Adult and Lifelong Learning Policies: Experiences, Challenges and Prospects from African Countries

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Lifelong Learning Policies in Africa

* Learning for older adults concern for Africa.
* Africa needs a futuristic vision for continental sustainable development agenda (CESA, 2016-2025).
* All Five 5 regions endorse lifelong learning LLL as a strategy to drive Agenda 2063
* UNESCO organizes CONFENTIA conferences (Agendas, declarations and frameworks for action)
* International community and Africa to commit to meet educational needs of all (children, youth and adults)
* adult learning conferences lead to cooperative learning and not meant for competitive prowess (Preece, 2006).
* Member nations- develop road maps & action frameworks to deliver recommendations
* LLL - improves personal, cultural, social, and economic conditions of citizens (SADC, 2020).
* LLL enables individuals, group & communities to control their lives (Zepke, 2009).
* Nations participate actively in conferences to cascade the recommendations Biao & Maruatona, 2018).
Resurgence of old Age Issues in Africa

* African Elderly population experienced growth of 3.2% by 2010 and projected to grow by 4.5% by 2030 (African Development Bank, 2012).
* Health issues increase with age while spending on health decreases and health care systems in most African states are weak.
* Because of improved living conditions increase in life-expectancy in urban compared to rural areas (WHO, Africa Region report, n.d)
* Elderly pop. in sub-Saharan Africa- estimated at 43 million in 2010, projected at 67 million -2025 and 163 million by 2050
* by 2020, non-communicable diseases like hypertension, heart diseases, diabetes, will be among the main causes of mortality (WHO, Africa Region report, n.d)
* In South Africa, Kelly et.al (2019) reported that the national elder care policy places strong emphasis in caring for the aged in community and not institutions
* Africa suffers a paucity of studies on ageing (Lekoko & Nthomang, 2018)
* These have implication for provision of health care, education and pensions to support the elderly throughout retirement and old age (UNESCO (2015))
Challenges of Delivering Inclusive Lifelong Learning

* Africa has intricate colonial past and post–colonial history (corruption and mismanagement)
* It faces poverty, lacks economic development, youth unemployment, income inequality and political instability (Biao and Maruatona, 2018)
* The provision of adult education and lifelong learning are afflicted by conceptual and operational limitations
* Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) stresses providing efficient human resources adapted to African core values between 2016-2025
* CESA strategic objectives focus on formal education and only SO6 refers to the provision of literacy (strategies are to help people find employment).
* It is guided by principle of “good governance” and the pillar of “political will” both of which are scare in most African countries.
* Lack of commitment from governments to coordinate lifelong learning services with different stakeholders.
* Regional LLL plans do not integrate SDGs to ensure that SDG 4 foregrounds others such SDGs 3, 5 and 6
Prospects for Delivering LLL and Health

1. Development of lifelong learning policy for AU member states
   * Most African governments endorse lifelong learning as a principle.
   * However, there are no clear policy guidelines and laws governing the development of structures and programs (Walter, et. al, 2014).
   * States need to develop policies and laws governing LLL.
   * Countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania have worked with UNESCO to develop impactful adult learning policies (UNESCO, 2018).
   * (II) Laws would provide safeguard for the older people to litigate in case they are denied access to learning.
   * The ECOWAS and East and Central Africa have better apprenticeship and vocational training compared to SADC (UNESCO, 2013)
   * (iii) State and regions to offer free, well-resourced, non-formal education to the elderly (Lekoko & Nthomang, 2018).
   * (iv) The LLL policy to be linked to National and Regional Credit and Qualification Frameworks and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
Prospects for Delivering LLL and Health

2) **Widening cooperation and coordination in the provision of learning**

- African governments to cooperate with providers and stakeholders such as the CBOs, private and NGO sectors.
- Some stakeholders are better placed to access difficult to reach communities where government service are lacking.
- The state to do curriculum and assessment and monitoring of outcome.

3) **Africa needs an integrated vision for lifelong and health:**

- Africa needs a vision to mobilize resources to ensure that elderly citizens are not under served as Africa transforms into learning society by 2063.
- Older people need access to free non-formal learning opportunities to engage in independent life activities (Lekoko and Nthomang, 2018).
- Africa needs to offer learning that integrate some SDGs, especially SDG 4 and 3 to teach the elderly basic knowledge and skills that promote health, safety and well-being. (English & McKay, 2022).
- Health literacy, to offer health skills to help the elderly to implement health-related messages to age with dignity (English & McKay, 2022).
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