

## **RIGHT TO WORK AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF OLDER PERSONS**

**Guiding Questions for the focus areas of the X Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing:**

### **Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building**

#### **Introduction**

Nigeria which became an independent country has experienced strong economic growth over the recent past amidst extremely high rapid increase in poverty rate, caused by official corruption, inequitable distribution of resources and gross injustice. This has far reaching negative consequences in the country's development, including impeding right to work and access to the labour market, by extension access to justice in the context of older persons. Previous governments had designed social protection policies and programmes that are aimed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient social development. These policies were poorly implemented, thereby failed to diminish people's exposure to risks and their capacity to manage economic and social risks; eg illiteracy, unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age.

#### **National Legal Framework**

**Question 1. In your country/region, how is the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age, guaranteed in legal and policy frameworks?**

The right to education is recognized in the Nigeria constitution and national laws and is reflected in the various international declarations and treaties; these include the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Educational policy in Nigeria is therefore in line with those rights and is based on a 6-3-3-4 system – that is, six years of primary school, three years in junior secondary, three years secondary and four years tertiary institution. This policy is based on the philosophy of self-realization right, human relations, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national unity as well as towards social, cultural and economic intergration. The policy is set out in terms of relevance to the needs of

the individual and those of the society, in consonance with the realities of our environment with high illiteracy level and need for inclusion of old age; (what we call second chance educational programme or adult education).

### **Availability, Accessibility and Adaptability**

**Question 2: What are the key issues and challenges faced by older persons in your country/region with regard to the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services?**

The major challenges facing older persons or adult education delivery in Nigeria are failure of the Universal Basic Education Act to give adequate recognition to Adult and Non-Formal Education as a key sector of basic education. This results to inadequate funding in the budgetary allocation to adult education at all levels of government which is grossly affecting the implementation of this specialized education sector especially when compared with the formal education sector.

**Question 3: What steps have been taken to ensure that education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services are available and accessible to all older persons, adapted to their needs, suited to their preferences and motivations, and of high quality?**

Accessibility is a major constraint here. In the world of rapid changes, adult education should be established at the door steps of all the interested adult learners so as to avail the opportunity for learning. In that context, lack of fund to attend evening courses becoming a huge issue all over the country should be reduced. Another setback is lack of mobilization because many interested learners are not aware of the existence of the adult education centres and even the programmes they are supposed to enroll. This affects seriously efforts to achieve Education for all. Even there are some philanthropists who are willing to contribute to the funding, but due to lack of advocacy and mobilization they cannot do so. Also, geographical and mobility barriers challenge accessibility because offers of adult education are often concentrated in urban areas, while many older people live in rural areas, thereby being excluded from accessing these offers.

**Question 4: In your country/region, are there studies and/or data available on the access of older persons to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age?**

Poor record keeping is a problem affecting data collection in the non-formal education sector and this has seriously affected the databank needed for adequate planning and implementation. This also affects the tracking of learner's performance and transition from one level to the other. Also poor attitude of the target group and unreliable yearly statistics have shown that most of the targeted groups have not really embraced the older persons learning programme.

#### **Equality and non-discrimination**

**Question 5: In your country, is age one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination in relation to education in older age?**

Except for the equal treatment framework directive, there is no non-discrimination framework that takes account of age in access to education in the country. However, access to education in the country is non-discriminatory and equal treatment is given to all that have the learning capacity to embrace learning at all level.

#### **Accountability**

**Question 6: What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building?**

There is no established mechanism for monitoring older persons' education in the country other than the general education ministry that has a grossly under-funded Adult Education Department. However, it is noted that there is problem of accountability and transparency in the management of funds allocated to Non-formal education sector. There is also lack of legal or programmatic establishment of adult education and education towards older people. As a result, there are no unified complaints mechanisms in place in the country.