)

### 7. Planning/development whose responsibility?:

As observed in this paper, the current practice of planning Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) for illiterates in Nigeria from the public sector perspective has been Top-Bottom in approach over years despite the some political claims.

The approach used which did not and is not yielding the expected result of the programme which makes the fight against illiteracy an unending task, due to the use of irrelevant and unsuitable learning materials in our literacy centers. This is because one if not more of the implementers are often left out of the planning session. Even though they are the arm charge with the mandate of making direct contact with the illiterates for making them literate.

Programme planning and development is usually a co-operative venture, because it involves individuals and groups. It is advanced by this paper that for a good Adult Literacy Programme to be well planned and developed, three major groups should be involved. They are:

1. The experts in curriculum design.
2. The supervisors/inspectors.
3. The organizers/ instructors.

#### **8. Benefits of a good programme planning:**

Proper planning makes organizational management easier because it contains what is to be done, how to do it, when to do it and who is doing what for the completion of every step of the programme. The total view of what is good for the organization and the community is eminent. The defined time frame for contacting, attracting and satisfying the community is often ensured. People often feel the impact of the programme of a good plan. It enhances unity by all stakeholders in the implementation of the planned programme. There will be a good direction for accurate action by the implementers of the programme. There is a defined yard stick for monitoring and evaluation of the programme. It avoids confusion in plan implementation.

#### **9. Suggestions**

This paper suggests that, if adult education programmes are to be successfully implemented for goal achievement. The following recommendations are inevitable:

1. A community base material development should be made a policy among stake holders of adult literacy programme developers.
2. Capacity building training should be organized for adult literacy supervisors, organizers and facilitators for effective material development.
3. Funding of adult literacy centers should go direct to the centers so as to enable them develop their suitable learning materials.
4. A provision for training and re- training of these instructors on the process of developing a learning material in states and local government areas.
5. The public sector should identify, select and contract experts in programme design to take lead in the task of planning adult literacy programmes to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign against illiteracy in Nigeria.

#### **10. Conclusion**

Planning/development is seen by this paper as a vehicle for effective implementation of Adult Literacy Programme. As the adage goes, effective programme planning brings about responsive implementation. So is the relationship between planning and implementation of a programme which leads to goal achievement. Some approaches and groups of persons to be involved in planning Adult Literacy Programmes were suggested in this paper along with four major five major suggestions towards the success of Adult Literacy Programmes in Nigeria.

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