

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Assessment of the quality of training of non-formal education facilitators in the south-south political zone of Nigeria

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Accepted 25 November, 2015

In pursuance of the search for best practices in the execution of development agenda, the training of quality non-formal education (NFE) facilitators has been identified as an important agent for social engineering, community development and economic emancipation. The South-South political zone of Nigeria is a socially and economically backward environment. Which quality of NFE facilitators are turned out in this zone which may advance the cause of development? A self-designed evaluation model, named Biao's non-formal education performance model, three research instruments and eight research questions were relied upon in the process of data collection within four of the six States making up the South-South political zone. The data were analysed using frequency distribution, means and percentages. Findings revealed that although education policy makers in the south-south zone, showed an understanding of the possible positive impact of non-formal education on development, they exhibited a dearth of information about adult and non-formal education; it was further found that there existed no NFE facilitators' training institutes within the South-South zone and tertiary institutions' academic departments of adult and non-formal education were too few to impact meaningfully on the population of this zone; additionally, it was found that the NFE facilitators' training programmes run in only four academic departments of adult and non-formal education in the zone did not reflect the concerns of the millennium development goals; Although, 30 of the 35 trainers of NFE facilitators found to exist within the South-South zone at the time of this study were formally trained in the area of adult education, these trainers currently run defective facilitators' training programmes to produce NFE facilitators for the zone; the South-South then was found to lack NFE facilitators both in qualitative and quantitative terms; unless urgent specific steps were taken, the South-South therefore cannot be seen to benefit in a foreseeable future from an enduring development legacy. Consequently, it was recommended that a South-South non-formal education summit whose aim will be to further sensitize and conscientize education policy makers about the development potentials of non-formal education should be held as a matter of urgency; also core adult and non-formal education courses which currently exist within training programmes for facilitators should be reviewed regularly and concerns of the millennium development goals should be made to reflect within NFE facilitators' training programmes.

**Keywords:** Quality education, non-formal education, Nigeria's south-south zone; development.

## INTRODUCTION

"Evaluation" and "quality" of education are two constructs which only recently aroused the interest of educationists. It was not until the beginning of the 1970s that

"evaluation" appeared as a subject of educational research (Rolff, 1998); "quality" as a concern in education began to be discoursed very purposefully only in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the central role played by these concepts in the promotion of beneficial educational theory and practice has now been discovered, appreciated and acknowledged. Hence the frequent appeal nowadays by

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expert educationists for evaluation of educational processes for the purpose of determining internal consistency, functionality and quality.

## MODELS OF EVALUATIONAL STUDIES

The earliest and most popular model for carrying out educational studies is Stufflebeam's CIPP model ((Rolff, 1998); this is a model which outlines four major areas to be investigated and analysed in the process of educational evaluation. These four areas include "Context of education", "Input of education", "Process of education" and "Product of education" (CIPP).

Naturally, other models have since been developed; some of these subsequent models include Okeke's (1989) model for Cooperative Educational Planning and Analysis, Tiller's (1990) Decentralized School model, Coleman's (1992) Quality Assurance model and Rolff's (1998) System-interlinking model to cite but a few.

Unfortunately, all these models were designed to measure quality of education within the formal school system; consequently, the outcome of these studies had implications for the training of formal school teachers only. Yet, learning takes place not only within the formal school system but also outside of it. For example, most non-formal education programmes hold outside the physical frame of the formal educational system and certainly all non-formal educational programmes hold outside the philosophical mould of the formal education system.

### Non-Formal Education and the Training of Facilitators

Non-formal education which is also known as "adult education" or "lifelong education" or "education permanente" is mainly any form of education that takes place outside the formal school system; however, non-formal education may equally take place within the physical environment of formal system of learning; where this happens, formal safeguards known to the formal school system such as rigid time-tabling, fixed learning meeting places, formalized teacher-student relationship and not easily changeable curriculum contents are made more flexible and more accommodating of the perceived short-term and long-term needs of non-formal education learners.

Although the practice of non-formal education is as old as the first human being that walked the surface of the earth (since this first human being was a person who had to learn to adjust to living conditions of a new and non-formal learning environment) and although the earlier notable teachers (Babylonian, Egyptian mystery school teachers and Greek philosophers) carried out their teaching within non-formal environment, the training of

NFE facilitators became an important aspect of non-formal educational process only after the introduction of the formal study of adult education in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The formal study of adult education began in 1920 when the first Department of Adult Education was established in the United Kingdom (*John et al, 1991*). The establishment of this first department was necessitated by the desire of a few social scientists to learn more about the psychological and social aspects of non-formal education learners; with the establishment of this first department, arose the necessity to train a special corps of teachers for the promotion of adult and non-formal education.

These special teachers who have come to be referred to as instructors, adult educators or facilitators, have been used through about nine decades to help communities and countries achieve their set non-formal educational goals. Throughout these decades, the welfare of these facilitators has been neglected and treated poorly in many societies; for example, in many societies, these corps of educators do not enjoy an official salary structure; they are not organized into a recognized professional association and they are not given a structure within which to carry out their work all year round as they are employed as part-time teachers of out-of-school learners.

However, Youngman (2005), Pant and Kumar (2005), *Groener and others (2005)*, Mpfu (2005), and Gartenschlaeger (2005) submit that the success of all world development plans depends greatly on the ability of all societies to train quality NFE facilitators. The results of their studies suggest that the importance of the supply of quality facilitators is such that where adequate political will, sufficient funds and excellent infrastructure are provided without the supply of qualitatively trained facilitators, non-formal education projects may still fail to yield desired positive results.

The implication of the aforementioned research results is that only successful implementation of non-formal education programmes, and not the schooling of a few children, portends and guarantees development in developing countries. This is because at no time have developing countries been able to keep about half of their school age children at school; at any point in time therefore there are more illiterate and semi-illiterate persons in these countries than they are school age children at school; the schooling of all children and development of learning infrastructures for all out-of-school learners would have been the right possible scenario to usher in development in developing countries.

### Nigeria and development programmes

Nigeria is a developing West African country; it had had the opportunity to embark in the past, on implementation of either internationally or locally generated development

programmes. Many reasons ranging from bad governance to military incursion into politics have been adduced to explain the failure of these earlier development programmes.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) project is the most influential and loftiest human and capital development project on earth today. Nigeria and indeed all the constituent parts of Nigeria have endorsed this project and they all seem to be working hard to actualize it. The MDGs project aims at reducing poverty but also at promoting universal primary education and gender equality; it also makes environmental sustainability, reduction in infant and maternal mortality and reduction in HIV/AIDS infection its major concerns.

Non-formal education facilitators are expected to play a central role in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals as the attainment of even the child-oriented development goals such as universal primary education and reduction in infant mortality is not possible and will remain a mirage without adequate sensitization and conscientization of parents and adult populations. Indeed none of the eight Millennium Development Goals is achievable without the active engagement of learners (Biao, 2008)

### Quality training for adult educators

In general terms, quality in education relates to the extent to which education addresses educational needs of a target audience, the level and kind of enabling environment established to carry through the educational project and the standard of personnel deployed to realize the goal of the said educational project.

The summary of research findings suggests that quality education tends to yield high cognitive achievement (as measured by test scores) enables individuals to earn high income in later life encourages management of fertility with the view to obtaining improved living standards equips individuals with skills to make informed decisions as they concern HIV/AIDS improves the economic potentials of nations (UNESCO, 2004).

In the specific case of non-formal education, quality training of NFE facilitators is related to whether education policy makers are aware of the existence of a segment of education known as non-formal education; whether policy makers are aware of the potentials of non-formal education in development matters and as a tool for social engineering; whether there exists credible training institutions for NFE facilitators and whether the training programmes of facilitators include recognized core and indispensable courses.

In other words, the model proposed here for evaluating the quality of NFE facilitators operating in the South-South political zone is made up of three main aspects, namely, education policy makers' awareness of the

potential of non-formal education, existence of credible NFE facilitators' training institutions and the enrichment of NFE facilitators' programmes with core non-formal education courses. This model that is here known as BIAO's NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MODEL appears thus in a diagram (figure 1).

### The south-south political zone of Nigeria

The South-South political zone is to be found in the geographical south eastern part of Nigeria. The South-South zone is made up of Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers, Delta, Edo and Bayelsa States; Efik, Ibibio, Ekwere, Ijagam, Bekwara, Edo, Urhobo and Itsekiri are the major languages spoken in the South-South. Fish farming, crop farming and retail business are the main occupations of inhabitants of this political zone.

This zone exhibits traces of past neglect in development arena. The South-South is currently nationally and internationally acknowledged as one region whose development level is inversely proportionate to the amount of wealth it generates. Consequently, specialized development agencies have been established and re-established with the view to catching up on the delay accumulated on the development agenda of that zone.

It is because, the South-South zone is one of the most deprived of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria on account of past long developmental neglect that this research chose to focus on it as a typical example of societies that may benefit from the actualization of the Millennium Development Goals through the provision of quality non-formal education facilitators.

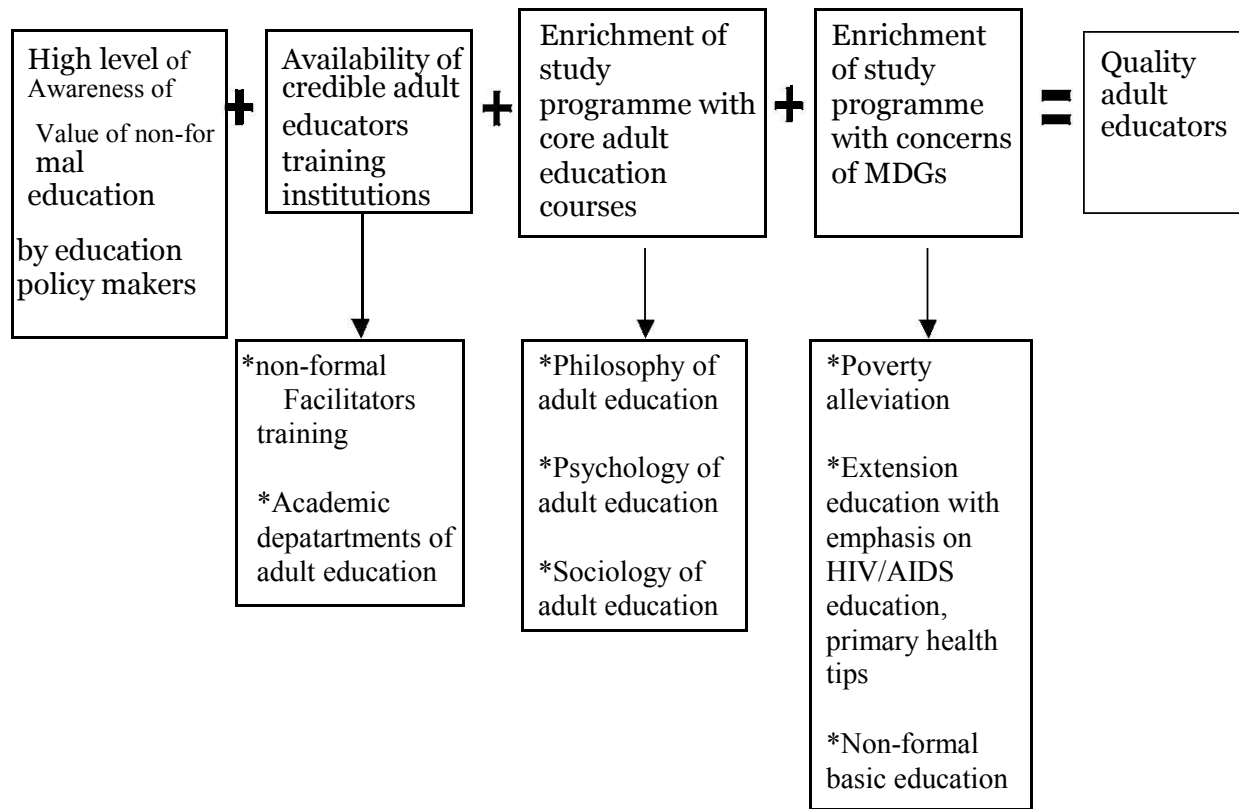
### Assumptions

The study was guided by the following assumptions:

That authorities in the South-South zone (Commissioners of Education, Heads of Units in Ministries of Education, Heads of adult education outfits, Heads of Non-governmental organizations, Voluntary organizations, law makers) are of the view that NFE is a means of social engineering and development.

That NFE brings information and knowledge to learners through the andragogical process and as such it constitutes a different recognizable segment of the national education system. That there exists in the South-South zone, identifiable NFE facilitators' training institutions. That the contents of the training programmes of facilitators in the South-South zone reflect the concerns of MDGs.

That at least 80 percent of trainers of NFE facilitators in the South-South zone underwent adult and non-formal education training. That the following courses exist on the NFE facilitators' training programmes as core courses:



**Figure 1:** Biao’s non-formal education performance model

Philosophy of adult education  
 Psychology of adult education and  
 Adult education and development

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- The study sought to find answers to the following questions. Do education policy makers hold the view that adult education is a means of social engineering and development?
- Is Andragogy treated as a distinguishable aspect of the national education system in the South-South political zone?
- How many NFE facilitators’ training institutes exist within the South-South political zone?
- How many trained facilitators’ trainers exist within the South-South political zone?
- How many untrained trainers of facilitators exist within the South-South zone?
- How many types of facilitators’ training programmes exist within the South-South zone?
- Which percentage of facilitators’ training programmes reflect the concerns of MDGs?
- How many of facilitators’ training programmes in the South-South zone reflect identified adult education core courses?

**METHODOLOGY**

This study was an evaluation study which analysed the known inputs in the training process of NFE facilitators with the view to ascertaining the quality level of the inputs; the quality of the inputs being ultimately an indicator of the quality of trained facilitators.

**Population and Sample**

The South-South political zone is made up of Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers, Delta, Edo and Bayelsa States. There exists no major peculiar features differentiating these states to warrant the adoption of cluster and stratification techniques in the sampling process; nevertheless, in order to ensure a high level of representativeness, four of the 6 States were sampled for study; the States studied include Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers and Edo States.  
 In each of the four States, the Commissioner of Education, the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education, Directors and Assistant Directors in Ministries of Education were identified as education policy makers. Consequently, for each State 12 respondents made up of the Commissioner of Education, the Permanent Secretary, 5 Directors and 5 Assistant Directors were selected.

**Instrumentation**

Three major instruments were used during the study; they include the self-designed Non-formal Education Performance Inventory (NFEPI), Interviews and Observation.  
 The NFEPI was a 10-item inventory within which each item

**Table 1. Summary of respondents**

STATE	Number of respondents
<b>Cross River</b>	
Commissioner of education	1
Permanent Secretary	1
Directors	5
Assistant Directors	5
	<b>Total = 12</b>
<b>Akwa-Ibom</b>	
Commissioner of education	1
Permanent Secretary	1
Directors	5
Assistant Directors	5
	<b>Total = 12</b>
<b>Rivers</b>	
Commissioner of education	1
Permanent Secretary	1
Directors	5
Assistant Directors	5
	<b>Total = 12</b>
<b>Edo</b>	
Commissioner of education	1
Permanent Secretary	1
Directors	5
Assistant Directors	5
	<b>Total = 12</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>

carried three suggested responses (Yes, No and No answer). In all items except in item 9, the "Yes" answer attracted the highest score of "1 mark"; the first and second "No" answers attracted "0 mark" respectively. In item 9, the first "No" answer attracted "1 mark", the "Yes" answer "0 mark" while the second "No answer" attracted "0 mark". The maximum score obtainable on the inventory therefore was "10 marks" while the least score obtainable was "0 mark".

The NFEPI was designed to elicit answers having bearing with the first two research questions; items 1 to 5 of the NFEPI sought to provide answers to Research Question 1 while items 6 to 10 sought to provide answers to Research Question 2. Answers to other research questions were obtained through review of official documents in ministries of education and non-formal education outfits and through the employment of other earlier mentioned data collection procedures.

The interview schedule used in the study was an unstructured one while the observation style employed both on the spot visits and review of official documents.

### Collection of Data

Data were collected through review of official documents, on the spot visits, interviews and through the use of a combination of soft and hard copies of the Non-formal Education Performance Inventory that were forwarded to the research participants through appointed research assistants in the South-South political zone.

For the purpose of this study, officers on the ranks of Commissioner of Education, Permanent Secretaries, Directors and Assistant Directors in the ministries of education were considered policy makers.

### RESULTS/ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Frequency distribution, percentage and means were employed in analyzing the data collected. The following tables lay out the data collected.

Table 1 shows that 12 respondents made up of 1 Commissioner of Education, 1 Permanent Secretary, 5 Directors and 5 Assistant Directors completed the NFEPI in each of the 4 States (Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers and Edo States) studied. On the whole therefore, 48 persons responded to the NFEPI.

Table 2 shows in detail, the distribution of respondents to the NFEPI. It shows that in each of the 4 States, respondents approached the NFEPI in slightly different manners.

In all the 4 States, all the respondents indicated that they have been hearing about non-formal education. However, many respondents could not confirm whether the Director of the State Agency for Mass Education at the time of this study, held a Bachelor degree in Adult Education. Indeed, a few Commissioners of Education submitted "no answer" as response for the question which asked them to state the qualification of their Director of Mass Education Agency.

Table 2 also shows the scores that were thus pooled by the manners in which respondents responded; these scores are in brackets on the table.

**Research Question 1:** Do education policy makers hold the view that non-formal education is a means of social engineering and development?

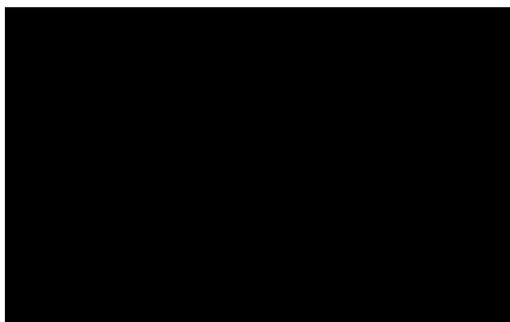
Table 3 shows that Akwa Ibom State had the highest perception of non-formal education as a means of social engineering. In other words, of all the 4 States, Akwa Ibom State laid the highest importance on NFE as a tool for development. Akwa-Ibom State was followed in this posture by Cross River State which was itself followed by Edo State while Rivers State showed the least regard for non-formal education as a tool for social change.

**Research Question 2:** Is Andragogy treated as a distinguishable aspect of national education system in the South-South political zone?

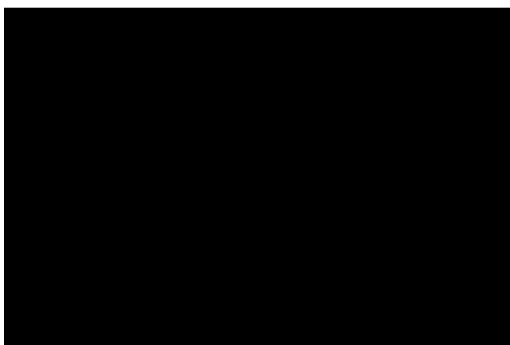
Table 4 shows that responses from Cross River State showed that policy makers in that State recognized non-formal education as a distinct sub-system of all identified

**Table 3:** Perception of non-formal education as a means of social engineering by education policy makers in the South-South zone.

S/N	State	Score on items 1-5
1.	Cross River	44
2.	Akwa-Ibom	45
3.	Rivers	35
4.	Edo	41
<b>Mean for all States</b>		<b>42.5</b>

**Table 4:** Perception by education Policy makers of non-formal education as a distinct education sub-system

S/N	State	Score on items 6-10
1.	Cross River	40
2.	Akwa-Ibom	25
3.	Rivers	22
4.	Edo	29
<b>Mean for all States</b>		<b>29</b>



non-formal education core courses?

Table 7 provides answers to research questions 6, 7 and 8. It shows that all existing 4 departments of adult education in the south-south offered Diploma, Bachelor, Masters and Doctor of Philosophy programmes in adult and non-formal education. None of the study programmes in the 4 departments had as yet made provision for the inclusion of the core concerns of the millennium development goals. However, all the available adult education programmes taught core courses such as Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology of Adult

Education.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study sought to know the quality of training given to non-formal education facilitators in the South-South political zone of Nigeria; The study sought to attain this knowledge through an examination of: the awareness of policy makers in matters concerning adult education, the existence of credible non-formal education facilitators' training structures, the inclusion in non-formal education facilitators' training programmes of adult education core courses, and the reflection of the concerns of the Millennium Development Goals in NFE facilitators' training programmes.

Tables 3 and 4 which presented the study results seeking the extent to which education policy makers in the south-south zone accepted non-formal education as a means of social engineering and the extent to which these same policy makers viewed non-formal education as a distinct sub-system of national education system, showed that a cumulative mean of 42.5 was scored in the case of social engineering while a cumulative mean of 29 was scored on the recognition of NFE as a distinct educational subsystem.

A total of 60 marks were to be scored by the 12 respondents of each State on each of these segments of the NFEPI; the mean score for each State on each of the segments of the inventory therefore was 30marks.

Judging from the results on tables 3 and 4, the conclusion may be drawn that while education policy makers in the south-south zone recognized non-formal education as a tool for social change and engineering, they did not accept it as a distinct sub-system of education; this is because respondents pooled more than the mean score on the first 5 items of the NFEPI and pooled less than the mean score on the second set of 5 items.

A further implication of this result is that while policy makers will be informing everybody of the importance of non-formal education, they will be doing very little in terms of establishing and promoting the establishment of strictly non-formal educational structures of education within the zone. And this implication was clearly confirmed by the results on table 5 where it was shown that no single facilitators' training institute exists within the south-south zone. Indeed, it was observed that Akwa Ibom State has no single facilitators' training outfit. The 4 departments of adult education found within the Federal universities located within the zone were all but one, established by the Federal government; while these departments may address some peculiar problems of the south-south zone they are not enough to both cater for facilitators' training needs and other non-formal educational needs of the zone.

Currently, none of the NFE facilitators' training

**Table 5:** Non-formal Education Training Institutes in South-South Zone.

S/N	State	Name of training institutes or centres	Number of training institutes
1.	Cross River	NIL	0
2.	Akwa-Ibom	Adult Education Training Centre- Uyo	0
3.	Rivers	Women Education Centre-Port-Harcourt	0
4.	Edo	(Institute) of Continuing Education-Benin City.	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>0</b>

Source: NMEC (2006) Digest of statistics on mass literacy delivery in Nigeria.

**Table 6:** Trained and Untrained Trainers of Non-formal Education Facilitators Within the South-South Political Zone.

S/N	State	Name of tertiary institution With adult education department	Adult Education Departments		
			Number	Trained trainers	Untrained trainers
1.	Cross River	1. University of Calabar	1	12	1
2.	Akwa-Ibom	NIL	0	0	0
3.	Rivers	University of Port-Harcourt-Port-Harcourt. Rivers State University of Science & Technology.	2	6 1	0 3
4.	Edo	4. University of Benin-Benin City	1	11	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>4</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>

programmes existing within the south-south zone embodies the concerns of the Millennium Development Goals; yet, these goals are currently the most profitable for a political zone that had earlier on suffered much neglect; the promotion of the millennium development goals is a sure way of accelerating human and resource development in this deprived zone; this is because the millennium development goals highlight such interesting and relevant issues such as poverty alleviation, basic education, reduction in HIV/AIDS, child and maternal death.

Obviously, education policy makers in the south-south zone are still deficient in relevant information about non-formal education and its potentials for development. Although they have demonstrated some awareness about the existence of non-formal education, when commissioners of education are not interested in ascertaining the type of certificate possessed by his/her Director of agency for mass education, it is understood that the realm of non-formal education in the south-south zone was still seen as another political outfit and not as a technical and professional area of human endeavour. This sort of mentality is obviously harmful to the development of non-formal education in the zone.

Only 35 trainers of NFE facilitators were identified in the south-south zone; thirty of these trainers were found to be trained while 5 of them were untrained. The number of trainers of NFE facilitators identified to be in the South-South is ridiculously low because it is a population too meagre to make any significant impact. The South-South has a population of more than 21 million inhabitants out

which one may count about 10 million adult persons and 5 million out-of-school youths (National Population Commission, 2008); when it is known that all these 15 million persons are in need of one or more forms of non-formal training and education that are expected to be handled by facilitators, it is realized that many facilitators are needed indeed. As it is, there is only 1 trained or untrained facilitator to 430,000 persons in need of NFE and 1 trained facilitator to 500,000 persons in need of NFE. The gap to fill is yawning indeed. This discussion may end on a cheerful note as it was discovered that the few existing facilitators' training programmes in the south-south zone, embodied acknowledged core adult education courses. The regularity with which these core courses were reviewed with the view to bringing them in line with the realities of the moment was however not investigated.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study led to the following conclusions: Although education policy makers in the south-south zone, showed an understanding of the possible importance of non-formal education in development, they exhibited a dearth of information about adult education or non-formal education.

There were no facilitators' training institutes in the south-south zone. Facilitators' training programmes in the south-south zone did not, at the time of this study, reflect the concerns of the Millennium Development Goals.

**Table 7:** Non-formal Education Facilitators' Training Programmes With MDGs and Core Courses Inputs.

S/N	State	Name of tertiary institution With adult education department	Name of training institutes or centres	NFE Facilitators' training programmes		
				Types (Diploma, Bachelor, M.Ed & Ph.D.)	MDGs Concern -poverty era -non-formal basic edu. -NGOs -HIV-AIDS	Core courses (Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology)
1.	Cross River	1. University of Calabar	NIL	-Diploma -Bachelor -M.Ed -Ph.D.	NIL	Yes
2.	Akwa-Ibom	NIL	Adult Education Training Centre, Uyo.	NIL	NIL	NIL
3.	Rivers	University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt. Rivers State University of Science & Technology.	Women Education Centre, Port-Harcourt	-Diploma -Bachelor -M.Ed -Ph.D. -Diploma -Bachelor	NIL	Yes
4.	Edo	4. University of Benin-Benin City	Institute of Continuing Education, Benin City.	-Dip. -Bachelor -M.Ed -Ph.D.	NIL	Yes

Although there existed few trainers of NFE facilitators in the south-south zone, 75 percent of these trainers were found to be trained. As a consequence of low number of trainers of facilitators, very few facilitators did exist in the South-South zone. Acknowledged core adult education courses were found reflected in the facilitators' training programmes available in the south-south.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings and as flowing from the conclusions, the following recommendations readily offer themselves:

A South-South non-formal educational summit should be held urgently with the view to enlightening education policy makers about the great development potentials of non-formal education as a tool for social engineering. This summit should be jointly sponsored by the departments of adult education in the south-south zone, of course with the support of organizations that may be stimulated to lend a helping hand.

Academic departments of adult education should review their facilitators' training programmes with the view to inserting the concerns of the Millennium Development Goals in those programmes.

States within the south-south zone should establish facili-

tators' training institutes with the view to training low cadre and intermediate facilitators that are so badly needed to prosecute on a continuous basis the wars against illiteracy and poverty.

Henceforth, no State should exist within the south-south zone which has no single facilitators' training institute or department. This is because the enormity of work that exists to be done through these facilitators requires that all hands be on deck.

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