

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND: THE VISION AND MISSION OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

AN INAUGURAL LECTURE

By

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North West University (Mafikeng Campus), Mmabatho, South Africa

Wednesday, 18th August, 2010

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Beloved Students
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen.

INTRODUCTION

The history of inaugural lectures seems to suggest that there are three main challenges that an inaugural lecturer has to contend with. The first is the challenge of time lag. An inaugural lecture is basically an initiation ceremony at which a new appointment to an academic chair makes a vow to his or her profession. Many years ago, when professional appointments were few, professors were initiated almost immediately after their appointments (Figgs and Lawrence, 1960; Omolewa, 1987). As more and more professors were appointed, time lag between when one assumed an academic chair and the actual inauguration became the order of the day. The second major challenge that can plague the inaugural lecturer is exposure to critical audience. It has been reported that one of the earliest inaugural lecturers was curiously tagged “a gentleman though not a scholar”. Another inaugural lecturer has had the inaugural address simply passed off as “a strange medley of stuff without any method of connexion, and in a most wretched barbarous Latin style” (Trevor-Roper, 1957). Again, one inaugural lecturer was described as one “whose learning was not very great and whose mind was not very powerful” (Trevor-Roper, 1957; Omolewa 1987). The third major challenge could be honesty. This stems from the mandate (or “obligation”) of the inaugural lecturer to be uncompromising, frank and courageous to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In pursuit

of such a courageous principle, Hugh Trevor-Roper (1957), Professor of History at Oxford, aptly described the fate of a few of those who have attempted to tread this path. It has been reported that one inaugural lecturer, Nicolas Cop, took to his heels in protection of his dear life after giving an inaugural lecture at the University of Paris in 1957. Hugh Trevor-Roper (1957) has also described another unlucky lecturer, Ernest Renan, who underwent the terrible experience of being “suspended permanently from his chair after the lecture with which he had fondly believed himself to be inaugurating a long tenure of it”, and Sir Charles Firth “suffered a twenty year boycott of his lectures through his incautious utterance at his inauguration.”

I do not know of any inaugural lecturer in the North West University, particularly the Mafikeng Campus, who suffered any of the dramatic hardships just described after performing the academic duty of giving an inaugural lecture. With God on my side, I sincerely hope that I will not suffer any such hardships.

If we were to go by the history of inaugural lectures on our campus, this particular lecture should have been given in 2014. You should then be wondering why this inaugural lecture is coming at this time when I should have been learning the ropes of coping with a new environment, seeing that I am not only young but entirely new here. My late mother of blessed memory had told me that “when a masquerade enters into a new town or village, he must first begin dancing on one leg and as he gets accustomed to the environment, he can begin to dance with both legs.” Why then was I unable to resist the temptation and instead begin dancing with both legs when I am still new here? It is because, Mr Campus Rector, you have in all your wisdom chosen as a Vice-Rector (academic) a man who is keenly interested in serious scholarship and research. You have chosen as a Vice-Rector (academic) a man who will go to all lengths to seek out and hire the best calibre of academic staff to come on board and push the research agenda of the Mafikeng Campus of the North West University much faster than it had done before. But for him, I would have remained quietly in my safe haven of one of Sub-Saharan Africa’s most resourced universities, the University of Botswana, from where I was hired and to which I pay tribute as the “academic factory” from where I was refined after my initial conception and delivery by the University of Benin, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Nigeria’s premier University, the University of Ibadan.

Mr Campus Rector, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, allow me now to begin my lecture by acknowledging our own Vice-Rector (Academic), Professor Mogege Mosimege, who against all odds was able to attract me from the University of Botswana to the Mafikeng Campus of the North West University at a time UNESCO was keen on taking me to Germany to serve at its UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UILL) in Hamburg.

In this inaugural lecture coming from the School of Continuing Education, Faculty of Education, North West University, Mafikeng Campus, I intend to argue that no one should be left behind in the conceptualisation, planning and implementation of education and lifelong learning in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is a very pertinent topic, coming less than a year after a global conference on Adult Learning and Education, organised by the UNESCO Institute and held in Brazil in December 2009 (CONFITEA VI). That conference and its Belem Declaration clearly made the link between the Millennium Development Goals, literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning and the Education For All Goals, to which almost every country in the world is a signatory. Mr Campus Rector, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the thrust of my lecture is based on the proposition that it does not augur well for us as Africans to deliberately seek to exclude anyone or any group of individuals from the process of learning. It is saddening and, indeed, frustrating for anyone to classify another human being as inferior or incapable of learning and therefore should be denied the right to learn. I argue that social exclusion especially as it applies to education and learning should have no place in the 21st Century Sub-Saharan Africa. That has been the foundation of my research and publication, some of the major outcomes of which I am summarising in this lecture as traditionally expected of any inaugural lecturer.

Given my initial training as an adult educator who has transformed into a professor of lifelong learning, I argue that indeed adults can and should learn for as long as there is life, and we have no justification whatsoever to exclude them from learning. I had earlier on in the 1980s been attracted to the debates on the ability of adults to learn. Towards that end, I had engaged in rigorous research aimed at establishing the point that “old dogs can learn new tricks” and can actually “learn new and better tricks” that are probably far from the imagination of the so-called “young dogs”. In each case, this position was sustained (Oduaran, 1981, 1985a, 1988a & Youngman, 1998). In my study of 1985 in which I identified and classified adult workers in an adult learning activity in industries, I measured the degree of performance on learning tasks against their levels of academic motivation. This study revealed that there is significant difference in adults’ performance in industrial training with varying levels of academic motivation, which the Student Problem Inventory (SPI) defined as the possession of adequate study skills and habits as well as the inducement to learn. Another study I carried out in 1989 to determine the extent of the relationship between self-concept and academic performance of young adults yielded a correlation co-efficient value of 0.48 (Oduaran, 1989a). That itself is a positive relationship even though it might not have been as high as that given by Bodwin (1959) who had in an earlier classical study given a value as high as 0.72. But the contemporary concern of my professional colleagues has moved beyond the initial debates aimed at proving that adults can excel over and above the young ones in rational and relational thinking and

learning, all things being equal to the advocacy for lifelong learning as the main path to social justice in education. In this lecture, I will address the question of leaving some behind in the provision of education and the importance of our vision and mission concerning this idea. I will then explore the two major challengers of the vision and mission of lifelong learning and our professional response. The lecture will be brought to a close by proposing an inclusive lifelong learning for Sub-Saharan Africa and some recommendations towards achieving that goal.

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

Mr Campus Rector, Sir, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I have titled my inaugural lecture tonight as *"No one left behind: The vision and mission of lifelong learning in Sub-Saharan Africa"*, to underscore the fact that the pursuit of education as it is presently organized is far too limited, anachronistic, wasteful and unfair. So then, I have chosen the catch phrase "No one left behind" very deliberately to make a valid and illustrative case that Sub-Saharan African countries do not serve the best interests of its people if they decide to enthrone and consolidate educational edifices, policies and programmes that selectively and subtly exclude any group of persons as far as learning is concerned. It runs contrary to the expectations of God, our creator. For in the Book of Exodus, Chapter 3 from verses 7 to 21 we are exposed to the story of when God made up His mind that He would free His children from the bondage in which they had lived for 430 years, He commanded His mouthpiece, Moses, to go tell Pharaoh, King of Egypt, "let my people go that they might serve me." I am sure most of you here know this story more than me. But what is of great interest to me in the story was that when God finally saw the affliction of His children who had been crying unto Him and decided to set them free, He gave them one serious command in verses 21 and 22 of Exodus Chapter 3. He told them that when they are about to leave 430 years of bondage, they must take along everybody and everything that belonged to them and anything that their captors had stolen from them for the journey. Sir, this story challenges me to believe that the liberty of anybody is incomplete until that person is fully restored together with his or her family. In the context of this inaugural lecture, whatever educational policies and frameworks that Sub-Saharan African countries might seek to put in place remain incomplete, unfair, and discriminatory until every single Sub-Saharan African is afforded the opportunity to learn anywhere, anytime, by whatever means and at reasonably fair price even if we are forced to commoditize the process itself. In other words, we make the case that every "wall" of exclusionism in education that had held our people captive until now must be broken down to allow everyone to experience genuine liberty. In making this argument, I am not unaware of the challenges posed to us by those who favour the counter-argument that mass education does not necessarily mean good or quality education. That is the kind of argument that has been used to deny many under-privileged and

oppressed people relevant and liberatory education that could and should ensure their movement up the socio-economic ladder of society.

This concern that arguments against exclusionism in education have failed to cut the ice in the modern and civilised world has been aptly demonstrated in the exemplary steps the United States of America (USA) has taken in introducing some educational reforms in the 21st Century. For we probably all know that on 8 January 2002, the immediate past President of the U. S. A, Mr. George W. Bush, at the 107th Congress of the United States signed into law the challenging Act titled ***“No Child Left Behind Act of 2001”***. That Act, you would recall, was aimed at closing the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. That was meant to build the strong foundation for lifelong learning in the United States of America.

Sir, it is even more challenging for those of us in the developing, or should I say under-developing, sub-continent known as Sub-Saharan Africa to now engage in more intelligent reflections as the United States continue to review its strategies in education. We are aware that half way into his tenure as President of the United States, President Barack Obama, has introduced on 13th March, 2010 an important reform in education (United States of America, 2010). The reform document has been tagged as ***“A Blueprint for Reform: The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act”***. Please allow me to quote directly what President Barack Obama said when he signed the reform into law:

“Every child in America deserves a world class education. Today, more than ever, a world class education is a pre-requisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these nations are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.” (President Barack Obama, 13th March, 2010)

Sir, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the truth is that if Sub-Saharan African countries in general and the three countries that constitute the context of my lecture must catch up and take their rightful place in the community of developed countries, it stands to good reason to propose that only open, affordable and accessible educational edifices can get them there. That is why, I have never been tempted to allow our vision for lifelong learning to ever get blurred by whatever challenges that Sub-Saharan Africa is currently facing. That is why it is equally cheering to receive the news that our own Minister of Basic Education, the Honourable Member of Parliament, Mme Mma Matsie Angelina Motshekga, has decided that

the nation of South Africa must rethink and reform the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) that had become a pain in the neck of most South Africans (The Star, July 7, 2010). The anticipated reforms announced by the honourable minister would ensure that we now have more centralised teaching methods and the narrowing down of subject material for pupils whilst at the same time reducing the workloads of both pupils and teachers (Motshekga, 2010). It might be too early to predict the quality outcomes this reform would bring. However, the truth is that as a living system, no education system must be allowed to remain impervious to changes. This is even more so because formal education as it is presently arranged has been producing millions of dropouts for Reihan Salam (2010) has aptly tagged as “the dropout economy”. So what we have on our hands at the moment are conventional high schools, colleges and universities that prepare the next generation for jobs that won’t exist (Salam, 2010). That means we have entered into a new era of the dropout revolution that must spark off another era of experimentation in new ways of learning and new ways of living. That is why we will keep on pushing for necessary reforms that would guarantee the enthronement and sustenance of lifelong learning.

Sir, I need to quickly make the point that lifelong learning practitioners are passionately interested in breaking down the “walls” of mechanistic and exclusionist education and establishing a solid edifice of educational inclusionism based on equality, equity, and social justice. We turn to equality, equity and social justice because we believe that mechanistic and exclusionist education philosophies, policies and practices are ill intentioned, anachronistic and dangerously damaging. Consequently, such odious educational thrusts must not be allowed to stand in the nascent Sub-Saharan African democracies. This is the goal I having been pursuing in my research and scholarship in which I have used Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa, in particular, and Sub-Saharan Africa, in general, as the contexts.

WHY TALK ABOUT LIFELONG LEARNING?

It is probably expedient at this stage for me to conceptualise the major substance of my lecture by way of defining lifelong learning. By lifelong learning I refer to the educational principle and framework aimed at harnessing the intellectual capital of any nation. It is to be seen as the comprehensive structure that informs any valuable educational policy that promotes learning by everyone without any form of discrimination for whatever reasons. It is implemented in such a way as to encourage learning by all, anywhere and at anytime. It encompasses, therefore, formal, non-formal and informal education. When fully operational, it does not only guarantee access, quality participation, equity and equality but the cultivation of interpersonal and

intrapersonal skills, social and emotional intelligence, environmental intelligence and intercultural relationships. Then in more formal settings, it facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, aptitudes, interests and values such that the dignity of everyone is upheld as our social magna carta.

Although the concept of lifelong learning has been interpreted widely, as I shall indicate later, broadly, lifelong learning has introduced a new kind of vision and mission that aim both to equip individuals and communities with the relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes, aptitudes, interests and values that are urgently needed to transform themselves first into effective and relevant citizens and then into learning societies where knowledge is expected to be created, evaluated and refined continuously for profitable consumption. Furthermore, lifelong learning offers hope for effective interrogation of wrong attitudes and nuances that must be jettisoned in preference for more edifying collective participation in community learning that relies on collaboration by all and due respect for all learners. Above all, lifelong learning has introduced the realisation that humans are not just “physical things” but that each one of us has a body, soul and spirit that must be concerned with his or her final destiny after we shall have finished our course here on earth.

The desires to have everyone learn continuously informed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights posited that “Everyone has the right to education”. The conventions that were enacted in subsequent years further built on the declaration. In particular, the convention that was signed in 1960 by member states of the United Nations was against discrimination in Education. It emphasized the need for members to encourage “by appropriate methods” of education extensive provision of education to all who missed out on schooling.

In 1979, the United Nations endorsed a convention aimed at the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (Bown 2000). According to Ghandi (1995), Article 10 of that convention states that:

State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education.

Unfortunately, discriminations, whether against women, girls, minorities or particular races, still pervade educational systems and social policy initiatives in many Sub-Saharan African countries to date. People are still being denied not just the right to education but also, more extensively, the right to learn. This inaugural lecture therefore highlights, in practical terms, the research

and scholarship I have engaged in to help draw attention to the need for more social justice in educational provisions. I also seek to draw attention to why and how we should erect the more rational foundations of mass generated, mass-orientated and mass managed learning systems that could guarantee to all the right to learn continuously for as long as there is life. Even more importantly, I wish to examine briefly the implications of the requirements of lifelong learning and adult learning, in particular, for the acceleration of development processes in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa, in particular, and Sub-Saharan Africa, in general.

My thesis in this inaugural lecture is that it is culturally, socially, economically, politically and psychologically illogical, unfair and wasteful to confine learning to any one segment of life, society, location (space) and time. Every resource in society that has the potential of widening access to learning must be put into good and profitable use without any delay. Neither would it be right nor rational for societies to seek to restrict the use of resources for learning to particular groups of people or geographic space and time. This implies that the more reasonable thing to do is to invest every resource at our disposal to promote the goal of lifelong learning for the betterment of all Sub-Saharan Africans. Yet, in far too many countries I have noticed that learning by the adult populace is misunderstood and undervalued for reasons that cannot be justified in any learning society.

So what is learning?

Studies on how people learn naturally draw us into the debates over development cycles. For me, the adult development cycle has been of interest. In getting involved in the concerns over adult development, I have been mainly interested in the aspects of adult learning. In several studies I have conducted, I have found the age is not barrier to learning in so far as the brain has been put into effective and regular productive use (Oduaran, 1981, 1996a, 2000a). In those studies, I have argued that the concept of learning must be broadly understood as a process by which an individual, under enabling conditions, continually acquires knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests and values through study, experience or being taught in the first place and then applying those things to his/her daily functioning. That is the tool every person needs in order to function maximally in an attempt to meet anticipated needs and resolve problems in meaningful ways.

Life itself is growth. It is full of learning events and this is because of the numerous transitions that we have to make. The growth we refer to may be lateral, vertical, physical, spiritual, social, economic, political, and so on and so forth. In fact, much of the growth is orientated to survival in and outside the womb. In the womb, we learn how to adjust to different stimuli from within and without. But outside the womb, we have a number of profound adjustments and learning

to do in order to live. We cannot over-simplify learning by stressing all the informal learning events we engage in. We should rather emphasise all the organized formal and non-formal learning events we engage in. Such organized learning as we have referred to is located in our conscious endeavour to get educated and professionally developed to be able to make meaningful contribution to our individual and community development in the economic, political, social, cultural, and spiritual realms.

To this effect therefore, learning to live entails profound pre-occupation with:

- Learning how to apply our brains to situations,
- Learning how to learn,
- Learning to know ourselves and others,
- Learning to do,
- Learning to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests and values in order to be more productive economically, and
- Learning to be creative, responsive, responsible and spiritual persons so that we can be more involved in assisting society to become a matrix wherein everybody can have total life fulfilment, among others.

Such learning profile as we have described above can certainly not take place in any one geographical space and time. It is the comprehensive kind of learning that enables people everywhere to be able to stand on their feet when exposed to the intricacies of the adult world. The scope covered in the sphere of learning to live is so wide that it cannot be constrained to the four corners of the classrooms. I am writing to invite you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, to look at learning to live in the 21st century in a new way and from an entirely different perspective. Our schools cannot afford the grave danger of remaining entertainment centres wherein the so-called highly educated teacher must continue to be an actor seeking to keep his/her job by remaining conservative. The schools must respond to the demands of people to cope with the future very resolutely and confidently.

In the Gray Mattan Memorial Address given at the European Council of International Schools Annual Conference held at The Hague on 16th November 2001, John Abbot (2002) quoted Schank and Cleave of the famous Santa Fe Institute for Studies in the Science of Complexity as saying that:

The method people naturally employ to acquire knowledge is largely unsupported by traditional classroom practice. The human mind is better equipped to gather information about the world by operating within it than reading about it, hearing lectures on it, or studying abstract models of it (p.6).

Learning is a rather comprehensive system that guarantees any person's desire to apply knowledge, information and experience from several sources by rapidly developing a pre-disposition to learn in appropriate environments.

It is such a pre-disposition that individuals apply it to the process of language acquisition for the purposes of communication. Such language acquisition is enhanced through extensive parent-child verbal interactions and relationships. But apart from learning for language acquisition, people learn how to survive. In several traditional communities in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa people learn to survive by banding together into small groups known by different names. This is what they do in order to scout for new sources of water, food, farming, shelter and even for the purposes of fighting wars or wading off intruders. By these means people learn to acquire the rich Sub-Saharan African team spirit, mutual support and respect for the elderly.

Living requires a great deal of intelligence. Psychologists generally define intelligence as the individual's capacity for adaptive and goal-directed behaviour in the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and interests. Three types of intelligence are identifiable in the literature; and these are intelligence Types A, B and C. Intelligence Type A is defined as inherited intelligence. Intelligence B is acquired by the process of nurture, and here the environment matters a great deal. Intelligence Type C is a combination of Intelligence Type A and B. I am talking now about intelligence type A which is inherited intelligence. Whatever happens to the unborn baby during the nine months of pregnancy leading to birth of a full term baby is generally known to have profound effect on the development of the child's brain (Oduaran, 2000a and 2005c). To this end, Marion Diamond, a famous female neurobiologist and one of those who perform the autopsy on Albert Einstein's brain is widely reported to have said:

...The mother's emotions affect the foetus, and so do her general habits and the parents' physical environment, (probably) half of birth defects are due to avoidable exposure to medicinal drugs, recreational drugs, alcohol, tobacco smoke, and toxic agents at work, and at home (Diamond, 1998 quoted in Abbot, 2002).

What this means is that if anyone needs to be intellectually equipped to handle life intelligently, it is expected that in addition to genetical inheritance the mother of that person must not be allowed to suffer from excessive stress, especially towards the end of pregnancy because such exposure impedes the transfer of essential hormones and this is most likely to reduce intellectual development. Over and above that, the degree of emotional bonding between the child and the mother is essential to the development of synaptogenesis. Synaptogenesis is

defined as the process by which the brain “reorganizes” itself and this takes place at birth, at adolescence, and in old age.

Lifelong learning embraces learning how to empathise with others. Life requires some profound measure of empathy. This is what enables individuals to get on with each other, and this includes those who hate us. It is empathy that enables us to understand non-verbal communications like facial expression, eye movements, gesture and the tone of voice. Such ability to read these things equips us with appropriate responses to situations. Life requires working out things for ourselves. As we grow old, we are expected to work out things for ourselves instead of depending on teachers and parents. That is what makes learning to live interesting at the same time. Life is tenuous for those who refuse to learn how to live or those who have been denied the treasure of learning.

If anyone desires to live in this world, that person must engage in profound learning. This learning does not only equip one for living but for understanding and appreciating our potentials to interact and lead meaningful lives. If that were the case, no one should be denied the opportunity to get started in life by way of acquiring the educational and learning equipment s/he needs to go through life.

Learning is as important for the child as it is for adolescents and adult persons. For the adolescents and adults, there is an overwhelming need to learn in order to meet the basic as well as the secondary needs. The needs to be met may be economic as in when people engage in the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes need for employment in some workforce. The sooner or later, the credentials that qualify us for entry into the workforce become obsolete and the individual would have to engage in re-training/learning activities. There are also social needs to be met. Towards meeting this category of needs, adolescents and adults have had to engage in learning that learning needs to the appreciation and internalization of the values of respect for elderly persons, diversity, citizenship, community participation and inter-generational exchange. The constant state of change in which we exist demands that we must learn on a continuous basis.

I have argued that adult education and learning, as concept and practice, could assist society in cultivating adult persons who have sufficient and responsive knowledge, skills, attitudes and values as would make them lead truly functional lives. I have argued that when adults are made functional through a process of transformation, they would be more prepared to engage in dispassionate questioning and reflective and critical thinking geared towards personal and community development (Faure, 1972; Freire, 1972; Gramsci, 1974; Bown, 1977; Gelpi, 1979; Martin, 2006; McConnell, 1996; Oduaran, 1985b, 1987, 1988b, 1996a, 2000a, Omolewa 1997).

In these 29 years, I have never wavered for one moment in my commitment to adult education and learning as a noble profession and as an academic field of study.

In advocating for learning for all and by all, I have been guided by two major theoretical frameworks that I have more appropriately tagged as ‘vision and mission’ and to which I must now give some attention.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR VISION AND MISSION

First, we must note that it takes great vision to conceptualise and overcome obstacles that have held down the development of a people for many decades. And then it takes a well thought-out mission to put in place ideas, policies and structures that would guarantee social justice in education such that all who seek to learn can do so unhindered by anything, be it economic, physical, political, psycho-social or geographic.

For centuries, different societies have tried to put emphasis on the importance of learning. In other words, there has been no doubt about the importance of learning for all societies. The debate has been quite lively and two major theories seemed to have emerged. The two major theories as they influence our discussion tonight are the mechanistic and liberalist theories.

The Reign and Lure of Mechanistic Learning

There has been a constant contestation between the utilitarians and liberalists as to what learning is for. We do not have the liberty to examine all the points and counter points that have been tendered by the opposing parties or group of scholars within the limits allowed. The worry is over the definition of relevance and goal in learning. But we cannot at the same time wish away simplistically the arguments, more so as they shall influence the propositions we may be making hereafter.

The utilitarians who are known as the “vocationalist” or “professionalists” argue that all learning ought to be practical, especially in the advancement of commerce and industry. In this sense, for learning to be relevant, it must have a utility value placed on it. Anything short of that may be wasteful and not worthy of budgetary allocations. Such line of thought had frequently influenced reforms to syllabi as scholars glibly pursue only the kind of learning as would extend and expand the frontiers of the so-called industrial society together with its bourgeois capitalist economy.

Today, the debate over the centrality of utility or relevance as the focal point in learning programmes is still raging, and very fiercely too (Boshier, 2006). On the surface, and judging

from the contemporary emphasis of the knowledge economy being foisted on us by agents of globalization, it would seem to me that the utilitarians have won the debate. If they have not won the debate, it is possible that their eloquence, resources base and propaganda are so intricately enormous that their opponents seem to be “feeble”. Feeble because the main justification that is being tendered for learning in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa today, so it seems, is “learning for employment” or what I shall term “meal ticket” learning as if all everyone needs is to learn to meet physiological needs.

Mechanistic education and learning has remained on the agenda for educational philosophies and policies, provisions and practices in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa. The reasons for this obvious reality are not far-fetched.

Botswana, Nigeria and South African economies are still largely contending with so many challenges, some of which are self-imposed and others imposed upon them by the global micro- and macro- economic systems. Consequently, emphasis has continued to be laid on professionalism together with skills acquisition. One fall-out of this reality is that most young people who engage in learning do so mostly and primarily for the purpose of acquiring skills that will make them become employable. Thus, I had referred to “meal ticket” education as a primarily pursuit by persons seeking for learning first for the purpose of satisfying their yearnings for wages. Employment considerations apart, Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa are confronted with the challenges induced by globalization together with its skills-based orientations.

The debate has been intense as to whether or not Sub-Saharan Africa should get involved in the race for globalisation. I have made it known in several academic fora that the world is not asking Sub-Saharan Africa whether or not her people are ready for globalisation, and for that reason, we have a choice to make (Oduaran, 2000b). Globalisation and globalizing agents have continued to offer an acronym known as TINA (Martin, 2001) mind set. TINA means ‘there is no *alternative*’. But Sub-Saharan Africa can develop its own alternatives, for example, in letting the world know that we hope to pursue humanism which is of a central value to all Sub-Saharan Africans. Maybe, at a later stage, we can join in globalisation. May be not.

Whether Sub-Saharan Africa decides to wait and shun globalisation or not, the fact no one can run away from is that mechanistic education and learning will continue to provide a base for globalisation and the New World Order. Mechanistic education and learning will also continue to induce or perpetuate exclusionism.

The Liberalist Counterpoint

The liberalists typified by the Victorian Age Cardinal John Henry Newman and John Stuart Mills continue to make the counterpoint that the pursuit of “utility” or “relevance” in learning may be good but that is hardly enough. In particular, Newman (1901) posited that: “...*useful is not always good, but good is always useful.*”

The pursuit of utility in learning and education is strangely constrained. It is even more constrained if it is tethered to strictly vocational education systems. It limits the human potential to learn newer and newer things not only during the years of formal schooling but beyond that in life and living after schooling. This is a much grander, attractive and challenging learning that can undo the obnoxious bands of exclusivist education. Some may, however, argue that greater access may not necessarily mean higher quality. But we can have access with quality. It all depends on the level of commitment and availability of resources.

Emphasis on vocational skills may lead on to the repudiation of learning for cultural transformation that every society needs to continue to exist. So learning also ought to help people in cultivating their minds, enlisting in intellectualism, purifying national taste, popular enthusiasm and popular aspiration so the ideas can be enlarged in the pursuit of how societies should continue to survive the vagaries of change for all times (Newman, 1901). For one to be in the mainstream of what Newman has proposed requires lifelong learning.

Whether or not we opt for mechanistic or liberalist education, it seems to me that the most challenging issue in educational provisions today is exclusionism. This is so because the tolerance of exclusionism will certainly prevent a large number of people from learning. Exclusionism has meant for Sub-Saharan Africa the tendency for the world to leave the region behind, and that is what Africans cannot afford. I will argue therefore that lifelong learning is also needed in the liberalist tradition for promoting democracy, humanness and social justice.

CHALLENGERS OF OUR VISION AND MISSION

The vision and mission of lifelong learning in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to remain relatively elusive because of a conglomerate of factors. We know that African governments are yet to resolve almost fully and effectively, for example, the challenges posed by illiteracy, poverty, HIV & AIDS, wars, civil conflicts, high population growth, environmental pollution, massive unemployment, deforestation, and so. Then, the concept of lifelong learning itself is misunderstood in Sub-Saharan Africa as people have either deliberately or ignorantly taken it to refer to placing emphasis in educational provisions on children or youth or adults. It is neither

of those things. Lifelong learning is a unifying umbrella concept that brings together all those areas of emphasis in a kind of framework that seeks to make ample provision for everybody, whether young or old and using all resources within society that serve educational purposes. That is why it seeks to stimulate and build upon all the intellectual capacities and capabilities we have all been endowed with so that we are the subject and not objects of change. Its main goal is that we all become productive and relevant persons instead of remaining bystanders in the process and context of individual and collective development.

As far as the challengers of our vision and mission are concerned, we have a contingent of coterminous ones that are far too many to cover within the short space of time allowed in inaugural lectures, but it would be useful to identify the two most dominant ones that have influenced my research and scholarship to date. These two challengers are adult illiteracy and HIV & AIDS.

Adult Illiteracy

By adult illiteracy I refer to the inability on the part of the individual to read, write and compute with understanding in any given language and to an appreciable level. We had bewailed in several fora and writings the triumph of illiteracy in our region even in this century. The triumph of adult illiteracy in much of Sub-Saharan Africa could be argued as the result of the tolerance of exclusionism. By exclusionism we mean the confinement of education to certain age groups or certain people by reasons of imposing, knowingly and unknowingly, barriers on others who deserve to learn. Exclusionism, as a concept, equally implies inequality of access to education. Consequently, certain segments of the society are denied access to education by virtue of so many reasons, some of which social, cultural, economic, political, physical, disability, creed, conviction, race, religion and nationality. By reason of this denial, only certain people can learn. In our context, we can cite the cases of the illiterate adults, the poor, the so-called street children and the isolated and/or confined populations-prisoners, women in purdah, refugees, and lepers as well as the physically challenged, the minorities and migrant populations. The prevalence of child, youth and adult illiteracy in our region contravenes Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which our nations have subscribed.

Article 26, rightly titled as *The Right to Education*, clearly states in its paragraph one that:

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

Technical and professional education shall be generally available, and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit....

Since December 10, 1948 when this universal declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, some progress has been made in the direction of implementing it. Since the inauguration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, educational opportunities have increased considerably. For a significant majority of the world's young people now attend schools and enrolment and participation in formal education at the secondary and post-secondary levels have expanded (UNESCO, 2010). In spite of the advances so far made towards a fully literate world, the picture is not actually clear as to how much concrete achievements we can correctly claim. We cannot correctly ascertain how much the world has achieved in literacy in qualitative terms.

Paragraph 2 of Article 26 we referred to talks about the promotion of understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, and among racial or religious groups in hope that the UN can really become the bastion of peace in the world. Today, we can ask: how much peace does the world know? How much has the acquisition of basic literacy assisted the literates to participate meaningfully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of their nations? How much of tolerance and friendship can we say exist among different racial, religious and nation groups in the world? How many nations today are fully and really committed to diversity and global citizenry? Your guess is as good as mine in determining how much progress the world has made. In practical terms, xenophobia is assuming a much more alarming scale, even in our Sub-Saharan Africa (Oduaran and Nenty, 2008).

Much against the hopes that were built into Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education has been abused. Nations have continued to use education for political propaganda and, worse still, stir up hatred, intolerance and sometimes, vicious physical attacks in some parts of the world.

Apart from the qualitative inadequacies being pointed out, illiteracy among persons aged 15 and over continues to be a significant worry for the world, Sub-Saharan Africa, Botswana and South Africa (to a lesser extent) and, more critically, Nigeria.

In the year 2010, UNESCO hinted that there are still 21 million out-of-school adolescents as at 2007, and this equivalent to 38% of the lower secondary school age group (UNESCO, 2010). This situation is disturbing when we consider the fact that those who are illiterate youths today will become adult illiterates tomorrow, and therefore further compound the illiteracy challenge in

Sub-Saharan Africa. The 2007 report by UNESCO has also revealed that there were 153 million adults who lacked the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed in everyday living (UNESCO, 2010). In other words, the report shows that Sub Saharan Africa still ranks as one of the worst performing continents in the world in terms of improving literacy rates. Sub-Saharan Africa's Ministers of Education have been so sufficiently traumatized as to order a correct estimation of

the problem. Even at that, we now know that the problem of adult illiteracy is starring us in the face as revealed in the 2010 data presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Adult literacy rates in Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and the World 2010

Source: Adapted from UNESCO Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, 2010, pp.312-313

Country/ Region	Adult Literacy Rate (15 & over) (%)						Adult illiterates (15 & over)			
	2000-2007			Projected 2015			2000-2007		Projected 2015	
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total (000)	% F	Total (000)	% F
Botswana	83	83	83	87	87	88	211	50	176	49
Nigeria	72	80	64	79	85	74	23,283	65	21,577	63
South Africa	88	89	87	91	92	91	3, 977	55	3,107	55
Sub-Saharan Africa	62	71	54	72	77	66	152,665	62	150,824	60
World	84	89	80	87	90	83	758,643	64	709,533	63

The data in Table 1 above suggests that whereas Botswana has achieved an adult literacy rate of 83% as at 2007 with a projection of 87% by 2015, is still harbours close to 211, 000 adult illiterates with 50% of them being females. For Nigeria, the adult literacy rate has stood at 72% as at 2007 with a projection of 79% by 2015. South Africa on the other hand has recorded an adult literacy rate of 88% as at 2007 with a projection of 91% by the year 2015. Even so, we cannot rest on our oars as the data still show that while Nigeria still harbours about 23 million adult illiterates with 65% of them being females, South Africa on other hand is still harbouring approximately 4 million adult illiterates with 55% of them being female. Like Nigeria, South Africa has launched her own mass literacy campaign appropriately tagged as “The Kha ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign” in February, 2008. Kha ri Gude which is Tshivenda phrase for “Let us

learn” has been planned to ensure that between 14th April, 2008 and the end of 2012, South Africa is totally rid of its burden of 4.7 million adult illiterates (Kha ri Gude, 2010, retrieved from <http://www.kharigude.co.za/index.php/literacy-in-south-africa> 2010/07/07).

In spite of the progress made over the last decades in reducing the rates of illiteracy and literacy inequalities, in particular, there are gross cases of gender imbalances. In other words, in many regions and countries, there are more female than male adult illiterate (aged 15+). UNESCO(2010) has made it be known that in every region, with the exception of Latin American and the Caribbean, females account for growing percentage of all illiterate adults. The report has warned that this percentage will continue to grow if girls are not given equal access to primary schooling.

What UNESCO imputed for the World illiteracy situation is replicated in Sub-Saharan Africa. UNESCO (1995) estimated that the literacy rates for the age grade 15 and above was 66 percent for males and 46 percent for females (Oduaran, 1999d). So there are more females than male illiterate adults in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan African women also constitute the larger proportion of our labour force both in paid and unpaid employment. Yet, Sub-Saharan African women constitute a very significant proportion of the political force in many Sub-Saharan African countries even though for the most part they are put in the back burner of the political affairs in terms of being key players.

The much progress that Sub-Saharan Africa has made in terms of fighting doggedly against illiteracy is undoubtedly the product of the many years of advocacy. The struggle has been intense and those who were at the forefront of the struggle have aged or are ageing. As adult education begins to be “pushed aside” by those who do not understand that after the battle has been won against illiteracy, there are other concerns known as lifelong learning and continuing and distance education as serious professions and callings, it is sad, very much indeed, that the offspring needed to continue with the struggle have been aborted in South Africa where the subject has disappeared from the curricula in most universities. It is relieving to know, however, that Botswana and Nigeria have been foresighted enough to keep adult and continuing education as a subject of serious scholarship and professional development in their higher education agenda. Yet, we have another burning issue.

HIV & AIDS

Mr Campus Rector, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, let me return very quickly to a subject that has touched my heart very seriously in this last lap of my race as an academic who has been advocating for the oppressed and marginalized people. This is one subject no one with the

genuine interest of Africa at heart can just wish away or put in the back burner. To do so is to kill the vision and mission that have been driving us on as academics in the last 29 years. I am talking about HIV & AIDS. The subject is serious because whatever academic policies and programmes our research may come up with must be managed by a people who are alive. The vision and mission we have been advocating for cannot be driven when our populations have been wiped out by the vicious epidemic that some may try to down play.

I say HIV & AIDS remain vicious for many reasons. In 2001 alone, an estimated 3.4 million adults and children were newly infected with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa and by the end of that year, the region was harbouring an estimated 28.1 million adults and children living with HIV/AIDS (Kelly, 2005, quoting UNAIDS 2001). What that meant was that the epidemic was far from being kept at bay in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This discussion is not intended to continue with the debate as to whether or not the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa is growing. Bennell (2005) has already addressed the issue, noting, in particular, that although it is impossible to generalize about the epidemic across the continent, advocacy is reportedly getting in the way of objective assessments of the levels and trends of the AIDS epidemic. Bennell (2005) had unequivocally argued that the HIV prevalence rates were not increasing in most Sub-Saharan countries as was usually stated or implied. While that might appear to be “good” news, it is also true that highly accurate statistics on mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa are still lacking, and we can only at best rely on estimates of HIV prevalence and sentinel population surveys.

The literature on Sub-Saharan Africa’s HIV and AIDS is gradually growing over the last decades. Almost all aspects of the epidemic have been addressed. Even at that, not much quality information is available on how HIV and AIDS has negatively impacted curriculum reforms and innovations in African universities. To date, only a handful of information on this dimension has been indicated in the literature (Oduaran, 2004c, and Help Age International, 2004).

I had observed that by the year 2003, Sub-Saharan Africa’s HIV and AIDS epidemic had assumed such a posture that the BBC News of 04th March 2004 tagged the situation as “grim” when viewed against the backdrop of the global spread and effects of HIV/AIDS. The HIV & AIDS epidemic has not abated, and it has affected not just excellence in education but the high rate of increase in orphanages and converted those who should have been retiring joyfully into having to acquire the skills of parenting once again and more intensely, the need to understand what intergenerational relationships and programming is all about (Oduaran & Oduaran, 2004a, Oduaran, 2005a, 2006b, 2008b, Oduaran and Molosi, 2009 and Oduaran and Oduaran, 2010).

Sub Saharan Africa HIV & AIDS Statistics as at 2007

AVERT (2008) reports that an estimated 22.4 million adults and children were living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa as at the end of 2007. During that year, an estimated 1.4 million Africans died from AIDS (Avert, 2008). The epidemic has left behind some 14.1 million orphaned African children, and it is now feared that some 30,000 Sub-Saharan kids die every day from HIV.

It is hardly any cheering news that we have not made so much progress in dealing with the challenges posed by HIV and AIDS. Indeed, according to Avert (2008), the estimated number of adults and children living with HIV/AIDS, the number of deaths from AIDS, and the number of living orphans in individual countries in sub-Saharan Africa at the end of 2008 are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sub-Saharan Africa HIV & AIDS statistics in 2008

Country	People living with HIV/AIDS	Adult (15-49) rate %	<u>Women with HIV/AIDS</u>	<u>Children with HIV/AIDS</u>	AIDS deaths	<u>Orphans due to AIDS</u>
Angola	190,000	2.1	110,000	17,000	11,000	50,000
Benin	64,000	1.2	37,000	5,400	3,300	29,000
Botswana	300,000	23.9	170,000	15,000	11,000	95,000
Burkina Faso	130,000	1.6	61,000	10,000	9,200	100,000
Burundi	110,000	2.0	53,000	15,000	11,000	120,000
Cameroon	540,000	5.1	300,000	45,000	39,000	300,000
Central African Republic	160,000	6.3	91,000	14,000	11,000	72,000
Chad	200,000	3.5	110,000	19,000	14,000	85,000
Comoros	<200	<0.1	<100	<100	<100	<100
Congo	120,000	3.5	43,000	6,600	6,400	69,000
Côte d'Ivoire	480,000	3.9	250,000	52,000	38,000	420,000
Dem. Republic of Congo	400,000-500,000	1.2-1.5	210,000-270,000	37,000-52,000	24,000-34,000	270,000-380,000
Djibouti	16,000	3.1	8,700	1,100	1,100	5,200
Equatorial Guinea	11,000	3.4	5,900	<1,000	<1,000	4,800
Eritrea	38,000	1.3	21,000	3,100	2,600	18,000
Ethiopia	980,000	2.1	530,000	92,000	67,000	650,000
Gabon	49,000	5.9	27,000	2,300	2,300	18,000
Gambia	8,200	0.9	4,500	<1,000	<1,000	2,700
Ghana	260,000	1.9	150,000	17,000	21,000	160,000
Guinea	87,000	1.6	48,000	6,300	4,500	25,000

Guinea-Bissau	16,000	1.8	8,700	1,500	1,100	6,200
Kenya	1,500,000- 2,000,000	7.1- 8.5	800,000- 1,100,000	130,000- 180,000	85,000- 130,000	990,000- 1,400,000
Lesotho	270,000	23.2	150,000	12,000	18,000	110,000
Liberia	35,000	1.7	19,000	3,100	2,300	15,000
Madagascar	14,000	0.1	3,400	<500	<1,000	3,400
Malawi	930,000	11.9	490,000	91,000	68,000	560,000
Mali	100,000	1.5	56,000	9,400	5,800	44,000
Mauritania	14,000	0.8	3,900	<500	<1,000	3,000
Mauritius	13,000	1.7	3,800	<100	<1,000	<500
Mozambique	1,500,000	12.5	810,000	100,000	81,000	400,000
Namibia	200,000	15.3	110,000	14,000	5,100	66,000
Niger	60,000	0.8	17,000	3,200	4,000	25,000
Nigeria	2,600,000	3.1	1,400,000	220,000	170,000	1,200,000
Rwanda	150,000	2.8	78,000	19,000	7,800	220,000
Senegal	67,000	1.0	38,000	3,100	1,800	8,400
Sierra Leone	55,000	1.7	30,000	4,000	3,300	16,000
Somalia	24,000	0.5	6,700	<1,000	1,600	8,800
South Africa	5,700,000	18.1	3,200,000	280,000	350,000	1,400,000
Swaziland	190,000	26.1	100,000	15,000	10,000	56,000
Togo	130,000	3.3	69,000	10,000	9,100	68,000
Uganda	1,000,000	6.7	520,000	110,000	91,000	1,000,000
United Rep. Of Tanzania	940,000	5.4	480,000	130,000	77,000	1,200,000
Zambia	1,100,000	15.2	560,000	95,000	56,000	600,000
Zimbabwe	1,300,000	15.3	680,000	120,000	140,000	1,000,000
Total sub-Saharan Africa	22,000,000	5.0	12,000,000	1,800,000	1,500,000	11,600,000

Notes: Adults in this page are defined as men and women aged over 15, unless specified otherwise. Children are defined as people under the age of 15, whilst orphans are people aged under 18 who have lost one or both parents to AIDS.

Source: AVERT 2008. <http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>, accessed 07/07/10 at 2.15 p.m.

From Table 3 above, it should be clear to us that challenge posed to Sub-Saharan African socio-economic development is far from being over. With an estimated 22.4 million people living with HIV it can only be fool hardy of anyone to pretend to be trying to effectively explore Africa's effective and rewarding entry into the global knowledge economy of the 21st Century when indeed the decimation of our human capital continues unabated. In other words,

whatever curriculum reforms that we seek to propose must fully embrace the challenge posed by HIV and AIDS. A lifelong learning approach to combating this scourge is essential.

OUR PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE

Mr. Campus Rector, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen; it should not surprise you that much of my research and scholarship has been in the area of adult illiteracy and lately HIV & AIDS together with all its consequences, especially the need for intergenerational relationships that has been made more important now by the fact that a whole medium generation of parents are being wiped out.

The Research and Scholarship Response to Adult Illiteracy

This is so because I am professionally and passionately worried that illiteracy and HIV & AIDS would prevent Sub-Saharan Africans, Batswana, Nigerians and South Africans from contributing significantly to the advance that the World is making in science and technology. Illiteracy excludes a majority of our people from participating effectively and efficiently in the social, economic and political development of their societies and the world. Illiteracy would continue to preclude Sub-Saharan Africans from developing their full potentials as human beings. And more importantly, illiteracy would continue to make our people hapless objects to be manipulated, abused and subjugated to the whims and caprices of the powerful and rich elites whether they live in or outside Sub-Saharan Africa.

There will be no more room to revisit these issues but rest assured that our advocacy has yielded results on many fronts. For example, in Nigeria today there is a National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education and State agencies offering the same service throughout the nation. Importantly too, Nigeria has a National Nomadic Education commission and a Federal Ministry for Women Affairs all of which are deeply committed to ridding Nigeria of illiteracy.

In Botswana, part of my inputs has been research into basic issues that need to be explored so that the gains already made in literacy programmes provisions can be firmed more appreciably (Oduaran, 1999a 1999b and 1999c, Oduaran and Modise, 2009). My scholarship and research has probably been useful in planning matters and, more importantly human resource development aimed at advancing adult basic education and post-literacy in Botswana. At the moment, I have joined other professional colleagues in examining the impacts of adult and non-formal education programmes in Botswana. Together, we are exploring how resources could be

commonly and equitably shared for the provision of adult education basic education and post-literacy programmes that are sufficiently equivalent to formal education programmes. We are now investigating the appropriateness of reading materials used in Botswana's adult basic education programmes (Oduaran, Ntseane and Fasokun, 2002). We are doing so because we intend to explore ways in which the reading texts can be improved in order to make them sufficiently knowledge enriching and motivating if our hypotheses are proved otherwise. These tasks are enormous but I will not allow myself to abdicate in the face of obvious challenges and mistrusts I have experienced in the course of my professional development.

The Research and Scholarship Response to HIV & AIDS

I have in the last 13 years decided to refocus my research as a lifelong learning academic into the area of understanding how HIV & AIDS affect excellence in education, lifelong learning and the emergence of one of the newest academic concerns in the developed world. I am here referring to intergenerational relationships about which scholars in Sub-Saharan Africa are paying no attention even as the grandparents who are supposed to care for their dying children and at the same time take over the parenting of the numerous orphans being left behind clearly lack the relevant knowledge and skills. Indeed, some of these grandparents are either dying or remain so sick that they can no more care for the orphans left behind. African scholars are yet to become interested in meeting the learning needs of these grandparents and the children headed households. It is as if nothing is happening. I have directed much of scholarship to this apparently neglected area of academic interests, and I am quite happy to report that my professional colleagues in the advanced world (Pinazo-Hernandis and Tomkins, 2009) have recognised my interest and raised global concerns to the issues I have addressed in my scholarship (Oduaran, 2004, 2005a, 2006b, 2008a, and 2008b, Oduaran and Owolabi, 2006).

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE LIFELONG LEARNING FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Campus Rector, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen; our advocacy for the rejection of exclusionism and the need for us to embrace with calm assurance the better alternative of inclusionism in education and learning, please permit to say, has yielded profound dividends. For in 2006, UNESCO gave me a grant that enabled me to engage in a kind of global research that culminated in the publication of a book we titled "Widening access to education as social justice: Essays in honor of Michael Omolewa", and was edited by me and the renowned American educator, Professor Harbans S. Bhola (Oduaran & Bhola, 2006).

Our advocacy has remained unwavering because we believe that exclusionism in education and training is not only a costly mistake but an aberration in the modern world. We believe that the economic costs of exclusionism are almost unquantifiable. But you can imagine the costs to economic returns on investment of the prevalence of the incidence of having an illiterate work force in an era of knowledge economy. Its social costs are equally appalling for exclusionism can very easily induce feelings of rejection, anomie and withdrawal. At some point in time this may further fan the embers of overt or covert social rebellion against exclusionism. The political costs of exclusionism are perhaps quite obvious. It may palpably induce ineffectiveness or non-participation in politics and political processes as well as political voicelessness, powerlessness and at some point in time, political oppression, injustice and marginalisation.

The educational costs of exclusionism are equally significant. For parents who have been excluded from education and learning can do little or nothing by way of supporting whatever learning their children may be seek to engage in. They may not, for instance, be in the best position of supervising the school homework of their children.

Exclusionism in education and learning manifests in the continuous locking up of hidden human resource treasures. For how would individuals function maximally when their capabilities for generating knowledge are not given any stimulation? Excluded persons may have immense potentials for educational and learning endeavours. They may have in their hands, situations of:

Locked up Wisdom

Locked up for Knowledge

Locked up skills

Locked up attitudes and aptitudes.

At the end, development is slowed down. The sphere of influence and participation of those who have been excluded is constrained. In multiethnic settings, the interactions of those excluded are restricted to the circle of those with whom they share the same language. The power of rational and creative thinking may subsequently be reduced. So may the preservation and transmission of community knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. In other words, exclusionism ought not to be tolerated by societies for all its ills. The principles of social justice, equity and equality demand that society is fair to all, and that is the major notion that has brought the drive for inclusionism.

Inclusionism is based on the notion that it is unethical, unwise, unfair and mischievous to exclude segments of the populations on account of any known or unknown reasons. It is based on the notion that it is economically, politically, culturally, socially and psychologically damaging

to exclude any segments of society from education and learning (Boshier, 2006). Because exclusionism imperils societal balance, it is reasonable, wise and profitable to adopt inclusionism as a pivot for balanced and stable development. It is a rejection of all social edifices that have been erected to prevent anyone from getting access to all opportunities that could be put into the full development of human potential. The idea is that access to educational and learning opportunities can no longer be regarded as a matter of philanthropy, charity, benevolence or loftiness of spirit (Faure et al, 1972). There is also the concern that if inclusionism is not pursued with all the vigour it deserves the world might be heading towards the enthronement of an obnoxious dichotomy between superior and inferior race and social groups, superior and inferior gender and super-rich and super-poor nations. If we allow this to be the case, we run the risk of converting conflicts and disasters, hatreds and rejections. No one would want this to happen and this is why various programmes are being pursued in the direction of understanding, co-operation, diversity and multi-culturalism.

Inclusionism is hoisted on the altar of what many of my professional colleagues have come to label as the “maximalist philosophy” (Dave, 1975; Cropley, 1979; Gelpi, 1984, 1985; Lengrand, 1975; Wain, 1987, 1993a, 1993b; Chapman and Aspin, 1997).

The maximalist philosophy conceptualizes and pursues the notion that lifelong learning be institutionalized in a “learning society” in which education and learning is more central to society such that no one is deprived of the right to learn. The goal of the philosophy is to increase the number of people who learn, know and can apply the principles of learning of learning for individual and community development. The philosophy, in line with Dewey’s position, posits that every resource in society that serves educational purposes must be fully put into use. In other words, resources should be commonly shared with no one building boundaries around resources that are put under his/her control. The maximalist philosophy, therefore promotes the need to maximize human potentials and physical resources to the maximum.

In spite of the criticisms levelled against this nascent interpretation of lifelong learning by Bagnall (1990), I am of the opinion that applying the maximalist philosophy to the provision of learning opportunities has immense potential for promoting inclusionism in all its ramifications. When inclusionism is applied to education and learning, all segments of society are equitably and equally provided for. The children, the youth and the adults are expected to be provided opportunities to learn at all times, but this is not the case in Sub-Saharan Africa to a great extent. The adults are almost always forgotten in the educational provision yet in their old age

they ought to learn how to live quality lives (Oduaran, Lekoko and Oduaran, 2004, Oduaran, 2006b, 2006c, 2008b, Oduaran and Molosi, 2009 and Oduaran & Oduaran, 2010).

It can be argued widening access to education and learning alone cannot guarantee the firm entry of Sub-Saharan Africa into the global geo-political and economic mainstream where the nations can have any meaningful voice. However, remaining a region that is developing very slowly or even stagnant in some instances cannot augur well for us as a people. One cannot with any iota of conscience say that Sub-Saharan Africa is developing at rate that would make it catch up with either East or South-East Asia. It may be true that the region had experienced some increased growth rate since the mid-nineties probably due to increased demand for export commodities like natural oil and gold with higher prices by China and India and then other rapidly developing countries. But countries in the region have also been net importers of commodities and services and have therefore been hurt by the higher prices charged by the developed world. The net effect of imbalances in exportation and importation with the latter gaining the upper hand is that Sub-Saharan Africa has remained a major concern. Why? As the Becker-Posner concluded:

Levels of education and health are very low in Sub-Saharan Africa countries; life expectancy is low and is actually declining; productivity is very low; fertility though declining remains very high; poverty of course is widespread; ethnic conflict (often violent) and political violence are common; corruption is endemic; opportunities for women are meagre. (The Becker-Posner Blog, 2010).

For these reasons I have proposed here inclusionism as the guiding theory for our advocacy for lifelong learning.

WHY ALL SUB-SAHARAN AFRICANS MUST COMMIT TO LIFE LONG LEARNING

Learning begins in the schools and in our homes. But when the individual leaves school where s/he acquires survival skills by acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, understanding and values, s/he is exposed to the challenges of a rapidly changing and complex world. This learning that takes place in school actually entails that the acquisition of enormous amounts of data. Much of the data individuals have acquired in school may make very little meaning to the learner. Sometimes, the learner does not know where they fit in, when they fit in and how they fit in. When certificates, diplomas and degrees may have been acquired from the compartmentalized systems, the real challenge manifests itself in how to convert the data into information, and

then the information into knowledge. Then it must be realized that the conversion process demands a great deal of efforts, co-operation and understanding in order to have meaningful results.

Life and living outside the school system demands even more effort than people realize. Sometimes, much information we gather from formal schooling is further extended, expanded and operationalised. The cultivation of personal attributes and values as well as the challenges requires that we continue to invest time and resources in a lifetime of learning in a knowledge-based society and economy. The essential and navigational learning becomes even more urgent and crucial in the global inter-dependence that is present in daily life.

Living to learn palpably implies physiological, economical, social and cultural change. Physiologically, people need to learn to cope with the effect of changes in their visceral organic functioning. We need to learn to understand our physiological transitions and the implications these have for physical activities, medication and diet.

Economically, we have to learn to cope with changes in workplace skills and competencies, re-skilling, employment and unemployment patterns, technological advance and globalisation, amongst others. In fact, employment is changing its nature, and we are now required to understand this because it is apparent that the schools alone cannot really prepare the young ones to become productive members of their respective societies, especially in an era of global capitalism (Oduaran, 2000e). Global capitalism is characterized by increased deregulation of industries and globalised business operations. We are witnesses to the rapid rate at which change and opportunities occur and people are now compelled more than ever before to take control of their destinies and explore economic opportunities by and for themselves. Globalisation of economies have brought to the fore the awareness that the era of jobs for life is dead. Those who thought that they have acquired the knowledge and skills they require to be in employment for life will be disappointed. The economic credo of the future is hire and fire or what some term as labour market flexibility (Ryan, 2002).

The world economy is on the drive for efficiency. This is the new catechism of businesses. Now, if anyone wants a stable career, that person must be ready to acquire marketable skills, which must at the same time be constantly upgraded. People are now living to learn new ways of thinking creatively. If anyone refuses to think creatively, that person must be ready to be left behind in a world in absolute hurry. Living to learn also requires that we understand the incursion of economic competitiveness. Everywhere, nations are being required to gear up for competitiveness. Everywhere, nations are being required to gear up for competitiveness. Everywhere nations are being required to gear up for competitiveness by lowering government

spending and keeping taxes relatively low in order to attract investors. The private sector is getting ever engrossed in down-sizing so as to remain competitive. Competitiveness is characterized by open markets, lean government spending, low taxes, flexible labour markets, effective judiciary and stable political systems (Ryan, 2002) and everyone is expected to learn how to understand these economic clichés.

The times we live in are times of anxiety, whichever way we look at it. It could be economic anxiety featuring mergers of the business juggernauts, layoffs and job insecurity. Everywhere, there is the fear of failing or the fear of downsizing, or of stagnant wages and the demise of the labour movements as they become powerless and the collective bargaining power for which they were famous in the 1970s to 1980s are thrown overboard. Indeed, it is no longer fashionable for labour leaders to parade themselves on the street adorning the title of “comrade”.

Computer-based production processes like computer-aided design, computer-aided manufacturing and just-in-time inventory systems have made easy corporate down-sizing and layoffs are the order of the day. This means that people would have to be relevant in terms of skills and knowledge or accept to be pushed to the sidelines.

Socially, we have to learn to understand and cope with increase in population, migration patterns and increases in the number of children, youth and adults at risk in the era of the HIV & AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as changes in family structures and relationships. At the same time, we are being required to learn how to live together in a global community. Learning to live together is one of the most challenging realities of the 21st Century. Global economy induces the emergence of global community along with all its challenges. Learning systems are being asked to be innovative in developing competencies that would enable people to live together in multicultural settings where no race is looked upon as inferior to the other. That means that people would have to acquire new sets of social structures and values that would enable them to deal with primitive prejudices and stereotypes that impede the process of living together. Beyond that, people would have to learn to understand conflict and difference in order to be able to cultivate the value of peace, peaceful relationships and felicitous interactions and exchanges. These have not been items that schools consider as important but which must be the centre stage in a rapidly shrinking global community (Torres 2003).

Culture is not a static item in society. The changes taking place in the world demand Batswana, Nigerians and South Africans must learn to understand, appreciate and be ingrained in the emerging culture flow, global emergence of a new global hegemony which is a hegemony of

structures and not of content (Thalefang and Oduaran, 2006). To survive, our people must learn in a sustainable manner the key aspects of their cultural contents that need development. This is the only way they can make sense of the world with its new universal categories and standards in an intelligent manner.

The experience the world has been having of recent indicates that there can be no end to learning. For we are witnesses to the collapse of micro and macroeconomic systems and the failure of super-power security systems (Schuman, 2010).

The physiognomy of the twenty-first century is crafted in the technicist legacy that is typified by so-called knowledge society and economy. The 21st Century is going to be prominent for the coming of new challenges. It is an era in which we shall have to cope with the increased use of the credit cards and the electronic transfer of funds within seconds and across a wide geographical space, over population coming as a result of improved health care across the globe, global warming as manifested by increased generation of gases that are not ozone layer friendly (that is, the hydro carbons) (Oduaran, 1989g), human cloning and the widespread manifestation of HIV & AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.

By whatever name the 21st century is known, it is obviously an era of immense contestations. On the one hand, there are those who in search of notions of paradigm shifts continuously espouse new causes, new knowledge and new concepts for various reasons (Longworth, 1999). This they do in an attempt to adapt to the times of rapid and uncertain changes. So they have fashioned our concepts like “post modernization”, “post-fordism”, “globalisation”, for example, to refer to what we used to know simply as capital accumulation. This is not the place to explore these new techno-scientific concepts in the light of the focus of this inaugural lecture.

On the other hand, there are those and these are probably in the majority, who are requesting for what Longworth (1999) has called STATIS. Statis belongs to the old school of conservatives who are more interested in better ordered or regulated and prescribed existence in which change should only occur slowly so that there will be no upheavals or chaos. Again, there will be no room to extend the frontiers of this contention in a brief discussion such as this.

The truth remains that whichever side of the contestation we really stand does not matter. What matters is that Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa exist in an era of the “techno-scientific revolution”. This is an era in which the globe has shrunk into a relatively closer unit through the operations of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs, for short). It is an era in which the production of wealth and movement of global capital is rapid and flexible beyond proportions ever imagined.

In the new 'techno-scientific' era, Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa continue to fit into a mould once described by Usher, Bryant and Johnson (1997) as the core-periphery labour market where those who do not have the modern skills, cultural capital, access to information or market power should expect to live and work only on the margins. Botswana, Nigeria and South Sub-Saharan Africa have remained on the margins for this long. Our people have sat on the periphery for so long that our contemporaries are apt to treat us with scorn. We are treated as if we really do not matter much. If we expect to be treated with respect and as partners in the global race for advancement, there would be an urgent need to build very quickly our own structures that would cultivate the learning societies.

By learning societies, I refer to environments in which knowledge creation, production and utilization is mediated by the integration of all institutions of learning, be they formal, non-formal or informal. The objective sought after is the integration of learning in different life spaces and events using all resources in the society that serve educational purposes. In such environments, learning takes place 24 hours a day, seven days a week and fifty-two weeks in a year.

For Sub-Saharan Africa, this may look like a kind of utopia but that is what the advanced world is pursuing. We cannot afford the pains of being left behind in this vibrant locomotive of learning for all at all times and in all places. Already, the formal school system in Sub-Saharan Africa has been striving to rejuvenate and revitalize itself in this highly commodified existence. But we cannot impute the same thing for the non-formal sector of organized learning.

Campus Rector, distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen, aware of the fact that the non-formal sector education has the potential for off-setting the traditionalist minimalistic provision of learning opportunities and that lifelong learning can help in reversing the social injustices, misfortunes and tragedies of the formal system of education, I have decided to apply my research and scholarship very vigorously to this often neglected and under-valued specialization called adult education.

As an adult educator, I have explored how adult education can be developed such that it can be a strong pivot in creating the learning societies we deserve. In doing this, I have explored the contestation whether or not adults can learn. My studies have proved that adults can indeed learn and sometimes better than children and youth under the conditions that they have a positive self concept, that they are adequately motivated and that they have not suffered any brain damage or organic disintegration (Oduaran, 1981, 1985, 1988, 1988c, 1989a, 1989b, 1993, 1997; 2005b, 2005c, 2005d, 2008c, Oduaran & Oduaran, 2007 and Oduaran and Oyitso,

1995). If the hypotheses I have tested in the different studies hold true as I think they did, there would be no grounds for us in Sub-Saharan Africa to assume that adult persons cannot learn.

The findings in those different studies prompted me to argue that millions of our illiterate adult Sub-Saharan Africans must be afforded the opportunity to acquire the skills of literacy and numeracy. Thereafter, their learning, I have argued, needs to be geared towards community development, professional development, environmental issues, life after retirement, earning, employment, peace education, computer applications and conscientization (Oduaran, 1984, 1985a, 1987b, 1987c, 1989c, 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, Oduaran and Okukpon, 2005 & Kazeem and Oduaran, 2006). I have argued that one of the kinds of learning Sub-Saharan Africa requires would be so comprehensive and basic that it should reach all peoples wherever they might be. Consequently, I have advocated for the rapid modernization and application of distance and open learning mode in some of my scholarship and research (Oduaran, 1981, 1985b, 1986, 1992a and 1992b, 2008b).

In advocating the development of different aspects of our specialization, I have come to realise that our research inputs have been rather too theoretical, weak, peripheral, pitiable and highly inadequate. I have therefore, demanded much more empirical research than we are presently engaged in (Oduaran, 1986, 1989d, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2006b). In directing my research and scholarship in those few but crucial areas, I have not been unaware that policy issues related to learning in particular and to such presently hotly debated topics like globalisation, gender, HIV/AIDS, access and poverty alleviation also need equal attention (Oduaran, 2000a and 2000b). If Botswana, Nigeria and South Sub-Saharan Africa can institute actions in these directions, we would be in the mainstream of helping peoples to achieve the goals of well scrutinised and desirable change and that of cultivating self-awareness, self-directedness, self-empowerment, and these should enable them to engage profitably in the four pillars of education prescribed by Jacques Delors as follows:

- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to Live Together, and
- Learning to be (Delors, 1998).

These four pillars represent the centrality of preparation for life, functionality, unity and peace and futurism. To that extent, I agree with the long known maxim put forth by Aristotle when he said: "All men by nature desire to know".

To effectively arrive at that point, Mr Campus Rector, I would like to tender a few suggestions for creating enduring societies in Botswana, Nigeria and South Sub-Saharan Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In support of the recent global CONFINTEA VI conference and Belem (Brazil) Framework for Action, I propose that:

1. The present bureaucratic and political inertia to allow for equitable allocation of resources to the non-formal sector of education must be jettisoned
2. The political and bureaucratic systems must be more proactive in responding to the need for equitable re-distribution and creation of more open access to opportunities for learning
3. There is need to reject for the remainder of this century the practice of defining education in the straight jackets of experts, planners and local priorities only, as the world is shrinking in space and time daily
4. We must stop denying education the possibility and need to be innovative in practice such that people can move away from the traditional methods, strategies and value of adult education to the more ebullient field of inter-generational lifelong learning philosophies and practices
5. There is need for the three countries to promote inclusive education and learning in terms of profound policy framework, adequate budgeting and prompt allocation
6. The Botswana, Nigerian and South African governments that have embraced democracy as the way to peace, justice and national development must promote as well active participative social learning that can quickly resolve the problems of gender inequalities, poverty, illiteracy and more urgently HIV & AIDS
7. Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa have been naturally endowed with resources that must be judiciously invested and commonly shared such that our peoples are privileged to have cheap and unhindered access to learning and to the new information and communication technologies.

CONCLUSION

In today's lecture, Mr. Campus Rector, I have made the point that one of the principal consequences of the recent changes in the philosophy, objective and methodology of adult education, as a University academic discipline, is its greater concern with the issues of genuine social economic, political, cultural and spiritual relevance. With respect to the issue of exclusionism and minimalisation of learning, I have tried to show that it is unethical, unfair, wasteful and anachronistic to limit learning to space, time and age in the new knowledge age and economy. Thereafter, I examined the different contestations that have inundated our discipline as characterized by the debates between the mechanistic education proponents and the liberalist counterpoints. Against the background of the Universal declaration of Human Rights and the need for our continent to get into mainstream of development and existence instead of sitting on the edge in terms of policy and action, I presented theoretical and empirical studies to illustrate my argument in favour of why we must support learning to live and living to learn throughout life as the real and only equitable way to guarantee the survival of our peoples, especially the adults.

The aspects of the entire issue of maximalising learning opportunities through the pursuit of inclusionism that I have covered in this lecture represent but a small part of the diverse and multifarious problems of equality, equity and justice in lifelong learning in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa. The main task of formulating and implementing policies and programmes that will ensure that every citizen learns continuously is clearly the prerogative of governments in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa. This is reasonably not part of the obligations of a University School of Continuing Education. Even at that, Mr. Campus Rector, in consonance with our terms of employment, we have responsibilities to dispense to society. As an academic unit sponsored with tax payers' money, we have a definite obligation to provide, through our training, scholarship and research, the well cultivated personnel and body of knowledge and information that can assist governments such as those in Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa in their development programmes.

In the Department of Adult Education at the Universities of Benin and Botswana where I had pitched my academic tents, we concentrated our attention on personnel development and knowledge creation and production through research and scholarship on the issues and problems of lifelong learning. Towards meeting this goal, we had tailored the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes academically and professionally to respond to changes and problems of our peoples. In both countries where I have served, our graduates are in government, non-government and civil society agencies where they are profitably engaged in planning, visioning, organizing and implementing policies and programmes. In South Africa, I have been exposed to a more practical level of theory building as I meet very regularly at

various learning centres in Ganyesa, Mmabatho, Vryburg and Taung the “real adult learners” in respect of whom I have been engaging in research aimed at enhancing their learning. I am happy to announce that I have now graduated from the level of mere theory building to actual practice, and I am quite pleased with this new challenge. So far, Mr. Campus Rector, we have not received any concrete report to effect that our graduates have failed to measure up to required standards. Everywhere they are making positive contributions to the development of learning for all, and more innovatively, by the out-of-school youths and adults.

Be that as it may, our School could make even more positive contributions if government refuses to allow their officials to continue to treat adult and continuing education as an educational “bingo” that must pick up the scraps in terms of budget and policy after the better favoured formal education system has been appropriated the best part of the educational budget. There are many more propositions that might emerge from the continuously active researches we are engaged in. Mr. Campus Rector, I have no doubt in my mind that our School of Continuing Education has more than justified its continuous existence as an academic unit in the Mafikeng Campus of the North West University, South Africa. I should seize the opportunity to thank Mr. Campus Rector and through you, the senior management and the University Council for the support we have received in our training and research programmes thus far. I wish to call on senior management and Council to continue to support our School of Continuing Education. Mr. Campus Rector, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to request you to ensure that the School of Continuing Education at the Mafikeng Campus must not be allowed to shrink in terms of its size and scope of operations, or even die. If anything at all, let me make a final plea that our School be allowed to transform into a thriving academic centre that can meet the academic needs of South Africa, and her closest neighbouring countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia. Who says we cannot even open a campus of our University in far flung nations like Nigeria and Sierra Leone where there is huge demand for effective and productive higher education? Our School is still relatively young and striving for academic excellence nationally and internationally. Help us to strive for greater heights.

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It is now appropriate for me to thank all those who have made it possible for me to rise to the academic rank of professor and to have performed in this capacity for this length of time. Firstly, my most esteemed and profound gratitude goes to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ to whom be all glory and honour for everything. I would like to specially thank my

spiritual father and General Overseer of The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye whose illuminating exposure made the gospel an ever living subject in my life.

I wish to seize this opportunity to tell my childhood friend, counsellor and wife, Dr. Choja Oduaran, herself a senior lecturer, all my children, grandchildren and children-in-law that I love all of you very dearly. Thank you for being patient with me as I continue to repeat far too regularly the need for all of us to embrace excellence and hard work as a way life.

I wish to thank my teachers at the institutions I attended as I grew up. I cannot now name all my teachers who nurtured me academically and socially as I grew up. But I must pay tribute to some of my teachers in the persons of Nigeria's immediate past ambassador to UNESCO and President of the 32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO (elected in September 2003), His Excellency, Professor Michael Omolewa, and Professors Joseph Aghenta, Nduka Okoh, Nicolas Nwagwu, Andrew Urevbu, Thomas Fasokun and Diran Taiwo to mention but a few.

I want to pay tribute, Mr. Campus Rector, to my late parents, Chief Michael and Mrs. Rebecca Oduaran for the different roles they played in my education.

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Campus Rector, I crave your indulgence to specially thank the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Dawid Gericke, who himself as a critical analyst has graciously acceded to every single academic initiative I have forwarded to him in my capacity as Director of the School of Continuing Education.

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Mr. Campus Rector, distinguished guest, I thank you all for patience and attention.

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