

Adult Education Strategies for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Rivers State, Nigeria

Okorie, Christiana U.

Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education,
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

&

Echezu, Benjamin C.

Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers State.
Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education

Abstract

This study investigated adult education strategies for achieving the sustainable development goals in Rivers state, Nigeria. The study made some clarification on the concept of sustainable development as well as areas of emphases in the goals. Four research questions were answered. The study used the descriptive research design, involving a sample population of 300 respondents randomly selected from three (3) Local Government Areas of the State. Data were analyzed using the weighed mean and rank order. The result revealed the levels of people's awareness on dimensions of sustainable development goals. The roles of adult education as well as the strategies to be adopted in achieving the goals were positive. The study further highlighted ignorance, poverty, misappropriation of resources and insecurity etc. as some of the problems confronting the achievement of the goals. Therefore, it was recommended that government should step up efforts on adult education programmes to ensure sustainability.

Keywords: Adult Education, Development, Goals, Strategies .Sustainability

Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals are set of internationally accepted goals adopted at the United Nations sustainable development summit in September 2015, it succeeded the Millennium Development Goals. It is a 15 years development programme. According to Emeka (2008) the goals equally enjoys global appeal as a valuable instrument and yardstick to measure progress in different nations of the world. It identified four major areas of interest as a part of the global agenda to address issue of sustainability. They include:

1. Social Development
2. Inclusive Economic Growth
3. Environmental Sustainability
4. Peace and Security.

Sustainable development is often used interchangeably with sustainability to mean continuous, renewable and lasting use of resources in a manner that preserved them for future development purpose. It also implies the process of maintaining human needs while attempting the preservation of natural resources. The Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment, therefore defined sustainable development as development that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, 1987). Development is also sustainable when the output therefrom is commensurate to the care of the present needs or the future.

Thus, it is reasonable to describe sustainable development as a judicious and prudent use of resources in such a way that does not endanger the existence of people tomorrow. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) regarded sustainable development as a development process for the well-being of the environment, economic and social system of today and tomorrow. Abraham (2012) maintains that sustainable development is development mantra that enjoins current generation to take systematic approach to growth and development and to manage natural resources and produced a social capital for the welfare of people now and the next generations. It therefore implies that people must act concernedly and responsibly to conserve, reserve and manage resources for the betterment of all. Contributing to this definition, Glenn & Daniel (2005) opined that it is a development efforts which includes those aimed at protecting the health and environment, and is undertaken in a manner that will not frustrate the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is also the rate at which development can be attained without depleting the resources. Sustainability requires continuous renewal of available resources. However, Erhun (2015) supports that if sustainable development cannot be continued then it is not sustainable. According to her, it is a development model that seeks to balance environmental protection against economic prosperity.

Sustainable development goals as gazetted by the United Nations Development Programmes in (2015) comprised seventeen development goals meant to ensure:

1. End to poverty in all its forms every where
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Healthy lives and promotes well-being for all at all ages,
4. Inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy for all
8. Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries
- 11 Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements
- 12 Sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Urgent action to combat climate change and its impact
14. Conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of life on land
16. Peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

In view of the goals, Nigeria as a member nation of the United Nation Organisation requires urgent and concrete steps in areas such as: needs assessment, planning, policy framework in line with the goals, strategies of achieving them, allocating scarce resources and working out modalities for evaluating progress among others within the time frame of the programme. Besides, Nigeria also needs social education, enlightenment and reconstruction to drive home the necessary attitude, behaviour, change, knowledge and values among others for sustainable development. Moreso, educating the people will assist in developing a social capital that is cordial and germane to the realization of the goals. Education remains an invaluable tool for development. To this end, Adekola & Abanum (2010) assert that no development is possible without education. Hence, education is an instrument per excellence. It is a vital instrument for liberating people from shackles of ignorance, poverty, and underdevelopment and for combating diseases. Therefore, sustainable development is not possible without adult education.

Thus, if education is so relevant to achieving development in society, adult education which is relative to it, equally have some significant roles to play in achieving sustainability. This is because adult education is instrumental to sustainability. It is against this background that the study attempt to look at achieving the sustainable development goals through adult education strategies in Nigeria.

Development is a product of education. Adult education, which is an aspect of education is capable of paving the way for sustainable development. Adult education, according to Nzeneri (2008) lays greater emphases on lifelong learning, education as a process and agent of liberation, a tool for adjustment for self and national development, for cultural awareness and integration, for conscientization and group dynamism. Contributing to this position, Osuji (2006) affirms adult education as a discipline that promotes human values and sustainable development policies and programmes in people. Providing the right teaching and learning process is the prerequisite of adult education. Adult education as defined by Nyerere in Oyebamiji(2013) is the incorporation of anything that enlarges man's understanding, activate and implement those decisions for themselves. Therefore, there is a serious connection between adult education and sustainable social, economic development and environmental sustainability. It is also fundamental to achieving equity, inclusive poverty alleviation and the building of equitable, tolerant and sustainable knowledge base society (UNESCO, 2011). Adult education therefore offers the local actions required for the actualization of a viable development. In a general term, the roles of adult education in the society include human capacity development, developing the social and cultural abilities of individuals to enhance environmental integrity and stability.

According to Seya (2005) adult education can apprehend the complex relationship between all forms of education to achieve development. It involves general transmission of knowledge for self-fulfillment and active participation in social and economic lives of the people. In line with this position, Egunyomi(2009:341) established that adult education is capable of engendering sustainable development by creating more access to:

1. Education and a literate society where government development plans and projects could easily be understood by everybody in the nation
2. Help in entrenching democratic process and political participation among citizens
3. Help in disabusing people from ethnic violence and strengthens national unity

4. Solve the problem of unemployment as it empowers people to be better skilled for better opportunities or be employers of labour
5. Help in the Reduction of diseases through community awareness and enlightenment programmes
6. Assist in fighting against gender discrimination thereby promoting gender equity and equality
7. Help in education of farmers on modern farming technology in order to bring about increased productivity.

Accordingly, there is a general nexus between adult education and sustainability. Adult education is the reason for everyone in the world to become aware and knowledgeable about these goals in order to contribute adequately towards its attainment. This relationship is necessary because it facilitate a lasting skills and abilities in individuals for the overall betterment of all in the society. In order to also check the ironical low level of awareness of the dimensions of the sustainable development goals and to bring about a plausible awareness of the programme, there is the need for regular education, sensitization and advocacy on sustainable development goals activities to ensure right direction for the programme among the people (Akinloye, 2018).

The attainability of sustainable development cannot be possible without cogent adult education strategies. This is because adult education is strategic to educating, conscientizing and training of individuals towards the realization of sustainable development goals. Conscientizing the people will enables understanding of the best strategy to adopt in promoting sustainable development. Also, adult education provides the necessary information that is relative to sustainability. In conformity with the above view, Mckeown (2002) supports that public awareness, education, capacity building and training are key to moving the society towards sustainability. Haladu (2006) emphasizes on the important of the communication media in promoting effective public awareness of any programme in the society. This support led to the believe that adult education is instrumental to development. Hence, UNESCO (2001) suggests national and institutional commitments that allow learning opportunity for all individuals irrespective of class, gender, race or religion. The following suggested strategies are very essential to sustainable development and are:

1. Community education, training, seminars and workshops
2. Collaborative research and development
3. Effective partnership and community participation
4. Literacy education
5. Prioritization of learning based on the goals
6. Provision of modern information communication technology (ICT) facilities.

Accordingly, the beauty of any development plan is the strategies of implementation. In line with this contribution, effective partnership with the people would equally assist to increase the possibility and potential for sustainability and create a more balanced and equitable participation where capacity building is competitive (Amirize, 2004) .

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain adult education strategies for achieving the sustainable development goals in Rivers state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the levels of awareness on the dimensions of sustainable development?
2. What are the roles of adult education in achieving sustainable development?
3. What are the strategies adopted in adult education programme to achieve sustainable development?
4. What are the problems of achieving the sustainable development?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design to obtain data on adult education strategies for achieving sustainable development in Rivers state. The design was considered best for the study because it is capable of providing accurate and reliable data. The population of the study consists of 3000 adults from the selected areas. The areas are Ahoada East, Ahoada west and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Areas of the state. 300 respondents comprising 180 males and 120 females were randomly selected from the Areas. The main instrument adopted for data collection was a structured-20-item questionnaire, which was titled: Adult Education Strategies for Achieving Sustainable Development Questionnaire (ASDQ). The instrument was subjected to scrutiny and suggestions by experts in the field of Adult and Non-formal education in the institution. The reliability index of 0.77 was established through the administration of test-retest on pilot group of 10 within the study areas. The study considered a benchmark of 2.50 and above as Agree while below 2.50 indicates Disagree. The mean and rank order on four-point scale was adopted to analyze the data from research questions. Thus, the mean score of 1.0 to 2.49 ranks 4th; 2.50 to 3.0 ranks 3rd; mean score 3.0 to 3.50 ranks 2nd while 3.50 and above ranks 1st respectively.

Results Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the levels of awareness on the dimension of sustainable development?

Table 1: Mean responses and Rank Order of levels of awareness on the dimension of sustainable development.

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}	RANK	DECISION
1	Inclusive social development	2.60	3	low
2	Inclusive economic growth	2.80	3	low
3	Environmental sustainability	3.27	2	moderate
4	Sustainable peace and security	3.27	2	moderate
Grand Mean		3.00		moderate

The data presented in Table 1 revealed the perception of respondents on levels of awareness on the dimensions of sustainable development. The mean scores of respondents indicated Inclusive social development with (2.60 ranks 3rd), Inclusive economic development (2.80 ranks 3rd), Environmental sustainability (3.27 ranks 2nd) and sustainable peace and security (3.27 ranks 2nd).

Research Question2: What are the roles of adult education in achieving sustainable development?

Table 2: Mean responses and Rank order of the roles of adult education in achieving sustainable development.

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	Rank
1	Decision Community enlightenment Agreed	3.78	1
2	Value system through capacity building Agreed	2.93	3
3	Ensures effective resource management Agreed	2.87	3
4	Facilitate change for peaceful and secured society Agreed	3.67	1
5	Enables a more literate society Agreed	3.66	1
Grand mean Agreed		3.38	

Using the analysis of data on research question 2 as represented in the Table shows the responses on the roles of adult education in achieving sustainable development. Specifically, the table shows community enlightenment (3.78 ranks 1st), Value system through capacity building (2.93 ranks 3rd), Ensures effective resource management (2.87 ranks 3rd), Facilitate change for peaceful and secured society (3.67 ranks 1st) and Enables a more literate society (3.51 ranks 1st).

Research Question 3: What are the strategies adopted in adult education programmes to achieve sustainable development.

Table 3: Mean responses and Rank order on the strategies adopted in adult education programmes to achieve sustainable development

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	Rank
1	Effective people's participation Agreed	3.23	2
2	Strategic community partnership Agreed	3.3	2
3	Strategic research and development programmes Agreed	3.53	1
4	Mobilizing community resources Agreed	2.73	3
5	Effective personnel training Agreed	3.37	2
6	Effective media campaign Agreed	3.63	1
Grand mean Agreed		3.30	

The data presented in Table 3 above depict the strategies adopted in adult education programmes to achieve sustainable development. Respondents unanimously indicated as follows; effective people participation (3.23 ranks 2nd), strategic community partnership (3.3

ranks 2nd), strategic research and development programmes (3.53 ranks 1st) and mobilizing community resources (2.73 ranks 3rd). The strategies further include effective personnel training and media campaign with (3.37 ranks 2nd) and (3.63 ranks 1st) respectively.

Research Question 4: What are the problems of achieving the sustainable development?

Table 4: Mean responses and Rank Order of the problems of achieving sustainable development

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	Rank
	Decision		
1	People’s ignorance	3.53	1
	Agreed		
2	Misappropriation of resources	3.6	1
	Agreed		
3	Violent conflicts	3.73	1
	Agreed		
4	Environmental degradation	3.43	2
	Agreed		
5	Infrastructural deficit	3.4	2
	Agreed		
	Grand mean	3.53	1
	Agreed		

Table 4 indicates the problems of achieving the sustainable development. The findings revealed ignorance, poverty and unemployment with mean score (3.53 ranks 1st), waste and misappropriation of resources (3.6 ranks 1st), violent conflicts and insecurity (3.73 ranks 1st). The table however represents environmental degradation with (3.43 ranks 2nd) while infrastructural deficit has (3.4 ranks 2nd) respectively.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study were organized using four different tables. The results documented in table 1 showed a moderate level of awareness on the dimension of sustainable development with mean rating of 3.0.which is adjudge not good enough for the programme. This is an indication that there is need for proper sustainable development goals awareness creation in the area of study. This is in line with Nzeneri (2008) who supported the need for adjustment for self and national development, cultural awareness and integration, for conscientization and group dynamism. Therefore, there is need to step up campaign and awareness for people’s understanding in order to ensure right direction of the programme. In addition, it was observed in table 2 with mean of 3.35 that adult education plays a significant role in ensuring the achievement of sustainable development. As indicated in the table, adult education possess the capacity of creating understanding and fostering knowledge about any development programme. The finding is consistent with Egunyomi (2009) who added that Adult Education is pivotal to sustainable development.

Rating on the strategies adopted in adult education programmes to achieve sustainable development attracted a high score of 3.30, depicting agreement on the strategies adopted as effectual and acceptable means of actualizing the goals. It can be said that adopting these strategies will pay off for the attainment of the goals. In conformity with the finding, Oyebamiji(2013) advocates the incorporation of anything that enlarges man’s understanding, activate them for decision making and implementation of such decisions

In terms of the problems of achieving sustainable development as observed in table 4 with grand mean of 3.53. Respondents noted these variables as possible hindrances to the achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigeria. According to Azikwe (1992), these problems as indicated are cog in the wheel of development; and are responsible for the much underdevelopment in Nigeria. Therefore addressing these problems adequately will create conducive atmosphere for the realization of the goals.

Conclusion

In the cause of this study, the roles of adult education as well as the strategies to be adopted were established as indispensable and effective tools in achieving sustainable development. The study further highlighted ignorance, poverty, misappropriation of resources and insecurity among others as some of the problems of achieving the goals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. State government and allied organizations such as Communicating for change, Niger Delta for justice and pro- Natura International (Nigeria) among others should step up efforts to sensitize the people on these goals.
2. Strategically reposition adult education programmes to achieve maximum results for sustainable development.
3. Government as matter of urgency should adequately address literacy problems especially in the rural areas and;
4. Promulgate policies that will ensure peaceful co-existence and proper management of resources for sustainability.

References

- Abraham, N. M. (2012). Towards Sustainable National Development through well Managed Early childhood education. *World Journal of Education* (2).3. 43-48.
- Adekola, G. & Abanum, B. (2010). Adult Literacy for Rural Development in Rivers State Nigeria. Being a Paper presented at National Conference of Nigeria National Council for Adult Education. University of Ibadan.
- Akinloye, I.A. (2018). Towards the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: Maximizing the influence of religious leaders. *Stellbosch Theological Journal*, 4 (1). 39-60. Retrieved from <http://www.idx.doi.org/10.17570/stj2018>. On 13/3/2019.
- Amirize, B. (2004). *Community Development Project Management*. Port Harcourt: Olu- Alade Printing Press.
- Azikwe, U. (1992). *Women Education and Empowerment*. Nsukka: Fulladu Press.
- Brundtland, G.H. (1987). Our common future. The World Commission on Environment and Development. Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- Egunyomi, D.A (2009). Continuing Education and Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* (6) 339-342.
- Emeka, V.A. (2008). Distance Education: A viable Vehicle for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. *Journal of Adult Education and Development* (4).1.42-54.

- Erhun, M.O. (2015). Sustainable Approach to Economic Development in Nigeria: A Legal Perspective. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 6 (14).
- Glenn, M. W. & Daniel, B.M.(2005). Principles and Approaches to Sustainable Development and Chemical Management for a Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management Centre for International Environmental Law (CTEL).
- Haladu, A.A. (2006). Revitalizing Post Literacy in Nigeria: A prelude to achieving the MDGs. In Okediran, A. (Ed) *Adult Education in Nigeria: Journal of the Nigeria National Council for Adult Education* 12. 180-193.
- Mckeown, R. (2002). *Education for Sustainable Development*. Toolkit:University of Tennessee.
- Nzeneri, I.S. (2008). *Handbook on Adult Education Principles and Practices*. New Edition. Uyo. ABIGAB Associates Limited.
- Oyebamiji,M.A (2013). Mass Media and Adult Education. In B, A. Eheazu,C,N.Barikor & I.S. Nzeneri (eds) *Readings in Adult and Non-Formal Education* (1) 119-132.
- Seya, P.T.(2005). Adult Education and African Development in the Context of Globalization. *Adult Education and Development* No.65, pp 95-118
- UNDP. (2015). Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from <http://www.UNDP.Org/content/undp/en/.../sustainable-development-goals.html>. On 2/8/2017.
- UNESCO. (2011). *The Belem Framework for Action: Harness the Power and Potential of Adult Learning and Education a Viable Future*.(22).42-50. Los Angeles, CA.