

Assessment of Funding Approach to Adult Learning and Education in Rural Communities

Emmanuel Idowu Ojobanikan¹ , Njitum C. A. Mandah², Abosede Olubukola Foyewa³

¹Department of Educational Foundations, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

²Department of Adult Education and Community Development, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

³Department of Arts and Humanities Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: agsemmanuel45@gmail.com

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Abstract: The challenges of Nigeria as a nation require holistic approach and appropriate education to tackle for socio-economic development and peaceful co-existence of Nigerians. Adult learning and education (ALE) being a discipline with huge potentials for adults, is capable of tackling the problems. However, it needed to be scaled up through new initiatives and approaches. This study therefore, assessed the funding approach to ALE programmes in Ekiti State, Nigeria; with a view to understand how ALE programmes have been funded and implemented in Nigeria in recent times. Review of concepts and terms were carried out. Qualitative research method was used to obtain data. It was discovered that Ekiti state Government adopted specific need and service-oriented approach to funding and implementation of adult learning and education programmes in the State. The approach yielded positive results with 67 adult literacy centres established and 5,029 adult learners enrolled between 2019 and 2022. A total of 45 individuals and 12 faith based organisations sponsored ALE programmes. It is therefore recommended that government at all levels should adopt need and service-oriented approach to funding and implementation of ALE programmes with a view to make ALE relevant in providing solution to the Nigeria's socio-economic, political, environmental and security challenges.

Keywords: Approach, Assessment, Implementation, Need, Service, funding

INTRODUCTION

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is often perceived as a new field, yet it is deeply rooted in the history of human civilization. This misconception has led to misunderstandings about its scope and has underestimated its potential to address many contemporary challenges, especially in rural communities. ALE, in fact, dates back to the origins of mankind, with theological accounts suggesting that the discipline began with creation itself, where God served as the instructor and Adam as the first learner (Ojobanikan, 2019; Holy Bible - Gen 1:27-29). This foundational role of ALE underscores its intrinsic value and establishes it as the precursor to all subsequent educational fields such as early childhood education, youth literacy, and guidance and counseling. These fields evolved through the processes of procreation and the training of the young, perpetuating the legacy of ALE.

Despite its ancient beginnings, formal recognition and development of ALE did not occur until the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century (Inna, 2017; New World Encyclopedia, 2016). This milestone marked a pivotal shift, acknowledging the integral role of ALE in fostering societal and national development across multiple dimensions, including social, economic, agricultural,

environmental, health and well-being, employment and labor market, security, and crime control (Biao, 2022; UIL, 2016). The evolution and formalization of ALE highlight its critical importance and demonstrate its broad and impactful reach in addressing diverse global challenges.

However, the decline in literacy rates in Nigeria—from 70.20% in 2008 to 51.08% in 2012, and a partial recovery to 62.02% by 2018 (World Bank, 2023)—poses significant challenges. Adult Learning and Education (ALE) has historically played a vital role in equipping adults with essential literacy skills, as well as daily life support and work competency skills. These capabilities are crucial for engaging in meaningful socio-economic activities and for supporting children's education through mentorship in completing assignments. This role of ALE remains critical in addressing the challenges brought about by the declining literacy rates in Nigeria (Ekuri et al., 2022; Ryan, 2018).

It is also important to note that funding for ALE in Nigeria has been woefully inadequate. The educational funding model allocates only 5% of total education funds to ALE, and even this meager percentage is often inaccessible (Hussain, 2021). Furthermore, Biao (2022) and Taylor et al. (2023) have reported on the poor state of ALE funding and have advocated for increased financial support and combined efforts to fund ALE programs.

Given these circumstances, it is crucial to adopt proactive approaches to promoting ALE that can address the myriad socio-cultural, economic, security, governance, youth unemployment, restiveness, and agitation challenges of the 21st century. This study thus examines the approach to funding ALE in rural communities of Ekiti State, Nigeria, with the goal of canvassing more collaborative funding to advance ALE in rural areas throughout Nigeria and beyond.

Despite its ancient roots, Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is not as widely recognized or embraced in Sub-Saharan Africa as other fields of study. Within tertiary institutions, ALE is often marginalized within curricula and attracts less interest among students (Obasi, 2014). This lack of prominence contributes to widespread misconceptions about what adult education entails, its scope, and its potential benefits. Many people mistakenly equate ALE with education designed solely for older adults (Fajonyomi, 2020).

Globally, ALE is an emerging and evolving discipline. Its concepts and definitions vary significantly due to socio-cultural and economic differences across regions. This diversity in understanding means that ALE does not conform to a single, universally accepted definition (Kester & Aderinoye, 2020; Fajonyomi, 2020). This variability underscores the need for a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to defining and implementing ALE, particularly in regions where it is underrepresented in the educational system.

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is often misconstrued in various ways—some see it as education strictly for the elderly, others as unconventional learning outside traditional classroom settings, and still others as informal learning derived from daily activities. To clarify these common misconceptions and provide a comprehensive definition that considers the socio-political and cultural contexts of different countries, UNESCO (1976) offered a broad definition of adult education. This definition describes ALE as:

"The entire body of organized educational processes, regardless of content, level, or method, whether formal or informal, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, and universities or in apprenticeship settings. It encompasses all learning wherein persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications. This learning may also steer them in a new direction and foster changes in their attitudes or behavior, aiming for a dual objective: full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic, and cultural development."

To further refine and update its conceptualization of Adult Learning and Education (ALE), UNESCO expanded on its 1976 definition in 2015 (UNESCO, 2015). This update was designed to better reflect the evolving understanding of adult learning's role within lifelong learning frameworks. The 2015 definition asserts that:

"Adult learning and education is a core component of lifelong learning. It includes all forms of education and learning that ensure the participation of all adults in their societies and the world of work. It encompasses the entire spectrum of learning processes—formal, non-formal, and informal—whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enhance their capabilities for living and working, benefitting both their personal interests and those of their communities, organizations, and societies. Adult learning and education involve sustained activities and processes of acquiring, recognizing, exchanging, and adapting capabilities. Given the shifting boundaries of youth and adulthood in most cultures, the term 'adult' in this context includes all those who engage in adult learning and education, regardless of whether they have reached the legal age of maturity."

This definition broadens the scope of ALE, emphasizing its importance not only in personal development but also in enabling active and informed participation in various societal, economic, and cultural contexts. It highlights ALE as a dynamic field that adapts to the needs and capacities of adults, acknowledging the fluidity of the stages between youth and adulthood. The updated UNESCO definition also brings a functional dimension to the understanding of adult education, suggesting that ALE's role is increasingly vital in helping adults adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities, thereby enhancing their functionality in society. This perspective on ALE as an integral part of lifelong learning positions it as essential for continuous personal and professional development.

The definitions of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) provided by various scholars emphasize its dynamic nature and its critical role in enabling adults to adapt and thrive in their environments. [Nzeneri \(2002\)](#) articulates that adult education caters directly to the social, economic, political, and cultural needs of adults, facilitating their ability to fully adjust to changes and challenges in their lives and wider society. This conceptualization views ALE as a transformative process that not only educates but also makes adults functional and responsible members of society. [Owede \(2015\)](#) expands on this by describing adult education as a process through which adults engage in sequential and continuous learning to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. This perspective highlights the ongoing nature of adult education, which is not a one-time event but a lifelong endeavor. Similarly, Houle's definition, as cited by [Ihejirika & Onyenemezu \(2012\)](#), focuses on the personal and societal improvements that ALE aims to achieve. He defines it as the process by which adults, whether individually or in groups, strive to enhance their skills, knowledge, or sensitivity, thereby contributing to personal and communal development. This definition underscores the role of ALE in empowering individuals and, by extension, their communities, through intentional, structured learning efforts.

Adult education encompasses a broad and impactful range of learning processes that significantly enhance both individual and societal development. It spans all educational levels—from literacy and post-literacy programs to secondary and higher education—and addresses diverse aspects influencing the wellbeing of adults and their communities. [Fajonyomi \(2020\)](#), considering the Nigerian context, defines adult learning and education as a subsystem of the Nigerian educational system that includes formal, non-formal, and informal learning. These learning types are not only supplementary to traditional school education but also complementary, occurring in various environments aimed at fostering self-improvement and societal development, regardless of the social, economic, and physical statuses of the participants.

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) can be differentiated into three primary types: formal, non-formal, and informal, each serving unique purposes and catering to diverse learning needs across various stages of adult life. Formal Adult Education is characterized by its structured environment within traditional educational institutions or designated centers. This type of education is typically curriculum-based and often culminates in the awarding of certificates or diplomas. Common examples include part-time and sandwich courses offered by higher education institutions in Nigeria and elsewhere, which provide adults with opportunities to gain advanced

knowledge and qualifications while possibly managing other life responsibilities (Kapur, 2019; Bruce, 2006).

Non-Formal Adult Education occurs outside the traditional academic setting but remains organized and purpose-driven, designed to meet specific learning needs and objectives. This type usually does not lead to formal certification but is integral in providing practical skills and knowledge. Programs such as apprenticeships and vocational training for women in development centers fall under this category, tailored to empower individuals with specific skills relevant to their professional and personal growth (Robert, 2020; Kapur, 2019).

Informal Adult Education represents a more spontaneous form of learning, emerging naturally from daily activities and interactions. This type of learning is unplanned and unstructured, occurring without any formal curriculum or predetermined objectives. It includes a wide range of experiences, from simple life skills learned through personal endeavors to knowledge acquired through social interactions. Informal learning enhances the adaptive capabilities of adults, making it a vital component of lifelong learning (Kapur, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2014).

These classifications, endorsed by educational theorists and organizations like Kapur (2019), UNESCO (2015), and Borode (2002), underscore the versatility and inclusiveness of adult education. This broad perspective ensures that adult education serves as a dynamic tool for personal and communal advancement, accommodating a wide array of learning needs and styles. Together, these three forms of ALE provide a comprehensive framework that supports continuous and adaptable education, essential for meeting the diverse needs of adults. They facilitate lifelong education that is accessible and flexible, allowing adults to learn at their own pace and adapt to changing circumstances. The significance of ALE lies in its capacity to empower adults to improve their lives and, by extension, the communities in which they live (Fajonyomi, 2020; UNESCO, 2015). This approach not only enriches individuals' personal and professional lives but also contributes to the broader societal development.

The approach to funding Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Nigeria highlights significant challenges and evolving strategies. The government traditionally plays a pivotal role in funding educational programs, including ALE, through budgetary allocations. However, the actual disbursement of these funds frequently falls short of the amounts appropriated, as indicated by the disparities between the budgeted amounts and the actual funds released from 2015 to 2019. For instance, while a substantial budget was set in 2016 at approximately 1.376 billion Naira, less than half of this amount was actually released, reflecting a common trend of underfunding in this sector (Table 1).

Table 1. Federal budgetary allocations to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education

YEAR	Appropriation	Releases
2015	370,000,000.00	185,000,000.00
2016	1,375,828,656.00	493,886,998.00
2017	1,140,828,656.00	570,414,327.91
2018	678,988,837.00	203,696,651.10
2019	965,481,652.00	220,467,981.44
2020	2,056,120,503.00	?
Total	5,587,248,304.00	1,673,465,958.45

Source: Hussain (2021)

This chronic underfunding has necessitated the search for alternative funding sources to sustain ALE programs. Recently, religious bodies and organizations have played an increasing role in the organization and administration of ALE, stepping in to fill the gaps left by insufficient governmental support. This involvement underscores a broader trend where non-governmental entities contribute to educational funding, a necessity given the global economic downturn that has particularly impacted government spending on education (Biao, 2022; UIL, 2019).

The situation calls for a comprehensive reevaluation of funding strategies for ALE. Exploring innovative funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, international grants, or community-based funding initiatives, could provide more stable and sustainable financial support for ALE. Additionally, leveraging technology to reduce costs and increase reach, as well as advocating for policy changes that prioritize adult education funding, are critical steps toward revitalizing and sustaining ALE in Nigeria and similar contexts globally.

In the context of ongoing challenges in funding Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Nigeria, innovative models are essential for ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of these programs. This section discusses the "Each One Teach One" model developed by Dr. Frank Laubach, which has significantly influenced the funding of ALE in Nigeria amid financial constraints.

"Each One Teach One" is a voluntary model that relies on the active participation of individuals and communities in supporting ALE. Originally designed to address literacy needs, this model has evolved to encompass a broader educational scope. It advocates for each literate individual to teach another, thereby creating a self-sustaining cycle of education and empowerment. In a funding context, this approach encourages community members who have benefited from educational programs to contribute, either by teaching others or by financially supporting the education of their peers.

In Nigeria, where economic challenges and misconceptions about ALE have limited government funding, the "Each One Teach One" model offers a viable alternative. Misconceptions often reduce ALE to basic literacy, overlooking its broader implications for personal and societal development. However, the UNESCO 21st-century conceptualization of literacy expands the definition to include a wide range of life skills and competencies that are critical in contemporary society. The model's reliance on community and individual involvement aligns well with the socio-cultural dynamics in Nigeria, where communal efforts and mutual aid are prevalent. By leveraging this model, ALE programs can mitigate the impacts of reduced governmental funding and the economic strains exacerbated by global events such as the pandemic.

The 'Each One Teach One' model, developed by Dr. Frank Laubach during his missionary work in the Philippines (Lawson, 1998), is a prime example of a grassroots approach to literacy that has had a profound and lasting impact on community-driven educational efforts. This model was born out of necessity in an era characterized by inadequate funding for educational programs. Its principle is simple yet powerful: each individual who benefits from literacy education is encouraged—or in the original implementation, mandated—to teach another, thereby proliferating literacy throughout the community.

Dr. Laubach's method hinged on the participation of local leaders, in this case, a chief who helped enforce the teaching mandate. This strategy ensured that literacy education extended beyond the classroom, transforming it into a communal obligation and a social responsibility. Such a model was not only a means to educate but also a way to strengthen community bonds and ensure sustainability. It proved so effective that it was later adopted by the Thompson Reading Aides Corporation (TRAC) to enhance literacy among non-literate women in Manitoba, demonstrating its adaptability to different contexts (Paziuk & Gamey, 1994).

The evolution of the 'Each One Teach One' model has included adaptations to meet modern needs. A notable extension of this model is the 'Each One Fund the Teaching of Another' initiative, where those who are unable to teach are encouraged to support literacy by funding the education of others. This approach, highlighted by researchers like Biao (2022) and Archer & Muntasim (2020), represents a method of mobilizing domestic resources for education, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility within the community. It underscores the concept of self-help in funding literacy initiatives, which is particularly pertinent in regions where government support may be lacking or inconsistent.

For over a decade, the sponsorship of Adult Learning Education (ALE) programs, such as literacy and women's vocational education, by the government in Ekiti State, Nigeria, has been minimal due to inadequate funding, economic downturns, and a lack of commitment to ALE. As a result, literacy classes and vocational education centers for women have been progressively

shutting down. The decline in funding led to significant attrition among learners due to the non-payment of instructors' and facilitators' honorariums. By 2005, the government had reduced its support for adult literacy classes by 75% due to low budget allocations and completely halted funding by 2010. This lack of support left non-formal education centers without instructors and essential equipment until 2019, according to the [Ekiti State Agency for Adult & Non-formal Education \(AANFE\) \(2021\)](#). The resultant effects were a relapse into illiteracy among adults and economic stagnation among women who could not complete their vocational training to become self-employed for economic empowerment and independence. This failure to enroll and complete ALE programs left many adult illiterates unaware of developments in various spheres, negatively impacting rural communities where a high percentage of the population requires adult learning.

The pressing need to address these detrimental outcomes prompted the development of a new initiative and approach for the implementation of ALE in the state. This study evaluates this new approach to funding and promoting ALE, particularly in rural communities of Ekiti State.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the strategies adopted by the Ekiti State government to revitalize and sustain adult education amidst financial constraints and to identify the effects of these strategies on the target population.

The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly examine the strategies deployed by the Ekiti State government to fund Adult Learning Education (ALE) programs, with a focus on determining how these strategies have revitalized and potentially expanded funding for ALE within the state. Additionally, the study aims to evaluate the tangible outcomes and achievements of these initiatives in enhancing adult education, particularly in rural communities.

In alignment with this objective, the study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What initiatives have been implemented to fund ALE in the rural communities of Ekiti State?; (2) To what extent have these funding initiatives been successful in the state?; (3) What challenges have been encountered in the implementation of these funding strategies?

These questions are designed to provide insights into the effectiveness of the funding approaches and to identify any obstacles that could be impeding progress, thus offering a detailed assessment of the current state of ALE in Ekiti State.

METHODOLOGY

This study assessed the funding approach to adult learning and education in rural communities in Ekiti State, Nigeria, focusing on the recent and innovative methods used to revive and revitalize adult education in the state. Ekiti State, located in southwest Nigeria, is bounded by Osun State to the west, Ondo State to the east and south, and Kwara and Kogi States to the north. It is predominantly an agrarian state, with a large population living in rural communities and engaging in farming activities. The majority of its rural population are adult illiterates who require some form of adult learning.

A qualitative research method was chosen for this study to capture in-depth details about the conception, implementation, and achievements of the funding approach used. Data were collected through interviews, and primary data were obtained from the annual performance reports and memos of the Ekiti State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education ([AANFE, 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022](#)).

Purposeful sampling was employed to select participants from the study's target population, which included all staff of the Ekiti State AANFE, such as the political head, directors, and field officers. The sample consisted of 1 political head, 2 directors, and 10 field officers. Interviews were conducted with these participants to understand the approach used and its effectiveness in funding adult learning and education in the state. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were used instead of real names: the political head was identified as PH1; the directors as DR1 and DR2; and the field officers as FO1 to FO10.

Content analysis was utilized to analyze notes taken from the interview responses. To control for researcher bias, two coders were involved in interpreting the collected data. The analyzed data were then subjected to an external peer review by two experts in the field of adult

learning. Finally, the research findings were reviewed for validation by participants DR1 and FO1, ensuring the reliability and accuracy of the results.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Government Initiatives

The state government has recognized the necessity of Adult Learning Education (ALE) for all citizens and its significant role in social, economic, agricultural, and environmental development. Consequently, it has adopted a proactive strategy known as the "Learning Needs and Service Oriented Public-Private Partnership Approach" to manage, administer, and fund ALE programs.

Participants PH1, DR1, and DR2 referred to this approach as the "Specific Learning Needs and Service Oriented Public-Private Partnership Approach," abbreviated as SLENASO-PPPA. This strategy was developed in response to a lack of funding which previously hindered the educational initiatives for adults. The government now encourages individuals, particularly stakeholders, to financially support adult education to ensure it is not neglected.

Over the past decade, despite not funding literacy programs, the state government responded to public demand by initiating the SLENASO-PPPA. This innovative funding and implementation method involve collaboration among the government, NGOs, and individuals, focusing on several key areas:

1. *Specific Learning Needs:* The government has identified a continuous need for adult education to prevent a relapse into illiteracy.
2. *Service Oriented:* The government has recognized the necessity for top government officials to engage with and serve their communities. This has led to partnerships with individuals aimed at advancing adult learning.

Additionally, the Ekiti state government has established a policy framework under the SLENASO-PPPA. As per participant FO5, this policy mandates public office holders and civil servants on a consolidated salary scale to sponsor at least one literacy center in their constituency. The government provides the necessary infrastructure and logistics, allowing individuals to contribute actively to their communities while addressing their educational responsibilities. The state government has also created favorable conditions for various ALE programs, including remedial programs, adult literacy, and women's vocational and skill acquisition programs. It has equipped women's vocational centers with modern facilities and collaborates with individuals who offer training in various vocations.

Moreover, the government supports private organizations and NGOs that train women in different trades, issuing government certificates to graduates at no cost to the organizations or NGOs involved. This collaborative effort underscores the government's commitment to enhancing adult education through innovative and inclusive approaches.

Community Involvement

The "Specific Learning Needs and Service Oriented Public-Private Partnership" approach adopted by the Ekiti state government has significantly promoted community involvement in various ways:

1. *Public Office Holders and Civil Servants:* Government policy requires public office holders and civil servants on a consolidated salary to sponsor adult learning programs in their constituencies. This mandate is widely seen as an opportunity for these individuals to contribute to community development actively.
2. *NGOs and Private Individuals:* Non-governmental organizations and private individuals play a crucial role in this approach by providing training in diverse vocational skills to adult learners. Their involvement enhances the practical impact of the educational programs and furthers the development of vocational competencies among community members.

These strategies highlight a broad-based community involvement, crucial for the sustainability and effectiveness of adult education initiatives within the state.

Outcome and Achievement

This study evaluated the impact of the "Specific Learning Needs and Service Oriented Public-Private Partnership Approach" implemented by the government in collaboration with private entities for adult learning and education. The analysis, based on interviews with participants and data from Annual Performance Reports (2019, 2020, 2021), highlighted significant achievements in the realm of adult education across Ekiti State.

Establishment of Literacy Centers: The initiative led to the establishment of 39 basic literacy centers and 28 post-literacy centers across the state. These centers are designed to enhance access to basic and continued education, respectively, promoting literacy among adults in various communities.

Enrollment Figures: The programs have seen a substantial increase in participation, with a total of 5,029 learners enrolled in both basic and post-literacy programs. This marks a significant uptick in engagement in adult education.

Infrastructure Development: The project included the renovation of existing Women Vocational Centers across the state, improving the quality and accessibility of learning environments. Additionally, new model vocational centers were established in Ado-Ekiti, providing state-of-the-art facilities for advanced vocational training.

Training Programs: The initiative successfully trained 753 women and youths in various vocational skills. These training programs are crucial for the personal and professional development of the participants, equipping them with skills necessary for economic independence.

Equipment Acquisition: To further enhance the training quality, modern equipment worth ₦2,890,000 was purchased. These acquisitions included essential items such as gas cookers, sewing machines, and a generator, among others, all aimed at supporting the vocational training offered at the centers.

PH1 commented on the broad impact of the initiative: "Through the implementation of the specific learning needs and service oriented public-private partnership approach, we have established 68 literacy centers, enrolled over 5,000 adult learners, and provided extensive training to women and youth. The purchase of modern equipment has also significantly bolstered our achievements."

DR2 reflected on the progress made: "The annual reports from 2019 to 2021 demonstrate substantial progress compared to previous years, which suffered from a lack of centers and learners and outdated equipment. This partnership approach has provided us with a solid foundation for future expansion and success."

Table 2. Outcome and achievement

Achievement	No	Enrolment	Fund made available	Source of fund
Basic Literary Centres	39	3,025	₦6,230,000;00	Private
Post Literary Centres	28	2,004	₦4,480,000;00	Private
Women Vocational Centres	11	753	-	Government and Private
Purchase of Modern equipment	18	-	₦2,890,000;00	Government

Source: Field work (2023)

Based on [Table 2](#), the establishment of 39 basic literacy centers and 28 post-literacy centers facilitated the enrollment of 3,025 and 2,004 learners respectively, funded privately with allocations of ₦6,230,000 and ₦4,480,000. Eleven Women Vocational Centers were renovated or established, training 753 participants, with funding from both government and private sources. Equipment purchases totaling ₦2,890,000 were made to enhance the vocational training facilities.

This comprehensive assessment underscores the significant strides made in enhancing adult learning and education through effective public-private partnerships, reflecting a promising model for other regions and future initiatives.

Challenges of the Approach

Despite the successes recorded through the "Specific Learning Needs and Service Oriented Public-Private Partnership" approach in funding Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Ekiti State, Nigeria, the study identified significant challenges related to its implementation.

The primary challenge with the approach is the absence of a robust legal framework to support its seamless implementation. As noted by one of the participants, the process of securing funds from government functionaries for the sponsorship of adult literacy classes proved challenging. This difficulty arises partly because the approach, while supported at the executive level, lacks the legal mandates that would compel compliance and streamline the funding process. FO9 remarked that although the approach has been instrumental in advancing adult education beyond previous stagnation due to insufficient government funding, its implementation has been strenuous.

Another participant highlighted the practical difficulties in enforcing the policy which stipulates that stakeholders, especially top government functionaries, should finance adult learning programs in their domains. Without a law mandating the automatic deduction of sponsorship funds from their salaries, the implementation team must rely on persuasion and lobbying to secure the necessary funds. "Most of the time, they resort to various complaints just to dodge the sponsorship responsibilities," explained FO6. This participant advocates for a legal framework that would allow for the automatic deduction of sponsorship fees directly from the stakeholders' pay, thus ensuring more consistent and reliable funding.

The findings of this study in line the objectives of the study, discovered a new initiative called specific learning needs and service oriented public-private partnership approach used to fund ALE in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The initiative is similar to and aligned with what was called 'each one fund the teaching of another' in Layback's model. It is however different in the sense that it targeted specific need of adults in the study area and public office holder and government officials on consolidated salaries were targeted for drawing the fund for ALE. This is in tandem with [OECD \(2018\)](#), [UIL \(2019\)](#) and [Biao \(2022\)](#), advocating new sources of funding ALE as existing source is unpredicted and decreasing, to give accessibility to adult learners. [Maina & Orodho \(2016\)](#) opined that those public fund channels available to ale are no longer adequate, resulting to low enrolment and unattractive programme. Therefore, specific learning needs and service oriented public-private partnership approach being a new approach has impacted, supported and improved upon existing approaches (where government alone shoulder the responsibility of funding ALE) in the implementation of ALE.

On a positive note, the new approach has significantly enhanced community involvement in the funding and implementation of ALE. It encourages community members to contribute resources and participate actively in the educational development of their area, aligning with models that advocate for both private-public partnerships and community resource mobilization. This aspect of the approach resonates with strategies suggested by [Biao \(2022\)](#) and [Archer & Muntasim \(2020\)](#) for mobilizing domestic funds for ALE, promoting a form of self-help in increasing accessibility to adult education.

The specific learning needs and service-oriented public-private partnership approach have led to tangible improvements in educational facilities and resources. Renovations of learning centers and the acquisition of modern equipment have created better learning conditions, supporting [Kapur's \(2018\)](#) assertion that innovative approaches enhance educational environments. Similarly, [UNESCO \(2013\)](#) has noted that new approaches in ALE can improve access, retention, quality, relevance, and strengthen institutional capacities.

Despite these advancements, the implementation of such a novel approach invariably encounters obstacles. These challenges are typical of new initiatives and policies, as noted by [Obodo & Anighata \(2017\)](#) and echoed by [Iyanda & Bello \(2016\)](#), who argue that policy implementation is seldom straightforward and often fraught with difficulties. However, these challenges are not insurmountable; they can be addressed through continual review, assessment, and refinement of the strategies in place.

While the specific learning needs and service-oriented public-private partnership approach has significantly impacted ALE in Ekiti State by enhancing community involvement and improving educational resources, its full potential is hindered by the lack of a strong legal framework. Establishing such a framework could provide the necessary support to ensure more efficient and effective implementation, thereby optimizing the benefits of this innovative funding strategy.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

In the face of many global challenges, it is unequivocal that ALE has major roles to play in providing concrete solution to the problems of humanities. It thus needs adequate attention of policy makers for appropriate policy and legal framework to make its implementation effective and all encompassing. Educationist also must realised that it has to have in clientele all adults and out of school youths for all to have functional education. Its sphere must cover the people in government and the entire citizenry. All education stakeholders must do all it requires for ALE to play its part in achieving goal of 'education for all'. The impact of ALE must be felt at all levels and arms of government to ensure good governance and wealth creation. Therefore, new initiatives must be taken to ensure its promotion and advancement to be able to fully taken part in the provision of solution to the national and global crisis.

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that;

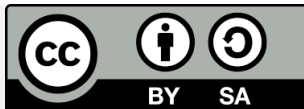
- Government at all level should support ALE in Nigeria and beyond by adopting the need and service-oriented approach to funding and implementation of ALE programmes.
- Government should provide enabling environment for individuals to actively participate in the funding and implementation of ALE.
- Government should give the policy a legal backing to make its implementation easy and for more resource to be available to ALE.
- Individuals that sponsor adult learning and education should be part of monitoring team to enhance effectiveness
- Individuals sponsoring ALE should see it as a way of giving back to their community (service to the community) and thereby be committed to it.

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