

THE ROLE OF SOCIETY IN LIFE-LONG EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the role of community in life-long education. Community as a body of people living in one distinct area, sharing common culture, interests' norms and origin plays an important role in life-long education. These roles extends from one understanding communal values and expectations, social consciousness through understanding of societal changes and adaptations like technological and environmental changes, to career needs and options for personal growth and development. Therefore, community like the home, but in a broader perspective provides practical learning ground for individual self actualization in more advanced and diverse role. Infed. org, (2007). It is these roles that are sum up together for one to see himself as a member of a great society.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of lifelong education was first fully articulated by Basil Yeaxlee, (1929). He along with Eduard Lindeman, (1926) provided an intellectual basis for a comprehensive understanding of education as a continuum. Life long education is conceived from the fact and reality that learning never ends and that age is never a barrier to acquiring a new skill and knowledge. It however depends on the circumstances or necessities stimulate arid gingers one o learn a new skill, values and acquire new knowledge. Formal or informal Akinpelue (2004). Life long education is a road to personal development, and a rich life, employment and economic growth of community.

A case in point is that of a retired, army General who after 35 years of meritorious service and having studied abroad came back to his kiths and kin, and when a kola nut was served him in respect of his feat, he thanked the elders and asked his orderly to put the kola nut in his bag. There and then, the elders asked him to return it for breaking and blessing. After being taught how he should behave next in similar occasion, he exclaimed that "learning never finishes". Other related life long education is that of a former Head of State General Yakubu Gowon who after being toppled from power went back to school and studied political science. At the moment as we are making this presentation life-long education is in progress.

Concept of Community

Community is a very amorphous word, and scholarly effort has gone into defining this word. Community in this paper should be understood from the dictionary meaning as a body of people living in one district or having common interest or origins, Joyce (1995). It is an existing geographic and historical boundaries populated by about five to ten thousand people and have common interests in helping each other to grow in different facets of life endeavours in which life long education is inclusive. Wikipedia.org (2007).

Life-Long Education

Life-long education as portrayed by Abiodun (2006) is a form of pedagogy synonymous with Paulo Freire a Brazilian radical adult educationist, lawyer and philosopher. In relation to his philosophy he says, the learner determines and goes for what is relevant to him. Such education empowers and liberates the individual to perform better in the society. It is often accomplished through distance learning or e-learning continuing education, home schooling or correspondence courses. Examples include the Nigeria Teacher Institute (NTI) Kaduna distance learning programme. National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) etc. as we sit, we are all into it willingly,

irrespective of our ages bearing in mind to improve our qualification in our places of work or get a better position in the future.

Life-long education is important because it accelerates scientific and technological progress.

As the world lasts, different things come up that is of interest hence the need to go back for retaining on such field to enable man adapt to the changing nature of his environment.

The Role of Community in Life-Long Education

The community according to Shitu (2001) serves as the learning environment of the school and the people within it and impacts on them in one way or the other with its existing norms and values.

The community roles are:

- i. It helps individuals through their mutual efforts towards learning and growth with methods that develop and strengthen the local community.
- ii. The community provides resources for personal exploration of the widest range of interest such as tools for research, creative and technical work which make the community to serve partly as a resource center, where people can draw knowledge, financial and political stronghold.
- iii. Their roles in schools has recently gone beyond mere financial contributions by community members and Parent Teacher Association, PTA's of providing infrastructural facilities, basic amenities to build of schools and colleges where lifelong learning and education take place.
- iv. The community serves as an advisory body on how to move institutions that promote lifelong education forward. Some parents and even whole community have been known to make representation s to the local inspectorate of education, the school board or ministry of education to cancel or transfer some teachers depending on their performance in their local schools. A case in point is the School Based Management Committee (SBMC) in Kaduna State which is different from P.T.A. but perform the same functions. They are in charge of monitoring and care for the education of their children in the community. This SBMC is appointed by the community itself. The idea sprang up out of the believe that one person does not train a child and that any person can suffer from the menace of improper child training or benefit from proper child training, the community inclusive.
- v. The community also provide skills to the youths, adults and the handicapped. This they do by building civic centres where these skills are acquired. A typical example is in Jigawa state where in every local government headquarters is a center for the blind where they learn how to weave rugs and mats.
- vi. The communities also build public libraries, museums, archives, business centers and internet café, which enhance lifelong education as well as serve to preserve historical background.

CONCLUSION

Having defined the different concepts that are relevant in this paper where community is conceived as a group of people who live together and share common origin and values with an estimated of population of ten thousand people. Lifelong education enables the individual live a fulfilled live for his needs and aspiration. These achievements cannot be possible if friction exists among the stakeholder (i.e.) the learner, the school and the community.

Therefore, the community which is the learners environment absorbs every shock coming from other stakeholders in lifelong education.

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