

Strategies for Repositioning Instruction in Adult Learning Centres for Sustainable Development of Adult Learners in Umuahia, Abia State

Dr. Ogechi R. Obiozor & Gloria N. Aniemeka

Department of Adult and Continuing Education
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

Abstract

The study was carried out to identify strategies for repositioning instruction in adult learning centres for sustainable development of adult learners in Abia State. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Three research questions were posed for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 50 adult education facilitators in Umuahia, Abia state for the study. The study utilized a 21 item researchers developed questionnaire structured on a 4 point rating scale. Mean statistical tool was used to answer research questions. The findings of the study indicated that repositioning instruction in adult learning centres for sustainable development of adult learners would involve provision and utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructures, retraining of facilitators and curriculum adjustment. It was recommended among other things that government and other stakeholders in Adult Education should provide ICT resources to enhance instructional delivery in the adult learning centres in Abia state, assist facilitators' capacity building and re-organization of curriculum contents.

Keywords: *Adult Learners, Development, Sustainable development, Repositioning*

Introduction

Sustainable development has been viewed in many ways by different scholars. Sustainable development is a state of wellbeing that focuses on empowering human beings to work continuously towards making the world a better place for human creativity, enterprise and quality living standards. Beluaye (2016) suggests that sustainable development has to do with an enduring, remarkable, non-terminal improvement in the quality of life, standard of living and life chances of the people in any society.

According to European Commission (2015) sustainable development stands for meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words, it stands for a better quality of life for both the present generation and the generations unborn. Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own need.

Since the Brundtland Report, the concept of sustainable development has gone beyond the initial focus to a more "socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth. To this end in September, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the "universally, integrated and transformative" 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals

(SDGs) which are to be implemented and achieved in every country from the year 2016 to 2030.

The goals include no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace justices and strong intuitions and partnership for the goals.

For development in any given country or any sector to be termed sustainable, growth which is measured by gross national product per head must translate into progress and general wellbeing in the society. To this regard, Omoruyi (2000) identified three important factors for sustainable development: raising people's level of awareness of their income and consumption level of food, medical services, education among others through relevant economic growth, creating conducive conditions for growth of peoples' self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic system and institutions which promotes human dignity and respect and increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables. For example, increasing varieties of customers goods and services.

Sustainable development provides an approach to make better decision on the issues that affect all of our lives. It is about finding better ways of doing things, both for the future and the present. This means meeting diverse needs of all people in communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunities. Adult education is the perfect tool to achieve the above mentioned objectives if full potentials of adult facilitators will be properly harnessed in Nigeria education sectors in general and Abia state in particular.

Instruction in adult learning is a systematic arrangement and delivering of subject specific content targeted to help the learner achieve desirable change in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of understanding. Obidiegwu (2008) is of the view that instruction is not just teaching because, it is more systematic, specific and objective. Instruction is expected to be properly planned and designed in a systematic way because its purpose is to help people learn. With a changing world like ours, adult learning instruction emphasizes the learner centred methodology and content. The felt needs of the learners should be directed to meet the changing world demand for sustainable living and development. According to Onyjemezu (1990) instruction in adult learning involves systems approach which entails carrying out the following:

- a. Identifying the educational problem to be solved or the educational activity to be undertaken.
- b. Stating the objectives to be achieved by solving the problem or undertaken the educational activity.
- c. Indicating the conditions necessary for the achievement of the objectives
- d. Map out appropriate methods and material resources to be used in order to achieve the objectives
- e. Design the way of knowing whether or not the objectives are achievable and determine whether the objectives have been achieved.
- f. If the objectives are not achieved as desired, try to make changes and try again.

From the insight enumerated above, adult learning involves the facilitators who are expected to be knowledgeable enough to guide in the statement of objectives and designing of instructional content that effect change in performance of the learners. In addition, effective instructional delivery involves suitable methodology for adult learners who are unique in characteristics and do know why they are involved in learning programmes. However, Information Communication Technology (ICT) has observably become a strategy for repositioning instructions in adult learning centres with reference to the world present standard. In the past few decades, ICT has provided the society with a verse array of new communication capabilities. Virtually all the educational facets has embraced ICTs in planning and implementation. Homes, schools, banks, industries, factories, organizations and even individuals now desire to live according to ICT incorporated world standard. However, this era of ICT has brought additional challenges to the adult learners. The question here is how many adult learners and their facilitators can operate ICTs based machine effectively and confidently?

Curriculum content is a major aspect in instruction of the adults that needs to be re-adjusted. Curriculum content could be referred to as those inter-related activities and information that aim at changing the learners behaviours, equipping their skills, improving their reasoning and thinking and make them responsible as desired. Therefore, curriculum content in adult learning should tally with the demand of the technological world in performance, outlook, and utilization. These elements: facilitators, methodology, learners, and curriculum content work co-operatively to enhance good delivery of instruction. Anwukah in Akubilo (2018) explained in what curriculum content should be like with the following reasoning.

1. A curriculum is intentions or plans often existing in written form.
2. A curriculum is not necessary activities but planning of such activities – a blue print of activities.
3. A curricular must contain many other intentions such as competencies and skills students develop; means of measuring level of attainment of these skills, the materials and equipment to be used.
4. Qualities of teachers capable of integrating into a unified or coherent whole of all the elements that make up the curriculum such as objectives, contents environment evaluation and others.
5. List of intention that had been deliberately chosen to promote learning and this does not include incidental or unplanned random learning.
6. Education and training have been used in the definition to avoid the misunderstanding which occurs each time one is left out.

Repositioning means changing the status of adult's instruction in comparison to the competing brand (world technological standard). This involves changing the curriculum content, training of the facilitators and integrating ICTs strictly in learning centres. This automatically brings in positive shift in adult learning instruction and potentials. Repositioning instruction in adult learning centres could be achieved through a serious refocus, integration and retraining on new trends and skills in the part of the facilitators, and the learners through adjusted curriculum content and in the methods in use Onyejemezu (1990).

Adult education all forms of learning undertaken by adults in order to upgrade, update, remedy, get fulfilled and live effectively as individuals and as members of a society. Adebola, (2014) opines that adult education usually refers to any form of learning undertaking by mature men and women outside the formal school setting or system. Eya, Ugwu and Alu

(2001), also describes adult education as a process whereby learners in full time occupation partake in designing the knowledge, skills and attitudes meant for them and which they voluntarily acquired often on a part-time basis. The learners are usually active participants who should study at their own pace and time after due consultation with facilitators and with appropriate teaching methods. Adult education usually targets different categories of people, dropouts, professionals, stark illiterates, the educated etc.

Although some people erroneously mistake adult education for only literacy programmes; it also includes numeracy, problem solving and life skills and other knowledge. There is also adult basic education, life-long learning, continuing education, retirement education, civic education and the host of others. Varieties of other learning experiences could also fall under adult education such as apprentice, continuing education, in service programme, on-the-job training, personal and professional development, outreach and campus educational programmes such as sandwich courses, workers and students industrial training, community development, rural training, manpower resource education, youth campus, holiday programmes, mass obligation campaigns, community health education and so on.

Short term learning activities such as conferences, evening classes, seminars, workshops, functional literacy programmes, volunteer youth programmes, skills acquisition and liberal education classes all constitute adult and non-formal education, it also includes correspondence study, self-study programme, television and or radio, school, open universities and other correspondence study activities (Seya, 2014)

In collaboration with Seya's view, the all-encompassing definition of adult education by UNESCO explains that, it is the entire body of organized educational process whatever the content, level, method, whether formal or otherwise, whether to prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent, social, economic and cultural development; adult education however must not be considered as an entity in itself, it is a subdivision, and an integral part of, a global scheme for life-long education and learning.

Therefore, repositioning instruction with emphasis on the facilitator, ICTs and the curriculum content will rather re-focus on the ways of analyzing common problems of the adults especially in the recent times: suitable ways of managing these problems, proper delivery of learning content and evaluation of educational outcomes. Instruction being an operational plan deals with all the problems challenging teaching and learning. For learning to be sustainable, instruction must be properly planned and designed in an organized system focusing on identification of instructional outcomes, developing the instruction and evaluating the effectiveness of instruction. These can only be done through the facilitator learner instruction, projects, curriculum content and acceptable methods of impartation.

ICT instructional use is vital to the progress and development of facilitators and participants alike in any learning environment. Unfortunately, many developing countries especially in Africa are still low in ICT application and use (Aduwa Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2005). One of the key characteristics and objectives of adult education is to equip man to play his part harmoniously in the modern world. According to UNESCO (2019), its task is to

obtain for each person an education confronting to his aptitudes and to the needs of society, including technological training and higher education. In this technology driven age UNESCO (2019) explained that education field has been greatly affected by ICT in ways of teaching and learning and research. ICT have the potentials to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, to motivate and engage learners, to help relate learning experience to work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, as well as strengthening teaching and helping schools change.

Research Questions

The study aimed at investigating strategies for repositioning instruction in adult learning centres in Abia State. Specifically, the study was guided by the following questions.

1. What ICT infrastructure should be provided to reposition adult learning instruction for sustainable development?
2. How could facilitators' capacities be built to reposition instruction in adult learning centers?
3. What learning activities are essential for integration into adult instruction for sustainable development?

Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design. Survey design is considered appropriate since it focuses on identification of the present condition, prevailing needs as well as provide information on which to base sound decision on the issue on ground. The population for this study consisted of fifty (50) adult education facilitators in Umuahia, Abia State. Due to the manageable size of the population, the researcher used all the population as the sample of the study. The sample size of the study is 50 adult education facilitators. The researchers used a questionnaire which was titled "Strategies for Repositioning Instruction in Adult Learning centres for Sustainable Development of Adult learners in Abia State" (SRIALS) as the instrument for collecting data considering the nature and predisposition of the respondents. The researcher was convinced that the questionnaire is of good standard and adequate to provide the data needed for the research. The responses options are Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) which attracted scores 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was face validated by experts who checked the appropriateness of the items in terms of coverage, clarity of language, suitability and relevance. This was done by giving the draft copy of the instrument to three experts in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education, College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. On the basis of the suggestions and recommendations of the experts, there were corrections on some items in the instrument which were taken to their appropriate positions.

The reliability of the instrument was established with a trial test administered on 10 adult lecturers (respondents) at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, (MOUUAU) Abia State. This was so because, these respondents in MOUUAU, Abia State have the same experience regarding repositioning of adult education centers. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using Cronbach's Alpha. For the ICT infrastructure for repositioning adult learning instruction, facilitators capacity building for repositioning instruction and learning activities for integration into adult education instruction for sustainable development in Abia State, the co-efficient alpha for the three sections were

0.759, 0.869 and 0.857 respectively, which gave overall reliability mean of 0.828 which shows that the instrument is reliable.

Data were collected by personal contact of the researcher with the respondents in Umuahia, Abia State. In this process the researcher solicited for the cooperation of the adult facilitators. As the respondents who filled the questionnaire were the focused groups. Instructions were given on how to complete the questionnaire in order to safeguard errors due to misunderstanding of the question. Those that were not filled immediately were retrieved in the return visit.

The research questions were analysed using mean to determine the level at which each item on the questionnaire affected the variable under study. Four point rating scale were used and the values assigned were collapsed into Strongly Agree (SA) which attracted the score of 4, Agree (A) which attracted 3, Disagree (D) which attracted 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) which attracted 1.

Results

Findings of the study are presented in the following Tables:

Research Question one What ICT infrastructure should be provided to reposition adult learning instruction for sustainable development?

Table 1: ICT infrastructure needed to reposition Adult Learning Instruction (n = 50)

S/N	ITEMS	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean	Decision
1	Provision of skill acquisition center with computers and internet facilities.	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
2	Provision of electricity and technical support to keep the computer facilities working	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
3	Provision of projectors for adult education facilitators	13	37	0	0	163	3.26	Accept
4	Supply of learning content in CD-Roms to Centers	29	21	0	0	179	3.58	Accept
5	Development and provision of reliable, locally produced software that would be easy to maintain	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
6	Designing programmes that can easily be disseminated through radio and mobile phones	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
7	Provision of educational television for replaying of instruction in learning centers.	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
Grand Mean							3.83	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Criterion Mean = 2.5

The analysis on Table 1 above which seeks to investigate the responses of adult education facilitators in Umuahia on the ICT infrastructure for repositioning adult learning instruction for sustainable development shows that the mean responses for all the items surpassed the

criterion mean. This implies that the respondents accepts that the ICT infrastructure that should be provided are provision of skill acquisition centre with computers and internet facilities (Mean = 4.00); provision of electricity and technical support to keep the computer facilities working (Mean = 4.00); provision of projectors for adult education facilitators (Mean = 3.26); supply of learning content in CD-ROMS to centres (Mean = 3.58); development and provision of reliable, locally produced software that would be easy to maintain (Mean = 4.00); designing programmes that can easily be disseminated through radio and mobile phones (Mean = 4.00) and provision of educational television for replaying of instruction in learning centres (Mean = 4.00).

Research Question 2: How could facilitators capacities be built to reposition instruction in adult learning Centres?

Table 2: Mean ratings of Facilitators Capacity Building for Repositioning Adult Education instruction in Learning Centres

S/N	ITEMS	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean	Decision
8	Facilitators should be made to receive mandatory training on the use of ICT infrastructures for different purposes.	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
9	Curriculum Development Centers should produce easy to understand/manipulate computer assisted instruction manuals for use by the facilitators.	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
10	Programme providers should re-emphasize on the need to deliver instructions and direct learners with computers and internet facilities	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
11	Ability to improvise learning materials from web designs on old and new innovations	9	37	4	0	155	3.10	Accept
12	Facilitators should be trained on how to evaluate outcomes of programmes using ICTs machines for adults in different locations.	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
13	Experts on accepted practical skills should be posted to learning centers for competence and effective instruction delivery	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
14	Programme providers should sponsor facilitators on seminars, updates, workshops for acquisition of knowledge on new skills and innovations	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
Grand Mean							3.87	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Criterion Mean = 2.5

The analysis on Table 2 sought to investigate the responses of adult facilitators on the capacity building for repositioning adult education instruction in learning centres shows that the mean responses for all the items surpassed the criterion mean. This implies that the

respondents accepted that facilitators should be made to receive mandatory training on the use of ICT infrastructures for different purposes (Mean = 4.00); Curriculum Development Centres should produce easy to understand/manipulate computer assisted instruction manuals for use by the facilitators (Mean = 4.00); programme providers should re-emphasize on the need to deliver instructions and direct learners with computers and internet facilities (Mean = 4.00); ability to improve learning materials from web designs on old and new innovations (Mean = 3.10); facilitators should be trained on how to evaluate outcomes of programmes using ICTs machines for adults in different locations (Mean = 4.00); experts on accepted practical skills should be posted to learning Centres for competence and effective instruction delivery (Mean = 4.00); programme providers should make provision to sponsor facilitators (Mean = 4.00).

Research Question 3: What learning activities are essential for integration into adult education programme for sustainable development?

S/N	ITEMS	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean	Decision
15	Native hair plating	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
16	Poultry farming	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
17	Production of coconut oil	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
18	Growing of flowers	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
19	Making of natural fruit juice	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
20	Cassava flour production	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
21	Cooking of native food	50	0	0	0	200	4.00	Accept
Grand Mean							4.00	Accept

Table 3: Mean ratings on learning activities for integration into adult education instruction for sustainable development

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Criterion Mean = 2.5

The mean response for all the items surpassed the criterion mean (2.5), the researcher then accepted all the items and concluded that the respondents accepted that the learning activities that need integration into the adult education instruction for sustainable development are native hair plating (Mean = 4.00); poultry farming (Mean = 4.00); production of coconut oil (Mean = 4.00); growing of flowers (Mean = 4.00); making of natural fruit juice (Mean = 4.00); cassava flour production (Mean = 4.00); cooking of native food (Mean = 4.00).

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the strategies for repositioning instruction in adult learning centres for sustainable development of adult learners in Umuahia, Abia State. The results showed that the adult facilitators accepted that the ICT infrastructure that should be provided to reposition adult learning instruction for sustainable development includes provision of skill acquisition centre with computers and internet

facilities, provision of electricity and technical support to keep the computer facilities working, provision of projectors for adult education facilitators, supply of learning content in CD-ROMS to centres, development and provision of reliable, locally produced software that would be easy to maintain, designing programmes that can easily be disseminated through radio and mobile phones and provision of educational television for replaying of instruction in learning centres. The grand mean shows that the respondents agree with all the items listed. By this, the facilitators show the level of needs in the learning Centres. It is also important that computer and ICT instructions will contribute to good instruction delivery and reception if properly put in place. Nowadays, without the knowledge of ICT in learning centres, no development project will be carried out successfully because knowledge has gone global and must be assessed to conform to the world standard. This will definitely make the learners to be viable in skills and economically independent for sustainability.

The result on how facilitators capacities could be built showed that the facilitators capacities could be built through mandatory training on the use of ICT infrastructures for different purposes, Curriculum Development Centres should produce easy to understand/manipulate computer assisted instruction manuals for use by the facilitators, programme providers should re-emphasize on the need to deliver instructions and direct learners with computers and internet facilities, ability to improve learning materials from web designs on old and new innovations, facilitators should be trained on how to evaluate outcomes of programmes using ICTs machines for adults in different locations, experts on accepted practical skills should be employed in learning Centres for competence and effective instruction delivery and programme providers should also sponsor facilitators. According to Rosenblatt and Inbal (2007), facilitators who are multi skilled can easily respond to problems of learning environment, learning content, problem of methodology, impacting various skills at different times as demanded than un-skilled facilitators. The items on capacity building will help the facilitators develop computer skills, be confident in delivery and manipulation for effective instruction delivery. Developing the facilitators potentials in this form will no doubt position the adult learners to compete favourable in this computer age, especially on the aspect of economic independency.

Finally, findings on the learning activities to be integrated into adult education instruction for sustainable development showed that the respondents accepted that the skills that need integration includes native hair plating, poultry farming, production of coconut oil, growing of flowers, making of natural fruit juice, cassava flour production and cooking of native food. These indicated that adult learners demand for programmes designed based on their felt need and societal demand. In this era of knowledge explosion, people now demand for skills that can sustain them in their environment.

Conclusion

The modern information and communication technologies have great potentials in transforming instruction delivery in adult education learning centres just like every other aspects of human endeavours, for sustainable development. Adult are major players in the production sector of the economy and adult education is uphold to address the socio-economic, cultural and political as well as the environmental problems of our country as stated in the objectives of adult by the National policy on education. If Nigeria will attain the United Nations sustainable development goals in 2030, urgent attention should be given to

the adult education learning centres by providing working ICT facilities and infrastructures especially in rural communities. Adult education facilitators should also be trained and retrained to meet the needs of learners at their centres and the curriculum re-organised to accommodate the felt needs of learners. If these challenges are properly addressed, adult would be able to acquire new and practical skills for sustainable livelihood and maintenance of their environment, not only in Abia State but in the Nation as a whole.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present research, the following recommendations are made;

1. Provision of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructures should be made available by the government at Abia State adult learning centres.
2. Facilitators who are vast in the knowledge and teaching of ICT facilities should be employed to operate the machines in this centres for effective communication and impartation on the adult learners.
3. Curriculum content of the adult learners in Abia State learning should be re-organized to solve immediate needs of adults and give them self-fulfillment.

References

- Adebola, H.E. (2014). Media Techniques in Adult and non-formal education. IFEVIC publishers Ltd, Awka Anambra State.
- Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, S.E. Iyamie, E.O.S., (2005). Using information and communication technology in secondary schools in Nigeria. *Education technology and society*. 8(1), 104-112.
- Brundtland Commission (1987). Report of the world commission on environment and development. United Nations: retrieved on 20th July, 2017 from <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/sustainable-development>.
- European Commission (2006). Study on European terminology in adult learning for common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector. Retrieved in July 24th, 2017 from <http://3.Hauts.gov.uk/adult-learning-definition.pdf>.
- European Commission (2015). Sustainable development. Retrieved 20th July, 2017 from <http://onlineec.europa.eu/environment/eussd>.
- Eya, L.O., Ugwu, J.C. and Aliu, B. E., (2001). Adult education its, nature and purpose. Prize publishers Nsukka, Nigeria.
- Obidiegwu U. J. (2008). Instructional Technology in adult education, in Igbo R. O. (ed). Contemporary adult education. An inclusive approach; Book of readings. CIDJAP Printing Press
- Onyejemezu (1990). Educational Technology 1 and 2 in NTI Nigeria Certificate in education by distance learning course book on education, cycle 1, module 11 and 12, Kaduna: NTI.
- Seya, P.T. (2014) Adult education and African Development in the context of globalization. Retrieved on July 20th from <http://dvv.international.de/index.php?article-id=230&clang>
- UNESCO (2012) exhibit 2-public hearing. Retrieved on 20th July, 2017 from <http://crtc.gc.ca/Broadcast/eng/HEARINGS/2012/ex2012560a.htm>.