

# Community Education Needs of Community Based Organization Leaders in Anambra State, Nigeria

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**Abstract-** The central focus of this study was to ascertain the community education needs of community based organizations leaders in Anambra State of Nigeria. To guide this study, five research questions were posed. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 1,701 executive members of the 189 registered community based organizations in the 21 local government areas that make up the three senatorial zones of Anambra State. The sample consisted of 1045 executive members of community based organizations selected through stratified random sampling. The internal consistency reliability coefficient obtained was 0.88. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection while mean was used to analyze the data. The criterion mean of 2.50 and above was accepted as indicative of agreement and where it falls below 2.50, it indicated disagreement. Among the major findings of the study were that the respondents agreed that they need basic, social, political, economic, and cultural education to improve or further lead as required. It was recommended that the Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education in Anambra State should mount campaign in the rural communities on the need for community education programmes, that community education centres should be established in the rural areas and qualified adult educators employed to facilitate the programmes, policy makers and other administrators in mass literacy, adult and non-formal education should reflect the needs of the community in policy formulation.

**Index Terms-** Community education, Community based organization and Community leaders.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Within the community framework, there is need for people to be educated. It is vital because without it, people may not function effectively. Community education is one form of education that will bring about positive change among the people in the community. Ezumah (2004) sees community education as a process aimed at raising consciousness, spreading understanding, and providing the necessary skills, including the human and material resources for the social, economic, political and cultural development. Findsen (2006) defined community education as an organized learning activity that groups or individuals undertake for the personal, community, cultural or economic development. It touches all other areas of learning but its primary focus is the adult as learner and the community as the context.

Contextually, community education is the education that promotes the integrated involvement of community members in

the effort to bring about desirable social change. It is education for peoples empowerment to take control over their own lives. In other words, it is an educational process whereby people, collectively learn to help themselves and improve their lives. It is the need for improving the quality of life in the in the community that brought about the activities of community education.

According to Anyanwu (2002), community education is not a new phenomenon of human living. For example, in Nigeria traditional communities, people had been practising indigenous community education before the advent of the early missionaries and the colonial administrators. The traditional apprenticeship programmes were plausible forms of community education. Such programmes were run in the areas of health, agriculture, arts and crafts and constituted a recognized way of inducing enlightenment. Anyanwu further stated that with the introduction and general acceptance of the Western system of education and culture, there was a gradual decline in enthusiasm for erstwhile indigenous community education with corollary problems of illiteracy, unemployment, underdevelopment, poverty, armed robbery, kidnapping, and youth restiveness in Nigeria. This indicates the inadequacy of formal school system of Western Education alone to meet the socio-economic and cultural needs of the Nigerian society.

Formal education having been unable to address most community concerns alone, policy makers came up with the idea of non-formal education. Non-formal education according to Ngwu (2003:41) can be defined as:

any planned and consciously organized general education and /or training activity outside the formal school in a particular society for illiterates, school leavers, dropouts or other adults, as individuals or in groups, for the purpose of raising their consciousness of their social situation and their standard of living, improving their individual or collective efficiency in their jobs or preparing them for self-employment, wage employment or further training within the existing education/training system.

Non-formal education is focusing on teaching people to improve their basic level of subsistence, as well as there standards of nutrition and general health, participate in determining the nature and content of programmes of community education, and acquire knowledge and skills which can immediately be put into practice to solve community problems. In these ways, non-formal education becomes an important tool for community education to provide social change for better living in the community. Non-formal education provides the viable educational alternatives that will enable different categories of completers to further their education.

In 2004, the Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education came up with strong emphasis on all forms of functional education such as community education that was

enshrined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). In the document, it was clearly stated that efforts shall be made to relate education to overall community needs. To realize this objective locally and globally, the fifth World Conference on Community Education was convened in 1987 in Nairobi, Kenya where the proponents and practitioners of community education from 40 countries in all continents affirmed their commitment to the goal of community education: to raise the consciousness and enhance the initiative of people in solving their problems in the spirit of self-reliance and self determination (Akande, 2007).

Ezumah (2004) stated that the non-formal nature of community education operational strategies determines its objectives. He went on to state that the primary objective of non-formal community education is to return education to the people in the community. Community Based Organization (CBO) leaders, therefore, need this type of education (community education). This is the type of education that will provide them with certain types of knowledge, skills, understanding, courage, perceptivity, and foresight in community leadership. The National Libraries of Medicine (2007) defined community based organizations as public or private non-profit organizations that are representatives of a community or a significant segment of a community, and are engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, or public safety community need. Thus, community based organizations refer to all the organizations based in the community and set by the community for the purposes of enhancing the well-being of the community members. Each community based organization has its own leaders and the essence of the leadership is to direct activities and have enormous responsibility to direct what they are doing within CBOs.

Abiona (2009) sees community leaders as volunteers and agents of change that motivate and mobilize their people to improve their communities. They are members of their community who are familiar with the culture, social organization, structure, and values of their community. In other words, community leaders are the leaders of different community based organizations set-up by the community who are often formed to improve the standard of living in their community. Because community leaders occupy this position, they need to be educated within the context of the community. In realization of this, successive Nigerian governments have intensified efforts in initiating national development programmes to promote community education. Such programmes include: Mass Mobilization, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), Family Support Programme (FSP), Environmental Sanitation, population education, mass literacy campaign, political education, among others. These programmes were initiated to promote the life and meet learning needs of the people, community leaders inclusive. This is in line with the views of Alam (2004) who noted that one of the goals of Dakar Education for All (EFA) framework of action was ensuring equitable access to education to meet the learning needs of all.

Despite the efforts of the government in initiating community education programmes in the country, the findings of the study show that community based organizations leaders in Anambra state have little or no idea of community education programmes to improve their lots. It is not clear if these community education

programmes have been contributory in improving their expected roles. This is because, they have not been able to fill their position properly and hence, do not perform as desired in their area of jurisdictions. This is evidenced from their poor leadership and accountability, disputes, ignorance of political rights, poor attitude to environmental sanitation, among others. This agrees with the views of Anyanwu (2002) who said that:

Community leaders are more interested in power sharing and the creation of positions than in the solution of community problems. Hence, with the lack of intelligent and imaginative of local leadership, the administration of a disorganized community can be frustrated by low morale, apathy, and outright neglect.

The non-performance of these community leaders of their expected roles could be attributed to some gaps that need to be filled through community education programmes. The gap will be considered as the educational needs of these community based organizations leaders. As a problem-centered activity, community education becomes a tool that will build the capacity of community leaders to satisfy the imbalance or lack of adjustment between the present condition in the life of the community and a new set of condition that will be more desirable.

In identifying those gaps, they could be basic education needs, social education needs, political education needs, economic education needs, and cultural education needs. These are important because, they will equip the individuals, including the community leaders with the desired knowledge and skills that will make them function effectively in their communities, hence the need for this study.

## II. METHOD

The study adopted a survey research design The population of the study comprised of 1,701 executive members of the 189 registered community based organizations in the 21 local government areas that make up the three senatorial zones in Anambra State. The sample consisted of 1,045 executive members of community based organizations selected through stratified random sampling. A self constructed questionnaire titled "Community education needs of community based organizations leaders" (CENOCBOL). The instrument was subjected to two experts in Adult Education and two other experts in Measurement and Evaluation all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. Comments from the experts where incorporated in the modification of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and 0.88 was obtained and was adjudged high enough. The data collected was analyzed using Mean and Standard deviation. Decision rule was based on 4\_points numerical values assigned: Very Great Extent (VGE)\_4points, Great Extent (GE)\_3points, Low Extent (LE)\_2points and Very Low Extent (VLE)\_1point. Items which had mean rating of 2.50 and above were agreed on.

## III. RESULTS/FINDINGS

The findings of the study were presented according to the research questions in tables 1~5. Out of the 1,071 copies of the

questionnaire distributed and returned, 26 copies were badly filled and discarded while the remaining 1,045 copies were presented and analysed in tables using mean and standard deviation.

**Research Questions 1**

To what extent do community based organizations leaders need basic education?

**Table 1: Mean of the basic education needs of the respondents**

N = 1045

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	STD. Deviation	DECISION
1.	Basic literacy skills i.e. ability to read, write, and compute figures	3.72	.476	Agreed
2.	Simple hygiene and other health care practices	3.46	.542	Agreed
3.	Nutritional values of balancing daily diet	3.41	.553	Agreed
4.	New Methods of farming	3.40	.629	Agreed
5.	Civic education	3.47	.569	Agreed

Table 1 shows that all the items 1-5 were agreed by the respondents. This is because each of these items has mean rating that is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This, therefore, implies that the CBO leaders need basic education which includes basic literacy, simple hygiene and health care, family planning, social change, nutritional values, new methods of farming to improve their quality of life.

**Research Question 2**

To what extent do community based organizations leaders need social education?

**Table 2: Mean of the social education needs of the respondents.**

N = 1045

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	STD. DEVIATION	DECISION
1.	Knowledge of establishing good human relationship	3.49	.560	Agreed
2.	Communications skills	3.50	.565	Agreed
3.	Knowledge of restoring peace and harmony, counseling and resolving conflicts in the community	3.43	.545	Agreed

4.	Acquisition of leadership training to perform your roles effectively.	3.32	.624	Agreed
5.	Skills of attracting private sector partnership for community development	3.37	.545	Agreed
6.	Improved family life condition.	3.43	.619	Agreed
7.	Love for others, recognition of personality, and security of life.	3.44	.652	Agreed
8.	Identifying the needs and problems of the community for self improvement.	3.34	.625	Agreed

Table 2 revealed that all the items 1-8 were agreed by the respondents because each of the items has mean rating that is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that the CBO leaders equally need social education which includes among others knowledge of good human relationship, effective communication, peace and harmony, social change, security life.

**Research Question 3**

To what extent do community based organizations leaders need political education?

**Table 3: Mean of the political education needs of the respondents.**

N = 1045

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	STD. DEVIATION	DECISION
1.	Knowledge of your civic responsibilities	3.56	.581	Agreed
2.	Knowledge of state ideology	3.41	.588	Agreed
3.	Ability to vote and be voted for	3.48	.590	Agreed
4.	Knowledge of and sound criticism of state issues	3.59	.639	Agreed
5.	Ability to train other people in leadership skills and political development.	3.38	.607	Agreed
6.	Ability to conduct free and fair elections in your area	3.42	.613	Agreed
7.	Knowledge of the importance of democratic value in a local environment.	3.37	.591	Agreed
8.	Basic office skills to strengthen your leadership structure.	3.42	.608	Agreed

Table 3 shows that all the items 1-8 were also agreed by the respondents because of the fact that each of the items has mean rating that is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that the CBO leaders also need political education such as

knowledge of their rights and duties, ideology of the state, ability to vote and be voted for, leadership training, to mention but a few.

**Research Question 4**

To what extent do community based organizations leaders need economic education?

**Table 4: Mean of the economic education needs of the respondents.**

N = 1045

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	STD. DEVIATION	DECISION
1.	Skills of identifying available community	3.54	.559	Agreed
2.	Mobilizing strategies for self-help effort projects	3.51	.609	Agreed
3.	Improving your agriculture productions.	3.33	.569	Agreed
4.	Acquisition of vocational/technical skills.	3.37	.642	Agreed
5.	Employment skills to reduce poverty	3.40	.600	Agreed
6.	Ability to pay your tax regularly.	2.85	.900	Agreed
7.	Entrepreneurial skills to promote your business.	3.17	.575	Agreed

Table 4 revealed that all the items 1- 7 were as well agreed by the respondents because they have mean ratings that are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the CBO leaders need economic education such as knowledge of identifying and utilizing their available resources judiciously, mobilizing people for self-help effort projects, improved agricultural production, among others.

**Research Question 5**

To what extent do community based organizations leaders need cultural education?

**Table 5: Mean of the cultural education needs of the respondents.**

N = 1045

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	STD. DEVIATION	DECISION
1.	Acquisition of monuments and historical events.	3.42	.650	Agreed
2.	Strategies to abolish harmful cultural practices in the community.	3.33	.654	Agreed

3.	Knowledge of your culture and other peoples' cultures.	3.57	.633	Agreed
4.	Knowledge of other peoples' languages and styles of communication such as storytelling.	3.39	.604	Agreed
5.	Ability to impart the tradition, beliefs, values, and behaviour of the community into the younger generation.	3.39	.632	Agreed
6.	Possession of a set of belief and principles regarding the existence of a single being or group of beings who created and govern the world.	3.77	.916	Agreed

Table 5 shows that all the items 1-6 were also agreed by the respondents owing to the fact that each of the items has mean score that is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This, therefore, implies that the CBO leaders agreed need cultural education such as knowledge of monuments and historical events, harmful cultural practices, other peoples' cultures, languages, to mention but a few.

**IV. DISCUSSION**

From the analysis of data in research question one, it showed that the respondents agreed to the basic education needs that would make them perform better in their communities. This is in agreement with the views of Lynette and Babara (2010) that basic education refers to all those programmes with fundamental education, as well as those programmes with alternative curricular, including areas such as basic health, nutrition, family planning, literacy, agriculture, and other vocational skills. This also corroborates with the notion of Wikipedia (2011) that basic education refers to the whole range of educational activities taking place in various settings that aim to meet the basic learning needs.

Result of research question two showed that social education needs were agreed by the respondents. This means that the respondents need social education to establish good relationship in the community, communicate effectively, restore peace and harmony, improve their family life, among others. This agrees with the view of Davis and Gibson (1997:12) who noted social education as:

Any individual's increased consciousness of himself- of his aptitude and untapped resources and of the relevance of these to others. It enhances the individual's understanding of how to form mutually satisfying relationships, and so involves a search for the adult for ways of helping a young person to discover how to contribute to as well as take from his associations with others.

Social education here, is emphasized as a particular type of process directed at a specific task-the social development of adolescents. Learning can, therefore, be viewed as either an internal change in consciousness or as the process of acquiring knowledge, feelings, and skills.

The findings from research question three revealed that political education needs were agreed by the respondents. The respondents see political education as a way of knowing their rights and duties, state ideology, exercising their franchise, strengthening their leadership, among others. This is in line with the view of Okafor (2004) who stated that political awareness is referred to attitudinal term that connotes one's consciousness as regard to his political duties to nation and that of the nation to the citizens. It is the process of making the citizens of a country to know their political rights which entitle them to participate in the national political life of the state. Cheng (2001) agreed with the above statement when he said that political education enlightens residents from different perspectives about political points of views and knowledge and values of ideological events.

On economic education needs, it was found that the respondents' opinions were unanimous in all the items. Those items include among others, identifying their available resources, mobilizing people for self-help efforts, improving their agricultural production and vocational skills to gain employment. The findings of the study is in agreement with the view of Steinmann (1994) who affirmed that economic education prepares individuals for their roles in everyday economic situations as consumers, producers, and economic citizens. It aims at the emancipation of individuals to improve their living situations in a responsible way. Hopkins (2003) corroborates with the above statement when he noted that economic education is the education that helps individuals to develop skills to meet their financial and personal objectives, including savings, financial stability, home ownership, high education and retirement.

Result of research question five revealed that cultural education is of necessity leaders. This implies that the respondents need cultural education to acquaint themselves with monuments and historical events, know different cultures, languages and styles of communication, propagate the tradition, values and beliefs, abolish harmful cultural practices, and have belief on a being that created and govern the world. This finding is in line with Campbell [2011] who averred that to be culturally literate is to understand the history and accept what underlie a culture, and to be able to converse fluently in the allusions and informal content of that culture.

## V. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that one of the major indices of development in any society is education of its citizenry. Community education becomes a panacea for improving the quality of life in the community. It embraces all range of development activities in any community undertaken by the people, the government or non-governmental organization. Community development, therefore, relies heavily on community leaders who are the real agents and catalysts of social change and improvement of their communities.

For community leaders to perform very well in their expected roles, community education programmes are of utmost necessity. Such programmes of community education include: basic education, social education, political education, economic education, and cultural education. It is assumed that when they

acquire these educational programmes, the decline in their roles will be reversed and a desired set of conditions set in.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

The Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education in Anambra State should mount campaign in the rural communities on the need for community education programmes. This is to sensitize community leaders to ensure their popular participation in educational programme activities that are designed for them to improve their quality of life.

The government should from time to time organize workshops, seminars, and symposium for community leaders and adult educators. This will go a long way in strengthening the leaders' knowledge and skills in developmental programmes especially when new innovation in education is made.

Community education centres should be established in rural communities and qualified adult educators employed. This will enable the people to integrate into the whole spectrum of development programmes and to meet the demand of both the non-literate and functionally illiterate adults to improve themselves educationally which guarantees a leverage to better livelihood.

The policy makers and other administrators in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education should reflect the needs of the community in policy formulation. This will make the people see the educational programmes as their own and this will make them participate in the learning exercise.

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