PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN FINANCING ADULT EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: Adult education is concerned with developing the adult population of a country to become useful to themselves and their societies. It is aimed at equipping adults with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes required to actualize their full potentials, and then depends on them to, in turn, apply themselves to the all-round development of their societies. In Nigeria, adult education is relevant and strategic in the development of the nation. However, there are many challenges to adult education in Nigeria. One of such challenges is poor funding. The cause of poor funding is government’s inability to single-handedly finance adult education in Nigeria. This, therefore, underscores the need for an alternative means of funding adult education which is very important to national development – a joint effort, sort of, in financing adult education towards sustainable development in Nigeria. To this end, a public-private partnership (PPP) becomes a necessary avenue. This paper examined the nature of public-private partnership in financing adult education and its implications for sustainable development. The authors relied on qualitative data from theoretical sources and recommended ways through which the Nigerian government can build synergy with private individuals and organizations in financing adult education towards sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Adult Education, Public-Private Partnership, Sustainable Development, Nigeria

Introduction

Education is an important tool for development. Nations all over the world invest hugely in education. The reason for this is an expected improvement in the lives of the people and their entire society. As a process, education transmits from one generation to another the necessary knowledge, skills, values and norms required for the development of the individual and his/her society. As an instrument of development, it equips people with the prerequisite knowledge and skills for solving their immediate problems without compromising their ability to meet future needs. Education, therefore, is a fundamental determinant of development in any society.

Education begins with the improvement of man (the human being) as its primary focus. It is the human being who, having undergone the refining process of education, proceeds to apply himself for tangible development and transformation of his society. In this light, Nyerere in Black News (2020) viewed development as what “is for man, by man, and of man”. The primary aim of education, in all its ramifications, is the overall development of man who will in turn develop his society.

World over, countries and governments formulate educational policies and set up various institutions and programmes to achieve their educational goals and objectives. Such policies mostly reflect the realities and demands of the nation. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE) establishes, among other things, the role of education in the sustainable development of the individual and his society. The policy provides various forms of education for personal and national development, among which adult education occupies a very significant place.

Adult education is concerned with developing the adult population of a country to be useful to themselves and to as well utilize their usefulness for the betterment of their nation. It begins by providing the adults – so defined by the society to which they belong – with the body of knowledge, set of skills, aptitudes and attitudes required to actualize their full potentials, and then depends on them to, in turn, apply themselves to the all-round
development of their societies. It is a very relevant type of education as it concentrates on the learning needs of adults who constitute the most active group in the socio-economic development of Nigeria. It prepares adults for a healthy social life and equips them for optimum utilization towards economic growth and development (Dokubo, 2013).

For this reason, the Nigerian government invests both financially and in terms of infrastructure in the functioning of adult education. This is with a view to fostering national development and providing Nigerians with the opportunity of assessing and acquiring quality education irrespective of their social, cultural, economic and religious differences. Governments at federal, state and local levels play significant roles in the funding of adult education. However, there are still many challenges in the successful establishment and running of adult education programmes, as government’s effort is hardly enough. Some of these challenges include: poor payment of facilitators, lack of adequate instructional materials, poor monitoring and evaluation programmes, lack of training and retraining of staff and facilitators, inadequate advocacies, mobilization and sensitization of key stakeholders, establishment and maintenance of non-formal education centres, and lack of accurate and reliable data (Hussain, 2021).

The major cause of these problems can be traced to government’s inability to single-handedly fund and manage adult education in Nigeria (Babalola, 2021). This is evident in the poor allocation of funds to the Ministry of Education in the annual budget. According to Olufemi (2020), the 2021 budget on education, which is ₦742.5 billion out of the total national budget of ₦13.08 trillion, represents just 6.3% of the annual budget, making it “the worst” in 10 years. This trend is against the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO’s) global benchmark for the funding of education, which is 26%. The resultant effect is, therefore, an underfunding of adult education which, ab initio, had received only little or no serious attention in the allocation of the nation’s scarce resources. For instance, Hussain (2021) noted that only ₦1,673,465,959.00 was released, of the total sum of ₦4,531,127,801.00 appropriated to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education between 2015–2019, which is very poor considering the importance of adult education.

There is, therefore, the need for an alternative means of funding this type of education which is needed for national development. It is to this end that a public-private partnership (PPP) becomes an important strategy for financing adult education. Public-private partnership in this case involves a collaboration of government and private efforts towards funding and managing adult education programmes. This effort will go a long way to addressing the challenges of adult education and its attendant consequences on national development. It is the focus of this paper, therefore, to examine the nature of public-private partnership in financing adult education and its implications for sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Conceptual Clarification**

**Adult Education**

The concept of adult education has enjoyed numerous definitions. This is owing to the broad nature of the discipline and the various contexts in which it has been viewed. Oyebamiji (2009) opined that adult education is a response to the educational needs of adults and their societies. Such needs may vary according to individual and community differences; hence the fluid nature of adult education, as it evolves in accordance with the changes in circumstances of individuals and their societies. At one time adult education can be a lifetime opportunity for self-improvement and actualization; at another, it can be a tool for national development and societal advancement. In this light, David in Orobor (2008:4) defined adult education as:

“a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full-time basis (unless full-time programmes which are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, skills, appreciation and attitudes or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal and community problem”.

Providing another comprehensive and all-encompassing definition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 19th General Conference in Nairobi, 1976, as reported in Ihejirika
(2015:24) regarded adult education as:

The entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level and method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in the schools, colleges and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behavior in the two-fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

The above definition explains the meaning, content and scope of adult education. It reveals the different modes in which adult education can take place, whether through formal, non-formal or informal settings. This definition has greatly influenced the educational policies of many nations, including Nigeria. It views adult education as the process by which people continually improve their functionality towards developing themselves and their society. In this regard, adult education becomes a functional type of education which increases people's abilities to perform effectively and productively in the development of their society. And it corroborates the view of Barikor (2015) that education is man's greatest tool for his survival and that of his environment.

Through adult education, people become happier and creative in their daily lives. They are in greater harmony with others and their environment. At home, parents become better at their roles. In the community, people become better leaders, neighbours and citizens. In the industry, workers become more refined, and business men and women, more successful and productive. Adult education, thus, is a continuum of activities through which persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop themselves with the purpose of reaching their full potentials and partaking in the sustainable development of their society. It is a lifelong education concerned with the development of man and his environment.

Sustainable Development

The word sustainability is no longer new in the register of development. It refers to the ability to endure over a long period of time. Generally, sustainability is regarded as a continuum, or the capacity for something to exist without termination. Initially having no place at all in the vocabulary of development experts, the phrase sustainable development has now become a widely accepted and important consideration in many development policies across the world. In virtually all aspects of human endeavour, there is now the need for sustainable development. Hence, we have social sustainability, cultural sustainability, political sustainability, environmental sustainability and economic sustainability (Oyebamiji & Adekola, 2008).

The term sustainable development has received many definitions from different authors and institutions. The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defined sustainable development as “the use of environment and resources to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This definition justifies the view of the environmentalists that the vegetation, ecosystem and man’s entire environment must be protected from degradation and possible extinction. In man's quest for development and industrialization, he destroys his environment and depletes the material resources provided by nature for his sustenance. People build houses, industries, roads without considering their obstructions of natural erosion channels, thereby blocking these channels and causing erosion problems for future generations. Governments build infrastructure with little or no consideration for need of land and vegetation, or the usefulness of such projects in the future. Trees are felled for timber without plans for replanting. Policies are made to affect the socio-economic condition of people. The question of sustainable development, thus, is: How do all these developments in society today affect the lives of the people positively without having any negative effect on their survival tomorrow?

Boutrous Ghali, in Onyeozu (2007), described sustainable development as the practice of utilizing renewable resources and avoiding the over-consumption of non-renewable resources. This corroborates the assertion that sustainable development is concerned with the preservation and regeneration of useful resources for the future improvement of man and his environment, albeit it is not concerned with man's physical environment only, but goes beyond the physical to affecting all aspects of the quality of man's life. It is in view of the aforesaid that the United Nations in its Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) summarized in
essence that:

Sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potentials to meet human needs and aspirations (p.57).

Therefore, from a general point of view, one can define sustainable development as the process of conserving, reserving, using and managing resources for the purpose of development, such that these resources improve man's life and standard of living in his present society without compromising the usefulness of such resources for future development.

Public-Private Partnership

A partnership is an agreement where parties or partners agree to co-operate to advance their mutual interests. This agreement could be between government, schools, employers, professional associations, employees and their representatives, the local community and combinations of organizations. A partnership agreement may be written and stated in clear terms, defining the rights, authorities, and responsibilities of the partners involved. This kind of agreement arises in response to the weakness of sole proprietorship. When persons pull resources together for the purpose of ensuring effectiveness and survival of an enterprise, it is known as partnership (Gabriel, 2018). When this kind of partnership occurs between the government or its agencies and private individuals or organizations, it is referred to as public-private partnership (PPP).

PPP is a generic term for the relationships formed between the private sector and public bodies often with the aim of introducing private sector resources/or expertise in order to help deliver public sector assets and services. The concept and practice of public-private partnership has attracted various meanings. There is a debate as to what constitute and define a PPP. Thus, Umar and Tubosun (2016) observed that “there is no universal consensus about the definition of public-private partnership”. However, the authors stated that a public-private partnership is characterized by certain elements, which they noted as follows:

1. The infrastructure or service is funded, in whole or in part, by the private partner.
2. Risks are distributed between the public partner and private partner and are allocated to the party best positioned to manage the risk.
3. A public-private partnership structure is complex and involves multiple parties and relatively high transactions.

A public-private partnership (PPP) is usually a long-term business relationship between two or more public and private sectors. It usually involves the private sector financing government projects and services. The use of public-private partnership is in vogue in many countries and is used in the building of schools, hospitals, transport systems, as well as other public infrastructures (Wikipedia, 2021). Maigida in Oviawe (2018:75) defined public-private partnership as “a joint mutual agreement entered into by the government and private bodies to provide services to people based on established terms.” In this light, he viewed PPP as a mechanism of bringing together public authorities and private stakeholders to devise, finance, build, manage or preserve a project of public interest.

The National Council for Public-Private Partnership in the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) (2021), defined public-private partnership as a contract between a public agency and a private sector entity through which the resources of each sector, as well as risks and benefits, are shared in delivering services or facilities for the use of the general public. This definition views public-private partnership as a joint effort of both the public and private sectors aimed at providing public service. It further corroborates the view of The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships (2016) which sees public-private partnership as “a co-operative venture between the public and private sectors, built on the expertise of each partner, that best meets clearly defined public needs through the appropriate allocation of resources, risks and rewards.” Umar and Tubosun (2016) further stressed that a PPP is a contractual agreement between a public agency, whether federal, state or local, and a private sector entity in the provision of social services among which education is included. Therefore, public-private partnership approach can be a reliable way of ensuring adequate funding of adult education in Nigeria.
Historical Dimension to Financing Adult Education in Nigeria

Although the history of adult education in Nigeria can be traced to the pre-colonial era, there exists no available record as to the funding of adult education during this period. Adult education in Nigeria before the coming of the Europeans was practically a family or communal intervention to develop the individual into a more functional member of his society. Activities such as initiation, traditional religious education, age grade, story-telling, festival, cultural displays, apprenticeship and short-term attachments, were either at the cost of the individual, the family or the community. There was no organized governmental plan for the establishment and funding of adult education. By the 14th Century, Islamic scholars and traders taught Arabic literacy and the study of Koran in the Muslim north of Nigeria, just as their Christian counterparts did in the southern and central parts of the country in the 15th Century (Fafunwa, 1974). However, the purpose of these activities was mainly religious and economic. Adult education was aimed at acquainting the indigenous people with foreign religious practices as well as preparing them to participate in the emerging commerce of the time. And there was no organized governmental plan for the funding of adult education.

The first attempt by government to fund adult education in any part of Nigeria was in 1872, during the colonial period. The colonial administration provided an annual sum of £30 as educational support for the three missionary societies operating in Lagos—the Church Missionary Society, Wesleyan Methodist and the Catholic Mission. By 1877, the government increased the grant to £200 per annum for each of the missions and sustained this provision for five years until the establishment of the Education Ordinance of 1882 (Abdulrahman, 2014). The Phelps Stokes Commission reinforced the involvement of the colonial administration in the funding of adult education in Nigeria. The commission was established in 1920 with the mandate to investigate into the educational needs of the African people. Following the report of the commission in 1922, the colonial administration set out to improve and broaden the scope of adult education in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Part of the recommendation of the commission was the adaptation of education to suit the needs of individuals and their communities. It was an attempt to design an educational plan that will cater for the indigenous needs of Africans. As Abdulrahman (2014:116) puts it, “the genuine intention to educate Africans in line with their needs and peculiar orientation started with the establishment of the Phelps Stokes Commission.”

However, Ibeh (2008) argued that the financing of adult education by the colonial administration did not fully happen until after the Second World War (1939 – 1945). There was a need to bridge the educational gap created by the war. By the end of the war, many returning school children were already over-aged and many of them adults. Hence, the Nigerian government and leaders began to fund an alternative form of education which will help students meet up with lost years of education. During this period, the Nigerian elites took proactive steps in providing primary education not only for children but also for the adult population who were denied educational opportunities during the war.

The effect of the war on the socio-political development of Nigeria also triggered the movement for political independence and educational advancement. The period towards the end of the war ushered in the use of mass education and adult civic education to mobilize the Nigerian people towards self-determination. It was a period of political emancipation as well as educational and economic expansion in Nigeria. For instance, in 1949, the Lagos State Government provided adult education for employees in commerce and industry. The Nigerian government also organized community development programmes in various parts of the country. The aim was to have a more literate and empowered Nigerian society through the education of the people (Fafunwa, 1974; Imam, 2012).

It is therefore apt to say that the period between 1945 to 1960 was one of the most significant eras in the development of adult education in Nigeria. There was increased funding of adult education for political, economic and educational expansion, as well as community development.
Roles of Adult Education in Engendering Sustainable Development

There are many ways through which adult education can ensure sustainable development in Nigeria. Tawari and Oghenekohwo (2019) asserted that there is a significant relationship between literacy education and sustainable development. Through adult education, the widening gap in access to education can be bridged, especially in a country like Nigeria where the formal school system has many faults.

Adult education is beneficial to both the individual and the society. It promotes social cohesion, equips adults with life skills, knowledge and competences. It goes beyond this to even having a more positive effect on the economy (Ozturk, 2001). Through adult education, the individual gets a better prospect for increased and sustainable income; he or she becomes employable; people attain an improved standard of living; there is greater social inclusion and engagement in service; people become more innovative and competitive, and there is an overall improvement in governance. Adult education can, thus, cause a significant change in return on investment for governments in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Tawari and Oghenekohwo (2019) emphasized certain areas of funding for adult education that are important to sustainable development in Nigeria. They include: visual literacy, environmental literacy, health literacy, financial literacy, financial literacy, health literacy, environmental literacy, global awareness and civic literacy.

1. **Visual literacy:** This form of adult education enhances the visualization skills of the learners, to enable them decipher, interpret, direct patterns and communicate using imagery. As a result of change in digital technology – the advancement in graphic user interface of the internet and the integration of voice, video and data into one digital form – there has been an increase I the use of visual imagery. Gadgets such as
smart phones, digital cameras, streaming video, are now useful in communicating ideas for sustainable development.

2. Environmental literacy: This type of literacy helps adults become more knowledgeable in the understanding of their environment. The funding of environmental literacy for adult in Nigeria will enable adults have better understanding of their environment and help them protect their environment against environmental degradation.

3. Health literacy: The funding of health literacy is to enable adult Nigerians access and use quality information in making health-related decisions. Poor health literacy can limit adults” access to quality healthcare. It can hinder the ability to comply with health instructions and affect their medication negatively, which can have a terrible effect on healthcare of adults.

4. Financial literacy: The funding of financial literacy programmes will improve the skills of adults in making informed economic decisions. In a developing country like Nigeria, adults need to be equipped with the right knowledge and skills to invest wisely and productively. This underscores the importance of funding of financial literacy.

5. Global awareness: Funding of this type of adult education to keep the adults abreast with global changes and issues. It prepares adults to collaborate and work with people of different cultural, religious, ideological background and lifestyles in an open camaraderie as well as mutual respect, justice and equity.

6. Civic literacy: Funding for civic literacy is for adults to articulate, appreciate, understand and influence civic decision-making process. The purpose is to encourage lifelong learning among adult Nigerians in order to equip them for civic participation.

Government Effort in Financing Adult Education in Nigeria

The government has made considerable effort in financing adult education in Nigeria. However, government effort towards the funding of adult education in Nigeria has been one of “scorn and neglect”. This, as argued by some scholars, is a result of the culture of poor interest in adult education which prevailed at an early time in Europe and was introduced by the colonialists in Nigeria. Even though government got involved in adult education to some extent, there was no visible financial commitment towards its growth and development until 1946. The paltry sum of £304,070 out of a total sum of £5,174,193 colonial education expenditure given to adult education in 1946 goes further to confirm the unserious attitude toward adult education (Ibeh, 2008).

Ibeh (2008) added that this attitude prevailed in government circles for many years and even carried over to the first post independent government. And so, this insignificant contribution to adult education by the colonial administration perhaps fueled the complete lack of interest in it by the first post-independent government, as no financial provision for adult education was made in the first ever National Development Plan (1962 – 1968). By the Second National Development Plan (1970 – 1974), adult education had a total expenditure of ₦1.46 million. By the Third National Development Plan (1975 – 1980), it had ₦6.96 million, and by the Fourth National Development Plan (1981 – 1985), the government had ₦19 million set aside for adult education.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) was adopted in 1977 and modified in 1981. The policy provides for equal access to education, including continuing and further education, and commits to the eradication of illiteracy and promotion of lifelong learning (NPE, 2004). Beyond the articulation of desired outcomes, nothing much has been achieved in terms of significant development of adult and non-formal education. For instance, 28 years after the adoption of the policy, the literacy rate for Nigerians 15 years and above is about 66% (UNESCO, 2004). There has hardly been a sustainable, virile, and coherently comprehensive set of programmes demonstrating government’s commitment to adult education as a strategic priority in Nigeria’s development.

Although the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) was established in 1990 to monitor and coordinate adult education programmes, as well as to conduct research related to the development of adult and non-formal education in the country, adult and non-formal education programmes
continue to operate mainly as desperate, piecemeal activities that are not integrated into a coherent purposeful strategy in pursuit of a national development vision. Many government-sponsored adult and non-formal education programmes have been chronically anaemic due to inadequate funding (Ossai & Nwalado, n.d.).

The table below shows the trend of funding of Adult and Non-formal education in Nigeria for a period of six years (2015 – 2020).

**Table 1: Federal budgetary allocations to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR APPROPRIATION</th>
<th>RELEASING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>₦370,000,000.00 ₦185,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>₦1,375,828,656.00 ₦493,886,998.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>₦1,140,828,656.00 ₦570,414,327.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>₦678,988,837.00 ₦203,696,651.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>₦965,481,652.00 ₦220,467,981.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>₦2,056,120,503.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>₦5,587,248,304.00 ₦1,673,465,958.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted and modified from Hussain (2021)

The table 1 above revealed that 50% of the appropriation bill was for all the responsibilities of adult education for 2015 fiscal year. In the subsequent year 2016 there was sharp decrease in funding, only 35% of the capital appropriation was released to fund adult and non-formal education programmes for the year. However, in 2017 fiscal year, 50% of the appropriation was also released. There was a decline in funding and 30% was released to this section. 22.8% of the appropriation capital was released in 2019. While in the 2020 fiscal year the corona virus pandemic came with its ugly head that brought almost everything to stand still with most almost all the academic institutions closed for more than nine months. It is evident that the only 36.9% of the total capital appropriation to adult education in the year 2015-2019 were released to fund adult and non-formal education programmes in Nigeria. The 2021 budget on education, which is ₦742.5 billion out of the total national budget of ₦13.08 trillion, and represents just 6.3% of the annual budget, is another sign of how poorly funded adult education will be for the year 2021 (Hussain, 2021).

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the major challenge facing adult education in Nigeria is the unavailability of funds and poor utilization of limited resources. This problem cannot be solved by governments, organizations or institutions alone. There is, therefore, a need to harness all available human and material resources towards establishing a more functional adult education system in Nigeria (Ossai & Nwalado, n.d.). And it is this need that underscores the importance of a public-private partnership approach of financing adult education towards engendering sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Public-Private Partnership Approach in Financing Adult Education in Nigeria**

A public-private partnership (PPP) approach towards financing adult education in Nigeria will involve the collaboration of government and private individuals or organizations. Public private partnership has been defined as arrangements between governments and private sector entities for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services. Such partnerships are characterized by the sharing of investment, risk, responsibility and reward between the partners (Egbewole, 2011). The PPP is a very important developmental strategy for developing countries. It is a model which has proven effective in the development of the economic, transport and healthcare and educational systems of many countries.

Oviawe (2018) explained various models of public-private partnership for vocational adult education in countries such as Germany, Japan and Singapore. In Germany, for instance, the government delegates the responsibility of curriculum and assessment to a coalition of labour representatives, business organizations and educators. The business plays a given complex role managing the system by monitoring the quality of training provided by firms in the vocational education programme. Under this system of vocational training, trainees undergo 1-2 days
training in the public training schools and 3-4 days training in companies. This system relies on the sharing of cost among companies and government. For instance, the schools are funded by government while companies pay remuneration to apprentices.

There is another model of the PPP in Japan. This model is based on a local relationship and depends on high school staff correctly analysing the skills of potential graduates and their fit with academic and vocational needs of employers. Here, Japan’s manufacturing system come from high schools, which have a network of relationships with hiring managers that allows them to place their most accomplished students preferentially. This model encourages government use of incentives such as tax levies to promote training.

A similar system exists in Singapore. This model encourages firm level training through government policy known as ‘Human Resource Development’ or ‘Workforce Development System’. This model enables Singapore to train its workforce to truly state-of-the-art standards, to engage industry as a close partner in training, to enable students to train in an environment that is designed for training, but which, at the same time, is similar enough to the real thing, in order to present challenges to the students very much like those they will face in the workplace. It combines the advantages of a first-rate apprenticeship system with the advantages of first-rate school-based vocational education system (Popovic, 2021).

**Implications of Financing Adult Education on Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

The United Nations (UN) recognizes adult education in its Agenda 2030 as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN charges all Member States to promote and fund adult education in order to create learning opportunities for all adults. However, the impact of funding adult education goes beyond providing lifelong learning opportunities for adults to affecting other serious socio-economic issues like poverty, hunger, healthcare, well-being, gender equality, environmental protection as well as responsible consumption and production of non-renewable resources. The implication of this is the sustainable development of the economic, healthcare and social life of the people.

However, Popovic (2021) noted that there are arguments that the benefits of adult education are not visible as they can not be properly measured in terms of direct utilization or commercialization. But one can also argue that such a conclusion about the impact of adult education is not exactly correct. Such a statement could rather be made about other forms of education which are completely restricted to the formal school system, but not adult education. For adult education itself is designed to meet the immediate educational needs of adult, and can be measured in terms of changes in the behaviour, attitudes and aptitudes of learners as a result of the knowledge and skills acquired.

In the foregoing, Bisovsky (2018) argued that the transfer of learning outcomes obtained from adult education is more direct and also quicker than in initial education or training that is part of the formal educational system. This, he stressed, is because most adult learners are already employed or accept a new job soon after successfully completing a continuing education programme and put their knowledge and skills into practice immediately. He further posited that adult education is effective and investments in adult education by the state, the economic sector and also individuals pay off; therefore, governments and private institutions need to build up synergy in financing adult education towards ensuring sustainable development in Nigeria.

The importance of financing adult education for sustainable development of the individual, economy and society cannot be overemphasized. The implication of financing adult education is first on the development of the individual, which will in turn impact economic and societal development, thereby fostering sustainable development. The implication of financing adult education on sustainable development in Nigeria can, therefore, be summarized as follows:

For individuals:

1. Adult education increases their employability, thereby leading to monetary effects.
2. Increases their well-being in terms of better mental and physical health.
3. Increases their self-confidence.
4. Provides social benefits such as an increased social circle and civic commitment.
5. Improves personal and interpersonal capabilities, such as self-esteem and empathy.

For the economy:

1. Adult education increases innovative capacity.
2. Improves competitiveness through increased productivity and innovation.
3. Encourages growth due to increased employment and innovative capabilities.
4. Allows an increase in tax payments.

For the society:

1. Adult education improves health of the population
2. Reduces criminal activity.
3. Increases sustainability and preservation of environment.
4. Promotes social cohesion and respect.
5. Reinforcing social/political outlook, thus development of democracy.
6. Increases active citizenship.
7. Increases cultural integration.

(Bisovsky, 2018).

Conclusion

There is no gainsaying the importance of adult education to sustainable development in Nigeria. It is a viable tool for human and societal advancement. In Nigeria, governments at all levels can instrument adult education in engendering sustainable development through various public-private partnership models. This paper has examined the nature of a public-private partnership approach towards financing adult education and the implication for sustainable development in Nigeria. This approach will go a long way to curbing the challenges accompanied with poor funding of adult education. Through public-private partnerships, both the government and private organizations can plan and implement more effective strategies of funding and managing adult education programmes, despite the poor budgetary allocation to the education sector, which will help keep the nation on the path of sustainable development.

Suggestions

Based on literature reviewed on this study, especially with regards to how effectively the public-private partnership (PPP) approach was used in financing adult education in other developed and developing countries, the following suggestions were made:

1. Public-private partnership should be encouraged to ensure adequate financing of education programmes across all parts of Nigeria.
2. Governments at all levels should make legislations that will foster public-private partnership in financing adult education in Nigeria.
3. There should be collaboration between government or its agencies and private organizations in managing and supervising adult education programmes in Nigeria.
4. The Nigerian government should review its National Policy on Education to allow for a public-private partnership alternative in financing adult education.

References