Non Formal Education As A Strategy For Community Development In Obio/Akpor Local Government Area Of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
The study focused on non formal education as a strategy for community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. It is a survey study. Three research questions guided the study. 10 beneficiaries of non formal education programmes were used as pilot study while 80 respondents constitute the sample of the study. The respondents filled the questionnaire distributed to them for the survey of the study and they were retrieved through the help of two research assistants. The instrument was analyzed with mean. The result of the study showed that non-formal education has through its myriads of programmes engender development in communities by promoting entrepreneurship, promoting youth empowerment, engaging out-of-school in meaningful programmes and equipping the beneficiaries with practical skills to secure gainful employment. Based on these recommendations are made on how to further utilize the developmental programmes provided through non formal education. Keywords: non-formal education, practical skills, out-of-school

INTRODUCTION
Non-formal education programmes are designed to provide people with knowledge and skill to perform effectively in their development efforts in their communities. It is a process of bringing about change in the attitudes and behaviour of people. Non-formal education plays the role of impacting positively on the lives of the poor, the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the excluded. Green (2009) sees the purpose of non-formal education to include raising consciousness and the building of community skills and capacity of previously excluded, oppressed, exploited or isolated groups. According to her, non-formal education helps to organize such people to act to advance their own welfare. Indeed, she perceives non-formal education as relating to basic human needs.
METHODOLOGY
Design of the Study
The study adopted survey design. 80 respondents constitute the sample of the study. Questions contained four point response scale of strongly agree, agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree The respondents filled the questionnaire distributed to them for the survey of the study and they were retrieved through the help of two research assistants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Research Question 1: What extent do non-formal education programmes promote youth empowerment in Obio/Akpor local government area?

Table 1: Responses on how Non Formal Education Programmes Promote Youth Empowerment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Question Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Non formal education aids economic empowerment among the youths.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Youths become self reliant and developed through non formal education.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Youths are engaged in meaningful activities and work through non formal education.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Non formal education eradicates illiteracy and ignorance among the youths.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey work 2016

The calculation in table 1 above and the analysis, all four mean were accepted with the mean value 3.23, 3.25, 3.14 and 3.25 in line with the research question. The total mean value is 12.87 and 3.22 is grand mean value. The result above showed that non-formal education promotes youth empowerment.
Research Question 2: To what extent does non-formal education engage out-of-school children in meaningful programmes in Obio/Akpor local government area?

Table 2: Responses on how Non Formal Education Engage Out-of-School Children in Meaningful Programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Question Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Non formal education assists disadvantaged children to acquire skill and competencies.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Non formal education develops in children self-confidence, respect, and intellectual awareness.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Out-of-school children are engaged in literacy and functional education programme.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Out-of-school children are engaged in apprenticeship and skill acquisition programmes.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Mean 12.43
Grand Mean 3.11

Source: Survey work 2016

The calculation in table 2 and the analysis all the four mean were accepted with the mean value 3.10, 2.94, 3.14 and 3.25 in line with the research question. The total mean value is 12.43 and 3.11 is the grand mean value. The result above showed that non-formal education engage out of school children in meaningful activities.

Research Question 3: To what extent do practical skills acquired through non-formal education programmes help beneficiaries in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area to secure gainful employment?

Table 3: Responses on how practical skills acquired through non-formal education programmes help beneficiaries to secure gainful employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Question Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Practical skills acquired through non formal education help beneficiaries to secure gainful employment.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Non formal education skills make the beneficiaries to be employed in industries.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Companies employ people with non formal education skills.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Self employment can be achieved by acquiring non formal education skills.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Mean 13.16
Grand Mean 3.29

The calculation in table 3 above and the analysis, all the four mean were accepted with the mean value 3.29, 3.24, 3.30 and 3.33 in line with the research question. The total mean value is 13.16 and 3.29 grand mean value. The result above showed that non-formal education provides practical skills which help beneficiaries to secure gainful employment.
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of research question 1 indicated that non-formal education programmes promote youth empowerment in Obio/Akpor local government area by strengthening the existing situation, provision of enabling environment for productive and intellectual abilities to be realized, organize and influence change on the basis of gained knowledge, decision making process and to financial, social and natural resources. Identify areas to shape the lives of the youths and the community in which they live, capacity to bring about change, analyzing and addressing the dynamics of oppression and assisting individuals and groups to play an active role in the decisions which affect their lives, encouraging and developing the skills for self sufficiency and eliminates dependency. Youths are able to acquire skills and knowledge to help develop themselves and community. This is in agreement with assertions of Asojo (2001) and Okandeji (2005).

The findings of research question 2 indicated that non-formal education engaged out-of-school children in meaningful programmes in Obio/Akpor local government area by teaching them how to read, write and solve arithmetic. Educating them on personal environmental safety, enlightening and developing them on self help, sports activities, entertainment activities and programmes. Moral values are also inculcated into out-of-school children; their potentials are stimulated and developed by acquainting them on various skills and business they can undertake not only to earn a living but also to support others in need. They partake in citizenship and leadership training programmes and other sensitization programmes. This is in agreement with the assertions of Aderinoye (2004), Ngwu (2006) and Ihejirika, (2012).

The findings of research question 3 indicated that practical skills acquired through non-formal education programmes help beneficiaries in Obio/Akpor local government area to secure gainful employment. Non-formal education offers different programmes majorly to equip beneficiaries with practical skills to enable them secure gainful employment whether self employed or employed by industries, companies and other establishments. The beneficiaries through the skill acquired from the programme of non-formal education and financial support received from some individuals established workshop, business centres, shops etc, to attract work. They realized income from their personal engagement which assist them maintain high level of standard of living. Other beneficiaries are engaged by companies, industries and other establishments to fashion their objectives and wages are paid to them to the services rendered by them. The skills open doors for juicy occupation for the beneficiaries to earn decent and meaningful living and support their family and dependents. They were able to generate wealth and enrich themselves by utilizing the skills acquired in their chosen profession or career. Some of the practical skills include but not limited to tailoring-sewing, hair dressing, wielding, radio mechanics, hat making, decoration, painting, computer operation, plumbing and pipe fitting, carpentry, masonry, confectionaries, tie and dye, carving and weaving, manufacturing of soap, pomade, candles, electrical installations, fabrication, fishery, poultry, baking, pottery. This is in agreement with Asuka, (2002) who identified some of the skills as skills acquired through non formal education programmes.

The findings of this study attest to the fact that youths are empowered through non-formal education programmes to become a viable instrument for their development and that of their communities. Out-of-school children are engaged and reformed through some meaningful programmes provided by non-formal education.

CONCLUSION

People become active to engage in resourceful ventures in order to ameliorate and overcome the plight of illiteracy and ignorance, poverty and dependency, idleness and slothfulness, wastefulness and vices and criminality.
RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:
1. Government at all levels should adequately fund non-formal education programmes by establishing and equipping centers for sufficient utilization by members of the communities in the whole federation.
2. Social-economic empowerment programmes should be undertaken by the government and non-governmental organization to enable youths make meaningful contributions to the development of their communities.
3. Members of the communities should be given equal opportunity and privilege to participate, gain knowledge and acquire skills provided through non-formal education.

REFERENCES
Omoole (Eds). Philosophical Foundation of Adult and Non-Formal Education. Ibadan: University Press.


