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BARR. SAM OTOBOEZE FOUNDATION

**THEME:**

“Empowering the Youth and Less privileged

to shape Nigeria’s Future”

by

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Being the text of a Keynote Address at the 2020 Annual Event of

Barr. Sam Otoboeze Foundation (BSOF) on December 19, 2020

@

Holy Child Catholic Church Premises, Ochima.

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**PROTOCOLS**

When I got the invitation to be a guest lecturer for this occasion, I quickly accepted it because I see this lecture as a modest contribution I can make to the success of the Barr. Sam Otoboeze foundation and also because I happen to be not just an academician, but I am also involved in the special type of academics that the foundation is providing through its skills, acquisition centre, is generally recognized as Nonformal Education.

Since 1979 when I did my doctoral research in the informal sector in Benue State and developed a continuing education plan for training school leavers apprentices in various craft, traders, occupations and businesses in which they were working.

And I have continued to contribute to research and knowledge generation for restructuring the Nigeria education system to cater for both the formal and nonformal education needs of the citizenry through mainstreaming nonformal education as a separate federal ministry like other countries in other parts of the world.

**EMPOWERING THE YOUTH AND LESS PRIVILEGED TO SHAPE UP NIGERIA’S FUTURE.**

**Introduction**

Let me tell you something straightaway about the educational practice of articulating the skills needs of varying groups in society. They all involve the art of prediction. However, what happens most often is that educational theorists, most of the time, have enough sagacity to perceive the defects of the system in vogue, but not enough power to remedy them. Hence, the problem is not one of whether educational theorists know what is wrong and what to do, but rather whether they have the power and resources to put in practice what they know. Here lies the paradox.

I decided to point this out early in this lecture because some of the great educational theorists such as Socrates, Cicero, Quintillian, Comenius, John Milton, John Locke, Rousseau, Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire, have laid out, from the beginning of educational practice, the requisite skills for the survival of both humanity and society; but all too often, people lose consciousness of them. In all, these theorists emphasize education as a basic strategy that assures the survival of the human race. Let me now turn to the theme of the workshop.

The idea of empowerment is not a new concept. Governments, development scientists, social movements, United Nations agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations, charitable and religions bodies, community based groups, youth, women and disadvantaged peoples organizations have articulated and implemented several different programmes , strategies, and efforts to work together for the common good of the youth, the less privileged and the poor. Such terms as rural development, community development, mass education, community self-help, social welfare services, extension services, cooperatives and entrepreneurship are common in the society. What is new are the words we use to express the specific meanings that are ascribed to these words. These terms have different origins and philosophies as well as emphasis, but certain characteristics seem to be common to almost all of them. The major idea in all these terms is that of empowerment.

**THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF NONFORMAL EDUCATION**

**Definitions of Nonformal Education (NFE)**

Ngwu (2003) categorized the various early definitions of Nonformal Education under the following orientations:

The changing definitions of Nonformal Education reflect the changing problem situations in which both the concept and practice of NFE are needed and applied. As such, many early definitions of NFE have become outdated and most often, the diversity of perspective and practice are ignored. Hence, the effort in this lecture on identifying common elements and essential features or

characteristics across the various types of creative, experiential experience and participatory nonformal education practices. For example, Frennes (2002) reported that the Council of Europe Symposium on NFE started with a basic assumption that the Coombs and Ahmed 1974 definition of NFE as "any organised, systematic educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal school system" was applicable only to arrive at a new definition of NFE at the end of the symposium as "multiple learning situations positioned on a learning continuum and structured across multiple dimensions between formal, nonformal, and informal learning". The argument was that "the respective features of each of the three modes of learning fade into one another towards the centre of what is ultimately a continuum of learning contexts, contents and methods" (Chisholm, 2001:62)

**Common elements in existing definitions of nonformal learning:**

* Purposive learning,
* Diverse contexts,
* Alternative/complementary teaching and learning styles,
* Less developed recognition of outcomes and quality

Source: Council of Europe Symposium on Nonformal Education: Report (2001)

Council of Europe a universally valid definition of nonformal education was neither possible nor desirable (Fennes, 2002). Because of the diversity of subscribe to a definition that rapidly became out dated, and everyone wanted to respect diversity of perspective and practice. But through identifying common elements and essential features across the various forms of creative, experiential and participatory nonformal learning, the first symposium on nonformal education nonetheless made a crucial contributions to documenting and verifying how nonformal education was perceived, and understood and practiced.

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Source: council of Europe Symposium on Nonformal Education: Report (2001)

A continuum of learning contexts, contents and methods. It was defined in 1974 by Coombs and Ahmed as "any organised, systematic educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system". Multiple learning situations positioned on a learning continuum and structured across multiple dimensions between formal, nonformal and informal of learning.

**Essential features of nonformal learning**

* Balanced co-existence and interaction between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning.
* Linking individual and social learning, partnership-oriented solidary and symmetrical teaching/ learning relations
* Participatory and learner-centred
* Holistic and process-oriented
* Close to real-life concerns, experimental and oriented to learning by doing, using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning as learning devices.
* Voluntary and (ideally) open-access
* Aims above all to convey and practice the values and skills of democratic life.

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Multiple types of non-formal education exist which can be adapted for specific learning needs of individuals and populations in different conditions. Particularly, in the context of achieving the EFA goals and the MDGs, non-formal education's elastic, and context specific approaches are appropriate and useful in fulfilling the right to education of the marginalized and those populations with special learning needs. While schooling remains an important means for providing basic education, non-formal education can reach learners who lack access to formal education or cannot complete full cycle of basic education.

Along with formal and informal learning, non-formal education constitutes an integral part of lifelong learning towards which many countries are shifting their policy focuses. This recognition has been accompanied by national efforts to explore potential roles of non-formal education in their education systems and the way in which non-formal education can be related to formal education, The innovative nature of non-formal education to develop human capabilities, improve social cohesion and to create responsible future citizens has increasingly been recognized. With reforms to improve school curricula taking place across the world, non-formal education has proven to be effective for critical pedagogy and innovative approaches, going beyond the two pillars of learning, 'learning to know' and 'learning to do, 'that used to be the main focus of formal education in the past, to also include the other two pillars - 'learning to be' and 'learning to live together' (Delors, 1996).

There have emerged heightened individual and societal expectations of the positive impact of non-formal education on economic productivity. Providing learning opportunities for those who partially or completely missed formal basic education could potentially lead to higher social productivity and thus greater economic growth. It is in this context that one must explore the potential of nonformal education to meet learning needs of out-of-school children, youth and adults.

**THE EDUCATION SYSTEM CONTEXT**

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) defined formal education as kind of education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies and – in their totality- constitutes the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognized as such by the relevant national education authorities or equivalent authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education, vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognized as being part of the formal education system.

It will be important here to discuss the extent to which government have put in place formal educational policies and curricula programmes for nurturing the youth in such a way that they are knowledgeable enough to have power to take decisions and make choices that will eventually lead to a better future for them. Currently the Nigerian educational system is implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in line with the Jomtien 1990 World Conferences on Education Declaration as well as the 2000 Dakar Education for All (EFA) programme. Under basic education, literacy skills, generic skills, life skills and immediately useful knowledge for the world of work and 21st century skills have been outlined as basic learning needs for the youth. The fact is that most educational targets set out as part of international development declarations and assistance are more on paper than in actual operational processes. However, that does not mean that an awareness of these skills as outlined may not bring about the desired change in the quality of life, knowledge, skills and attitudes of the youth. Hence, a detailed listing of these required skills learning for the youth in the formal education system will follow. My task here is to give as much information as possible which I believe will help the youth to prepare well for the future in such a way that future success is assured. Hence, the rest of this section will elaborate briefly on each of the skills that are prescribed for the youth as part of a lifelong learning process. The understanding is that these skills can be learnt anywhere and not necessarily in the school. This is a clear testimony to the need to “deschool society” by broadening the concept of education to include not only schooling but also nonformal and informal learning activities which enable the wholistic development of the youth and equip them to participate actively in society’s process through such strategies as volunteerism, mentoring, apprenticeship, age sets, internship, community service, and involvement in the activities of occupational and professional associations, youth groups and community based associations.

**Basic Skills:** Basic education or basic skills for children, youth and adults, as defined at Jomtien and Dakar, is targeted at meeting one's basic learning needs. These needs can be met:

* **in various settings** (home, community, school, out-of-school, socio-educational, cultural and recreational centres, workplace, mass media, everyday life and activities);
* **by various agencies** (public and private, voluntary, non­governmental, communal).
* **by various agents:** family, local and the broader community, government, civil society (including local associations such as rural cooperatives, PTAs, etc.) and the markets;
* **through various means,** including formal, nonformal and informal education and training, self-directed and experiential learning, making use of both traditional and modern media, face-to-face and distance learning modalities; and
* **throughout life,** that is, not just during a specific period in the life of an individual because Basic Learning Needs (BLN) are numerous; they change over time and must be updated as realities and knowledge also evolve (Obanya, 2004:61).

Accordingly, **basic education** is not synonymous with **schooling;** rather, basic education focuses on the inculcation and consolidation of literacy, numeracy, essential life-skills, environmental, health and civic awareness skills, investigative/reasoning and manipulative skills, psycho-social, emotional, physical development-adjustment skills, etc; and most importantly, learning-how-to-learn skills, as a perquisite for lifelong and life-wide learning.

To guide the development of curricula for basic education, as well as school and classroom practices, (Obanya 2004: 17) cited the Jomtien and Dakar conferences as having outlined a number of skills which promote the teaching and development of basic skills and which are not yet directly infused into the formal education curriculum. These are generic skills, life skills and immediately useful knowledge of the world of work as weel broad-based skills. The essential components of these skills are presented below to show the extent to which governments and the international development agencies expect the youth to be trained and knowledgeable to assure a successful future. For sure, there is no short cut to learning them, even as we all know that there are many deficits in the current system of formal education in Nigeria.

**Generic Skills:** The key elements of the **generic skills** are the following:

1. **Analytical power:** an advanced capacity for logical reasoning, employing appropriate verbal, quantitative, graphic, documentary, audio-visual, sensory perceptions and a wide variety of tools.

**2.** **Communication:** oral and written (as well as in other possible forms) using the appropriate language and non-verbal forms in specific situations to achieve specific objectives.

**3.** **Problem-solving:** the ability to task one's analytical power to the maximum in developing possible solution paths to problems in a wide variety of situations.

**4.** **Team spirit:** the ability to contribute meaningfully to group activities in a wide variety of forms, to relate to others, to get out of one's shell while remaining oneself.

**5.** **Creativity:** the ability to go beyond the well-trodden path in thinking as well as in action.

**6.** **Versatility:** a broadened horizon in terms of domains of knowledge and competence.

**7.** **Lifelong learning skills:** perseverance, risk-taking, a spirit of enquiry, reading as a habit, self-directed learning efforts, the ability to face challenges, etc.

**8.** **IT (Information Technology)** as a discipline in its own right and as a tool for and support to other disciplines and life activities. (Obanya: *2004:133- 134).*

The **Life Skills** components of basic education which are required by the youth in a knowledge economy are:

* **Knowledge** in the form of versatility and flexibility, not simply the ability to store and reproduce facts and figures.
* **Communication skills** - the capacity to appreciate the views and feelings of others, to convey one's own feelings and opinions in ways that help to sustain personal and working relationships.
* **Adaptability** - a willingness to venture into novel situations - new ideas, novel working and thinking tools.
* **Creativity** *-* a strong drive to go beyond the well-trodden path, to experiment with new ways of learning.
* **Team spirit** - an acceptance of the principles of group cohesiveness, the team being more important than any of its individual members.
* **Literacy**- in its comprehensive dimension - prose, quantities, graphics, maps, spatial analysis interpretation and use in communication.
* **IT-fluency** - a mastery of ICT as a thinking, research, communication and working tool.
* **Learning as a way of life:** a frame of mind that is the foundation stone of lifelong and life-wide learning. (Obanya, ibid).

**World of Work Skills:** The requirements of the world of work have also led to a reappraisal of which knowledge is of the most worth, which is in itself an old philosophical question in education. The consensus today is as follows:

* **Specific subject matter and skill-based knowledge** are known to have a short shelf life; they therefore have to yield grounds to fundamental skills (language, mathematical reasoning, scientific and social enquiry, technical skills (analysis, communication, etc.), and learning-to-learn skills.
* **Factual knowledge** is also less important (i.e. more difficult to transfer to life and further learning situations) than over-arching knowledge.
* **Intra-personal skills** (as typified in the age-old "man, know thyself" maxim) is being brought to the fore, e.g. the human development skills needed during the adult life cycle.
* **Inter-personal skills** to enable the individual function in socially and professionally heterogeneous work settings.

The above skills in immediately useful knowledge belong to a special class of knowledge and skills that are not yet captured in the school curriculum. This workshop is on career mentorship is targeted at this kind of knowledge that is immediately useful for making career choices.

**Broad-based knowledge** the indication are that specialization is likely to lead to a dead-end in a knowledge economy; hence, more emphasis on broad-based knowledge that dwell more on processes, system thinking, methodologies and personal initiative are the immediately useful knowledge needed by the youth to face the challenges of the future using knowledge and skills( Obanya, ibid).

According to Obanya (2004), the indications are that the emergence of knowledge-based economies has led to radical paradigm shifts along the lines of a shift from fixed curricular to more flexible curriculum frameworks.... from a focus on teaching to learning ... from the transmission and acquisition of information to a constructivist approach to knowledge ... to the acquisition of skills needed to continue learning throughout life… from categorized subject content to a more interdisciplinary approach integrated areas, etc, the nature and roles of nonformal education are implicit in the above assertions on the radical changes needed for improving human proficiency.The above scenerio surely requires a variety of teaching methods and learning activities beyond what obtains presently in our schools. The same goes with the list of 21st century skills presented below

**21st Century Skills:** The following list provides a brief illustrative view of the knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits commonly associated with 21st century skills which are considered appropriate for study, analysis, curricular programme development for inclusion in the school curriculum. This is considered already overdue in our primary and secondary schools, if we are striving to actually create a knowledge economy even as some of them have already been mentioned under basic, generic, life and work skills etc. The 21st century skills are:

* Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information
* Research skills and practices, interrogative questioning
* Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression
* Perseverance, self-direction, planning, self-discipline, adaptability, initiative
* Oral and written communication, public speaking and presenting, listening
* Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, facility in using virtual workspaces
* Information and communication technology (ITC) literacy, media and internet literacy, data interpretation and analysis, computer programming
* Civic, ethical, and social-justice literacy
* Economic and financial literacy, entrepreneurialism
* Global awareness, multicultural literacy, humanitarianism
* Scientific literacy and reasoning, the scientific method
* Environmental and conservation literacy, ecosystems understanding
* Health and wellness literacy, including nutrition, diet, exercise, and public health and safety **(**[*http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-*](http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-)**)**

**THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF EMPOWERMENT**

**What is Empowerment**

Empowerment is frequently cited as one of the most successful strategies for bringing about positive change and development for individuals communities and nations. Empowerment is discussed at the level of individual (changes in skills, knowledge, consciousness and awareness, hope, action and process that result in increased resources and opportunities among other things (Verity, 2007). The above implies that empowerment is a group working style that aims to help people achieve their own purpose of increasing their confidence and capacity (Gboku and Lekoko, 2007). It implies deliberate increase of power to effect change in individuals groups.

Empowerment according to Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) is the ability that people have to take effective control of their lives in terms of being well-informed and equipped with regard to education, finance and relevant skills that will enable them to make the choices they want, follow the career they desire and achieve the goal they set for themselves. Hence, empowerment has four major elements which include; control of one's life, access to information and education, access to finance and access to skill for decision-making related to one's situation.

The empowerment process results in an increase in knowledge, capacity, self-confidence, high self-esteem, self-reliance and ultimately the well-being of the empowered. Youth empowerment is also defined as the ability of youth to act on their own terms in a supportive and enabling environment (Osalor, 2012), youth empowerment is the ability, power and support youth have to improve their lives, the lives of people around them and in the large society. Therefore, youth empowerment implies building the capacity of youth to engage in development activities for their own well-being and that of individuals in their communities. It is also a system of creating a situation that will encourage and recognize the potentials of youth.

Rev. Fr. Dr. Ik. B. Ngwoke cites Wikipedia and defines youth empowerment as an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people, gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement changes in their own lives and the lives of others. It aims to awaken the youth to their capacity and potentials to grow and develop, to make them creative and independent self-developers, and thus face the youth from bandage to self-imposed or society-imposed limitations. Youth empowerment employs measures and develops program tailored to making the youth self confident and self-reliant enough to take responsible charge of their own lives having more choices and better options and becoming productive members of society.

Subjectively, youth empowerment is about working with the youth to acquire the relevant knowledge and develop the necessary skills, competence and attitudes to become active agents in society rather than victims of developmental and societal changes. This requires learning, training and work opportunities throughout life, hence the concept of lifelong learning.

There are many dimensions of youth empowerment which include; education, economic, political and socio-cultural empowerment.

Fulton Sheen in his 120 Holy Hour Readings argues that *“education once seemed the gateway to heaven-on-earth for everyone”*. Now we have tried it, and know that schooling alone will not save our society. Never before was there so much education, and never before so little arrival at the truth. The Twentieth century is the century of the greatest attempt at universal education in the history of the world and yet it is the century of the most terrible conflagrations, wars, and revolutions of history. We have stuffed our children's minds with facts, and neglected to teach them how to live.

**Education Empowerment:** is a vital tool for liberation and empowerment especially for youth. Education helps youth to acquire basic skills that ensure their participation in developmental activities of their nation.

**Economic Empowerment:** Youth need to be economically empowered for them to earn more income and participate in the economy and as well participate in the planning and implementation of community development projects of their communities. Economic empowerment is a type of empowerment that pays attention to the provision of training in vocational skills in order to help learners gain opportunities to earn basic additional income (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). It is thee aspect of empowerment where people are trained to engage in different economic ventures and activities to increase their income.

**Political Empowerment:** Political empowerment is an important issue in the nation politics. For the youth to be politically empowered they must have to participate in political activities of their countries. Political empowerment enlighten the youth on how to legitimately and decently seek their right.

**Socio-cultural Empowerment:** Youth need to be socio-culturally empowered because of tradition, institution, cultural practices and ideologies that discriminate against youth. It is a type of empowerment that liberates youth from these socio-cultural practices that deny youth their material and human right.

**SCOPE OF EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment according to Ukwueze (2015) quoting Karl (1995) comprises six levels of within the youth empowerment framework. These levels could be to promote youth empowerment programmes. They are as follows:

* Awareness creation
* Access to Resources
* Conscientization
* Participation
* Control
* Welfare

**Awareness Creation**

Adult non-formal education methods are used to create awareness of t he meaning of empowerment and the need for youth to participate in all aspects of the development process of the nation.

**Access to resources**

This involves equality of access to resources such as health, education, social opportunities, land and credit. This is essential for youth to make meaningful progress because the path to empowerment is initiated when youth recognize their lack of access to resources as a barriers to their growth and overall well-being and then take action to address the problems.

**Conscientizaiton**

This is a crucial point in the empowerment framework for youth to take appropriate action to gender inequalities. These must be a recognition that their problems stem from internal structural and institutional discrimination. Though conscientization, youth also recognize the roles they can play in transforming the system that restricts their growth, development and active participation in the democratic process of the society.

**Participation**

This is the point when youth are taking decision alongside adult to ensure equity and fairness. To reach this level, mobility is necessary. By recognizing themselves, and working collectively, youth will be empowered to gain an increase in representation which will lead to increase in empowerment and ultimately greater control of their lives and opportunities for growth and development.

**Control**

Control is recognized as the ultimate level of equity and empowerment. At this level, youth are able to make decisions over their lives and the lives of their children, husband and community. In this way, the contribution of women can be fully recognized and rewarded.

**Welfare**

The youth will also be educated on the importance of acquiring employable skills or competences so as to be self-reliant in order to meet the basic needs of their families. This can be done through first, organizing workshops or seminars for the youth on their specific areas of need and the competencies and life skills that they need to acquire. In this way their real needs rather than their wants and felt needs are addressed.

**THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE BARRISTER SAM OTOBEZE SKILLS ACQUISITION CENTRE**

The Challenge of Vocational Skills Acquisition in Igbo-Etiti LGA is best understood within the context of the overall development needs of the people.

According to the Enugu State Poverty Report (1998), Igbo-Etiti LGA is a heavily farmed area with little fallow land and a net importer of food even though 81 percent are farmers. The LGA has no vocational or technical school and only two of the eleven autonomous communities have electricity. It is a third rank LGA (out of 4 ranks) going by the distribution of LGAs by weighted Poverty (WPI) Index Score. Over 83 percent of the population are aged between Age 0 and 44 years and 24.3 percent aged between 15-29 years.

The LGA has the lowest percentage of a high percentage the unemployed (6.4%) artisans (2.1%) of all the LGAs in Enugu State (See Enugu State Poverty Report, P.x-9). The LGA also scored zero in the area of household production of such non-food products as pottery, metal products and wood products with first 1.1% of households able to produce cloth. It is also one of the five LGAs in Enugu State where less than fifty percent of the households are able to afford Food regularly.

While 57.3 percent of people interviewed in the LGA think that things have go become worse for them in the last five years only 29.2 percent think that things are better now. The literacy rate is estimated at 69 percent even though 30.3 percent of the adult population are reported to have no schooling and 28.2 percent could not complete primary schooling unemployment was reported as one of the most serious community problems identified by 97.9 percent of the sample respondents in the Poverty Report.

From the foregoing statistics, the need for vocational skills training becomes glaring with over go percent of the population of the LGA engaged in farming even though the LGA is reported as a net importerof food, there is an obvious need for vocational skills training in agricultural related trader and occupations. The high proportion of the population that are aged between 15-29 years, there is the need for training them in employable skills since unemployment is perceived as one of the most serious problems in the LGA. The near absence of people working as artisan and craftsmen calls for the training of young men and women in these areas almost as a crash programme because of the growing importance of such skills in modern social living. The doubtful literacy profile of the LGA where 69 percent literacy rate is accepted but 30.3 percent and 28.2 percent (58.5 percent combined) of the adult population are reported as having no schooling respectively brings in the need for basic literacy in the way and manner anticipated in the Jomtian Declaration of the World Conference on Education for All.

The above indications suggest that more needs to be done in this LGA in the area of vocational skill training as part of an expanded programme for Poverty Alleviation and for the Achievement of Basic Needs. The women commission will need more support from the communities, the government and the international community in order to play its role creditably. I wish to stress that this project is owned by the Agency for Mass Literacy. Therefore, we must all support this first brain-child of the chairperson.

**THE GEO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE SKILL ACQUISITION CENTRE**

Igbo-Etiti Local Government, the locality in which this Acquisition Centre carries on its activities is a third rank LGA (out of 4 ranks) in Enugu State going by the distribution of LGAs by the Weighted Poverty Index (WPI) score in the Enugu State Poverty Report (ESPR) of 1998. It is a heavily farmed area with little fallow land and a net importer of food eventhough eighty-one (81) percent of the citizens are farmers.

Over eighty-three (83) percent of the population of Igbo-Etiti LGA is aged below 44 as at 1998 with forty two (42) percent (almost half) of them aged under 14 years. The middle aged people should be the target beneficiaries of the educational programmes of this Acquisition Centre. Many of them have had basic education and should use the opportunity offered by this Acquisition Centre to seek self-improvement and empowerment.

The adult literacy rate of the LGA is estimated at 69 percent (ESPR,1998) eventhough 30 percent of the adult population are reported to have no schooling coupled with 28 percent who could not complete primary schooling. This is a doubtful literacy profile because if we accept the 69 percent adult literacy rate and have 30 percent and 28 percent of the adult population as having no schooling and having dropped out of primary school respectively, we now actually have 58 percent with less than basic literacy. This leaves us with only an actual literacy rate of 42 percent, which is very much below the-national average and still very unexpectedly low for the Southeast zone. Hence, the need for the kind of Acquisition educational intervention by the College of Education. We need to democratize and popularize education at all levels in this local government area.

With the majority of the adult population in the LGA with less than basic literacy, the situation of their children can easily be imagined. The social situation and the home environments of these children cannot be such that can promote a literate or modern society and environment. The Acquisition Centre idea is designed to promote the use of a remedial model of education for creating literate and modern environments where these predominantly subsistence farming families will step out of poverty-ridden homesteads and step into the kind of modern environments they should have created before now in the schools, in the markets, in the village squares, in the health centres, in the Church, etc.

Statistically speaking, we are lagging behind educationally in Igbo-Etiti especially among the middle-aged populations. For as Margaret Mead, the famous American cultural anthropologist amply enunciated in her study in the future of children, *Culture and Commitment: A Study of the Generation Gap,* which she prepared for the American White House Conference on Children in 1969, children in configurative cultures such as ours learn more from the behaviour of their familiar peers or contemporaries rather than their parents. Therefore, the indications are that with the high population growth rate in the LGA and the prevalence of poverty (with 81 percent of the citizens being farmers), and with the ravaging unemployment rate among the youth; more than half of the population of the LGA are going to be the major important beneficiaries of the activities of this Acquisition Centre, while the secondary or indirect beneficiaries are in the majority as the children of these middle-aged students of the programme who put the knowledge gained from the centre in their daily life activities and to promote their livelihood system.

**Education for both Individual Empowerment and National Development: The Critical Dimensions**

In my 1985 Doctoral Thesis at Ohio University, Athens, USA; I explicated three major theoretical orientations in the use of Education for the achievement of Development. In a very broad sense, Education has three major uses, namely: *personal*, *social* and *instrumental*. The person who receives formal Education uses it to upgrade himself intellectually. The brain is an "intellectual equipment" which most people do not use as effectively and as efficiently as they should do without formal Education. It is the proper and guided use of the brain that leads to individual empowerment. Formal Education enables an individual to engage more readily and easily in logical, productive and critical thinking over and above the ordinary daily life linear and relational thinking that non-literate people are most often limited to using. This is the empowerment function.

The social value of Education lies in the fact that while educated people are equipped with different types of thinking skills and styles, uneducated people with their limited number of thinking faculties interact with the educated ones in the same social environments and institutions - the family, the market, the workplace, in other social, political, economic, natural and religious activities, etc. Life is easier and much more enjoyable when regular people like you and me understand each others’ behaviours without reading divergent and sometimes dangerous meanings into ordinary human behaviours and activities. This is a social value of Education to reduce the tendency among people with different levels of education to misunderstand their personal situations and the reality of their social situations *– (ka ima nke a, ima nke ozo)* Education is a human right so, that equality, peace, understanding and knowledge is accessible to all human beings. For instance, the uninitiated may give a contradictory meaning to my making the sign of the Cross. Being educated in Christian religious practices makes for easy interpretation, and understanding of the sign of the cross; so also are other related activities in human behaviour. This prepares the ground for social harmony and enjoyment of life with little confusion or conflict. That is why the Elite in the developed countries like America and Europe (politicians, academicians, bureaucrats and technocrats, etc.) spend more money on Education than any other sector of economic activity and support educational endeavours generously. Education is the engine of social progress, so goes the age old saying. At the same time, a word is enough for the wise! The more one is educated, the more the person participates fully and actively in the life of his or her community, family and society.

The instrumental effect of Education, which is sometimes referred to as the symbolic value of Education is a little more difficult to grasp. However, an example will suffice here. The instrumental effect of Education is like the parable of the sower in the Bible. What you sow, why you sow, when you sow, how you sow, and where you sow determine to a large extent both individually and collectively what you harvest. Sometimes, Education becomes an instrument for social progress; at other times, and in some unfortunate situations, it becomes an instrument for social crisis or revolution, which sometimes results in unexpected and disastrous consequences for the society, particularly the elite in a society. Education leads to a harvest of planned social change rather than social disorder or disharmony. That is how the developed Western world is funding EDUCATION FOR ALL or the Nigerian Universal Basic Education (UBE) while the Nigerian political and bureaucratic elite are implementing it the Nigerian way with all the attendant confusion and corruption.

Another way to understand the instrumental effects of Education is to appreciate how Education leads to many unanticipated changes in the life of an individual, the community and society. The first people who practiced how to read and write did so because they needed to keep records and accounts, but today reading and writing are instrumental to the improved quality of life of the people, leisurely life, social progress and the technological advances we are witnessing in society. Again, an uneducated person is likely to prepare yam to satisfy hunger only, but an educated person will think of and prepare yam in a special way to enjoy eating, to impress, attract, or entice as well as satisfy hunger. Education makes man to live beyond the instinctual or animal level in everything: political, economic, social, cultural, religious etc. and to have a bountiful harvest which enables man to enjoy whatever he is doing in the hope that something good will eventually result from it if he has achieved a certain level of consciousness of what he is doing and a level of academic or scientific knowledge required for full participation in the affairs of his or her society. For instance, many of the students who are undergoing this programme will gain higher levels of self-confidence, academic skills, and intellectual knowledge and social status that will empower them to be more active and productive in their families, their work and in providing community services. The problem here is that many people do something because others are doing it or because these other people ask them to do it without their really being able to achieve a certain level of personal and conscious "educated" identification with what they are doing.

**TOWARDS A NATIONAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR NFE SKILLS ACQUISITION CENTRES**

**Goals and Objectives of the NFE Programme:** Within the institutional policy-making subsystem, the thinking currently appear s to be that the creation of alternative training and employment opportunities for unemployed youth, adult men and women with special occupational training needs artisans and craftsmen using nonformal education processes would produce the best results.

The NFE programme as such should be able to combine technical/apprenticeship training with formal instruction in the theory and practice of the trades/occupations as well as the provision of placement services fog radiates of the NFE training programmes in both the formal and in formal sectors of the economy. The NFE programme should also be designed to provide improved skills training, self-employment and continuing occupational education opportunities for the majority of the unemployed. Other complementary objectives could be to provide easy entry, to-cost and flexible training and employment opportunities for unemployed rural youth in the skilled-industrial trades so as to promote the formation development of rural cooperative small-scale enterprises. The training should be oriented towards helping the youth to develop technical-occupational skills, business initiative , critical awareness, economic literacy and management skills which they need for their own personal fulfilment and occupational development within the training programmes should be towards enabling the youth to acquire core skills in business communication, mathematics and basic introductory technology which are common to all trades/occupations as well as in specific technical skills related to one or two of the trades /occupations.

**Management and Sponsorship of Programmes:** World experience in the last two decades has shown that private and voluntary agencies are more effective in the implementation and management tor nonformal education and vocational skills training and employment generation projects (The World Bank, 1980). Even though provisions have been made in several Nigerian government policies for state and federal governments to organize nonformal education activities like apprenticeship/vocational/ industrial training schemes and small/scale industry projects, the results of such government undertakings have so far not been very encouraging (osoba. 1985;Ngwu,1985b).

The issue of management and sponsorship of any NFE programme designed to promote community development, vocational skills acquisition, employment creation and increased productivity should be considered carefully in the light of the foregoing observation about the effectiveness of privately sponsored projects. It may be necessary for government to initiate the policy for the promotion of NFE programmes but the actual implementation/management should be left with voluntary agencies and private organizations or individual entrepreneurs.

The vocational skills acquisition and employment creation programmes should therefore be organized in the form of joint ventures between government. voluntary agencies, private individuals or organizations and communities. For instance, in committee on employment generation for the state and appointed ar. Acting Director for the Voluntary Service Corps (VSC) all of which have a direct relationship to the skills acquisition and employment creation programme of the government. Within an NFE context, the committee and VSC management should work out the modalities for the introduction of an NFE-oriented apprenticeship training scheme as an avenue for crating gainful employment opportunities for the unemployed.

The skills acquisition and employment generation progarmmes when fully operational should have a commission or a national agency made up of representatives from ministries which carry about nonformal occupational and skills training activities as well as representatives for voluntary agencies, communities, private sector organizations and individual entrepreneurs who may have interests and make investments in particular projects. For proper management, it is also necessary that the NFE skills acquisition programmes be carried out under the auspices of a national commission or agency which may include the setting up and running of the vocational skills acquisition programmes in much the same way as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Industries supervise government parastatals and industrial projects. However, in this case, a working relationship should be agreed on with other partners in the projects in such a way that government should have supervisory power. Management, production, sales and marketing n arrangements should be in the hands of private entrepreneurs or voluntary agencies or communities as the case may be. Each individual project should have its own special arrangements. The functions of the commission/agency should include:

* Determining funding requirements and the training needs in a centre
* Approving training and production programmes
* Regulating training, employment and production activities
* Offering placement services for graduates of the programmes either in modern sector employment or helping them for in production team/groups or cooperatives.

The commission/agency should, in addition, assist in soliciting for and providing technical assistance to the centres; and in promoting small-scale industrial extension services for newly established self employed graduates of the programme. At the local government level, which is the appropriate location for NFE centres, private individuals , organizations social clubs, voluntary agencies, missionary bodies as well as communities should be encouraged to establish centres in partnership with government or independently, but such centres should be run under government or independently, but such centres should have a committee or a board representing all the interest groups .A board/committee should include community leaders, priests or pastors, teachers, representatives of skilled tradesmen and apprentices and ministry/local government officials. Some of the functions of the board should include:

* Determining the occupational training and industrial development needs of the local government area
* Establishing standards and practices which will make training and production both functional and relevant to the employment /development needs of the people, the LGA, the state and the country.
* Offering assistance in the procurement of equipment and materials in the centres
* Helping graduates of the NFE programmes to get financial support for setting themselves up in self employment
* Recommending programmmes orientations and improvement.

A decentralized approach to the administration of the NFE programmes is recommended. Within the Nigerian context, the training and production activities embodied in the NFE programmes for the promotion of skills acquisition and employment generation should be concentrated in rural areas. This demands therefore that the administrative headquarters of the commission /agency should be located outside the state capital and should move from one zone to another every five or ten years in order to be close enough to the situation on the ground in those centres. At the initial stages, NFE centres should be established in each of the EGAs of the state: and then later each community should have a centre. As already suggested above, private agencies and voluntary organizations as well as individual entrepreneurs and communities should be encouraged to establish NFE centres in partnership with government. Funding for the centres should be jointly undertaken by all the interest groups or stakeholders according to an agreed formula for shareholding. The NFE centre should of course be self-financing and profit making after takeoff .Participants in the programme should naturally pay for their training and

**Personnel:** Both full-time and part-time staffs are needed. As much as possible, local personnel should be employed. On important consideration here would be to bring together in an NFE centre the required technical administrative and extension personnel as well as training staff for the trades in which training and production activities would be going on in a particular centre. These different grips of personnel would be responsible for planning and implementing a broad-based training and production programme in the trades and occupations identified as relevant to the development of the particular locality.

The staff in each of the centres should be able to teach and carry on extension and production activities. The graduates of the training programmes should be followed up through extension services offered by the staff of each centre so as to help set them up in self employment. When such graduates become well established, linkages could be established between them and the centres. Some staff of government ministries such as community development officers, adult education officers, agricultural/cooperatives/ extension officers could be retrained and converted to carry on teaching, research, administrative, extension and industrial promotion duties and activities in the NFE commission/agency. Graduates of polytechnics, technical colleges and private centres. These different classes of professional could serve as an excellent team of on -site training staff and field workers whose their apprentice s with such problems as:

* Improving their productivity and efficiency on the job
* Obtaining credit facilities and repaying tern promptly
* Extending marketing and supply services
* Managing their business enterprises in such as way chat master craftsmen who are already establish din the informal sector could also be retrained and encouraged to tale on apprentices or establish NFE centres where they train others according guidelines set by the NFE commission /agency.

In this way, institutional development and job creation become the long term benefits. Services provision will be promoted at the local level and each LGA will organize local development activities around the centres.

**Participants/Clientele of the Centres:** The NFE programme should naturally serve as an umbrella under which all unemployed school leavers and all unemployed active members of the labour force would be identified and mobilized. At the initial stages of the organization if the NFE programme, community members who are skilled in vocational /technical trades and occupations should be identified, trained and retrained so that they can be used in training other unskilled community members Graduates of the training programme should be encouraged to form partnerships, or work teams or cooperatives. They should be made to understand that in whatever employment situation they may find themselves, they should always think of working in groups and sharing skills and equipment.

Attention should be focused on primary school leavers and dropouts and graduates of junior secondary schools who accept to sign a bond to stay on in self employment in the rural areas. Missionary bodies, social clubs, age grade associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities should be encouraged it nominate and sponsor candidates for training and subsequently help them set up their own business,. The local government area NF#E board or committee should also be charged with hoping to identity potential participants in the NFE programme through setting up liaison channels and linkages with potential sponsors of candidates.

**Content of the Training Programme:** Such a body as the Nonformal Education Commission or Agency should offered training to participants in a wide variety of areas. The major areas to be covered may include the following even though local development needs should determine what should be offered.

* Job/technical/occupational/vocational skills
* Management and marketing skills
* Social and communication skills /basic literacy skills
* Self and social awareness training.
* Civics and leadership training

Lack of management and marketing skills, communication skills/language arts and critical consciousness have been found to be common among school leavers and dropouts working in the informal sector in the rural areas in Benue State (Ngwu, 1993).Also lack of awareness of the opportunities existing for self-improvement and occupational development as well as lack of initiative in their entrepreneurial activities demand that some form of motivational training should be organized for participants in the NFE programme. Such motivational training and entrepreneurial education will enhance their chances of success in self employment.

Each NFE centre should courses of instruction and practical occupational training in trades, crafts, and occupations relevant to the identified felt needs of the people in the area/ community/locality and recommend such trades to the State NFE commission/agency for approval, funding and staffing. Research results on informal sector employment in Third World countries indicate that the trades/occupations in which most people get employed in are clothing production, wood working or carpentry/cabinetmaking/upholstery making and auto/motorcycle mechanics (Chuta and Liedholm, 1979; Callaway 1973; Pen1, 1979; Mabawonnku, 1997; Ngwu 1985). Other marginally viable-trades include iron works/welding, radio/ electrical repairing, painting and sign writing, photography and food processing such as rice/com milling. The importance of clothing production, wood working as well as home construction (including bricklaying) cannot be overemphasized. Those three major trades should be concentrated on at the initial stages of developing the programme. Other trades should be added on as local conditions demand. Detailed equipment lists should be worked out with the cooperation of toolmakers, fabricators/equipment manufacturers, experts in vocational, technical and industrial education and master craftsmen in the informal sector.

In addition to vocational or technical training in a special trade or in two trades as the case may be, there is a need for a general education programme covering these major topics:

*Development studies:* Meaning of development satisfaction of basic needs, generating employment, satisfaction of basic needs, generating employment, integrated rural development, women's development, agricultural development, organization of cooperatives, economic literacy/rural economics.

*Group behavior and group processes:* Formation of groups, setting group goals, sustenance of groups, inter personal communication skills, community life and action, resolution of conflict, work relations, trade union education.

*Management and marketing:* Keeping records costing, control, budgeting, understanding financial statements, sales promotion, export promotion. organizing exhibitions and trade fairs, production management, us of local materials and resources, international trade relations.

*Communication/basic literacy skills:* methods of getting information, basic skills, and business methods. Detailed curricula should always be worked out by each NFE centre staff with the aid of consultants based on identified needs,. The training programme should be flexible enough to respond to local variations in learning and development needs.

**Delivery System:** For effective training and high productivity, the mode of delivery must be flexible as is characteristic of all employment-oriented nonformal and containing education programmes. Training should be organized at both on the job and off the job levels. At the same time, a foundation has to be laid for linking such non formal training, with the established formal occupation / technical education training system in such a way as to allow the NFE participants in the training and production programmes to continue their education in senior technical schools or in professional technical/polytechnic institutions.

The on the job part of the training should be organized in workshops run by artisans and craftsmen who either trained in the initial stages of the programme or are accredited for training purposes by the NFE agency/ commission. Those workshop owners should be made to meet certain requirements in terms of equipment, workshop, layout and number of apprentices allowed at a time. Those conditions will be specified by the NFE commission /agency. The period of on the job training should be arranged to fit into periods of high demand for work in particular occupations. Low season periods should be spent in teaching the theory and principles if the trade in the NFE centres. Experience with projects from the case studies in chapter 7 shows that on the job training takes between half and two thirds of the entire training period, In the Nigerian situation, the NFE commission/agency should be charged with determining the length of training for each trade/occupation. A variable period of training is recommended depending on the trade/occupation.

The off the job component of the training should be organized either at the local government NFE centre level or the zonal NFE centres or in technical colleges and trade centres where space is available or during holiday periods when the regular students are not in session. At the local government level. Mobile training clinics should be used in places where there are no structures for such training. The off-the-job training should be designed to cover, the theoretical aspects of the technical / vocational / trainees for effective occupational performance.

The facilities to be provided in each centre depends on the resources available to the sponsoring agencies, but certain minimum standards have to be met. The idea would be for each NFE centre to serve as:

* A community centre in the tradition of the community school centre movement in the USA in the 1950s
* A model demonstration site for new and sophisticated equipment
* A learning resource centre
* An instructional centre and a pilot small-scale/cottage manufacturing industry.

A variety of teaching and learning processes should be adopted. Such methods as the use of instructional modules, as is currently being practiced by the international labour Organization, group discussions, problem-solving techniques, discussions (a la Freire) individualized learning packages, self-directed learning methods, participant- initiated learning activities, staff-with participant demonstration tutorials should be used. Staff should be expressly trained to use these methods instead of using the lecture method, which has become over used in our education system.

The preferred method of ensuring open entry and open exit, and hence, flexibility in the training programme, would be to use instructional modules. The- International labour Organization usually offers technical assistance in the development and use of this method. Also, in order to allow the trainees/participants to make greater use of independent and centre-facilitated learning systems, Individualized instruction and self-directed learning packages should be used (see Busshoff et al, 1981).

Curriculum development and dissemination should be a continuous process, and as much as possible should be relevant to local resources, needs and conditions, Instructional materials and course outlines should be developed as the need arise and outside consultants in order to ensure relevance and functionality .The National Policy on Education (FGN, 1981:333) states as follows:

The national commission for the Development of Adult Education will be required t explore ways and grant admission to products of the adult education, apprenticeship and other forms of nonformal education in to appropriate sections of the formal education system when and if desired.

Following from the above policy guideline it will be desirable if training is designed to reflect both the employment creation and continuing professional/technical/vocational skills training goals. Therefore, the State NFE commission/agency should work out modalities for linking the NFE training programme with the formal education system, as has been suggested earlier. Certificates of completion of training should be given to graduates of the NFE training programme. Adoption of formal education certificate equivalency examinations and preparation for external examinations like the City and Guilds should not be encouraged since such practices tend to make the programme become institutionalized and certificate oriented, thus losing its flexibility and

defeating the goals and objectives for which it was started. The curriculum development process, discussed above, is one way to infuse originality and relevance into the programme; hence, a rigid syllabus cannot be used here.

With, respect to the employment/self-employment generation objective, placement services should be offered as part of the total package. There is generally high vacancy rate for artisans and craftsmen in the country (National Manpower Board, 1979). In addition, private sponsoring agencies and voluntary organizations as well as communities and village/neighbourhood groups should encourage graduates of the NFE centres to stay on in the rural area s by helping them to form cooperatives or b helping to set them up in business in their localities.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Promoting skills acquisition and employment generation through nonformal education and direct government participation and intervention in the activities of informal sector or small-scale enterprises is one of the current strategies adopted in developing countries for achieving balanced growth and socio-economic development. Development theorists within the human resources development school of thought have put forward agreement s to show that such a strategy usually creates the conditions of the achievement of full employment, more equitable income distribution and relevant skill and knowledge development.

Attention has only recently been given to promoting small-scale enterprises in Nigeria and what has been done has so far ignored the education and training dimensions of such programmes. A nonformal education systems framework for the description of an ideal programme was used to point up aspects of organizational development in the promotion of skills acquisition and employment generation. Following insights gained from a literature search and experience gained from a research project on occupational formation and development in the informal sector (Ngwu, 1986), the following Tec. limn relations are considered appropriate:

* The NFE programme should have as one of its objectives the creation of an alternative training and employment generation organization for school leavers, dropouts as well as youths, women, artisans and craftsmen. Government should organize the programme in partnership with private agencies as well as individuals and communities.
* A stat NFE agency/commission should be set up and NFE centres for training and production activities should first be set up in each of the zones in a state and later in each of the local government head quarters.
* The NFE centres should employ both part-time and full-time staff, who should be recruited locally.
* Participants in the NFE programmes should be mainly school leavers and dropouts, junior secondary school graduates and unemployed artisans and craftsmen. They should be made to sign a bond that they will remain in the rural areas after their training and to set up in business.
* The training programme should be brad enough to include technical /vocational skills training as well as entrepreneurship education, basic literacy, general and civic education. Occupational trades identified as mast popular with school leavers include clothing production or tailoring, carpentry and auto/motor cycle mechanics.
* The occupational or trade skills taught in a centre should be determined *by* local needs. Training should be conducted both on-and off-the job. Instruction in the theory of a trade should be in the NFE centre and part of the practical skills training should be off-the job in accredited workshops A normal training period should last between three and five years depending on the trade/occupation.
* A much as possible, the modalities of linking the NFE programme with the formal education system in such a way that graduates of the programme can continue their studies in senior secondary or technical school should be worked out by the NFE agency/commission. However, the curriculum should be flexible and not set as a syllabus for an external certificate examination.

The idea of education as a panacea for most development problems encountered in the developing world has become generally accepted. The easier application of this idea in national plans for high-level manpower development has even recently been extended to the planning of mass literacy campaigns. This practice is even more strongly pursued now given the fact that development experts have consistently made the point that a threshold literacy rate of 40 percent is needed for any country or society to achieve any meaningful and sustainable development. In the same manner, it has also been shown that nonformal education through apprenticeship training as is being advocated here may be a more relevant form of education than formal sector entrepreneurs (liedholm and Chuta, 1979, Ngwu 3986). However, Olakanpo (1968) found out that the relationship between education and informal sector entrepreneurial success becomes importantly relevant when considerations are based on illiterate, literate and above primary school education. The implication here is that some form of organized education has to be consciously provided for any occupational group in society if that group is expected to make any meaningful contributions to the development of that society.

Current practices in vocational and adult education in the United States of America and many developed countries focus attention on entrepreneurial education for youth and adults. A case has been made for the renewal of the entrepreneurial spirit in the people through the development of a system of non formal occupational/entrepreneurial training which is designed to help relieve the current unemployment of the youth and the poor economic conditions of hi rural areas.

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