

**THE PLACE OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)
IN THE PROMOTION OF ADULT LEARNING IN NIGERIA:
A FOCUS ON ENUGU STATE**

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Abstract

When the world leaders from 189 nations met at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2000, they pledged allegiance to the new global partnership to achieve the following eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015: They include, Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Achieve universal primary education, Promote gender equality and empower women, Reduce child mortality, Improve maternal health, Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, Ensure environmental sustainability and Develop a global partnership for development. They believed that with the combined efforts of national governments, the international community, civil society organizations and the private sector, the target of 2015 will be met. Nevertheless, the targets are within reach in some countries while in others, the contrary is the case as will be proved in this research. Adult and non-formal education is included in the second target. The education of the adult is of special importance to a developing country like Nigeria because adult education leads to a successful harnessing of adults for national development. In the words of William cited in Okafor, Okeem and Mereni (1987) "Adult education is a major means of sharing the latest and most pertinent knowledge with the people and through it human resources can be developed to much effectively what seems an avalanche of technological improvement".

Adult education is an instrument for programme changes in the adult population in a society. It enlightens them in electing the right type of persons to represent them in government and prepares them to exercise their rights, duties, educate them on issues of social living such as medicare, hygiene, family planning and security as well as the importance of recreation and leisure. In the view of Anyanwu (1987) desirable change highlights the role of the adult population in a community; it is not the children but the adults who hold in their hands the destiny of the society. It is evident that literacy programmes are making very little impact on the problem of illiteracy in Nigeria. The case of Enugu State is a reference point where out of the 17 local government areas, adult education centres are functional in only 6 local government areas – (interview report 2013). According to Adaralegbe (1979) an illiterate and ignorant adult will not only be found wanting in discharging such duties which political, economic and social changes will impose on him but will also be a break on the national wheel of progress. Indeed such a person may constitute a negation of what his child will be exposed to in school because an illiterate parent will not help his child much in the formal school system. Whereas most countries are already looking forward to post – 2015 Development plan on MDGs development agenda, quoting the United Nations' Special Adviser, Nigeria is not likely to achieve these goals on Adult literacy with only one year remaining to 2015 target of MDG.

Keywords: Adult literacy, Millennium Development Goals.