

Counselling Adult Learner for Community Participation in Development of Literacy Centers in Akampa Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper focus on how adult literacy education and community development are explored to determine how adult literacy education might be used to further the goals of community development in Akampa Local Government Area of Cross River State. While there are parallels between these two disciplines, there are also barriers to overcome if an integrated approach to dealing with community issues is realized. This paper reflected an interest in advancing a comprehensive approach to community development in communities with limited economic resources, low-level literacy and limited access. It seeks to address the issue of whether adult literacy education programs have a meaningful role to play in community development. The strengths of participatory approaches such as community-based literacy, and community development principles such as collective action, shared values, participation, social justice, political awareness and action, comprehensiveness, empowerment, and learning and reflection, facilitate an interdisciplinary approach. putting these three perspectives sought to stimulate and provoke the adult learner to critically analyse issues around him/her and be able to suggest practical solutions that will lead to his/her personal development and that of the rural community, all within the cultural setting. promotes confidence as an individual in a modern society, and as a member of a national and world community.

Keywords: *Counselling Adult, Community, Learner, Participation , Literacy, Development.*

Introduction

Counselling is learning orientated process carried on by a professionally competent counsellor in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, to assist the client with methods within context of the total personnel to learn more about self, accept self, and learn how to put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly perceived, realistically defined goals, to enable the client become a happier and productive member of society. According to Effiom, Cyril & Branda(2020) Counselling of group of person will also reduce assist professional counselling program in the creation of curricula and education experiences that can address counselling programme. This is very essential for adult students who need to find themselves by weighing the pros and cons of each need to aid necessary adaptation to their new found role but it is highly neglected in Akampa Local Government Area of Cross River State. Oduaran (2000) stated that social and economic changes occur so quickly that one barely has enough time to deal with one given change before another one manifests, so in this 21st century, adults are constantly developing and applying a repertoire of concepts, strategies and since education is perceived as an instrument for human development this has increased learner's interest and interest in learners needs. Adult students in Akampa Local Government Area need effective learning environment, and lack of it affects the distinct goals and expectation in education especially persistence in learning. The objective of this study is therefore to look at the challenges confronting adult students, and ways counselling services can aid adaptation in psychological, emotional, physical and social roles. As Adult education develops and educational experiences of students changes,

the need to provide adult students with counselling services increases. The changes brought more complex learning situations which pose greater threat for students facing the ‘physio-psychological, social, and economic changes taking place at the different stages of life’ (Oduaran 2000).

Adult Students and Counselling

Counselling concern is to assist in the development of education, social, personal and career or occupational choice but adult students have more than the four key areas confronting them. Counselling services therefore to adult students may be performing the following function.

- To assist the adult students to create new, more flexible arrangement that will aid persistence, through prioritization of daily activities, especially assignments, time spent on work, hobbies, family or friends and makes decision how to manage the time well.
- To help adult students to adopt behaviours that are positive through the development of attitudes that build up self confidence.
- To assist adult students to see clearly the aims, goals and ideas of learning situation and be able to know, what has to be done, when to do it and how to do it. It follows up with the client to monitor the progress or attainability of the goals set.
- To assist adult students in making career and occupational decision with methods of measuring knowledge and skills like inventories, questionnaire, and tests to verify or refute any claim.
- To assist in the promotion of advocacy as a tool for raising the profile of adult students and lifelong learning.
- To keep records and prepare reports related to the needs of adult students, which will later form baseline data for further studies.
- To make referral in difficult situation.

According to Effiom, Cyril & Brenda (2020) as professional education counsellors continues to see an increase in the numbers of individuals who are stigmatized, the need for better understanding about the perception of the stigmatized and how they can be integrated into the society to help them become productive is essential.

COMPONENTS OF ADULT LITERACY IN AKAMPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE.

As you can see, adult literacy can be looked at in a number of different ways. In planning an adult literacy program, you have to consider all of them, and decide what your community needs and what you have the resources to do. The areas that are generally referred to when adult literacy is discussed are:

- **Reading:** "Functional literacy" is often defined as the ability to read at a particular grade level.
- **Writing:** Written literacy might best be considered to be an individual's capacity to write what she needs to in clear and reasonably accurate language.
- **Math:** "Numeracy" or "mathematical literacy" usually refers to the ability to perform the basic mathematical operations - addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and whatever else - normally needed in everyday life.
- **English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL):** The teaching of English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills to those for whom it is not the native language.
- **Cultural literacy:** Familiarity with the background knowledge that is everywhere in American culture. This can include everything from the great classics of western literature to knowing the names of Elvis Presley hits from the '50's.

THE USES OF LITERACY

- *To improve their employment situations.* Whether that meant gaining more responsibility on their jobs, becoming more competent at what they did, being promoted, finding a better job or career, or just being able to work at all, most learners felt that improving their skills could lead to improving their work life and finances.
- *To better parents, spouses, and family members.* Reading to children or helping them with homework, keeping better contact with faraway relatives, even writing love letters to husbands or wives were all cited as reasons for learning to read and write better.
- *To better citizens, and to participate in the political life of their communities.* Learners wanted to be able to read about and understand the issues in political campaigns or local controversies, so they could make their own reasoned decisions, and wanted to be able to work in their communities to influence or change the things they cared about.

COMMUNITY NEED

Communities can assess and interpret their own needs in a number of different ways. Once the communities determine to start a program, it's necessary to take a careful look at the community and determine how many people need what kinds of literacy services. Listen to the community to understand how it views the issue of literacy, and what kinds of needs resonate with its residents. Some community reasons for establishing a program may be:

- **Economic concerns.** Do local employers have difficulty finding qualified and competent workers to keep their businesses and industries competitive? Is the local unemployment rate high? Is the area depressed? Literacy could be closely related to all of these conditions.
- **Immigration.** A community may experience growth in its immigrant community, creating a need for ESOL services. Employers, merchants and service industries, and health services may have difficulty communicating with immigrants, often because of cultural as well as language differences. The local schools may also be seriously affected.

- **Children's education.** It is often mentioned that the one clearly significant literacy statistic that applies under virtually any circumstances is that mothers (i.e. primary caregivers) with low literacy levels have children with low literacy levels. If the community and its schools are concerned about the literacy of children, one component of addressing the issue may be literacy services for parents, or a family literacy program that works with parents and children together.
- **Health issues.** Literacy is often a factor in health issues, particularly preventive health and health maintenance. Do parents understand the need for good prenatal and infant care? Are elderly residents aware of how their medication is to be taken and stored? Does everyone understand the instructions to be followed if the water treatment plant breaks down? Concern for public health may be a motivator for literacy services.
- **Quality of life.** In many communities, raising the quality of life for all citizens is a priority. Thus, a community may decide that literacy services are important simply because there are community members who need them. More often, this concern links with one or more of the others mentioned to strengthen the determination of the community to support a program.

Community Learning and Development Centre in Akampa Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

The idea of the establishment of Community Learning and Development Centres, slowly being introduced by the government, links well with community learning groups. It would be necessary to create space for the community members where they could come to learn.

The idea would also, in the long run, help the people to develop a culture of reading and writing in particular as well as the promotion of lifelong learning in Akampa Local Government Area. A learning culture needs to be strengthened in most of the communities. One important aspect to be considered in this regard should be the incorporation of consciousness raising and mobilization for learning within community group learning activities.

During the researchers interviews and from the researcher observation and discussions with the different groups and group leaders, it was discovered that forming and sustaining groups was becoming difficult. One community member expressed that: "People in the communities are moving from group activities towards individual activities for self enrichment." (individualization).

Thus, the development of Centres and the promotion of Community Group Learning should be to enhance social interaction and collective development. The Community Learning and Development Centres, if realized, will have to address some of these problems.

At the community centers,

- 1) community members would benefit from all the activities and support at the same time and at the same place.
- 2) programs can easily be coordinated and integrated to suit the busy time table of those adult learners involved.

3) the different organizations will also benefit from the fact that groups could easily be found, utilized, and supported when necessary.

Some were motivated by the pleasure, socialization, and a positive feeling about the activities in the group. Being away from home responsibilities and spending hours with friends were some of the motivations.

Motivation for group learning

- Needs Identification
- Clear goals
- Relevant Activities
- Benefits
- Accomplishments
- Usages
- Identity
- Internal motives

Problems/factors that hinder

- Lack of group learning skills
- Conflicts and Negative attitudes
- Lack of cooperation
- Discouragements
- Lack of leadership
- Lack of skills
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of resources and support
- Lack of commitments
- Lack of strategies.

Participation in Adult Education for Community Development

Community development projects inherently involve adult education. Regardless of the topics addressed – health, adult literacy, agriculture, and so on – participants are taught by practitioners while also learning informally through personal interactions (Naidoo, 2001). Thus, participation in lifelong learning through community development activities ‘is critical to sustainable and democratic development’ (Naidoo, 2001, p. 730). Practitioners in such projects must decide whether, how and why participants should determine the content, goals and methods of programmes intended for their benefit. In 1970, Paulo Freire asked ‘how can the oppressed ... participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?’ (p. 48). Freire argued that for full human development, people must ‘participate in the process of their own education’, including developing ‘program, content, method, objectives and so on’ (Bell, Gaventa, Peters, Horton, & Freire, 1990, p. 145). Freirean notions of participation have powerfully shaped international development projects with marginalised people. The idea would also, in the long run, help the people to develop a culture of reading and writing in particular as well as the promotion of lifelong learning in Akampa Local Government Area. A learning culture needs to be strengthened in most of the communities. One important aspect to be considered in this regard should be the incorporation of consciousness raising and mobilization for learning within community group learning activities.

Roles and positions in the learning environment

The audience are people who ‘help’, work with communities, and acknowledge feelings and beliefs . The term ‘animator’ positions the educator as an active agent: ‘the talking machine’ (Goffman, 1981, p. 144) who leads the learning experience. In Hope and Timmel’s (1999) writing, the animator helps ‘people unveil their situations[,] providing a framework for thinking, creative, active participants to consider a common problem and find solutions’ by helping ‘participants to describe, analyze [sic], suggest, decide, and plan’ . The agents in the training, then, are not the learners, but the animators; this phrasing restricts learners’ ability to participate as curriculum developers towards their own liberation. The animators and learners are divided: One is a knowing entity that directs and the other an unknowing entity that is directed. The dialectic is reiterated through the emotional connection the animator develops with the learners as they identify ‘issues on which the community have strong feelings’. Despite the power imbalance, the curriculum calls animators and learners to be emotionally united in their effort to ‘break through the deadening sense of apathy and powerlessness which paralyses the poor in many places’.

Conclusion

Counselling therefore helps adult student to develop self-awareness, build relationships, improve and change their live. It helps the struggling student’s build their strength, become highly motivated in their learning situation and make the environment a multidisciplinary environment where knowledge is acquired, skills developed and attitudes changed. The idea would also, in the

long run, help the people to develop a culture of reading and writing in particular as well as the promotion of lifelong learning in Akampa Local Government Area. A learning culture needs to be strengthened in most of the communities. One important aspect to be considered in this regard should be the incorporation of consciousness raising and mobilization for learning within community group learning activities.

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