

Evaluation of Community Development Programme in South Africa

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Abstract: There are various community development programmes in South Africa but this study assessed functional literacy programme in South Africa to ascertain the extent to which the programme have served the people. In pursuant of this goal, the following research questions were put forward: Are the community development programmes addressing the adult learners' needs in the areas? And if they do, has the programme been of help to the development of the community and improve the working efficiency of adult participants in this programmes after training? A qualitative research paradigm was followed in this study to collect data through interviews, focus group and observations. Purposive sampling was used to select information. Data analysis involved identifying similarities and presenting a discussion of the research. Informants' consent was requested for the interviews. The major inferences drawn from this study was that these programmes were quite satisfying except for practical; skills acquisition, materials and distance of instructors from the place of learning (programme). These were identified as problems affecting the working of community development programme in the areas. These and other findings formed the basis for the recommendations made in the research.

Key words: community, community development, evaluation, skill acquisitions

1. Introduction

Community is not a new thing in the history of human living as a social-group. From time immemorial, man has often tried the best means of bringing about a better living through peaceful co-existence with his co-habitats. Behind the whole idea of community development is the idea of organized self-help by the people. The method is often local; the people tax themselves, organize communal labour, and punish deviants of intransigents. In this way the people not only encourage initiatives, self-help and mutual assistance but also make them more effective. Behind every hue and cry about community development is the need to encourage affected communities to improve their conditions.

Although community development has various meanings, the type applied in this study during this period is the "locality development model" of Rothman (1970) and the "self-study" style of community development of S. T. Bruyn (1963). It is the style of community development popularized in the 1950s by such scholar as Irwin T. Sanders (1953). Its programme aim at better livelihood to combat poverty, relevant education to combat ignorance and superstition more knowledge about health to combat disease; and techniques of social organization and self-actualization. It would not only be for life, but would also enable the adults to re-order their lives, and as they do so, to tender the main stream of national development.

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1.1 What Is Community Development?

Community Development is primarily concerned with meeting the needs and aspirations of community members whose circumstances have left them poorly provided for, often without adequate services, with limited means to organize, and excluded from mainstream opportunities to participate in activities or decision making. Community development seeks to build collective capacity by improving skills, confidence and knowledge for individuals and the community as a whole (Gilchrist 2009, p. 36). The interpretation of community development by the United Nations Organization (UNO), cited in Anyawu (1981, p. 165), it is the process by which the effort of the people themselves are united with those of the governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate those communities, into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.

1.2 Community Development Programmes

South African people recognize the fact that the key to solving most of the social, economic and development problems lies in providing effective rural education programme in fishing, agriculture, health family care and basic adult literacy particularly for those rural adult comprising about 40% of the total population and who have never had the opportunity of going to school. Education whether formal, informal and non-formal is based on improving the living standard of people. With education, the rural village according to Fafunwa (1974, p. 188) is most likely to become more productive and will continuously seek new way of improving itself and its environment.

With the last seventeen years, several community development programme have been established and actively promoted in South Africa by the government of South Africa. Current community development programmes that are being emphasized include Programme on education and re-orientation of school drop-outs, Programme of Family Education and orientation programmes, a programme of women education and gender empowerment and literacy programmes which unites the effort of the people with those of the government. It often succeeds in linking the effort of the people with those of government to improve the economic and social conditions in South Africa. It involves components such as (1) basic infrastructures which include good roads, water, health and hospital facilities etc, (2) social-economic establishments like supermarket, retail outlet or shops.

For each of above items mentioned to be fully achieved, various mean of educating the people will include:

(1) Agricultural and Industrial Education

In most African countries, it is easy to say that agriculture is the main economic activity and it employs about 90% of the population. However, this cannot be said of South Africa where poverty and lack of formal employment are serious national problems. Here majority of South Africans in the rural areas are either famers, fishermen or any other industrial profession. They need a kind of education that is functional. The adult educator with the assistance of the people in rural areas will teach on how and when to plant, how and when to use fertilizers etc. In order to get a good field.

(2) Health Education

Health is wealth we say. Here people are taught how to purify water by boiling, filtering and cooling in order to combat water borne diseases for good health and long life. They are also taught how to keep their environment and surroundings clean both around their homes, communities and the nation at large. The community development officer can further achieve development by involving the members of the communities of this nation through the non-directive approach which involving will help the members of the community in conscientizing them to become aware of their rights and privileges in the society.

(3) Co-operative Education

This mean teaching the people how to pull their resources and income together and letting them know that it pays than the individual efforts. Co-operative education are saving-credit, co-operatives construction and, habitation co-operative, fishing co-operative.

(4) Adult Literacy Classes

Adult literacy programme has so much to do with mass literacy campaign. It promotes the acquisition of reading, writing and simple numerical skills by all their populations for the purpose of enhancing socio-economic development, to which the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Heads of State had committed themselves at a meeting in 1961 in Addis Ababa. In regard to participation, the majority of adult literacy learners in South Africa are women. In general, men do not want to join literacy classes because the literacy programmes have come to be regarded as programmes for women. It has also been reported that the majority (70%) of the adult learners that attend literacy classes in South Africa have attended school some time back and that in most cases illiterate men do not enrol in the literacy classes (Okech et al., 1999, p. 69).

1.3 Objectives of Community Development

There are two principal school of thoughts when it comes to the objectives of community development. The first school of thought lay emphasis on physical structures in the community. The main concern is to improve on material and tangible projects, town halls, markets, health centers and such like project in the community. The second school of thoughts believes in the entire development of the individual thereby increasing the abilities, capabilities and making it possible for him to build up him/herself and its environment.

This is usually possible and achievable since the various views agreed that community development should focus on the people through changes in the condition of their community. The major objectives of community development are subsumed in the fact that there is need for stimulation among the people of the area for better things and the urge to attain such better things. Having these as a guide the main objectives of community development are as follows:

(1) The people's morale must be raised to a level where they would desire and be willing to change their higher standard of living through their own effort. This has to be achieved through education and motivation.

(2) There is need to develop and raise responsible leaders who would serves as guides to the entire people in every share. Men and woman who have proven character in the community and could be trusted.

(3) The spirit of civil consciousness and sense of citizenship play very important role in enhancing the full participation of the people. This is achieved through enhanced and improved communication network in the community.

(4) Grassroots democracy should be strengthened and revitalized through creation of organ that would encourage participation in local affairs. By so doing both individual and collected views would be respected.

(5) There is need to inculcate in the individual ability to initiate, sustain and endure process of growth. By so doing the people are able to diagnose the problems of the community and be able to come up with solutions.

(6) The relationship in the community must be harmonious and co-operative in order to achieve desired change. The already existing channels of communication in the area would be utilized for the effective contact with the people.

(7) The people have to be introduced into self chosen changes in a gradual manner to avoid stress setting in.

This in effect means that the people would not be forced into any programme. They will rather be properly mobilized and carried along to achieve the set goals at their own pace having been able to assess the need of such programme/project by themselves (Zuofa, 2001, p. 83).

1.4 Theoretical Frameworks

The value of theoretical frameworks is that it directs attention to the specific phenomena of interest and focuses attention on particular types of relationships. In this study, community development programmes has been evaluated. The key theoretical concepts are identified and defined in this section.

Evaluation — Evaluation is to determine significance or worth or judging the effectiveness or worth of educational programs (Hodnett, 2001). It is commonly aim to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a programme or project (Programme Manager's Planning, 2004, p. 1).

Programme evaluation is a management tool. It is a time-bound exercise that attempts to assess, systematically and objectively, the relevance, performance and success of planned, on-going or completed programmes or projects, or some aspect thereof. Patton (1997, p. 23) defined program evaluation as the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness and/or inform decisions about future programming.

The process of programme evaluation is in three distinct phases, namely planning, implementation and success. The first two are evaluated by formative evaluation, while the third one is done by summative evaluation. Summative evaluation focuses on measuring the general success of the educational programme. It is designed to determine the extent to which a particular intervention has met its stated objectives (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000, p. 157). This type of evaluation is concerned with a program's overall effectiveness (Center for Program evaluation and Performance Measurement, 2011). As this study is of limited scope, the researcher only evaluated whether the intended outcomes of the community development programme have been attained.

Some of the reasons for evaluation are: The clarification of the goals of the programme, the need for efficiency in the implementation of the programme, the desire for greater efficiency in future programme design and implementation, justification of the present programme in terms of the results achieved. These main types of evaluation have been identified namely: Need Assessment, Formative Evaluation and, Summative Evaluation. These three components make up an all encompassing evaluation which makes use of a systematic approach, here it implies that the programme to be evaluated should be seen as a system in which all its elements are identified and their interrelationship and interdependence determined before and during programme evaluation.

2. Methodology

The research methodology of this study is qualitative. It was used to gather information from the different participants on how community development programmes has affected the area and the participants. The advantage of this approach is that it provided rich explorative data as observed by the researcher during the interactions with participants. The study was guided by the interpretive paradigm which is concerned with understanding the experiences of the participants and the meaning make of them. The focus was on the perspective of the participants (Henning, 2004; Merriam, 2008). In this study interview was used because most participants in literacy classes are usually not proficient in writing. Interviews can also bring out views and opinions especially of those who are uncomfortable giving them in a group. Another reason was that interviews allow people to respond in both a structured and in an unstructured way (Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

In addition to interviews, data was collected through focus group discussion and direct observation. Focus group discussions were used to get opinions and facts about questions that concerned learners as groups rather than individuals or those that required detailed explanations. The observation method was applied to observe conditions of learning, facilities available at the learning centres and their adequacy and quality. It was used to cross check respondents answers about the conditions of the learning centres.

2.1 Population Sample

According to Mugo (2011, p. 5), a population is a group of individuals, persons, objectives, or items from which samples are taken for measurement, for example a population of presidents or professors, books, or students.

Selection of the Adult Learning Centres was based on the following criteria:

- The type of Adult Learning Centres.
- The educator population and
- The location of Adult Learning Centres.

The largest group and population of the centres comprised of adult learners who are level 4 learners. Three Adult Learning centres in Kwa Mhlanga circuit of Mpumalanga were selected to participate in the study. Each Adult Learning Centre had twelve participants. Adult Learning Centres were selected purposefully as they were regarded as rich informants of knowledge the research intended to gather (Patton, 1990, p. 7).

2.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through observing and describing what are the experiences of the participants in community development programmes. The researcher interacted with the participants in order to get the most reliable information about community development programmes. To avoid discrimination, the researcher gave the participants equal opportunities to participate in the investigation. Follow-up sessions were conducted in the form of structured and unstructured interviews. Focus group interviewing is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threaten environment (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 6).

This data collection method is actually an open group discussion. The format of this type of group interview is not that of question and answer. The researcher encouraged respondent to use their own terminology in describing their experiences of the programmes. The reason for this was to allow the data to truly emerge from the respondents. The researcher spent sufficient time with the participants and observed persistently in order to ascertain validity of information as well as by triangulation, which is, using more than one method of data collection. To ensure that reliability and validity were assured in this study, the researcher first pilot tested the research instruments and used opinions from experts.

2.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the participants through individual and focus group discussions were analysed by selecting, comparing, synthesising and interpreting information to provide explanations. The researcher analyzed and interpreted what the participants said and what the individual statements from the participants stands for. The researcher used the inductive approach to ensure that the research findings emerge from the frequent dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data generated. Comparisons were drawn, similarities identified and a discussion of the research presented. Once the data have been generated, the researcher organized the data and

discovered the relationships or patterns through close scrutiny of the data. The data was coded, categorized and condensed. The researcher then interpreted and drew meaning from the displayed data. The first step to be taken by the researcher involved data organization. The process also involved grouping of information, coding information of similar kind and genre. After major topics and sub-topics from the interviews analyses have been identified, data collected was categorized according to the topics and sub-topics.

3. Research Findings and Discussions

3.1 Why Did You Join the Programme?

In responding to the question above, one participant said, "I want to learn hand work" and another said I was tired of the shame and embarrassment of not knowing how to read and write. The focus group discussion revealed that respondents specifically wanted things to do with HIV/AIDS, income generation, gaining confidence, speaking in public, reminding themselves about things they had learned earlier and improving their marriage. One man said, "I did not want to lose my marriage or allow my family to suffer because of my inability to provide for the family". They mentioned they wanted to learn how to read, write and numeracy. Some participants added understanding what is read and written, learning arithmetic symbols, probably because many people learn how to count informally and join the classes when they already know simple arithmetic.

The findings confirm that adults were motivated to join adult literacy classes for various reasons such as the literacy practices related to their every-day lives (Probak, 2004), in order to emerge from poverty (UNESCO, 2001), achieve what they believed in, establish or maintain relationships and achieve their goals (Zeigler & Durant, 2001) and a wide range of reasons (Okech et al., 1999).

3.2 Are You Satisfied with What You had Gained/Hoped to Gain from the Programme and Why?

Most participants conceded that they are satisfied with what they gained because it is what they had hoped from the classes. The reasons given by those who were not satisfied was that they needed some skills that will help them make a living; that is, being able to provide for their family, "reading, writing and numeracy is good but how does that pay my bills and send my children to school?" One of the respondents asked. Those that felt satisfied mentioned that although they could read a wide range of words, there were some words they could not read. One of the learners emphasized that she was able to read with understanding. They had learned how to write letters, shopping lists, names and deposit slips. Gaining confidence and being able to speak confidently in public was cited eleven times.

The learners who had been to secondary school and upper primary did not mention reading and writing but acquisition of knowledge on health and income generating activities. From the above, it is clear that the learners were acquiring knowledge that is relevant to the improvement of their lives. This may suggest that adult learners who were already literate may have valued the reading and writing as something gained from the classes. This is in agreement with what Nafukho, Amutabi & Otunga (2005, pp. 9–10) who argue that adults need to know because there could be benefits to be gained from knowledge acquired. The reasons that were motivating the adults to participate in the programmes were in agreement with those given by Fasokun (cited in Fasokun, Katahoire & Aduaran, 2005), who argues that adults in Africa are motivated to learn for example in order to maintain or establish social relationships, to serve others, to satisfy a personal interest, or to advance their careers, to earn more money or to meet external expectations.

3.3 What Causes Men to Drop out of the Programmes?

The focus group discussions revealed that respondents were of the view that the fear to be seen studying with women and various reasons that mainly centred on attitudes. The same reasons would possibly be the cause of low enrolment of men in the programmes. In South Africa, most men are not formally employed; they spend much of their time doing or in search of manual jobs in the informal sector and hardly have any time to engage in study or any other activity. They therefore do not enroll in the programmes. In cases where they enroll, some are forced to make a choice between attending the literacy class and possibly going without a meal on that day or missing class to earn a little money for survival and for the up keep of the family. When they miss the class frequently, they fall behind and eventually drop out.

3.4 What Causes Women to Drop out of the Programmes?

Some of the participants revealed that caring for their families, being stopped by their husbands and various other reasons were the causes. From the responses it is evident that women have more gender related work that constrains their participation in the programmes. One of the respondents said generally, women have a lot of work at household level. In addition, women are generally controlled by men and despite the strides South African has taken in affirmative action for women, men still wield a lot of power over women especially in the rural area and this negatively affects their participation in the programmes. In some cases, wives fear to ask for permission from their husbands. In other instances, women do not attend because there are no caretakers to look after their children while they are attending the programmes. The findings confirm what Shirley (1990) identified as the major obstacles to attendance in literacy programme. Another reason mentioned was that illiterates are mistreated and running away from this mistreatment requires one to become literate.

The findings seem to be consistent with literature on what motivates adults to join the programme (Probak 2004; UNESCO, 2001; Okech et al., 1999). One male respondent remarked "*Money is more important than everything else*". The learners think that those who are poor would rather spend their time searching for survival instead of attending adult literacy classes and that the search for money overrides the search for literacy skills. This may seem to suggest that the learners do not clearly see the role literacy skills play in the fight against poverty.

3.5 What Do You Think Is Missing from the Community Development Prograame?

When adult learners were asked what was missing from the community development programme they were attending, there were mixed reactions on what was missing from the existing programmes. The responses revealed that the programme was mainly lacking in terms of administration, content and facilitation. While other respondents indicated that there was nothing missing, few others indicated that they did not know what was missing. The opinions on what is missing shed some light on a wide range of learning needs such as accounting, tailoring and computer learning that are currently unmet by the programmes and yet are necessary for rural life. Others like mushroom growing, leadership training and making tie and dye are relevant both in the urban areas and rural areas.

It is important to note that some of the findings indicate that the people who participate in the programmes are those not able to access formal schooling because of poverty generally and the majority of these were female. It was found out that adult learners were motivated to join the literacy programmes mainly to learn how to read, write, acquire livelihood skills; and some of the learners were originally literate and may have relapsed into illiteracy because of poverty. The learners were not satisfied with what they had gained what they had hoped for from the programmes. It appears that being ashamed of being seen attending the programme was a de-motivator to participation. The learners felt that the venues were generally accessible in terms of distance except in a few cases where the learners traveled long distances to reach their learning centres. However, lack of funds was identified as a constraint to motivation to participate in the programmes.

The learners generally felt that there were no enough and relevant facilities and equipment for learning. According to them, it may imply that the learning environment may not be conducive as expected. The results also indicate that adult learners felt that the learning materials were suitable although inadequate. The facilitators were able to adapt materials developed for rural areas and those developed for primary schools to suit only rural areas.

Findings of the study also suggest that learners felt that programmes were addressing the adult learners' needs and the reason given by many was that the literacy skills and general knowledge acquired helped them operate in the urban environment. This may be attributed either to their habitual perception or their lack of critical judgment. On the whole, findings suggest that the programme is relevant for improving of learners' standards of living in rural areas and is capable of making them live as useful citizens in their communities. Generally, it was felt that learners utilized what they learned from the programmes in a variety of ways.

3.6 Was the Methods Used by the Programme Providers' (Facilitators) Appropriate?

The findings revealed that the participants felt that the providers were starting with literacy which then would be used to improve their livelihoods. This is what Oxenham (2004) termed "literacy first strategy". The participants' perception was that you cannot run a business if you do not have literacy skills. They felt that you cannot compute or use a calculator if you are not literate unless you are naturally gifted. They preferred the integrated adult literacy approach to other approaches. The main reason was that the approach enabled them to integrate the learning of reading, writing and numeracy with economic skills.

In addition, different government sectors working together with the community development programmes enabled learners to acquire knowledge and skills from a variety of sources for example extension workers in the health, agriculture, trade and other development sectors. Also, non state actors such as HIV/AIDS related agencies, religious agencies, microfinance agencies among others with a wide range of content to offer to the learners enabled them to have a variety of knowledge. This widened the participants' knowledge and improved their opportunities to access credit which helped them to engage in income generating activities. In my own opinion, I think that facilitators should make a lot of effort to bring to their programmes a wide range of extension workers and persons with knowledge and skills in various fields. This is appreciated by the adult learners.

Baryayebwa (2005) advocates for integration and contends that the approach relates the teaching of literacy to the daily lives of the learners, and community development programme instructors should bring into the learning process extension workers from health, cooperatives or agriculture. Okech (2004) describes this as an approach that involves integration of knowledge from various activities with the learning of reading, writing and numeracy, and vocational skills acquisition.

3.7 How is the Knowledge and Skills Acquired from the Community Development Programmes Utilized in Everyday Lives of the Participants?

Majority of the participants mentioned that they did not know how the knowledge and skills were utilized and the reason was because they did not stay with graduates, while others indicated that they use the knowledge and skills to read and write a variety of messages, few other participants use it to deal with health related issues, but for home improvement (making door mats, table cloths or mats, small bags, tie and dye and palm-leave bags for home), and empowerment non indicated income generation.

The focus group discussions suggested that those who completed the programmes were able to read, write and do some arithmetic. These they use for shopping, communication and assisting their children and ground children in their home work. However, they could not use the skills to practice modern farming, fishing in the rural areas nor stop their businesses from collapsing but they are able to speak and address the public confidently. One of the current learners supported this view saying "Those who finished from programme can write and speak English to address or motivate others". Generally, it was felt that learners utilized what they learned from the programmes only in reading, writing and numeracy. This is in contradiction with what Land (2001) found out in a study in South Africa that people had positive perceptions of ABE classes because they felt that participation in ABE classes results in many highly valued gains.

3.8 Are the Strategies Used in the Programmes Suitable for Community Development?

Asked about the suitability of the strategies, the discussions revealed that participants were of the view that the literacy first approach was the preferred approach but this was not enough. They mentioned that they had come to the programme in order to acquire adult literacy skills which they would go and utilize in their day to day activities. There were no livelihood projects at the centres that the learners were engaged in; this however was a disappointment to most of the learners.

They had come to the centres to acquire literacy and vocational skills. However, they recognized that the need for literacy skills was created by the inadequacies they experienced in their daily activities which required them to stop relying on mediators in cases where literacy skills were required. Two of the centres were trying to integrate economic skills in the practical terms by teaching tailoring skills and handicraft but failed because of materials and lack of capable facilitators.

4. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it can therefore be concluded that community development programmes in South Africa are quit appropriate to the adult learners. Although, the strategies approaches and, methods are generally not suitable to the learners because, the learning materials are not adapted. The adult literacy providers' strategies of literacy first assist learners to acquire literacy skills which they can utilize in their day to day activities or at least meets their expectations is good but not enough. The integrated adult literacy approach should be revisited because of integration of different community development approaches.

Community development programmes with inadequate resources may utilize learning materials developed for urban areas provided the facilitators are innovative and able to adapt them to rural settings appropriately. These programmes, however, can be improved through making more materials available and accessible to the participants; and with content relevant to rural areas. Facilitators' performance can be good when the facilities and equipment they are using are of good quality. Adults are motivated to join the programmes if they feel the programmes are addressing their needs.

The appropriateness of community development programmes can be judged from the usefulness of the knowledge and skills acquired and satisfaction the learners get from the programme, especially when it comes to poverty eradication. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the programme of a truth does not provides a means for in-service training to its beneficiaries.

5. Recommendations

Functional skills in the programmes should be emphasized not only in class but also through provision of materials, inputs and start-up capital to the learners so as to enable them to move out of poverty as literacy skills alone will not help them get out of poverty. Effort should be made to improve on the conditions of learning by improving the quality and quantity of facilities, equipment and facilitators.

The facilitators should be well trained in order for them to adapt a wide range of materials that exist in the area for learning and to strengthen the participatory methodologies as they were preferred by the learners.

(1) Community development specialists must co-operate with the Community Development Committees (CDS) member in guiding them on how they can identify their need.

(2) The specialists should organize an enlightenment campaign, programmes which will help in conscientizing the community members towards self-help efforts.

(3) The government and the good people of the area should intensify effort in providing accommodation for these instructors or better still help them to be mobile by providing them with transportation.

(4) The various local Government Authorities in the state should assist in providing some funds to communities under their jurisdiction.

6. Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher is aware that the problem and prospects of community development are as varied as they are broad. This being the case, no one study can claim to have exhausted all the facets of the evaluation.

The researcher, therefore, suggest that future researchers in this area should explore the following:

(1) The possible motivating factors that will enable more adult take part in the community development programme.

(2) The full integration of school drop-outs into the community development programme.

(3) Ways of arranging classes for different occupation.

(4) The sources of funds for the programme, and its improvement and

(5) The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the mobilization of community member for community development efforts.

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