



Life-long Learning and Capacity Building

Like any other country in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria's older persons are increasing rapidly. In Nigeria, those aged 65 years and above (the elderly) make up 3.1% or 5.9 million of the total population of 191 million, which in crude numbers represents an increase of 600,000 during the 5-year period 2012-2017 (Population Reference Bureau, 2012) (National Council on Ageing 2016). The rising numbers of the elderly in Nigeria are among others attributed to the crude mortality rate that is gradually decreasing. Ageing in Nigeria is occurring against the background of socioeconomic hardship, widespread poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the rapid transformation of the traditional extended family structure. Another cause for the increase in the older segment of the Nigerian population can be found in the declining fertility rate (although still one of the highest in Africa) that has continued to drop since the 1980s.

Against this backdrop education should give access to basic human rights, especially for older persons. Learning is an activity carried out by human beings and is a continuous process from birth till you're not able to learn, and to that end formal educational system must be reorganized so that it can be flexible enough to accommodate individual options and to prepare young people to continue their education as self-directed and competent adult learners till they age gracefully .

The philosophy behind lifelong learning is that it is never too soon or too late for learning. Lifelong learning is attitudinal that is acquiring a mindset that one can and should be open to new ideas, creativity and skill development as you age .Unfortunately lifelong learning in Nigeria is truncated by challenges which includes but not limited to political upheaval, poverty, insecurity, lack of policies etc. Some Nigerians feel they are too old to learn or that they have learnt enough in school and this attitude hinders the creation of a national culture of lifelong learners. The Nigerian educational system is deficient in providing a process that encourages lifelong learning for older persons both at the governmental and non governmental level.

Lifelong education is important because of acceleration of scientific and technological progress. The knowledge and skills acquired in primary, secondary

and university education may not be sufficient for a professional career that will last many years. From statistics, most older persons are not literate in the Nigerian settings and therefore will benefit from lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning faces the challenge of meeting the expanding educational needs and expectations of larger numbers of students from different backgrounds especially with older persons who cannot meet up with the pace of technological advancement and digitization. New occupations and careers and the rapid transformation of others require new knowledge and skills to perform them. The explosion in knowledge and technology also calls for lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is advocated because of the cost of education in the formal system and the need to teach and learn effectively within constrained resources.

Lifelong learning is for social inclusion, employability, active citizenship and personal fulfillment. Lifelong learning enables individuals to update and complement their knowledge, competences and skills throughout life engagement. The Nigerian government has not met up with the high expectations of the implementation of pension regulation schemes existing in the country. These expectations arose from the need to have a sustainable standard of living in retirement and their benefits paid when due but suffice to mention at this point that older persons between the ages of 60 to 75 are still willing to learn, work and explore other areas of interest after retirement since they are experienced.

More-so, adult education and continuing education still suffers setback due to age disparity and other stringent requirements for older persons in Nigeria. Literacy rate among older persons in Nigeria is low especially tailoring and narrowing it to the rural folks who makes up 60% of older persons and lack of education is one of the primary determining factors responsible for the state of mind and behaviour of people at that level. Therefore, in order to alleviate their depressing nature, lifelong learning and capacity building are bound to check the imbalance and provide the needed pointer to longevity and reduce the snag on Ageism.

Introduction To Digital And Computer Technology



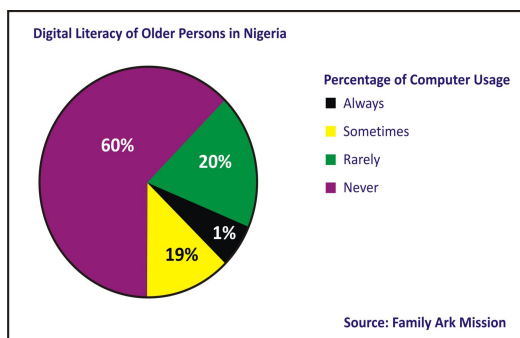
Through Family Ark Mission and the University of the 3rd Age Project Lagos Center with Aptech Computer Solution in Lagos - Nigeria, some of the seniors were taken through some modules in digital and computer technology for older persons. The modules include: Introduction to Computer, basic

Submission: Family Ark Mission - Nigeria



soft-wares such as MS office , Excel , Power Point , Publisher , Corel Draw, how to navigate using the mouse, operating with the keyboard, introduction to different operating systems, introduction to social media platform such as Whatsapp , Instagram , Zoom , Skype, Internet browsing , creation of email using different platforms like gmail , yahoo, aol , hot mail etc. This program was designed as a 10-hour course to learn basic computer skills, with 20 subsequent hours of tutorials to consolidate these skills, for a total of 30 hours. The program was specifically structured to be suitable for teaching older people and to address the basic knowledge of computers, files, the Internet, email, chatting, and word processing.

At the beginning of the training program, participants were given simple manuals designed to provide course contents, including step-by-step instructions and numerous illustrations. The manual was made up of basic information to understand parts of the hardware (such as the keyboard or the mouse), functions of the operating system (Windows), Internet, email, and word processor. It was designed to teach ICT skills to elders . The course was imparted as a 2-hour lessons each day for the first two weeks. The rest of the training, which was focused on consolidating the knowledge acquired in the first two weeks, was taught in 2-hour tutorials, two days a week, until reaching a total of 30 hours.



To find out how often older people use computers and their potential Internet access, two questions were posed about these issues: "How much time do you usually spend on the computer?" and "Do you normally use the Internet?" Results showed that 60 % of the participants never used a computer, 20% rarely, 19% sometimes, and 1% a lot. In this respect, the senior citizens currently participating had hardly had any contact with computers, making this course their first opportunity for learning about and using a computer in most cases.

Capacity Building For Active Ageing

The ageing population is a global phenomenon and solutions are looked for in order to mild-mannered the economic impact. One alternative is supporting active ageing through capacity building and development of entrepreneurship among senior population. Seenagers (Senior Teenagers) otherwise known as older persons, are a valuable resource for capacity building. They often have the skills, financial resources and time available to contribute to economic activity. This will lead to the growing prevalence of senior entrepreneurship. Engaging seniors in both business creation and in supporting new and existing entrepreneurs would maximize the quality of their working life, nurture inter-generational learning and ensure knowledge transfer. At the University of the 3rd Age Project Lagos center in collaboration with Family Ark Mission, a module was created to capture capacity building for older persons in Fish Culture and Management whereby seniors visited the Institute of Oceanography in Victoria Island Lagos Nigeria and were lectured for 3 hrs on the subject. As captured by permission, a retired medical director has embarked on fish farming on a commercial scale .



By examining older retired workers' engagement in post-career entrepreneurship and wage-and-salary employment, older population have a higher probability to become entrepreneur as they may possess more human capital than younger ones due to lifelong learning and on-the-job-training. Also, older entrepreneurs seem to start businesses with a higher survival rate than younger founders. A study on North of England shows that there is a growing interest in self employment among people aged 50 and over. Men were more likely to seek continuing employment, while women were more enthusiastic about self-employment and business creation. It's been identified that five major themes associated with successful aging of older entrepreneurs that emerged for women are namely autonomy, independence, self-reliance, personal



effectiveness, and inter-generational support. However, there are many factors which might discourage seniors from capacity building activity, like technological developments, high administrative and tax burden. Although, contrary to classic stereotyping, senior entrepreneurs remain highly ambitious and open to technological developments. Education appears to have a positive effect on opportunity, necessity, social entrepreneurship and on growth ambitions. It is found that in less developed countries older and higher educated entrepreneurs are particularly important for stimulating economic growth, while for highly developed countries the contribution of younger entrepreneurs is more important. Conclusively, a convention for older persons is expedient to enhance and facilitate their inclusiveness in national agenda .

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