

# Developing a National Strategic Framework for Implementing Lifelong Learning Component of SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*The United Nations in 2015 announced a new universal agenda, containing 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, aimed at transforming the world. Goal 4 of the agenda called on all countries to ensure the provision of equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. However, in Nigeria, there exists only a national policy framework on quality education and not on the vision of lifelong learning. This paper is written advocating the development of a national strategic policy framework for implementing the vision of lifelong learning component of SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda in Nigeria. The paper began with a discussion of vision of SDG 4-Education 2030 and its corresponding targets. The concept clarification of lifelong learning and the reasons for its global recognition were also discussed. Examples of countries with best practices on lifelong learning policy formulation were presented. Literature documented pragmatic approaches for promoting lifelong learning for all was discussed. The paper made specific recommendations for implementing the vision of lifelong learning for in Nigeria and concluded that the implementation of these recommendations will go a long way to help the country achieve the vision of lifelong learning for all component of the SDG 4-Education 2030.*

**Key words:** SDG 4-Education 2030, National Strategic Framework, Lifelong Learning for All, Learning Cities, Global Citizenship Education

## I. INTRODUCTION

On September 2015, world leaders converged at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and adopted a new comprehensive, ambitious and transformational development agenda which outlined a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The goals and targets aimed at shifting the world onto a sustainable and resilient development pathway while ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’ (United Nations, 2015). The outcome document, adopted at the summit, *inter alia* called on countries to “develop as soon as practicable, ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of this [new] Agenda...in order to support the transition to the SDGs and build on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies” (United Nations, 2015).

SDG 4 of the Agenda called on all countries to *ensure the provision of inclusive quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all*. This was strongly reiterated in a UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women, and UNHCR organised World Education Forum held in Incheon, Republic of Korea in 2015. The outcome of the forum is universally called the Incheon Education 2030 Declaration and Framework for Action. SDG 4 contains two components: quality education and lifelong learning. However, access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities is not yet a reality for all in Nigeria. Besides, the country has not clearly defined the features of an overall system of lifelong learning or attempted to

implement one. While the country is instituting policies and frameworks for improving quality education; not much can be said to have been done for lifelong learning.

Yet lifelong learning is central to the realisation of alleviating poverty and hunger, to combating inequalities, to creating decent work for all, to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protecting human rights, to promoting gender equality, empowerment of women and girls; to ensuring lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources; and to creating shared prosperity and conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth.. This paper is, therefore, written advocating the strategic steps that need to be instituted for effective implementation of the vision of lifelong learning component of SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda in Nigeria.

#### **The Vision and Corresponding Targets of SDG 4-Education 2030**

The vision of SDG4-Education 2030 is to transform lives through education and aims to ensure equitable opportunities to education in a holistic and lifelong learning perspective. It also aims to ensure universal pre, primary and secondary education leading to effective and relevant learning outcomes for all children, youth and adults as a foundation for lifelong and life wide-learning. Lastly, it aims to ensure equal opportunity in access to further learning opportunities for youth and adults throughout life (UNESCO, 2015). In other words, the focus of SDG4 is on the relevance of learning outcomes both for the world of work as well as for citizenship in a global and interconnected world (UNESCO, 2015).

The corresponding targets of SDG4-Education 2030 are well enunciated in the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action as follows:

- i. Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- ii. Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.
- iii. Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
- iv. Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- v. Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.
- vi. Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
- vii. Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Essentially, the provision and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all is advocated in all settings and at all levels of education. This includes:

- i. Provision of equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and higher education and research, with due attention to quality assurance.
- ii. Provision of flexible learning pathways.
- iii. Recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education.
- iv. Ensuring that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire life skills.
- v. Provision of adult learning, education and training opportunities.
- vi. Strengthening science, technology and innovation.
- vii. Harnessing the potentials of Information and communication technologies (ICTs) to strengthen education systems, knowledge dissemination, information access, quality and effective learning, and more effective service provision.

### **Lifelong Learning: Concept Clarification and Justification for its Global Recognition**

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in life-long learning as an indispensable element of policy responses to the future of learning. The importance of lifelong learning was strengthened by its inclusion as a central feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and as a guiding principle and operational framework for education systems and policies (UNESCO 2018).

Despite the fact that there is no real agreement on what exactly lifelong learning means (UNESCO 2016a) and the submissions of Bengtsson, (2013), Lovren & Popovic, (2018), among others, that “the concept of lifelong learning remains vague

and without a coherent implementation strategy”, lifelong learning has generally evolved to be understood today as covering all education and training during a lifetime, including both initial education and training and adult learning. It is not only considered ‘lifelong’ but also ‘lifewide’, covering learning in institutions, families, communities and workplaces. It is also considered ‘life-deep’ because it recognises the ongoing and active acquisition, development and deployment of knowledge over a lifetime (Bélanger, 2016).

Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering lifelong (cradle to grave) and life-wide learning for people of all ages, delivered and undertaken through a variety of modalities and meeting a wide range of learning needs and demands. In other words, a lifelong learning framework encompasses learning throughout the lifecycle, from early childhood through retirement. It encompasses formal learning (schools, training institutions, universities); non-formal learning (structured on-the-job training); and informal learning (skills learned from family members or people in the community). It allows people to access learning opportunities as they need them (World Bank, 2003).

The importance of lifelong learning was underscored by Fauré, Herrera, & Kaddoura (1972), in their book *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*, when they emphasised that “we should no longer assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but learn how to build up a continually evolving body of knowledge all through life – ‘learn to be’. Some other prominent definitions of lifelong learning include:

- i. All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons (UNESCO 1996).
- ii. All learning activities undertaken throughout life for the development of

- competencies and qualifications (ILO 2008).
- iii. All general education, vocational education and training, non-formal education and informal learning undertaken throughout life, resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. It includes the provision of counselling and guidance services” (European Commission, 2006 quoted in International Labour Organisation, (ILO), 2019).
  - iv. Lifelong learning framework encompasses learning throughout the lifecycle, from early childhood to retirement, and in different learning environments, formal, non-formal, and informal” (World Bank 2003).

The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (United Nations 2013) proposed to “provide quality education and lifelong learning” as an overarching goal and core pillar for building more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies. In addition, the Report of the UNICEF and UNESCO led Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda (UNESCO-UNICEF 2013) also proposed “Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All” as the overarching goal.

In the Education 2030 Brief of January, 2017, Volume 1, UNESCO contended that SDG 4 goes beyond a mere expansion of the scope and coverage of Education for All Agenda by placing learning, equity, and quality at the core of global education discourse. The policy brief emphasises a new construct of education around lifelong and lifewide learning and specifically advocated the integration of SDG 4 into national education planning.

In essence, lifelong learning emphasises that learning occurs during the whole course of a person’s life, or learning over a life course, or

what can be termed “a cradle to the grave” learning. This implies that learning should not stop as long as one lives. It is more than just education and training beyond formal schooling. Lifelong learning can be said to be the foundation of each of the four pillars of learning recommended by the International Commission on Education for the 21st century: learning for knowledge acquisition, learning for work, learning for existence, and learning to live together. The global recognition of lifelong learning emanated from the following:

### **1. Lifelong Learning is Education for the Knowledge Economy-**

The emergence of the global knowledge economy has put a premium on learning throughout the world. Ideas and know-how, as sources of economic growth and development, have important implications for how people learn and apply knowledge throughout their lives. Thus, lifelong learning has become a necessity for contemporary human existence because opportunities for learning throughout one’s lifetime are becoming increasingly critical for individuals and countries to be competitive in the global knowledge economy.

### **2. Flexibility of Education and Training Systems-**

Education and training are fundamental and always form an integral part of comprehensive economic, fiscal, social and labour market policies and programmes that are important for sustainable economic growth, employment creation and social development (ILO 2004). However, in the contemporary world, initial education and training for a single lifetime qualification is no longer sufficient with the accelerated pace of technological change. Therefore, education and training systems in the modern world needs to be flexible and prepare individuals to learn continuously over their life (ILO, 2018).

The recognition of lifelong learning, as a key principle to shape the development of education and training systems, made the International

Labour Organisation (ILO) to incorporate it in a number of normative and policy instruments which include the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No.195) (ILO 2004), the Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140) (ILO 1974), and the Conclusions on Skills for Improved Productivity, Employment Growth and Development (ILO 2008).

### 3. The Fast-Changing Marketplace of Jobs-

The global knowledge economy is transforming the demands of the labour market throughout the world. It is also placing new demands on citizens who need more skills and knowledge to be able to function in their day-to-day lives. Equipping people to deal with these demands and preparing workers to compete in the global economy requires a new model of education and training- a model of lifelong learning. Invariably, lifelong learning becomes essential for humans to remain relevant and be able to adapt to changes taking place in the workplace.

### 4. Acquisition of New Skills, Knowledge and Competencies-

In the knowledge economy, change is so rapid that workers constantly need to acquire new skills. Therefore, businesses and firms need workers who are willing and able to update their skills throughout their lifetimes. Besides, for one to succeed in the knowledge economy, one must master a new set of knowledge and competencies. Lifelong learning is the building block for the development of the core competencies and skills of employees such as literacy, numeracy, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, creative thinking, technical core capabilities, basic computer and software/application, behavioral skills, time management skills, and ethics and integrity skills.

**5. Rapidly Changing Technologies-** The speed of change in the knowledge economy, driven by rapidly changing technologies, means that skills depreciate much more rapidly than they once did. To compete effectively in this constantly changing environment, people need to be able to upgrade

their skills on a continuing basis. Where new technologies have been introduced, demand for high-skilled workers, particularly high-skilled information and communication technology (ICT) workers, will increase while the demand for lower-skilled workers will decline (OECD 2001f). For example, with the increasing deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and intelligent automation in many organisations, millions of workers will need to be retrained or reskilled. Hence, lifelong learning is no longer optional or aspirational; it is now ubiquitous and a necessity.

### Lockdown arising from COVID-19 Pandemic-

Corona virus globally known as COVID-19 has universally created a new reality in the workplace. To prevent the spread of the virus, which led to the deaths of thousands of people worldwide, countries all over the world initiated stay-at-home order for people which necessitated the phenomenon of *work-from-home* (WFH) for workers. This new reality may re-shape the world of work in the future. For workers to work from home, they definitely need continuous learning to adapt to the new reality and remain relevant in workplace. This is where lifelong learning becomes highly desirable to make people *learn-to-be*.

### Best Practices from other Lands on Lifelong Learning Policy Formulation

Many countries of the world have adopted “Lifelong learning for all” as a policy framework. Some of the countries that have published a national statement outlining its vision of lifelong are described below:

**1. Australia-** Lifelong learning, in its various forms, is used in Australia to provide individuals of all ages and backgrounds with skills and knowledge and enhance job chances and personal enrichment (*Learning for Life: Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy*, DEETYA, 1998).

**2. Austria-** Lifelong learning in Austria refers principally to vocational and further education and

training and its objectives include: increased opportunities for the workforce, expanded and improved forms of co-operation between public and private institutions, increased access for disadvantaged persons, re-employment rights to permit employed persons to participate in continuing education and training, improvements to apprenticeship training, increases in schools' autonomy, and equal status of adult education and training in the education system (*Country Report, 1998*).

**3. Canada-** Lifelong learning in Canada is directly linked to skill acquisition, employment, higher earnings, and a fuller life. Knowledge acquisition at all stages of life is seen as vital to maintaining her competitiveness in a global knowledge-based economy. As a strong foundation for participation in lifelong learning, the central government launched an early childhood development initiative which recognises the importance of the early years of childhood in the development of the child. Governments also offer a variety of supports to increase people's participation in continuous learning. These include: the save and invest in learning opportunities, improvement of foundation skills such as literacy for adult Canadians, investing in skills acquisition, and strengthening the acquisition of international competencies through international academic mobility (*Education Indicators in Canada (1999); Report on Public Expectations of Post-secondary Education in Canada, 1999*).

**4. Czech Republic-** Lifelong learning is seen in Czech Republic as a comprehensive process of vital importance with initial education of all young people in the framework of the formal education system and all subsequent continuing education and learning. The purpose of lifelong learning in the formal education system is to prepare students for their future profession and the personal cultivation of individual and community lives while that of continuing education include the education of the employed, the unemployed

and retired persons which take place in variety of settings such as state and private institutions, churches, and enterprises. It is financed by varied sources (*Country Report, 1998*).

**5. Denmark-** Lifelong learning in Denmark is viewed as a mandate for ensuring adequate learning opportunities for adults. It stressed the importance of initial education as a sound foundation for further learning; freer choice of adults to engage in learning opportunities, and provision of wider learning opportunities through rationalisation of services by formal education institutions in co-operation with industry. In May 2000, the Danish Parliament adopted a series of measures to tie continuing training and further education programmes together into a single, coherent and transparent adult education system. The reforms were designed to widen access to learning for adults at all levels, especially those with low levels of education, and ensure wider recognition for knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience.

**6. Finland-** The Finland's government development plan for the period 1999-2004 defines the following goals: offer one year of pre-school education for all children before the comprehensive school; help more young people to apply for upper secondary, general or vocational education to complete their studies; develop student's learning skills in all sectors of the education system; increase the provision of non-university higher education; expand opportunities for adults to study for a university degree; expand opportunities for adults to study for upper secondary, post-secondary vocational qualifications, and other studies that improve their capacity for further learning and employability; as well as the development of methods for recognising non-formal and informal learning (*Country Report, 1998. The Joy of Learning: a national strategy for lifelong learning, Ministry of Education, 1997*).

**7. Hungary-** Lifelong learning in Hungary is embodied in the “*Strategy for the long-term development of Hungarian public education*”. It concerns modernisation of public education and improvements in content that equip students to upgrade their skills and knowledge. The strategy includes organised learning for adults mainly related to the workplace after the completion of formal education. In the immediate term, the government is focusing on vocational training for young persons, the unemployed and at-risk workers. Government is also expanding educational opportunities to socially disadvantaged persons and ethnic minorities (*Country Report, 1998*).

**8. Italy-** Lifelong learning in Italy was introduced as a policy objective by the government, in consultation with the social partners, in 1996. Lifelong learning is envisioned as a fundamental incentive to ensure competitiveness and supported by a balanced social model based on citizens’ rights. The aims include: to redefine the whole formative and learning system and the roles of institutions and individuals; to implement a united national strategy administered by districts under national direction; to foster motivation to learn; and to develop alternative tertiary institutions. The concept also addresses concerns about the quality and relevance of initial education, the gulf between formal education and the economy, the relatively low education levels of young persons and adults, and the need for ensuring that the learning process is more individualised and flexible (*Country Report, 1998; Labour Agreement, 1996*).

**9. Japan** was one of the first countries to formulate a comprehensive view of lifelong learning. “*Lifelong integrated learning*” was introduced in the 1960s as a means for reforming Japan’s school-centred education system and as a means for improving re-training opportunities for adult workers.

The concept implies that the education system promotes learning by individuals through life according to their own self-identified needs. The lifelong integrated learning aimed at providing spiritual enrichment and better use of leisure time and remedying problems relating learning to school achievement. It is also seen as a tool for regional development and it places the learner at the centre. (*Country Report, 1998; The Final Reports of National Council on Educational Reform on Educational Reform 1985-1987; and the Report of Central Council for Education on Lifelong Integrated Education 1981*).

**10. Netherlands-** Elements of lifelong learning have long been established in the Netherlands. An action programme to implement specific lifelong learning policies was launched in the 1980s with the provision of part-time alternatives for regular secondary and tertiary education, a diversified field of liberal adult education run by the voluntary sector, a rapid growth in training for the unemployed, and a well-organised correspondence education and on-the-job training by the private sector. By the early 1990s, adult basic education for people with little or no schooling and the Open University had been added. In the 1990s, there were efforts linking vocational training and business, better translation of labour market needs into school goals and curricula, entry of non-public providers to learning markets, and increased transparency of qualification requirements and learning outside the formal education sector. The 1998 action programme focused on reorientation of the education system towards lifelong learning, employability of employees and job seekers, and employability of teaching staff (*Lifelong Learning: the Dutch Initiative, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 1998; Country Report, 1998*).

### **Pragmatic Approaches for Promoting Lifelong Learning for All**

Some of the pragmatic and operational approaches recognised in literature for promoting lifelong learning for all, as documented by Ojokheta, 2020, include: learning cities, global citizenship education (GCED), and appropriate funding of the education sector.

#### **Learning Cities**

A learning city promotes lifelong learning for all. UNESCO (2013) defined a learning city as a city that “effectively mobilizes its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; revitalizes learning in families and communities; facilitates learning for and in the workplace; extends the use of modern learning technologies; enhances quality and excellence in learning; and fosters a culture of learning throughout life. Learning cities help to enhance individual empowerment and social inclusion, economic development and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, (UIL), 2019).

#### **Global Citizenship Education (GCED)**

One of the significant landmarks of the post-2015 development agenda has been the universal recognition for a conceptual shift in the role and purpose of education beyond cognitive knowledge and skills. The relevance of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is now focused on the importance of values, attitudes and skills that promote mutual respect and peaceful coexistence (UNESCO, 2014). This is premised on the believe that the role of education should transcend beyond the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to build values, soft skills and attitudes among learners that can facilitate international cooperation and promote social transformation.

The globally recognised paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners need for securing a just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world is Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Thus, the United Nations Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) established in 2012 perceived education as a means to ‘foster global citizenship’.

Tawil, (2013) perceived global citizenship education “as directly related to the civic, social and political socialization function of education and ultimately to the contribution of education in preparing children and young people to deal with the challenges of today’s increasingly interconnected and interdependent world”. It constitutes an original, necessary and forward-looking mental framework which seems to be indispensable to education in terms of globalization and a global society (Wintersteiner, Grobbauer, Diendorfer, & Reitmair-Juárez, 2015). Global citizenship education is a multifaceted educational approach employing concepts, methodologies and theories from related fields, including human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development and education for international understanding.

The surge of interest in global citizenship education emanated from three perspectives: (1) The phenomenal advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) which have enabled people to connect and interact with others around the world anywhere and anytime; (2) the increasing heterogeneity of local communities, arising from transnational migration, which has necessitated the need to learn how to live together; and (3) the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) launched in 2012 by the UN Secretary-General.



Through these three perspectives, especially the GEFI, the world education community entered a new era in which education is expected to contribute not only to the fulfilling of individual and national aspirations, but also to ensuring the wellbeing of all humanity and the global community.

In 2015, global citizenship education was included as one of the topic areas of Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal on Education that countries must promote and address. SDG Education Target 4.7 calls on all countries to:

Ensure that all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development (UNESCO 2017: p.14).

Thus, GEFI and SDG Education Target 4.7 provided the impetus for the world community to pay attention to global citizenship education at the policy level.

**Appropriate Funding of the Education Sector**

The value which a country attaches to lifelong learning opportunities for all is often measured by the budgetary allocation to the education sector. Figure 1 provides data of the percentage of education budget against the total national budget in Nigeria from 2011 to 2019.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Education Budget against the Budget Size**

Year	Total Education Budget (Nbn)	Percentage of Education Budget against the Budget Size
2011	421.1	9.96%
2012	463.3	9.75%
2013	509.0	10.21%
2014	565.8	12.05%
2015	551.6	12.28%
2016	557.4	9.17%
2017	540.9	7.41%
2018	651.2	7.14%

Source: BudgIT, (2018)

It can be seen in Figure 1 that the percentage of educational budget was higher in 2013 (10.21%), 2014 (12.05%) and 2015 (12.28%). However, from 2016 till date the educational budget has declined from 9.17% in 2016 to 7.14% in 2018. This invariably shows that education sector allocation over the last three years, as a percentage of the federal budget, is falling in comparison with UNESCO recommended allocation of 15 to 20% of the national budget. This implies that Nigerian government has not shown enough political will to invest in order to improve the education sector. Therefore, the drive to achieve lifelong learning opportunities for all in Nigeria becomes questionable. Besides, significant proportion of the budgetary allocation to education sector goes to recurrent expenditure than to capital expenditure. Figure 2 reflects this:

**Figure 2: Recurrent Expenditure Trends in Education Sector**

Year	Recurrent Expenditure Trends (Nbn)	Capital Expenditure Trends (Nbn)
2011	304.6	51.8
2012	345.1	55.1
2013	360.8	71.9
2014	444.08	51.3
2015	459.7	23.5
2016	444.8	35.4
2017	398.9	56.9
2018	439.3	102.9

Figure 2 shows that in 2018, the education sector received its highest capital expenditure allocation since 2011. Even at this, the allocation to recurrent expenditure in the same year 2018 was 439.3 billion naira while 102.9 billion naira was allocated to capital expenditure. Despite the increase in capital spending from 56.9bn in 2017 to 102.9bn in 2018 (representing an increment of N45.91bn and a percentage increase of 80.5%), only 15% of the education sector allocation is directed to capital spending which includes infrastructure, fencing, equipping of laboratories, and more. Since significant investment is needed to close the deficits in education infrastructure, then, Federal Government needs to improve capital spending on infrastructure.

### Recommendations for Promoting Lifelong Learning for All in Nigeria

**1. National Policy Statement outlining the Vision of lifelong learning in Nigeria-** There is the urgent need for the country to develop policy framework for lifelong learning for all. The framework must take into consideration all forms learning, not just formal courses, must be premised on fundamental changes in curriculum and pedagogy with emphasis on willingness to learn, must create multiple learning opportunities especially for the under-served groups, must evaluate resources according to lifecycle needs and deployed them effectively, and must expand the scope of lifelong learning beyond a single

ministry. In addition, Nigeria should develop a national qualifications framework to facilitate lifelong learning.

### 2. Launch of Action Programmes by Governments for Realising the Policy Vision-

There is the need for the Federal Government to launch action programmes, replicable in the states and local governments, in order to realise the lifelong learning for all vision in Nigeria. The action programme should incorporate the following: the provision of part-time alternatives for regular secondary and tertiary education, a liberal adult education to be run by the voluntary sector, a rapid growth in training for the unemployed, a well-organised on-the-job training by the private sector, adult basic education for people with little or no schooling, better translation of labour market needs into school goals and curricula, entry of non-public providers to learning markets, transparent qualification requirements and learning outside the formal education sector, equal status of adult education and training in the education system, and the save and invest scheme in learning opportunities

### 3. Establishment of Lifelong Learning for All Fund -

Nigeria can take the innovative step of establishing *lifelong learning for all fund* for financing projects and researches aimed at promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all in the country. A grant of \$5 billion can be set aside for the take-off of the fund while the private sector organisations can be mandated to contribute to the fund through a framework to be developed by Ministry of Education.

### 4. Advocating a Paradigm Shift in the Mandate of Universities in Nigeria-

Lifelong learning is often perceived as an important mechanism, one that should play a key role in the development of a University, however, this is not the case in practice. There is, therefore, the need for Nigerian Universities to redirect its focus and mandate towards becoming lifelong learning Universities. Knowledge has become the most important asset,

one always subject to change due to innovation. Nigerian Universities must prepare learners for change arising from innovations. One of the innovations is the fact that everyone will have to continually educate himself or herself in order to increase the chances of employment. In this regard, Nigerian Universities should no longer aim at producing learners to assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but aim at producing learners who know how to build up continually evolving body of knowledge all through life. In other words, Nigerian Universities must produce learner who *learn to be* and become lifelong learners rather than learners who learn to acquire certificates. Therefore, the principles of lifelong learning must be incorporated into University education as fundamental principles.

**5. Promotion of Inclusive Learning-** One of the strategic steps for promoting lifelong learning for all is inclusive learning so that no individual is excluded from learning activities. Therefore, Nigeria needs to establish appropriate strategies to promote people's access to and participation, without any discrimination, in learning activities and enhance incentives for them to undertake such activities. Special attention must be devoted to disadvantaged or vulnerable groups such as individuals with low levels of or no literacy and numeracy and schooling, vulnerable youth, migrant workers, unemployed workers, members of ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, individuals with disability, prisoners, the elderly, people affected by conflict or disasters, refugees, stateless or displaced persons.

**6. Strengthening Work based learning for Lifelong Learning -** Life-long learning has been globally recognised as an indispensable element of policy responses to the future of work. In order to promote lifelong learning in the workplace, every organisation, with at least 20 employees, should be mandated to establish training centres within the organisation for continuing professional skills, reskill, and upskill development of the employees throughout the period of their

employment. In addition, organisations should be mandated to recognise employees' rights to free time for training through paid study leave

**7. Establishment of Learning Cities, Towns and Villages (LCTVs)-** To promote lifelong learning for all in Nigeria, every state in the country must establish LCTVs which help to turn the ideals of inclusive education to reality. Learning cities are now globally used as drivers of inclusion and sustainability and this initiative led to the establishment of the *UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC)* in 2013 which now has more than 224 active members from 52 countries. Learning cities can help in mobilizing resources to promote inclusive learning; in revitalizing learning in families and communities; and in fostering a culture of learning throughout life. The creation of learning cities can be facilitated by State Ministries of Education in collaboration with the States Agencies of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (SAMEs).

**8. Inclusion of Global Citizenship Education in Educational Policy and Curriculum Design-** Global Citizenship Education is now recognised by the international community "as a means for equipping individuals from an early age, and throughout life, with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour they need to be informed, engaged and empathetic citizens" (Lee & Fouts, 2005). Therefore, as a means of promoting lifelong learning for all, global citizenship education should be considered a key education objective in Nigeria and must be included in the educational policy and curriculum design.

**9. Development of a framework and for the recognition of all forms of learning-** In a complex and fast-changing world, as knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired on a lifelong and life-wide basis, all kinds of learning and training outcomes deserve to be valued and validated, regardless of where and how they were obtained.

Therefore, Nigeria needs to develop guidelines for the recognition of all forms of learning and learning outcomes, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning, so that they can be validated. In other words, Nigeria must develop guidelines on the recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of non-formal and informal learning in line with the recommendations of UNESCO's (2012) Guidelines on the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning.

### 10. Expanding Access to TVET and Skills Development Opportunities-

In order to connect technical training to labour market needs, there is the urgent need to expand access of people, especially marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities, to technical, vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development opportunities in Nigeria. Mainstream TVET and skills development systems can contribute to improving the labour market situation of people and enable people to acquire skills and qualifications required in the labour market and improve their employment prospects. The inclusion of vocational education and training as explicit outcomes in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Target 4.5 gives TVET and skills systems an unprecedented profile on the international stage.

### CONCLUSIONS

Although lifelong learning is a concept very popular among education strategists in Nigeria, it remains on paper as very little has been done to conceptualize and implement a national policy based on lifelong learning. This paper has, therefore, canvassed for the development of a national lifelong learning for all in Nigeria. It has also recommended some strategic steps through lifelong learning for all can be promoted in the country. It is strongly believed that the implementation of these recommendations will go a long way to help the country achieve the vision

of lifelong learning component of the SDG 4- Education 2030.

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