



# Lifelong learning and national development: The case of Ghana

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## Abstract

This paper examines lifelong learning and national development in Ghana. It is a library and hands-on research which starts by tracing the history of lifelong learning, lifelong learning in a learning society, characteristics, how some international institutions perceive it, and also captures lifelong learning and national development. Despite considerable progress made by Ghana over the last decade, the country continues to face major developmental challenges, including high incidence of poverty, illiteracy, digital divide and poor health. Lifelong learning has become a catch-cry of the new millennium. Politicians and educators alike in Ghana, as it is in any other African country, have seized upon the concept of lifelong learning. It is a major tool for developing every nation, most significant foundation upon which to build comprehensive, inclusive and integrated development of the youth and adult populations. Solid development in literacy skills empowers people and promotes important changes to their life. Lack of awareness of knowledge deficit, personal reluctance to change, ambivalence, group mentality, lack of motivation, time, and inadequate resources constitute barriers to engaging in meaningful lifelong learning. It concludes that institutions engaged in providing lifelong learning skills should remain relentless in ensuring that the critical mass of Ghanaians are equipped with positive attitude, commitment and motivation toward the lifelong learning journey, so as to impact positively on Ghana's development.

**Keywords:** Education, Literacy, Lifelong Learning, National development, Ghana

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## 1. Introduction

Lifelong learning, along with ideas such as 'learning society,' has become popular with politicians and policy-makers in a number of countries. The questions, then, are: What is lifelong learning? and Is the idea of lifelong learning helpful? Indeed, Collins (2008) has made us understand that promoting lifelong learning as continuous, collaborative, self-directed, active, broad in domain, everlasting, positive and fulfilling, and applicable to one's profession as well as all aspects of one's life, has emerged as a major global educational challenge. Earlier on, Cornford (2000) opines that lifelong learning is a major tool for developing every nation, and has become the catch-cry of the millennium and a major issue on account of continuing technological and social change, and the need for maintenance of skill and knowledge currency. Lifelong learning has, thus, been associated with literacy which has always been considered as the foundation of development. Literacy is the most significant foundation upon which to build comprehensive, inclusive, integrated lifelong and lifewide learning for all young people and the adults' population. Hanemann (2016) opines that "lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important as a key organising principle for all forms of education and learning in a rapidly changing world" (p. 16). It will, therefore, not be out of place to argue that all the countries that have witnessed development in all facets of life endeavoured, and reduced illiteracy through lifelong learning early in their developmental trajectory. [Clearly,] the African human capital literacy rate which is about 50%, can be further developed so as to present mature African men and women to face the challenges of an increasingly unequal world system, and contribute to the emergence of what is now referred to as "enlightened globalisation" (Seya, 2003). It is this idealist vision that is at the heart of the revival of lifelong learning, which is being repositioned as a tool for sustained and broad-based development in all poor regions of the world, and in African in particular (Seya, 2003). This observation by Seya is supported by Yang, Schneller and Roche (2015) that the understanding of lifelong learning differs widely, not only between countries, but also across the sub-sectors of education systems.

The mission of Ghana's Ministry of Education is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential, be productive, facilitate poverty reduction and promote socio-economic growth (The President's Committee on Education Reforms Review Report, 2002). In 2004, the Government of Ghana set up an Education Review Committee to review the education policy of the country. This was in response to the demands of education in a fast changing world that is driven by science and technology (The President's Committee on Education Reforms Review Report, 2002). The committee recommended among others, an independent continuous Lifelong Learning through open and distance learning modes, instead of a one-short formal school experience teaching. This should be expected because the vision of Lifelong Learning has evolved over the past few decades to become a constant feature in 21<sup>st</sup> -century policy discourse. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2014) asserts that "based on emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values, the concept of lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages, in all contexts (e.g. at home, at school, in the community and in the workplace) and through formal, non-formal and informal modalities which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands" (cited in Hanemann, 2016, p. 16).

### 1.1. Justification

The idea of lifelong learning was first fully articulated in 20<sup>th</sup> -century by Basil Yeazlee and Eduard Lindeman. They provided an intellectual basis for a comprehensive understanding of education as a continuing aspect of everyday life. In this, they touched upon various constituents of education traditions such as the French notion of '*education permanente*', and drew upon developments within the adult education in Britain and North America (Antikainen et al., 1996). According to Rahman (cited in Seya, 2003), lifelong learning is seen as a process that involves purposive and directed learning. Each individual sets a series of learning objectives and pursues these by means available in society. But making a conscious commitment to Lifelong Learning and being willing to take full advantage of the learning opportunities of a society requires that people become autonomous learners, resulting in sustainable social development. Social development increases the utilisation of human potential and improves the capacity of society to fulfil its aspirations, gradually resulting in the transformation of social structures. Lifelong Learning has been helpful because with the advent of various options of education, including modular, sandwich and distant learning in the various universities in Ghana, more people who otherwise would not have had the opportunity of tertiary education, have taken advantage of Lifelong Learning and educated themselves. Indeed, the increasing pace of globalisation and technological change, the changing nature of work, and the labour market dynamics are largely serving as reasons why many countries and people, today, have taken to learning at whatever settings they find themselves in.

Again, policy makers have placed increasing emphasis on the importance of lifelong learning in enabling more people, not just the registered unemployed who are out of the labour force, to move back into employment for the first time. However, there is very little reliable evidence on the economic effect of formal learning undertaken by adults. Certain issues such as lack of motivation, time, and inadequate resources can interfere with an individual's success as an independent adult learner. In addition, more subtle problems, such as lack of awareness of knowledge deficit, personal reluctance to change, ambivalence, and group mentality, can also be significant barriers to lifelong learning (Collins, 2008). The rationale for authoring this paper is to identify the extent to which the human capital has been built, promoted, managed and used in the national transformation process across the world through lifelong learning. It also looked at how lifelong learning has contributed to Ghana's development by continually upgrading of work and life skills throughout life. It also sought for barriers to its implementation. The paper further covers our own understanding of the main issues in Lifelong Learning and how it can be applied to everyday life as adult education practitioners.

## 2. History of lifelong learning

The origins of the concept of lifelong learning can be traced back to authors such as Basil Yeaxlee and Eduard Lindeman in England in the 1920's. They understood education as an on-going process, affecting mainly adults, and certainly not restricted to formal schooling. They also introduced the concept of "life-as-education" and the valuing of individual's experiences as much as their formal education (Faris, 2004). These two

authors helped to define the limits and the basic principles of adult education, and therefore, Lifelong Learning. According Kearns, McDonald, Knights and Papadopoulos (1999), from the 1930's and up until the 1970's, Lifelong Learning as a concept, was closely linked to adult/popular education and the workers education movement. The focus now is on training workers, and linking them to formal education, and increasing the influence of the trade union movement by building their activist base. The post-World War II period saw the decolonisation of African and Asian nations and the rise of national-liberation movement in the Third World countries. Newly elected governments were required to implement literacy campaigns and massive expansion of education to build nationhood and incorporate new groups into the political process (Kearns et al., 1999). In response to the needs of these emerging nations, UNESCO took the lead in developing the concept of lifelong learning as a cultural policy which promoted social change. In 1972, UNESCO released the Faure report titled '*learning-to-be*'. In this report UNESCO outlined their vision of what they titled "*education permanente*", or permanent (i.e. lifelong) education, as encompasses the whole lifespan being inclusive of different social sectors, occurring across different formal and informal settings (home, communities, work places) and addressing a broad range of social, cultural and economic purposes (Kearns et al., 1999).

The 1970's saw a number of important reports outlining policy directions regarding education in this broad sense. The OECD contributed to the debate with their own report: "Recurrent Education: A strategy for Lifelong Learning" (1973) and later, the "Lifelong Learning for All" report (1996) (Faris, 2004). The first (1973) report was quite similar in spirit to UNESCO's contribution. However, by 1996, the view of the OECD and, to some extent, the views of UNESCO had shifted. The OECD's "Lifelong Learning for All" report represented a major shift in focus of Lifelong Learning. This report claims that Lifelong Learning is based on four pillars: learning to live together, learning to be, learning to know how and learning to do. The concept of "learning to live together" and "learning to be" attempt to address social goals such as civic participation, social cohesion and democratic process. On the other hand, the concepts of "learning to know" and "learning to do" address economic imperatives such as building a highly skilled and competitive workforce. The OECD's 1996 report highlighted the socio-economic purpose of Lifelong Learning and recommended increasing early childhood education, clearly linking learning and work, assessing and recognising skills and competencies, developing new Lifelong Learning opportunities and rethinking the roles and responsibilities of unions, employer organisations, civil societies and governments (Kearns et al., 1999).

The European Union joined the debate in the 1990's building on the OECD's report and attempted to combine economic and social outcomes as the main goals of their Lifelong Learning policy, with slightly stronger emphasis on the economic advantages. These milestone documents produced by UNESCO, OECD and the European Union have highlighted the recognition of formal and informal learning, the importance of self-motivated learning, and the recognition of formal and informal learning, and the universal participation in Lifelong Learning (Watson, 2003). Over the years, the economic prosperity and social stability have become more prominent than inclusion or some of the other original social ideas, and has come to embrace the idea of self-funded learning as key element of Lifelong Learning policy. The researchers also incorporated some subsections to the paper. We briefly did this, by dilating first on the term, Lifelong Learning.

## 2.1. Lifelong learning

Collins (2008) defines lifelong learning as a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetime and to apply them with confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments. From Harper Collins Dictionary: (Social Science/Education), Lifelong Learning is a provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout peoples' lives in order to foster continuous development and improvement of the knowledge, and skills needed for employment and personal fulfilment. Lifelong learning may also be defined as the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual. It occurs through experiences encountered during the course of a lifetime. These experiences could be formal (training, counselling, tutoring, mentorship, apprenticeship, higher education) or informal (experiences, situations, etc.). In the African context, lifelong learning may refer to an individual's continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills overtime and the ability to pass them on to others in a manner that is understood. So the ability to pass this knowledge and skills on from one person to another is very important as it keeps the learning cycle in motion and makes it 'lifelong.' It is not surprising that Hoppers (2009) opines that "Lifelong Learning of the future, and Lifelong Learning for all, must look with the eyes of a chameleon, a full 360 degrees, and embrace humanity where they are, and build upon what they have, not reinforce the deficit and toxic formula that has been endemic to our practice for so long" (p. 12). It is therefore laudable for every Ghanaian to engage in Lifelong Learning since the benefits to the individuals, and Ghana as a country, are numerous. However, The Economist (2017) argues that lifelong learning that exists today mainly benefits high achievers, and is therefore more likely to exacerbate inequality than diminish it. It adds that if the 21<sup>st</sup>-century economies are not to create massive underclass, policy makers urgently need to work out how to help all their citizens learn while they earn. This, presently, is the case in Ghana, today, where premium has been placed on lifelong learning to realise the kind of growth and development we are yearning for.

## 2.2. Development

Development may be defined as a purposeful change in a society that contributes to social and economic wellbeing and advancement of its people without creating any disharmony. Development may also be defined as a process for enlarging people's choices. These choices primarily reflect the desire to live long through healthy lifestyle; acquire basic knowledge; and have an access to resources essential for a decent standard of living. Development is seen as a process of helping people change, equipping them with the skill, knowledge and attitudes necessary to conceive, plan, design and implement their own self development. This conception of development as conceived is made of two stages: (a) Liberating people from all social, economic, political and cultural inhibitions that prevent them from realizing their full potential. (b) Enhancement of peoples' knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to boost their self-confidence, creativity, and readiness to participate in all issues involving personal development and that of their society (Seya, 2003).

### 2.3. Education

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, values, skills, attitudes and aptitudes that can be useful to the individual and the general public. Education can also be defined as the process of enhancing individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable the person to identify with the community and society so as to improve the way of life of the society. Education therefore produces well balanced individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes and attitudes to become functional and productive citizens for the total development and democratic advancement of a nation (Ghana's Education Act 778, 2008).

### 2.4. Literacy

UNESCO (2005) defines literacy as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individual's to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in community and wider society" (p. 21). Hanemann (2016) has made us understand that, indeed, literacy can only unfold its full potential to "transform our world" if it is conceptualised and operationalised from a lifelong learning perspective (p. 16).

## 3. International concept of lifelong learning

### 3.1. World bank

The World Bank asserts that Lifelong Learning is essential for individuals to keep pace of the constantly changing global market and technology. The advocates of Lifelong Learning perceive that Lifelong Learning skills help the individual to adjust to an ever-changing world. The bank's approach to Lifelong Learning involves a combination of competencies. The Bank defines knowledge and competencies needed for Lifelong Learning, including basic academic skills such as literacy in foreign language, the ability to use information and communication technology. Workers must use these skills effectively, act autonomously, and function in society heterogeneous groups (Borg & Mayo, 2005).

### 3.2. UNESCO

UNESCO supports a more humanistic vision of Lifelong Learning as compared to the starkly economic arguments of the World Bank and the OECD. UNESCO's discourse on Lifelong Learning has focused on the full development of the individual. The 1972 report commissioned 'Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow' argues that the emphasis should be on *learning to learn* and not on matching schooling and the needs of the labour market (Faure et al., 1972). The aim of education is to enable one to be himself for a specific, lifetime vocation, as to 'optimise' mobility among the professions and afford permanent stimulus to the desire to learn and to train oneself. The report's perspective is that the love of learning creates a desire to Lifelong Learning and maintenance of learning society; and therefore the goal of Lifelong



Learning is to give people the power to exercise democratic control over economic, scientific and technological development (Burbules & Torres, 2000).

### 3.3. OECD

The OECD's Lifelong Learning framework stresses that learning occurs during the entire course of a person's life. "Formal education contributes to learning as do the non-formal and informal learning at home, the workplace, the community and society at large" (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation CERI, 2001). There are five key features of the Lifelong Learning approach as convinced by the OECD. First, it offers a systemic of learning since it examines the demand for, and the supply of learning opportunities, as part of a connected system covering the whole lifecycle and comprising all forms of formal and informal learning. Secondly, it stresses the central role of the learner in his or her own learning, and the need for initiatives that cater for the diversity of learner needs. This represents a shift of attention from the supply of learning to the learner. Thirdly, the approach stresses the motivation to learn, and draws attention to self-paced and self-directed learning. Fourthly, it stresses that education policy, has multiple objectives, comprising economic, social or cultural outcomes. It also captures issues on personal development and citizenship (Smith & Ferrier, 2002).

### 3.4. European Commission

According to the European Commission, Lifelong Learning is the scale of current economic and social change, the rapid transition to a knowledge-based society and demographic pressures resulting from an ageing population in Europe are all changes which demand a new approach to education and training, within the framework of Lifelong Learning (European Society of Education, 2005). The European Commission hopes to empower citizens to move freely between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries in pursuit of learning. Hence, Lifelong Learning focuses on learning from pre-school education until after retirement ("from the cradle to the grave") and covers all forms of education (formal, informal and non-formal). The European Commission's Lifelong Learning Initiative enables people at all stages in their lives to take part in stimulating learning experiences, as well as helping to develop the education and training sector across Europe (European Commission, Education and Training, 2007).

## **4. Characteristics of lifelong learning**

The concept of Lifelong Learning speaks to many people engaged in learning from different fields' endeavours. Thus, learning is today, perceived as both lifelong and lifewide. The notable themes conveyed in the literature on Lifelong Learning articulate four characteristics (Watson, 2003). The following characteristics or terms of learning comprising informal, self-motivated, self-funded and universal participation in learning are briefly discussed.

#### 4.1. Informal learning

The first characteristic of Lifelong Learning is that it encompasses both formal and informal types of education and training. Formal learning includes the hierarchically structured school system that runs from primary school through the university and organized school-like programmes created in business for technical and professional training. Informal learning describes a lifelong process where individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and educational influences and resources in his or her environment, from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media (Corner, 2009).

#### 4.2. Self-motivated learning

The second characteristic is the importance of self-motivated learning. There is a heavy emphasis on the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own learning. Lifelong learners are therefore not defined as by the type of education or training in which they are involved, but by the personal characteristics that lead to such involvement. Lauridesen and Whyte (1980) emphasised the importance of locus of control and successful academic performance. That in itself amplifies the significance and essence of self-motivated learning.

#### 4.3. Self-funded learning

Self-funded learning is the third characteristic of the Lifelong Learning literature. The concept of self-funded learning is linked to the characteristic of self-motivated learning. In recognition of the costs involved in subsidising lifelong involvement in education and training, the lifelong emphasises the responsibility of individuals to finance their own continuing education and training with minimal support from government. The West report defines lifelong learner as a person who takes responsibility for his own learning and prepared to invest time, money and effort in education or training on a continuous basis (West, 1998).

#### 4.4. Universal participation

The fourth distinctive feature of the lifelong learning policy literature is a commitment to universal participation in education and training (Watson, 2003). It advocates 'lifelong learning for all.' In fact, everybody should have unfettered opportunity to participate in learning right from childhood level to adulthood stage. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) argues that the universal participation is necessary for meeting the economic demands of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. The concept of universal participation includes both informal and formal learning for purposes, including social, economic and personal. Delors (1996) argued that universal participation in Lifelong Learning is necessary for social cohesion in a time of rapid economic and social change as well as mutual respect.

### **5. Lifelong learning in a learning society**

The learning society is broadly conceptualised as the response to the challenges posed by contemporary conditions, and in particular the rate of change in many spheres of modern life. There is a general consensus



that the major economic, technological, social, demographic and cultural shift create unique challenges which require new forms of learning to equip with the knowledge and skills to deal with profound change and uncertainty. There are four 'pillars' of education for the future (Delors, 1996), and they as follows:

- 1- *Learning to know*- mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge full stop.
- 2- *Learning to do*- equipping people with the types of work needed now and in the future, including innovation and adaptation of learning, to future work environment.
- 3- *Learning to live together, and with others*- peacefully resolving conflict, discovering other people and their cultures, fostering community capability, individual competence and capacity, economic resilience, and social inclusion.
- 4- *Learning to be*- education contributing to a person's complete development of the mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.

To the Economist (2017), the learning society is an educated society committed to active citizenship, liberal democracy and equal opportunities. This supports Lifelong Learning within the social policy frameworks of post-Second World War social democracies, to educate adults to meet the challenges of change and citizenship. The notion of learning society gained considerable recognition because it involves all of one's life, in the sense of both time-span and diversity and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources. Ghana, as a developing country, cannot do otherwise but go even further than necessary to overhaul its educational systems until it reaches a stage of a learning society. That has been the desire of both past and present governments in making frantic effort to realise that important goal.

## 6. Lifelong learning and national development

The role of Lifelong Learning in development is multidimensional. Indeed, as one of the building blocks of human development, and not just a basic right, education, including lifelong learning, is a foundation for progress in areas such as human capital development, nutrition, bridging of the digital gap and development of institutions and democracy. The economic role of Lifelong Learning in development is apparent in its contribution to human capital formation. It is now well established, alongside health care, sanitation and nutrition that improves people's standard of living and productivity by reducing sickness and mortality rate and by increasing life expectancy that, Lifelong Learning largely helps in equipping recipients' with essential literacy and numeracy skills. It also aids in yielding high rates on investments, thereby, enhancing labour productivity and the quality of life they enjoy. Thus, investment in development of human capital is crucial for developing a labour force and managerial know-how able to compete in today's global economy. Formal education alone is not sufficient for playing this role as those categories of the population who have had formal education and training might need to be updated and re-skilled through Lifelong Learning. This is mainly because, today's knowledge society, tends to render previously acquired knowledge and skills inappropriate and obsolete, especially at workplaces.

Lifelong Learning also plays a major role in social development. It is now widely admitted that growth in the economy of Ghana will not reduce poverty unless poor people are able to actively participate in the development process or activities. Such participation can be made effective, to a large extent, through Lifelong Learning. Indeed, the African population will need some kind of formal and informal education and training to be able to benefit from basic health care, including sexual and reproduction health services, the development of new medicines, and thus be in a position to free oneself from diseases that devastate poor people, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other parasites (Seya, 2003). Lifelong Learning will also be needed to enable the poor to really take advantage of programmes aimed at promoting and offering meaningful opportunities to the orphans, widows, and vulnerable children. Lifelong Learning is an appropriate strategy in drastically reducing unwarranted environmental degradation and destruction of water bodies through illegal mining dubbed “galamsey” literally meaning “gather and sell”, currently being witnessed in Ghana. It also empowers a number of people without access to safe and potable water and sanitation to devise appropriate strategies to address these seemingly insurmountable challenges that confront them in their communities.

## 7. The case of Ghana

Ghana’s formal educational system has gone through several phases of reforms to identify an educational system that responds to the times as well as national aspirations. In most cases, the reforms have either dealt with content, methods or duration. During the missionary and colonial era, education focused on transformation of the individual to suit the Western lifestyle; particularly, in the areas of *religion* and *occupation*. The traditional notion of education is the type of teaching and learning that occurs in personal contact between the teacher and the learner in the classroom setting. This is anchored in the reality that teaching and learning take place at the same time and at the same place. With the introduction of new technologies, including printed materials for correspondence, it became clear that formal, informal or non-formal teaching and learning theories and advancement in technology has made it possible to shift from institution-led learning to own-time self-learning at a distance. Thus, progress is being made from face-to-face teaching to self-paced-learning, which is vigorously moving towards more flexibility and openness in learning. This, indeed, has, and continues to inform policy and reforms in Ghana’s education system.

### 7.1. Educational reforms in Ghana

Following independence, Ghana continued to search for a system of education that was relevant to the world of work, adequate for rural development and the modernisation of its agriculture-based economy. The country has also been interested in a system of education that seeks to promote national and cultural identity and citizenship. Several laws, policy documents and reports have been adopted over the years by the various governments for meeting the educational needs and aspirations of the people. These initiatives have contributed to structural transformation of the educational system in improving access, quality teaching and learning. Infrastructural delivery as well as management efficiency has also been improved. However, there

have been some identifiable weaknesses which have led to various reviews in the educational system. For instance, much as President Nkrumah's Accelerated Development Plan of Education contributed to the expansion of enrolment into elementary and secondary education in the country, it somehow affected the standard of education at the basic and secondary levels, and rolled out a lot of unemployed school leavers. The policy was popularly described to be too elitist. The implementation of the Dzobo Report of 1973, from the year 1987, made tremendous impact on the system and rolled out large number of late teenage school leavers, most of whom were deficient in basic numeracy and literacy skills. Graduates of Junior Secondary School (JSS) level had also been described to be ill-prepared for either formal second cycle education or the lifewide and lifelong learning for self-actualisation (Ghana of Ghana, 2004, 2007).

## 7.2. The 2002 review of education

Recognising the drawbacks in previous educational reforms, a committee was set up in 2002 to review the entire educational system to make it more responsive to current challenges confronting the education in Ghana. The task of the committee focused on an examination of the structure of education, issues affecting development and delivery of education, the constrained of access to different levels of the educational ladder, information and communication technology (ICT) application, and distance education among others.

Based on the report of the Committee, the country decided to settle on a philosophy of education that seeks to create well-balanced all round persons with adequate knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes and attitudes to become functional and productive citizens. The underlying principle is that as the human resource of a country that has a great economic ambition made it evident that, Ghanaians should be trained to become enterprising, and develop the capability to respond to the demands of a fast-changing world that is driven by science and technology (The President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002).

Highlighting on the philosophy of independent learning, the committee provided foundational principles of education that stresses learning as an active role by the learner instead of teaching which is dominated by the teacher. There is the call for focus on continuous Lifelong Learning instead of a one-shot formal school experience. In this case, one does not continue to see education as having an end but rather a process and a way of life that forms part of life till death. The idea of independent learning which perceives 'learning' as an active role by the learner is also remarkable to the extent that, it will make Ghanaians become developed, and become more intellectually curious, more adventurous, innovative and entrepreneurial in thinking and action. By this process and mindset, Ghana is fast moving for a lifelong, lifewide and learner-centred approach to education which is more empowering compared to the historical perception of short-term and teacher-centred approach to learning and education.

## 7.3. The 2007 review of education

The 2007 Education Review Committee was tasked to review the entire educational system in the country with the view to making it responsive to current challenges. The underlying factors for the introduction of

the current Junior High and Senior High School reforms were to address the inadequacies and shortcomings in the previous reforms. The reform was also introduced to engender formation of human capital for industrial growth and for ensuring competitiveness in the global economy. It was also to ensure the ability to make use of recent developments in Science and Technology, especially Information and Communication Technology (ICT); radical transformation in the field of work and employment; and the preservation of cultural identity and traditional indigenous knowledge and creativity. The reform was further intended to ensure 100 percent access to basic education, placing high premium on technical/vocational education and training and improving the quality of instruction and making it flexible enough to accommodate diverse student abilities.

On the basis of that the Universal Basic Education was reduced to 11 years, made up of 2 years of Kindergarten 6 years of Primary School and 3 years of Junior High School (JHS). After JHS, students may choose to go into different streams at Senior High School (SHS), comprising General Education and Technical, Vocational and Agricultural and Training (TVET) or enter into an apprenticeship scheme with some support from the Government. A new 4-year SHS offered General Education with electives in General, Business, Technical, Vocational and Agriculture options for entry into a tertiary institution or the job market. Technical, Vocational and Agricultural Institutions were to offer 4-year courses, including the core SHS subjects. At the basic level, emphasis was placed on Literacy, Numeracy, Creative Arts and Problem Solving Skills. Teacher Training Colleges were upgraded into tertiary status, and conditions of service of teachers improved, with special incentives for teachers in rural areas. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) were made responsible for the infrastructure, supervision and monitoring of Basic and Senior High Schools. A new National Inspectorate Board (NIB) outside the Ghana Education Service (GES) but under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) were responsible for periodic inspection of Basic and Secondary Schools to ensure quality education. Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and cost-sharing at the senior high and tertiary levels were maintained. Educational services were widened to include Library and Information, Guidance and Counselling and Distance Education. The Private Sector was encouraged to increase its participation in the provision of educational services. Greater emphasis was placed on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Science and Technology.

The work of the commission nonetheless introduced the learning of ICT in all levels of the pre-tertiary education in Ghana. It established that if the government of the time had implemented the recommendations of the committee, most of the challenges would have been avoided. However, efforts by the government at the time to consult, and implement the right recommendations received commendations from key stakeholders of education in Ghana.

## **8. Benefits of lifelong learning**

The increasing pace of globalisation and technological change, the changing nature of work and the labour market dynamics, are among the forces emphasising the need for continuing upgrading of work and life skills

throughout life. Oduro-Mensah and Biney (2014) observed this situation in Ghana, and aptly expressed it in this way:

*“For a developing country like Ghana, recognising the relevance of lifelong education [learning] is, indeed, an extremely important issue. This is because the only national strategy for survival is to have a population that is as highly educated and knowledgeable as possible; thus, developing a population which has the capacity and the will to adapt to global change trends (p. 74).”*

The demand, then, is for a rising threshold of skills as well as more frequent changes in the nature of skills required, especially in this era of advancement in information communication technologies (ICTs). It has also been said that, Lifelong Learning's core values of learning, exploring, and serving, coupled with benefits for the mind, body and spirit makes it an incredibly powerful tool for personal transformation and enhancement. Lifelong Learning plays a major role in development. It is now widely admitted that growth will not reduce poverty unless poor people, especially in Ghana, are able to actively participate in it. Education provides one with knowledge and information, which in turn, brings about desirable changes in the way one thinks, feels and acts. It contributes very effectively to the realisation of one's potential. Therefore, education as considered as a social instrument largely helps in developing human resources, and for human capital formation. For example, people having reasonable degree of literacy and numeracy skills, tend to produce more farm crops, have limited number of children and enjoy a relatively better quality of life as compared to uneducated families. It helps in developing fully one's natural abilities. It also contributes in creating an intellectually curious and hungry mind and increases one's wisdom.

The role of Lifelong Learning is critical in addressing global educational issues and challenges. Lifelong Learning seen as learning 'from cradle to grave' is a philosophy of conceptual framework and an organising principle of all forms of education based exclusively on emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values. It is, indeed, all-encompassing and integral to the knowledge-based society. Lifelong Learning enables students to learn at different times in different ways for different purposes at various stages of their lives and careers. Lifelong Learning is concerned with improving learning opportunities throughout life while developing lifelong learners at the same time.

Learning and earning, which is the order of the day, is very much visible and alive in Ghana, today. Almost all the publicly-funded universities and over 50 privately-owned university colleges in Ghana, run distance education programmes. These institutions are visible in almost all the 10 regions and 216 districts in Ghana. Every Ghanaian, today, is making frantic effort to learn one skill or the other whiles working, so as to remain relevant not only at workplace, but also fit perfectly into today's fast-changing society. This has become even more important, especially in this era of information age ably propelled or powered by ICT. Much of this Lifelong Learning is receiving maximum attention and support from both print and electronic media. Ghana has a vibrant media landscape, and currently, there are over 20 television stations and more than 300 radio stations operating. The newspapers and tabloids are numerous and uncountable, all supporting the Lifelong Learning drive currently in vogue in Ghana. Even as Ghanaians are seriously engaging in one form of learning

or the other, there are some challenges hindering many others from actively participating in this all important Lifelong learning journey, and such difficulties must be addressed.

## **9. Challenges to lifelong learning**

Although education and training may have economic benefits for individuals, it is recognised that economic incentives alone are not necessarily sufficient to motivate people to engage in education and training. A range of motivational barriers needs to be identified and addressed in order for some people to participate in education and training. While some of the challenges are economic and can be overcome with financial assistance, many people are deterred from engaging in education and training by social and personal factors. Certain issues such as lack of motivation, time, and inadequate resources, can interfere with an individual's success as an independent adult learner (Oduro-Mensah and Biney, 2014). Some other problems such as lack of awareness of knowledge deficit, personal reluctance to change, ambivalence, and group mentality, can also be significant challenges to positive educational change (Collins, 2008). The delays in the supply of syllabuses and textbooks for the smooth take-off of Lifelong Learning programmes, and inadequate preparation and training of teachers to implement the educational reforms were some of the hurdles identified in Ghana. Inadequate classrooms and lack of both science and the state-of-the-art computer laboratories in some deprived schools are identified as some of the barriers to the smooth path to making Ghana a learning and knowledge society.

## **10. Conclusion and recommendations**

The paper examined lifelong learning and national development of Ghana. It first made a case for the promotion of Lifelong and Lifewide Learning among the populace in Ghana. It also traced the history of lifelong learning, and how UNESCO, World Bank, OECD and European Union perceived lifelong learning. The characteristics of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Learning in a learning society were also captured. Lifelong learning and national development and the case of Ghana received attention. The benefits and challenges to Lifelong Learning were also captured. It is clear now that Lifelong Learning is continuous, collaborative, self-directed and active, broad in scope, everlasting, positive and fulfilling, and applicable to work and all aspects of life. It is, therefore, important to examine the extent to which lifelong learning has actually been promoted in Ghana to foster social, economic and political progress in the country. The authors observed that when Lifelong Learning is properly promoted, it could result in economic growth, reduce poverty, consolidate democracy and harness the opportunities provided by globalisation not only in African countries, including Ghana, but the entire world at large. Again, Lifelong Learning empowers individuals because it opens avenues of communication that could otherwise be closed, expand personal choices and control over one's environment. It is also an appropriate strategy for the acquisition of many skills. Furthermore, lifelong learning is also found as key to which individuals can unlock the full range of their talent, and realise their



creative potentials in life, especially in a developing country like Ghana where mass extensive unemployment and chronic poverty is our lot.

Basil Yeaxlee and Eduard Lindeman provided an intellectual basis for a comprehensive understanding of education as a continuing aspect of everyday life (Bosco, 2007). Indeed, Collins (2008) provides various definitions emphasising Lifelong Learning as: (a) continuous (it never stops); (b) supportive (it isn't done alone); (c) stimulating and empowering (it's self-directed and active, not passive); (d) incorporating knowledge, values, skills, and understanding (it's more than what we know); (e) spanning a lifetime (it happens from our first breath to our last); (f) applied (it's a positive, fulfilling experience); and (h) inclusive of all roles, circumstances, and environments (it applies not only to our chosen profession, but to our entire life). Some of these definitions of Lifelong Learning were captured in the paper.

Based on the observation made in Lifelong Learning globally, and that of Ghanaian situation, it is recommended that the following should be done to strengthen Lifelong Learning in Ghana:

- First, the idea of widening access to education, promoting independence and Lifelong Learning, and also adopting alternative approaches in delivering education, should be placed at the centre of our education, and equally emphasised by institutions of learning and organisations working to engender Lifelong and Lifewide Learning in our part of the world.
- Second, employable skills must be developed and taught, and efforts must also be made for learners to develop a positive attitude, commitment, enjoyment, and motivation toward learning because no one will engage in processes and attitudes during their whole life for goals and objectives that they do not like.
- Third, lifelong learning is now recognized by educators, governing bodies, accreditation organisations, certification boards, employers, third-party payers, and the general public as one of the most important competencies that people must possess. Hence, promoting Lifelong Learning as continuous, collaborative, self-directed, active, broad in domain, everlasting, positive and fulfilling, and applicable to one's profession as well as all aspects of one's life has emerged as a major global educational challenge, and it is worth resolving in Ghana.
- Fourth, it is imperative to state that the interaction of education with other social and economic factors can only be useful and meaningful when it brings about positive changes in one's life and empowers a person to confront day-to-day challenges with confidence. Such a 'can-do' spirit can be fostered and sufficiently be built in learners through Lifelong Learning.
- Fifth, education organised and oriented on Lifelong Learning lines is certainly going to have a lasting and positive impact on income, agricultural productivity, manageable fertility rate, birth spacing, pre- and postnatal health, nutrition, knowledge, attitudes and values, and should be vigorously pursued in Ghana.
- Sixth, meaningful learning which provides opportunity for response and solution to problems is a process that starts with learners at the grassroot, with vision and leadership from the top. Hence institutions engaged in Lifelong Learning should concentrate more in deprived communities and

schools, so that learners will be ably helped to gain insights into how to solve problems with or without assistance, and develop self-reliance spirit and further explore to gain self-confidence in their endeavours.

- Finally, institutions and organisations, both governmental and private, providing Lifelong Learning should be relentless in their resolve to empower Ghanaians to become committed and motivated to engage in Lifelong Learning, to impact positively on national development.

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