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- Managing Primary Education for Gender Equity:  
The Critical Areas for Action  
Oku, O. O. 99 – 108
- Strategies for Financing Maintenance Cost of  
Physical Facilities in primary Schools in Imo State.  
Oluwuo S. O. & Aloba, R. B. 109 – 121
- Gender Spread in Status and Inaugural Lecture Presentation  
among University Teachers in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.  
Omoriegie, E. O. 123 – 135
- Evaluating Head Teachers' Professional Development Needs  
for Managing Primary Education for Sustainable Development  
Onuselogu, A. P. & Agu, N. N. 137 – 148
- Inclusive Leadership in Education for the Attainment of the  
Millennium Development Goal One: Poverty Eradication  
and Hunger Reduction.  
Onyene, V.; Johnson, S.; Ashiru, A. & Mbah, P. 149 – 163
- Attitude of School-based Management Committees towards  
School Development Programmes in Asa Local Government  
Area, Kwara state  
Opadokun, O.A. 165 – 173
- Assessment of School Administrators' Awareness, Participation  
and ICT Empowerment for Sustainable Ube Programme  
Oredein, A. O. 175 – 186
- International Agencies Participation in the Management of  
Education for Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta  
Uche, C. M. & Afangideh, S. T. 187 – 201
- Inputs into the Management of Education for Sustainable  
Development: A Focus on Women Community Based  
Organizations (CBOs).  
Onyene, V. & Bakare, T. V. 1203 – 220

- Recipients' Assessment of Mass Literacy Programmes for Poverty  
Eradication in Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria.  
Udeozor, R. K. & Oke, E. B. 221
- Using Information and Communications Technology to Enhance  
Tertiary Institution Students Academic Productivity for Sustainable  
Development in South-South Zone of Nigeria  
Udida, L. A., Udofia, I. U. & Ozurumba, C. N. 235 –
- A Comparative Analysis of Gender Participation in Educational  
Administration in Kwara and Osun State-Owned  
Tertiary Institutions  
Umaru, H. A. & Oyeniran, S. 245 –
- Assessing the Use of Computer-Related Technology [CRT]  
Tools in Enhancing Educational Management in  
Tertiary Institutions  
Unachukwu, G. O. 257 –
- Managing Basic Education for Sustainable National Development  
Usen, F. S. 269 –
- Managing Education for Sustainable Development: Examining  
Occupational Hazards Management by Secondary School  
Principals in Anambra State  
Uzoechina, G. & Uwandu, V. N. 283 – 2
- Health Care Delivery in Rural Communities: Implication for  
Educational Planners and Policy Analysts  
Uzoka, N. E. & Adetoro, J. A. 295 – 3
- Truancy and Academic Achievement of Junior Secondary  
School Students in Bayelsa State: Implications for  
Educational Administrators  
Wodi, I. I. 205 – 3
- Managing Education in the Era of Economic Reform:  
The Nigeria Experience  
Akinwumi, F. S. 313 - 32

## Inputs into the Management of Education for Sustainable Development: A Focus on Women Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

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### Abstract

Education is a veritable vehicle for creating, sustaining and promoting human conviviality. Every society uses her education system as an instrument for socio-economic development. The National Policy on Education (NPE) provided for partnership between the government and the private sector in the provision and management of our educational system for reasons associated with cost, increased social demand, variety of education levels as well as the existence of special vulnerable groups in need of education of different types. This study takes its conceptual framework from principles of access, equity and inclusion as guidelines for social group integration in public service distribution. It therefore discusses the role of Community Based Organisations, (CBOs) in expanding opportunities, second-chances and out-of-school education for her 140 million odd citizenry. To do this, the efforts towards education of CBOs operating in Lagos state were assessed. A working model for making them key actors in the provision, maintenance, monitoring, supervision and management of education was then presented.

### Introduction

Democratisation and post militarization in Nigeria have led to more policy attention on education especially to entrench collaborative efforts at widening participation, new initiatives and national development. Such policies help to establish an organised system of service delivery at the community level which will enable people to become self-reliant and participate fully in the development of their country. Policies also encourage cooperation between communities, government, and the private sector to improve living conditions of the populace.

There is little wonder then that a key focus of the Blueprint on National Community Development Policy (2000) is to encourage cooperation between communities, government as well as the private sector participation in the improvement of the living conditions of the rural communities. Some of its other aspirations include - educating and stimulating individuals and groups to accept change for the improvement of their living standards; and to create effective capacity building opportunities at the community level in order to upgrade skills of the people and their quality of life.

The Federal Government is constitutionally authorised to design, review and monitor programmes on education, health, finance, youth, women among others. This duty is replicated along the levels and tiers of government towards socio-economic development. Thus new provisions are subsequently implemented through her institutions, parastatals and other agencies to achieve national goals and also meet global challenges. Nigeria is becoming more open to the understanding that no society can succeed without involving the larger percentage of her citizenry, who are often largely rural-bound and who form the basic class system referred to as communities.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) emerged as a result of human desire for formalization of social interaction, exchange of ideas, working pattern definition, inter dependency, shared energy as well as in response to environmental dynamics. Specifically CBOs are local associations or unions made up of persons with common heritage, interests and most often able to communicate with each other. They share tremendous willingness to contribute actions in the way Chris Argy refers to as social motivation or drive to belong and strive to accomplish (individually and collectively) a common purpose (especially women CBOs). Thus the crucial question of why people need to formalise their togetherness is answered by development workers Anyanwu, 1987; Nkom, 1984; and Egenti, 2005 all of who seem to agree that it is to improve their lots, to provide and share basic amenities and to give assistance to the needy members of the community, and not merely the realization of rapid socio-economic growth that institutionalize their 'commonness'.

Most para-organs like CBOs emerged in the past few decades as direct results of gaps in socio-political and economic lives of the people where the government fell short of its duty, or have been seemingly inefficient, and, also to address issues of unemployment, economic problems or even natural disasters, among others. According to Lewis (2001), NGOs, and indeed CBOs are high profile 'actors' in the education sector. They can play advisory, advocacy and collaborative roles with the government. The latest trend sees communities transcending

such domestication, although they are still closely involved in all-round development and empowerment. African women form groups as a social platform for relating to and helping their kith and kin and these entities are now seen more as the modern community based organization (CBO).

Recent fieldwork by Onyene (2006) categorises features of CBOs as being either Local or Cosmopolitan based. She reviewed the nature, modus operandi; result or outcome; as well as attributes of their creation or culture-ties as Local and Cosmopolitan which make them divergently engaged in developmental issues. It is also apparent that the modern day CBO is more dynamic and effective. They are even more so in the case of women-only CBOs. They are more complex, open, dynamic, decentralised and with a wider operational scope, attracting more social need of their families.

The field work by Onyene (2006), regarding CBOs input in the provision and management of education in Anambra state schools shows that CBOs, town unions, cooperative organisations, village unions, agricultural grades, church-based women/men organisation, committee of friends at home and abroad congresses, political associations, health welfare organizations, indigenous student unions, social clubs, even football supporters and traditional rulers all act as vehicles for generating information, dissemination of knowledge as well as developmental change agents.

CBOs are usually non profit organizations undertaking issues like Health, Literacy, Vocational, Women and other Poverty Alleviation Programmes using Non Formal Education (NFE) as the propellant to achieve their goals. They usually deal with issues that concern development through participation. The basic goal of the CBO was formerly mainly social welfare, often economically oriented, but, nowadays education is fast becoming a priority embraced for its quality as a veritable tool for engendering any form of empowerment and national development.

#### Background to the Study

According to the Gender Training Manual (Taiwo and Akin-Aina, (1999) the input of women in development is yet to fully materialise. Women obviously have a lot to contribute and they continue to labour in every facet of life to ensure that their loved ones (their children, spouses and the extended family) get the most of opportunities while simultaneously fighting to optimise their own potentials in contributing meaningfully to societal growth.

Using gender sensitization as a premise to improve women's position through their efforts in development was a child of the 1970s, the

approach has now shifted to that of empowerment which also led to the present day gender and development drive. All of these have strengthened different women's organizations. There is also the lingering issue of inequality between men and women which has resulted into the need for women to further increase their participation in developmental projects including education, in line with the universal declaration on fundamental human Rights, which proclaim equality.

Non formal education (NFE) refers to all forms of out of school and adult education aimed at encouraging equity in distribution of amenities, equality and right of everyone to have access to quality education, as well as non-discrimination in provision. Non-formal education comes in the form of Literacy education (for those who have never participated in formal education); Continuing education; Vocational or Foundation education including Leisure or Liberal education (Okenimpe, 1989). It certainly covers all types of education available and its provision can be comprehensive too. There is no doubt that the effective delivery of Non Formal Education can be used to achieve the Millenium Development Goals (MDG), even much quicker.

The National policy on Education (NPE, 2004) allows for partnership between government and the provision and management of education system in terms of cost, support service, endowment and project sponsorship. Increased social demand, resource needs, multiplicity of education levels and the improvement of education for identifiable vulnerable groups in Nigeria exert a lot of pressure on the hitherto single-sourced provision.

The idea of widening access to education is embedded in economic and democratisation arguments. Discourses combine human rights, social justice, inclusion, affirmative action; with the human capital theory, economic and social development as well as global competitiveness, to claim that continued collaboration and networking will not only ensure even development, but 'firework' women involvement.

Thus CBOs must enjoy pride of place to be involved and to logistically support ongoing government projects, especially in education. They are expected to encapsulate the provision of impartial support in the form of information dissemination, observatory role (inspection) as well as the use of network of interpersonal relationships to share, guide and guard every qualitative arrangement put in place for any educational project. CBOs hold powerful wands for contributing immensely to development based on the premise that they are helping their own kith and kin.

#### Statement of the Problem

Families or hamlets and villages feed CBOs. CBO therefore form the

major focal platforms for service delivery in government programme EPI, UBE, Nomadic/Women education, HIV/AIDS awareness, Micro-credit NAPEP etc. Chiegwe (2007) agrees that the community is considered single most coherent political unit next to the family. To take primary charge of these responsibilities, the government has over the years set up Commissions, Councils, Panels and Bureaus through which policies and programmes are initiated and implemented. There is no gainsaying the fact that each of these organizations requires the participation and cooperation of CBOs as well as NGOs and other relevant institutions and experts in order to ensure that the citizenry network with such agencies can close the gap between the different organizations. Recognising the enormity of resources required was beyond what the Federal Government could shoulder. No wonder Chris. Ugbokwe (rtd) as the then chairman of the National Population Commission in 1992 reiterated -

*'we had to trim our needs ..... appeal to and receive assistance from many organizations (private and public)... the Nigerians, the media, the Press; private companies, associations, student bodies, clubs....and of course the CBOs.'*

CBOs are therefore seen as crucial in ensuring that corresponding programme implementation is achieved in the face of enormous hurdles of mechanised efforts, personnel, time, money and material investment.

The Beijing Declaration of 1995 includes the call to ensure women's full participation in public life as well as in decision making among others. Since education continues to shoulder the burden of effecting positive change, women's Community Based Organizations (CBOs) involvement in any and all forms of non-formal or out of school education can help to reach the marginalised or forgotten in the society such as women, disabled, illiterate, drop-outs, miscreants, militants etc. This will also help in entrenching equity in the provision as well as facilitate access to grass root level projects (to which the majority of the population still belong) in order to ensure inclusion. Since the Nigerian government cannot do all these by itself, it provided for assistance and collaboration in the Nigerian Policy on Education to promote Non- Formal Education (NFE: ---). The onus therefore falls on women CBOs to step up to such challenges. NFE therefore becomes a veritable tool for achieving Vocational Education, Poverty Alleviation, Illiteracy reduction among others.

The need therefore arises to examine the dynamics between the government as provider and women CBOs as the crucial support groups for NFE management and implementation. This study is interested in establishing and justifying the role of women CBOs as well as the

perceived contribution to Non Formal Education (NFE) in cosmopolitan Lagos. It also investigated the membership and non-membership as well as the gap between the stipulation of the NPE vis-à-vis women's perception of their roles towards the provision, planning, funding and management of Non Formal Education programmes. Thus it reviews the place and interest of the hitherto identified vulnerable group of women as potential catalysts to the establishment and effective running of NFE programmes.

### Purpose of the study

The objectives of this study are:

1. to ascertain the level of involvement of women CBOs in NFE programmes;
2. to highlight resources needed for better management of NFE programmes by women CBOs
3. establish the possible contradicting snags in Nigerian bureaucraticised educational structures;
4. to predict to a reasonable extent the propensity of women CBO's towards ownership, monitoring and willingness to contribute more to NFE programmes;
5. to propose a working model to enhance women CBOs partnership in the educational provision and management of NFE programmes.

### Research questions

The following questions were therefore raised to pursue the study objectives:

1. to what extent are women CBOs involved in the planning and running (organization, implementation and control) of NFE programmes in Lagos State?
2. Does the present structure in Nigerian education, namely; centralized and decentralized, permit women CBO involvement adequately?
3. How much of educational finances and material needs are women CBOs willing to provide?
4. what is the possibility of women CBOs' proprietorship of NFE centres in Lagos cosmopolitan communities?
5. Would CBO shared responsibility include NFE supervision and inspection? How responsive are women CBOs towards shared responsibilities of NFE monitoring and supervision?
6. What is CBOs place in expanding the opportunities for non-formal education (NFE)?

### Procedure

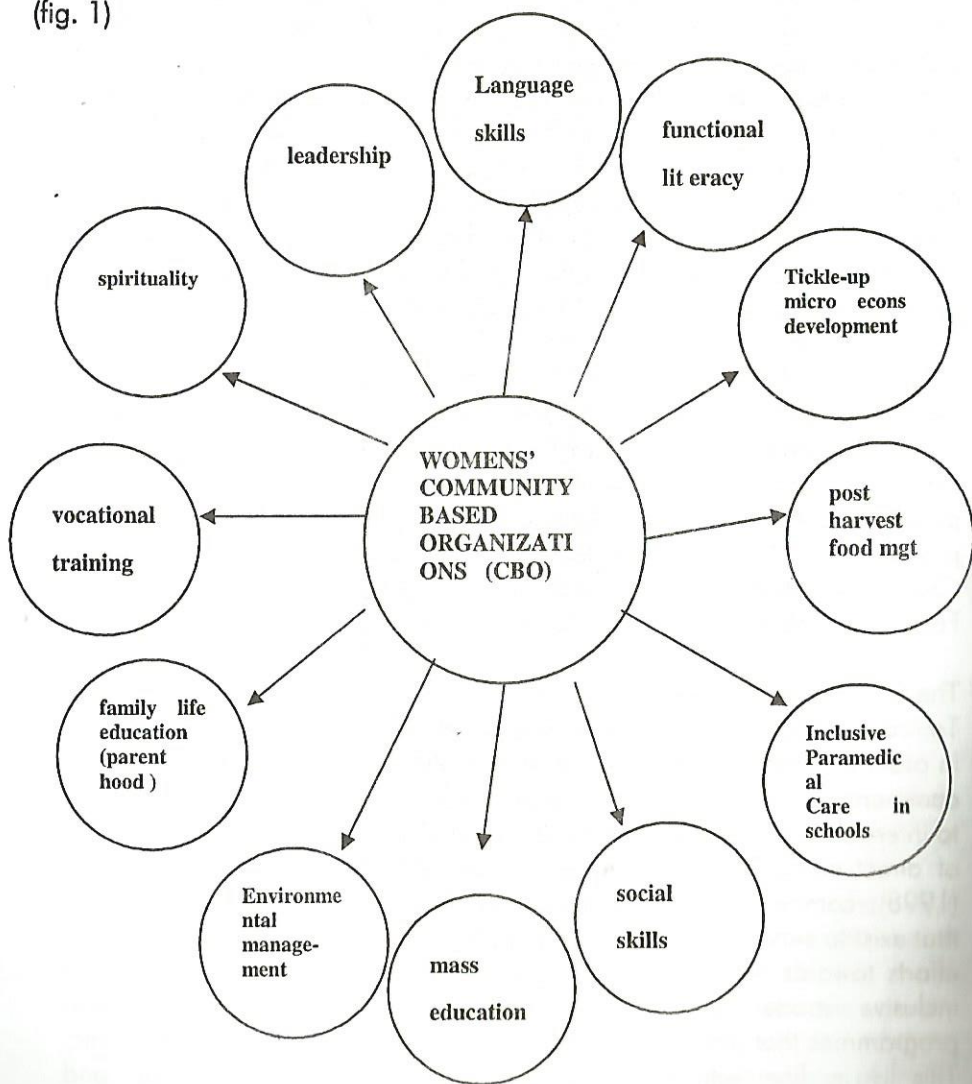
The study was group discussion-based. The discussion generated data which explains the status quo typical of women CBOs from about 43 local government areas in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. However, these CBOs operate an urban branch or charter in cosmopolitan Lagos. The common denominator is that all the respondents were resident in Lagos at the time of the study for their higher learning pursuits which also imply a homogenous educational and awareness background. The study therefore utilised the focus group discussion approach to get information from these 144 women who are either members of CBOs and, or show interest towards belonging to one. A 28 item non-structured question items guided the three sessions focus group discussions held in a university campus. Observation notes and oral discussion were used to collect information. There was also a 15 item questionnaire including a bio-data section and their Local Government Areas to stimulate divergent inputs.

The policy framework for the study is National Policy on Education (NPE) which provides for partnership between the government and the private agencies in the provision and management of the educational programmes. It therefore created a working model for making the women CBOs key actors and or partners in this onerous task of running Non Formal Education.

### The Conceptual Framework

To 'commune' simply refers to a human act of pooling resources together in order to meet people's needs (Onyene, 2006). The concept is that the community is the nearest to the grass-root level and therefore in a position to inter-relate closely with one another. This then places CBOs in position of direct contact with their clientele. According to Rao and Narayan (1998), community based organizations are goal-directed social entities that exist to serve the needs of the people. They basically combine human efforts towards results. Implicitly this study takes this framework of an inclusive model as effective machinery for reaching down with programmes that aim at sustainability, survival, adaptability, education etc. This is in line with the principle of inclusive democratization and transformative leadership, also of extending access, equity and inclusion for social group integration and public service distribution. (see diagram

This figure provides the central position of women CBOs as key actors in the provision and management of NFE (fig. 1)



The chart further indicates women CBOs contribution with their involvement can translate into meeting several of the goals of the MDGs including poverty alleviation, women empowerment, eradication of hunger and illiteracy reduction, among others.

Overall management is based on

- ▶ proper planning and control;
- ▶ adequate financing (and material provision);
- ▶ efficient administration;

- ▶ role organization and centralized and decentralized structure;
- ▶ mutual proprietorship; and
- ▶ effective inspection and supervision.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) seems to have upheld this view making provision for collaboration with private individual organisations, NGOs, CSOs etc. No wonder the NPE (2004:55 no 104, b), states part of its objectives:

'..... close participation and involvement of the communities, at the local level, in the administration and management of their schools'; which precipitates p.104, c); effective line of communication between local community and the state on the one hand and national machinery for policy formulation and implementation on the other. The Section 13(1) of the policy also notes that the Federal Government welcomes participation of local communities and organizations in financing education in order to support the joint effort of the Federal and State governments which will ultimately make education free at all levels.

Data Analysis and Result Presentation

Research Question One:

Figure Two: Extent of Women's involvement in NFE programmes

Extent of women CBOs involvement in NFE programmes provision

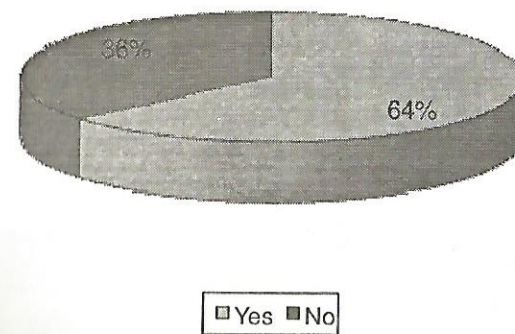
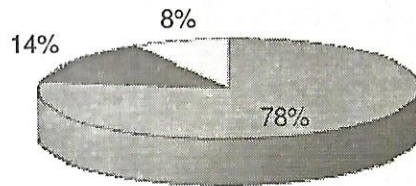


Figure two reveals that 64% of women CBOs are involved in one way or another in the provision of NFE programmes as part of their contribution

to revert illiteracy challenges of the densely populated cosmopolitan Lagos. This implies that there is a 36% gap in women's organized efforts towards addressing NFE as a vehicle for achieving the Millenium Development Goals.

Figure Three: Suggested ways of starting CBO initiated NFE programmes

Selected ways of starting a CBO-supported NFE programme

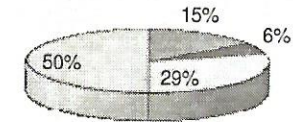


- Through awareness campaigns
- Through Feasibility studies or environmental scanning
- Through culture based groups

The result of figure three shows that the majority of the respondents believe the most popular way to start a CBO initiated and supported NFE programme is by ensuring that there is rigorous campaigns to bring such programmes to the notice of all stakeholders by different means. This suggests that lack of adequate information and awareness may be contributing to the untapped potential of women led organisations to the spread of NFE.

Figure Four: Convenient times of involvement in CBO activities.

Suggested time lines and convenient times for members to be involved in such a programme



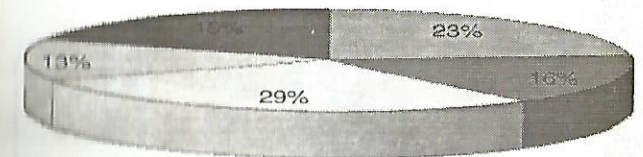
- weekdays evening
- Saturday noon
- Vacation period
- Weekends

50% of the respondents see weekends as the best time to get involved in CBO activities. This is probably because many of the respondents have otherwise engaging full time jobs and have only the weekends to attend to more personal and pressing business. 29% of them also suggest vacation period. This is also because most women combine domestic well as parental among other roles and may have some leeway for other activities when they get a break from the normal 'school run'. The implication for all these is that women may often have to work round other pressing activities in order to find time for these extra curricular activities which may negatively impact on women's participation even if they are willing.

Research question three sought to know how much of the financial and material upkeep of the NFE programme the CBOs are willing to contribute.

Figure Five: Women's contribution to NFE upkeep

Facilitative materials women CBOs can conveniently contribute towards NFE upkeep



- Money
- Furniture
- Book/stationary
- Human resources
- building

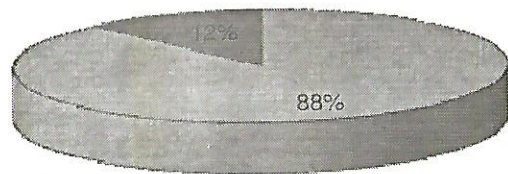
There are other different ways that women can materially contribute to NFE



upkeep even with the time constraints. 29% of the women believe that donating books and other stationary materials is a good way of helping a CBO organised NFE. 23% of the respondents suggest monetary donations and others furniture and infrastructure. This shows that the women realise there are many ways they can possibly contribute so that they do not wait on the government for effective NFE programmes

Figure Six: Women's leadership aspirations

**Interest in heading women CBO NFE Institutions**



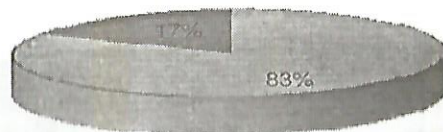
Yes

When asked if they are interested in heading a CBO NFE programme, 88% of the women showed keen interest which supports the enthusiasm that women have in making the lives of others better, given the chance.

Research question four examined the possibility of women CBO proprietorship and administrations of the NFE programme and the responses are documented below.

Figure Seven: Potential of CBO owned NFE programme

**Possibility of women CBOs fully owning/running an NFE programme**



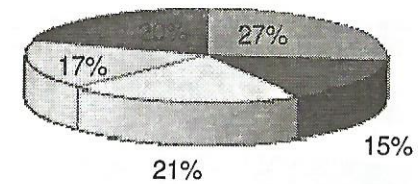
Yes

83% of the respondents answered positively to the possibility of CBO fully owning and running NFE programmes. Those who disagreed are largely

from those who do not belong to an active CBO and do not understand what this entails.

Figure Eight: Ways of raising funds for running NFE programmes

**Suggested ways of raising funds and materials**

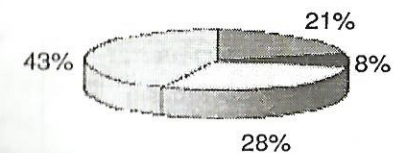


Industry (social responsibility)  
internationals  
Dues and grants  
philanthropy

There are different ways funds and materials could be raised to run the NFE programmes. Women CBOs are aware that it is possible to get funds from all these sources. They are even aware of sourcing from local industry as part of their social responsibility, a situation where industries have complained that many are not even aware of the vast amounts of funds always set aside compulsorily to help their locality. Other recognised sources include soft loans from banks and even self levies.

Figure Nine: How to run effective NFE programmes

**Best practice in running NFE programme**



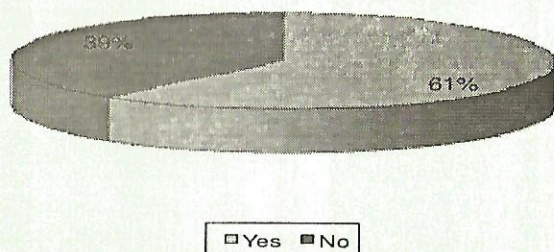
Use it for raising funds  
Awareness

79% of the respondents believe that how to get the best out of an NFE

programme is to run it like a regular formal school which they probably believe will give it more credibility. The majority 43% think that it should be run as an adult education programme. This is with the belief that it will give it a wider reach and make it more flexible and therefore create better opportunities for all.

Figure Ten: Women's involvement in general administration of NFE programme

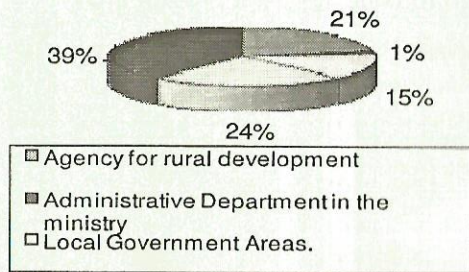
**Should women CBOs be permitted to provide headship/admin staff for the programmes?**



Majority of the respondents 61% believe in hands-on participation in the running of the NFE programme and believe they can get involved in the day-to-day administration and even head the NFE programme.

Figure Eleven: Involvement with State Officials

**Unit of the State that CBOs can conveniently work with**

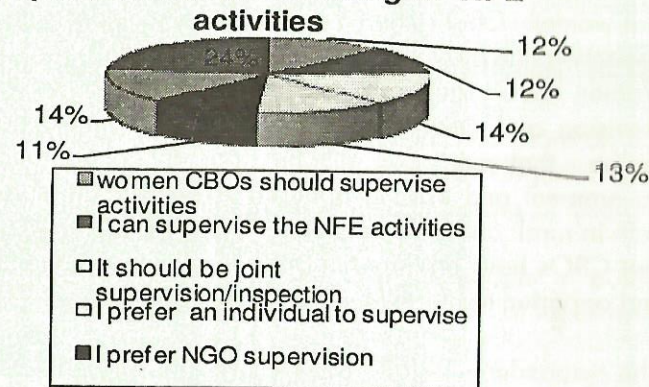


Most of the women at 38% see the Adult Education Department at the local level their best partners in running an NFE programme. This is in line with their belief that NFE falls squarely in the realm of adult education and they therefore see the adult education workers the best to collaborate with for a successful NFE programme.

Research question five is interested in ascertaining the responsiveness of women CBOs towards 'shared responsibility' in NFE monitoring and supervision vis-à-vis other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Figure Twelve: Supervision and Monitoring of NFE activities

**Suggested appropriate authority for the supervision and monitoring of NFE activities**



When asked whether they think that CBOs' shared responsibilities include supervision and monitoring of the NFE programme, their opinions slightly differed. 12% believed that joint supervision is better while 14% suggest a specialist and 13% choose individuals or even NGO (12%). The 24% of the respondents who were undecided to this question are found not belonging to any CBO prior to the focus group organized for the study. The general response here implies that it may not really be an issue for them who supervises, as long as it is well run and still reflect their basic interest to ensure that education is not beyond the reach of all deserving citizens.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

As noted earlier, this is a baseline phase of this study, hence efforts were directed at teasing piecemeal information for advocacy and decision making.

Data presented above shows the following results:

- Women CBOs are involved in the planning and running of NFE programmes though minimally, according to the respondents even though they are collaborating with the governmental authorities, their input is often minimal;
- Bureaucratization as a social structure permits women CBO

involvement but not to a great extent due to information flow bottlenecks and centralization of authority;

- that there are many more ways women can contribute which emerged from the brainstorming sessions. Women CBOs can conveniently provide far more than they are at the moment;
- There is great potential for women CBO proprietorship of NFE programmes in rural communities which incidentally is where NFE is usually mostly needed;
- that women CBO's shared responsibility includes supervision and inspection (the more involved they are the better);
- Women CBOs generally did not rate themselves high in the provision and management of NFE programmes, however they realise that more can still be done in collaboration with the government and existing agencies to ensure the spread of NFE both in rural and urban communities; and
- that CBOs have an important role to play in expanding the reach and opportunities for NFE programmes.

Most of the respondents 92(63.88%) believe that women's CBOs should be involved in the provision of NFE education programmes. This is in line with the dictates of the NPE (2004) which supports collaboration with the government from local communities in a bid to improve the lives of the community and encourage self and national growth and development.

112 (77.77%) of the respondents believe that the best way to start a CBO supported Non Formal Education programme is to institute awareness campaigns while 12(8.34%) of the women suggest through culture-based groups.

Many of the respondents think they will have time for such programmes especially, according to the half of the respondents, if it takes place during the weekends. Others suggest vacation periods or in the evenings during the week days.

67 of the women, representing 46.53% believe that women CBO involvement can be achieved through the collaboration between the CBO and the government. Others suggest collaboration with NGOs while 24.31% think that the CBO can do it alone.

The overall management of NFE by CBOs is based on proper planning (control) and efficient administration. The study reveals that women CBOs are currently not as involved as they should be because many women are not aware of the potential of women CBOs influence and contribution to NFE provision through participation, but they agree that it can greatly help to ensure equity in the provision and access to education in rural areas and especially for the marginalised. Women face

several challenges but there still remains a huge opportunity to increase their participation in national development because women, as nurturers are bottomless wells of resources capable of contributing especially using women CBOs contribution platform for effective developmental projects in Non Formal Education (NFE) programmes. CBOs will be more effective because they are grassroot oriented.

### Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the above revelation from the study, the researchers recommend the following:

- that Nigerian women should be enlightened more on the need to engage in one of more Community Based Organisations in order to have the right platform for addressing issues of illiteracy, poverty that goes with it and proper parenting;
- that the Government, School Owners, people in politics, NGOs collaborations etc to help with the provision of funds and logistics namely:
  - a. that government should finance loans for women CBOs through Community banks;
  - b. that multinationals can be of help through aids and grants;
  - c. that funds and materials for women's CBO NFE projects should also be raised through education endowment funds; and
  - d. that Corporate organizations should be vigorously pursue the CBOs to make good use of their dedicated budget for community development projects for such purposes.

Women should naturally be encouraged in their informal trades etc in order to give them the financial empowerment to serve better in CBOs;

- There is no doubt that there is room for improvement in women CBO participation. There needs to be more women CBO involvement in NFE programmes.
- This study aptly revealed that the women participants exhibit untapped potential of their CBOs contribution to NFE in the Country and that women organizations should use their communiqués for advocacy especially in projecting development and social sustainability.
- that the improvement of formal education requires an all-round attack by those vulnerable groups who wear the 'pinching shoes';
- that the Government should put in more efforts at giving supportive facilities to women; and
- that bureaucratic 'bottlenecks' should be discouraged to ensure that women's good intentions are allowed to germinate.

Other suggestions include the use of faith based CBO as a platform, the use of crusade or awareness programmes to create knowledge for CBOs, use of recreational grounds and monthly levies or child education 'adoption' projects

Since UNDP (2007) report still ranks Nigeria 158 out of the 177 and among the poorest nations in the world, education of women by women themselves is germane in order to get out of the doldrums, all hands must be on deck.

CBO involvement is a veritable way of providing, funding and supervising NFE in Nigeria to help propel her into the realm of developed nations.

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## Recipients' Assessment of Mass Literacy Programmes for Poverty Eradication in Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study focused on recipients' assessment of mass literacy programmes in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. It covered such areas as programmes identification, the adequacy of their curriculum coverage, the adequacy of infrastructural and instructional facilities, the effectiveness of delivery methods, the effectiveness of feedback or evaluation method and the suitability of the programme schedules/time tabling and location. A total of 16, 203 recipients from 441 training centres formed the population of the study. Random sampling method was used to select 1000 recipients from 50 centres. A questionnaire titled "Assessment of Mass Literacy Programme Questionnaire" was designed and used for data collection. It has a total of six sections and 34 items. Data collected were analyzed by using frequency tables and percentages. It was found that a total of eight mass literacy programmes were provided in the FCT. In all the various programmes, only English language and Science Education provided recipients with skills they deemed relevant for immediate functional living. Many facilities were not available, only discussion and lecture methods were made paramount. Oral evaluation was rated as the only effective feedback mechanism. Days and time of programme were suitable while location was unsuitable to recipients. It was recommended that more non-skilled people be encouraged to enrol in the centres, more facilities be provided and similar study be carried out in other parts of Nigeria.

### Background to the Problem

Education is a necessary tool for societal development and human survival. It is measured in survival terms. It is an asset which nobody or despotism can destroy. Any nation working with education is probably depending on the best instrument so far devised by man for his survival within the environment. The success of every societal plan, policy and