

Developing Education Based on National Values: A Case of Non-Formal Adult Education in Uganda

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Abstract: Access to education is one of the highest priorities on Uganda's development agenda. To achieve the national development goals, non-formal adult education is increasingly being used as an essential tool for the extension of literacy for development across all sectors. Government caters for non-formal education largely for children who still do not access education for various reasons such as social, economic and environmental. These children include; over age, children in pastoral areas and fishing villages and those in labour who are too old to return to school. Several initiatives have been undertaken by government in collaboration with other stakeholders with a view to enable the out of school youth benefit from education through alternative education delivery modalities. Apart from "non-formal education for children and youths", several adult education programmes and activities in Uganda are in place. These contain a vital and significant educational component consisting of such elements as vocational training in various skills, artistic activities including theatre and drama, extra-mural studies, community development and club activities, various mass mobilisation programmes for general or specific adult groups and varied forms of extension work. This study is a review paper about how nationalistic values contribute to the development of education, especially, non-formal adult education which in turn is believed to contribute to national growth and development.

Key words: Adult education, development, national development plan, non-formal education, priorities, development

INTRODUCTION

The need for a transformed society is a vision for each country. More and more people, many well beyond school going age (Boyle, 1981) are looking for opportunities to expand their intellectual horizons to develop better understanding of society and its institutions and to enable them to cope with rapid change. Others, confronted by growing complexity of technology, seek retraining to upgrade their skills or prepare for entirely new careers (Boyle, 1981) and on the other hand, groups and individuals are pressing for new options in society, all looking forward to education as the key sector to greater opportunity and fulfillment.

This implies that the scope of non-formal adult education has increased significantly more so in this 21st century. The expert of non-formal/adult education is found virtually in every area (Boyle, 1981) of the nation (be it health, social, political, economic, information and

technology, etc). In such a situation, national ideologies or values are obviously needed to shape sustainable development.

For Uganda's case, like other developing countries, the development needs are enormous. This therefore calls for the contribution of many fields including localised studies based on local values and a country's national ideologies. In this study therefore, am to justify how nationalistic values can contribute to educational development, especially non-formal adult education which plays a vital role in national development.

HISTORY OF NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN UGANDA

Modern non-formal adult education in Uganda dates to the coming of Arab traders in the 1840's, European explorers in the 1870's, missionaries and colonial officials in the late 19th century. The missionaries

taught their new adult converts and lay brother's various skills including blacksmith work, carpentry, shoe-making, molding tiles, brick-making, masonry, book binding, printing, etc., this was in addition to literacy, numeracy and agriculture (MGLSD., 1995). Though the mentioned skills were being offered, it's noted that at a certain point, there emerged a state of stagnation for quite long (MGLS., 2006). There was very little done by the colonial government to develop adult education apart from teaching adults to grow cash crops such as cotton, coffee and tea. After 1945 and up to independence in 1962, the colonial government became actively involved in adult education; many adult education institutions and programmes were initiated and developed (Odurkene and Okello, 1985; MGLS., 2008). These include.

In 1946, the Public Relations and Social Welfare Department was established, marking the beginning of a systematic involvement of government in non-formal adult education programmes. The department was staffed with resettled ex-servicemen and composed of two sections; Information and Broadcasting section and Community Development section. Important adult education institutions created under the department included: Uganda Council for Women, Radio Uganda and the Local Government and Community Training Centre at Nsamizi.

Creation of the Department of Community Development in 1952; the department paid more attention to the provision of non-formal adult education. Establishment of District Farm Institutes (DFIs) between 1957 and 1962 under the Ministry of Agriculture for training local government staff and provide local chiefs and progressive small scale farmers with progressive agriculture skills.

Establishment of Rural Training Centers (RTCs); alongside and sharing facilities with DFIs with the aim of providing a practical demonstration of a new and improved way of life for adults who passed through them. The RTCs were multi-purpose and ran multi-disciplinary courses including civic education, home economics, agriculture, handcrafts, etc.

Health education by Ministry of Health was also carried out with returning ex-servicemen were trained as health orderlies and used to demonstrate a hygienic way of life throughout the country. The establishment of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at Makerere College (now Makerere University) in 1953 with the mission of spreading the principles and quality of university adult study to the majority of people who were not able to attend its internal courses.

Other adult initiatives included the creation of an education section under MOH to spearhead health education, opportunities offered to prisoners and prisoner

warders under Ministry of Internal Affairs to learn various skills, formation of cooperative unions, trade unions and multi-national and national companies that offered adult education and training to their members and workers.

In Uganda's history, it has been noted that after Independence in 1962 and up to 1971, the period was marked by real growth in the development of non-formal adult education due to existing national ideologies adopted on the Independence Day. All institutions created during the colonial days continued to grow and the number of adult education institutions, programmes, personnel and learners increased. In 1967, The Department of Extra Mural Studies was renamed the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) and provided further and continuing education programmes of various types, offered through correspondence and residential studies. Other government departments which offered non-formal/adult education included; Health, Cooperatives, Agriculture, Community Development, Local Government, Veterinary, Labor, Information and Education.

Many other government institutions were also formed during the first decade of independence including the Institute of Public Administration (now Uganda Management Institute), the Law Development Centre and The Fisheries Training Institute, The Reformatory School of Young Offenders, The Management Training and Advisory Centre, etc. Several organizations and associations that promoted non-formal/adult education were established and/or sponsored by government (MGLS., 2008).

Projects and programmes geared towards adult education initiated during this period included; The mass literacy campaign, The MOH's Home and Environment Competition, The MOE's Namutamba Project, promotion of newspapers, periodicals, journals and among others.

During the period of 1971-1980, there was political unrest which led to the weakening and a setback in the education system of Uganda and also other social services and the economy at large lagged behind because of the embargos which were imposed on the country and the Amin regime at the time. This led to a huge backlog of illiteracy aspirants of further education and training and wastage of manpower. The economic hardships, the politically unstable conditions at the time and the uncertainty forced most of the adult education organisations and activities to decline and eventually came to a standstill.

After the tremendous improvements achieved by Uganda due to the improved political environment and with the current developments the world over, there has been revival of non-formal adult education with a number of government adult education institutions rejuvenated

and revitalized with the help of the government and development partners, under the Economic Recovery Programmes. Supported by government policies and regulations.

Several organizations affiliated to international parent organizations have also been established. There is also increase in the number of projects and programmes systematically and comprehensively planned and executed including health education programmes, agriculture programmes, vocational training to mention but a few, a number of ministries including those responsible for agriculture, health, labor, education have been involved. Several adult education institutions have also been formed. Various national and international NGOs have been registered that offer non-formal/adult education programmes.

According to the 2008 National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education in Uganda, it's noted that in 1988, the National Inter-Sectoral Committee for the eradication of illiteracy was formed and a plan for an Integrated Non-formal Basic Education Pilot Project was completed in 1991. In 1992 government, white paper on education was formulated. The paper spelt out the most comprehensive government policy on adult education. Since then, overall, adult education institutions, programmes and activities have been revived over the period 1980 to date.

PHILOSOPHICAL BASE OF NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN UGANDA (A REFLECTION OF STRONG NATIONAL VALUES AND OR IDEOLOGIES)

Like in Indonesia, national ideologies and or values have contributed greatly to education and these values have are said to play a fundamental role in contributing to change and transformation of communities as well as providing a means for development, cultural preservation and transmission from society to society and generation to generation. Uganda, investment in education has been prioritised in the last 2 decades based on the national vision education. Uganda's current education is based on the following beliefs.

Hope to facilitate reforms after a long period of civil strife: Education is expected to contribute to the accumulation of human capital which is essential for higher incomes and sustained income growth (MFPED., 2004). There has been extensive expansion of the education system to make it accessible to the larger population.

Belief in empowerment for all: Basic of fundamental education so as, to make good the deficiencies many people experience because of curtailed education or non-existent period of formal schooling.

Continuous professional development: Opportunities for further or continuing education in order to update professional competencies required by the world of work.

Belief in perfectibility: Vocational and technical education necessary for the acquisition of certain specific skills needed for the improvement of job performance.

Belief in creating a society that adhere to the principle of living together: Education for building social, political and civic competencies including instructions on national and international issues.

Education for leisure and relaxation: As human beings we are expected to take a rest however busy our schedules may be.

Belief in a health population: Education on health, welfare and family life including guidance on physical and mental health, family problems, parenthood.

One may ask that why discuss the philosophy of education. By understanding the philosophy of something, the significance of a given activity or programme becomes clear and there is in-depth examined light of a body of knowledge. In relation to Uganda's situation, after the 2006 elections, the Vice LC 5 of Mubende District is quoted to have said, "we must teach literacy, so government should increase more financial support to adult education in order for our people to vote wisely. I did not win the elections because most of my supporters were illiterates while I was popular during campaigns, only a few voted for me". Mboya of Kenya notes that, "it isn't children of today to who hold the present destiny of Africa in their hands, it's the adults". So, adults should learn and continue to learn mostly our values for they are change agents.

Because of the philosophy attached to non-formal adult education in Uganda, the field is the key to solutions for the many problems of development. Hence, highly prioritised for entailing national values. In this case, it serves as a need for enlightenment and a vehicle for shaping forward-looking citizenry.

A REFLECTION OF NATIONAL VALUES IN UGANDA'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2010/11-2014/15

According to the report by monitor online of Thursday, 27 May 2010, the Uganda government recently

launched its ambitious 5 years national development plan which requires 54 trillion shillings to transform the country into a modern and prosperous one within 30 years. The national development plan was drawn up by the National Planning Authority (NPA) a government body and launched by President Yoweri Museveni which was tasked to hold to the set national vision guiding the country.

The plan which focuses on creating jobs and raising household incomes, envisages that Uganda will be a middle-income economy by 2017. The transformation will be attained through raising human skills and gender equality, improving business competition as well as addressing the structural bottlenecks in the economy to accelerate socioeconomic transformation for prosperity. President Museveni is quoted to have said that “to transform Uganda, power, roads, railway, training of human resources, market, liberal economic policies and the promotion of the private sector are necessary adding that the economy is doing well at 5.5% growth. He also said 2 billion barrels of oil had been discovered and an oil refinery would be constructed in western Uganda and a pipeline from Eldoret in Kenya to Kampala. There will also be focus on agriculture, industry and promotion of science and technology and innovations”.

The government will pursue outward-oriented policies by encouraging Foreign investments and exports with high value addition and pursuing sound macroeconomic policies and management. The Chairperson of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism, Professor Adebayo Adedeji said planning was the backbone of transformation and warned against guessing and the recycling of old statistics. The plan highlights the oil and gas sector and says there will be continued exploration across the country, continuous geological mapping, license complement oil companies and carry out commercial production.

The government will also build infrastructure for distribution, regulate midstream activities, develop refineries, stock sufficient petroleum products and facilitate private sector participation.

Starting to a national ideology to projected changes (a current Uganda’s NDP): The Ugandan economy experienced varying growth rates when the Poverty Eradication Action Plan was being implemented with an average GDP growth rate of 7.2% between 1997/98 and 2000/01 to 6.8% between 2000/01 and 2003/04, increasing to 8% over the period 2004/05-2007/08 (GU., 2010).

Based on economic forecasts, GDP growth rate over the National Development Plan (NDP) period is projected at an average of 7.2% per annum. At this GDP growth rate, nominal per capita income is projected to increase from USD 506 in 2008/09 to about USD 850 by 2014/15. During the same period, the proportion of people living below the poverty line is expected to decline from the level of 31% in 2005/06 to about 24.5% in 2014/2015, above the MDG target of 28%. The NDP also addresses structural bottlenecks in the economy in order to accelerate socio-economic transformation for prosperity. The NDP interventions aim at:

- Creating employment
- Raising average per capita income levels
- Improving the labour force distribution in line with sectoral GDP share
- Raising country human development and gender equality indicators
- Improving the country’s competitiveness to levels associated with middle income countries

This requires the sustained orientation of Government expenditures and implementation capacity towards removal of the most binding constraints to the faster socio-economic transformation. Government’s efforts shall be directed toward transforming Uganda from a predominantly peasant-based economy to a just, peaceful and prosperous middle-income country. During the plan period, the investment priorities will include:

- Physical infrastructure development mainly in energy, railway, waterways and air transport
- Human resources development in areas of education, skills development, health, water and sanitation
- Facilitating availability and access to critical production inputs especially in agriculture and industry and promotion of science, technology and innovation

The development approach of the NDP intertwines economic growth and poverty eradication. This will be pursued in a quasi-market environment where the private sector will remain the engine of growth and development.

The government, in addition to undertaking the facilitating role through the provision of conducive policy, institutional and regulatory framework will also actively promote and encourage public-private partnerships in a rational manner. Furthermore, the government will continue to pursue outward-oriented

policies by encouraging foreign investments and exports with high value addition as well as pursuing sound macroeconomic policy and management. A “business approach” will be pursued to improve public service delivery. In addition, synergies and inter-intra sectoral linkages will be harnessed during the implementation of the NDP.

Non-formal/adult education and its importance to Uganda’s national development plan: It is widely accepted that illiteracy is a major barrier to the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty. According to Uganda Poverty Status Report 2001, the current literacy rates stand at 64% of the population but much lower for rural areas (MGLS., 2008a, b). According to recent UNESCO, UNDP and World Bank reports, this rate is the lowest in East Africa and Uganda is one of the countries unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goal target of halving illiteracy by 2015, despite government commitments in the National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan. At 77%, the rate for men is much higher than the one for their women counterparts which stands at only 54%. In 2000, 5.5 million Uganda women were illiterate.

According to the National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan 2002/3-2006/7, despite previous attempts to deliver adult literacy services, all government and NGO efforts currently reach only 4.3% of the nearly 7 million non-literate adult Ugandans. Yet, it is an established fact that literacy serves as a strong foundation for removing gender inequalities, increasing ordinary people’s entrepreneurial capacities, enabling poor communities to collectively act more effectively in pursuit of their development goals, improves agricultural practices, reinforces quality and access to education, enhances family health and health, increases civic participation and overall, raises living standards (MFPED., 2010).

Currently, the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development has the overall responsibility for coordination of adult literacy activities in Uganda. In the districts the responsibility is with the department for Community Development. These departments have community development officers and assistants in each sub-county. While activities are currently implemented in all the districts, the coverage is still limited in most.

THE ROLE OF NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES (THE CASE OF UGANDA’ VISION 2030)

The current national non-formal adult literacy strategic investment plan aims to expand the government functional adult literacy activities and scale up the literacy

work of NGOs by taking a deliberate step to invite religious institutions and together with donors and other partners/stakeholders, work collaboratively towards universal adult literacy and lifelong learning.

The plan commits to achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2007 and acknowledges the potential opportunities offered by the diversity of different civil society organisations. One of the partner CSOs specifically mentioned in the Government Strategic Investment Plan is LABE (LABE., 2008). In the plan it’s stated, “there are two major national levels of Adult Literacy training NGOs LABE and Reflect Coordination Unit (RCU) of Action Aid. LABE, the only indigenous national level NGO whose first interest and focus is literacy, operates as a literacy resource organisation, offering literacy management, training of trainers and literacy instructors and consultancy and materials development for NGOs, CBOs and Government Departments” (Forrester, 1998).

Non-formal adult education is seen as that form of education which in its ideal application can bring about a maximum of adjustment of attitude within society to any new and changed situation in skills and techniques required and made necessary by the change. The society has to learn any skills that help them to live as well as the manner in which they can use and change their environment. In such a case, non-formal adult education is important in transforming the society as a whole.

In the 2030 national vision, non-formal adult education is relevant because Uganda’s on the road to transformation and there challenges ahead accompanying the NDP and more so, if the country is to realize modernization as mentioned by the strategy. It has to address the development needs as already mentioned. Thus, non-formal adult education can do the following.

Prepare and build the people’s capacity to better understand their situation especially the marginalized people of society, in order to allow them to contribute to the socio-economic transformation. Increase community productivity and competitiveness leading to increased incomes to improve the social and economic well-being (MGLS., 1993).

Build capacity of the marginalized to challenge their subordinate position, self-confidence and self-respect and gain control over their lives and circumstances. Stimulating the dynamism in human learning using the principles of Andragogy in adult education.

CONCLUSION

One may keep wondering what may be the connection between education and development? What

role can non-formal adult education play in the national strategic plan apart from its cognitive features? Learning needs assessment has revealed that poverty is a priority concern among adult learners. It is for this reason that the functional adult literacy programmes has been able to access poverty action funds. These funds are set aside to address priority areas of government. The central government disburses the funds for functional adult literacy as conditional grants to local governments. The local governments also contribute funds to the programme using locally raised funds in a form of taxes.

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