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**AN AFRICAN EXPERIMENT:  
ADULT LIFELONG LEARNING AS EMPOWERMENT AND  
THE BUILDING OF A CONFIDENT COMMUNITY**

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## **Introduction: preliminaries and appreciation**

**Preventing a “clash of civilization”: assumptions on a return to traditional roots and system of education**

**The nature of the problems: innovation, resistance, recognition and acceptance; access.**

## **The UNIVA Experiment**

Founding of University Village Association (UNIVA); Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, winner of UNESCO Literacy Award 1989

- **First**, the training was done at the local level, that is, the initial training at the basic literacy level as well as at the trainers' workshops.
- **Second**, the instructors were recruited locally. They lived with their students and were used to the way of life in the villages.
- **Third**, the local language, Yoruba, was used in writing primers, a series of elementary textbooks used for beginners in literacy acquisition, as well as in teaching the learners.
- **Fourth**, the examination and graduation ceremony took place in the village, instead of in the usual university environment, and the graduation featured local equivalents of the university officials.
- **Fifth**, the neo-literates, the newly literate students who were prepared as future teachers, were given training in courses such as the adult learning process.

# IMPACT

*THERE IS A LINK BETWEEN LEARNING AND CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS, COMMUNITY WORK AND DISCUSSION*

- ▣ THIRST FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

CONFIDENCE GROWING,  
PARTICIPANTS BECOME MORE  
OUTGOING

- EXAMPLE OF COMMENTS BY LEARNERS

“NOW WE CAN KEEP  
OUR SECRETS.

- ▣ WE CAN KEEP RECORDS OF ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS, AND PREPARE MINUTES OF MEETINGS.

• WE CAN SIGN OUR CHEQUES.

- ▣ WE CAN COUNT AND RECORD VOTES.

**WE CAN WRITE TO OUR CHILDREN  
AND HUSBANDS TO TELL THEM  
ABOUT URGENT PRESSING ISSUES,  
AS WELL AS TALK TO PEOPLE WITH  
GREATER CONFIDENCE.**

- ▣ **OUR MOCKERS WILL REGRET  
MOCKING US.**

**WE HAVE TAKEN A BOLD STRIDE.**

- **WE HAVE CRUSHED THE  
BARRIERS PUT UP BY WICKED  
AND DECEITFUL PEOPLE.”**

# LESSONS LEARNT AND PRINCIPLES ENUNCIATED

**FOR A LITERACY PROGRAMME TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON ITS RECIPIENTS, IT MUST BE FUNCTIONAL AS WELL AS SUSTAINABLE.**

- ▣ *DELIBERATE EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO GAIN THE TRUST, CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT OF THE TRADITIONAL RULERS AND THEIR PEOPLE, AND THE USE OF DIALOGUE, NEGOTIATION AND COMPROMISE IS KEY TO RESOLVING THESE ISSUES.*

- **IT MUST ADDRESS THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THE TARGET POPULATION.**

- ▣ **LANGUAGE FACTOR IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE, AND THAT THE USE OF THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE IS CRUCIAL TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE LEARNING PROCESS.**

*THE POPULATION MUST GET INVOLVED IN  
THE PROCESS OF PRACTICAL PARTNERSHIP  
BUILDING*

*THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND PRACTICES  
SHOULD BE DEMYSTIFIED AND  
PARTICIPATORY*



# TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

- The indispensability of adult and lifelong learning for the cultivation of virile citizenship and building of confident communities
- *Global relevance and application, as search continues for meeting the needs of vulnerable groups including the minority population, immigrants and the poor.*