

# Chapter 16

## Changing Trends in Adult and Continuing Education: The Ghanaian Experience

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### Introduction

Formal Adult Education in Ghana could be traced to activities of the colonial government in the 1940s which led to the establishment of departments of Extra-Mural Studies as part of the university college in the Gold Coast, and later in Nigeria and the Sierra Leone as part of the Oxford University Delegacy. This gave birth to the People's Educational Association in the Gold Coast as avenue through which masses of people were mobilized to pursue adult literacy, liberal studies and citizenship training unparalleled in the history of the Gold Coast. After independence, the demand by Ghanaian workers for certificates led to reorientation of the Institute leading to a renaming of the Department as Institute of Public Education. In addition to the rebranding, Workers' Colleges were established to provide remedial programmes and opportunities for workers to pursue their education. In the 1970s, the Institute took steps to redefine her position in the University of Ghana by introducing MA and Diploma programmes in Adult Education and engaging in research and extension.

Against this backdrop and following global trends in higher education that now focus on lifelong, the Institute recently changed its name to reinforce the centrality of distance education as a complementary delivery mode for the university, and began playing a leading role in the implementation of the university's ICT policy on E-learning.

This chapter explores how the university-based adult education in Ghana has evolved over the years and its implications for the future. The chapter will cover the following:

- Colonial Influence on Adult and Continuing Education.
- Post-Colonial Influence on Adult and Continuing Education.
- Developing Adult Education as a Discipline.

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- From Adult Education to Continuing and Distance Education.
- Distance Education and E-Learning in Rapidly Changing World.

## Colonial Influence On Adult And Continuing Education

The introduction of university-based adult education in Ghana was based on factors outside the colony. Skinner (2007) has argued that after World War II, influential colonial advisors regarded the economic, social and political environment comparable to what prevailed in mid-nineteenth century Britain. Adult education occupied a vital place in British working-class history, and therefore some influential policy-makers and academics felt that this type of education could be transferred to the African colonies. Indeed, two commissions were crucial in the establishment of university-based adult education in the Gold Coast. These were the Asquith and Elliot Commissions. The departments of Extra-mural Studies which were created and attached to the university colleges in the Gold Coast and Nigeria had a relationship with the Oxford Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Oxford (Omolewa 1975).

Indeed, the connection between British West Africa and Oxford was facilitated by Colonel George Wigg, earlier who had established close links with the Oxford Extra-mural Delegacy while administering adult education for the Worker's Educational Association in Kent and North Staffordshire during the 1930s (Fieldhouse 1984). Wigg's visit to Africa led to the establishment of an educational scheme for African troops. In a report to the Colonial Office, Wigg recommended improvement in spoken English and elimination of illiteracy, as well as an element of liberal, non-vocational education "directed to the development of civic responsibility and community sense... [thus] introducing a concept of adult education which, so far, has made no impression in West Africa" (Fieldhouse 1984, p. 360).

To make this objective realizable, the Secretary of Oxford University Delegacy for Extra-Mural-Studies paid a visit to the Gold Coast in February 1947. Thereafter, some of the staff of the Oxford Extramural Delegacy was sent to the Gold Coast and Nigeria. The active involvement of the staff in British West Africa coincided with the agitation for independence in the post World War II era. In 1948, the Oxford Delegacy seconded David Kimble as a Resident Tutor for a period of up to 2 years<sup>1</sup> to work as a Staff Tutor in the Gold Coast. In April 1949, the Delegacy's outfit was absorbed by the newly-established University College of the Gold Coast as the Department of Extra-Mural Studies. Once in the Gold Coast, David Kimble introduced the tutorial class modelled along that of the Oxford Delegacy Extra-Mural Studies.

Having established that the Gold Coast already had a tradition of voluntary associations, and having witnessed the great strides made in Britain by the national voluntary Worker's Educational Association (WEA) in Britain through the tutorial class model, a voluntary association called the People's Educational Association

<sup>1</sup> Adult Education in the Gold Coast, University of Oxford Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies Report, 1953.

(PEA) was formed at Aburi in the Eastern Region of the Gold Coast (Skinner 2007; Amedzro 2004). The PEA became the vanguard of liberal studies and community development. Its programmes concentrated on subjects such as Philosophy, Government, Economics and International Relations with the aim of improving the quality of the individual to function as a unit of his society. The programmes were also meant to help the people develop their leadership skills, to be politically responsible and to engage in local self-help.

There were systematic courses of 40 or 24 weeks duration and non-systematic courses made up of public lectures, seminar, conferences, one-day and weekend schools; and residential schools of longer duration such as the New Year School. There were also courses on parliamentary procedure and budgets for newly-elected legislators (Skinner 2007). These programmes were not targeted at certification. The heart of the liberal adult education tradition was the provision of opportunities for men and women to study subjects in depth, and usually at great length, but not in pursuit of qualification. The Department paid great importance to democratic methods of teaching in the PEA classes which was done through discussions. Most of the topics discussed were topics that had been decided together with the participants.

Indeed, Fieldhouse (1992, p. 11) has noted that:

The notion of “liberalism” in English adult education implies a democratic, dialectical and non-utilitarian approach. It is democratic rather than authoritarian, with students enjoying the right to choose what and how they study. The class is treated more as a mutual exploration of the subject than a one-way transmission of a body of knowledge from “expert” lecturer to ignorant students. It is dialectical rather than propagandist, with a total freedom of discussion of all subjects. And it is non-utilitarian, non-vocational in that it is concerned with the education of the individual either for personal intellectual advancement or to make the individual a better-educated citizen.

In 1954, the Department became the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies. Since the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies was not established as a teaching department, attention was paid to the recruitment of Resident Tutors to facilitate the tutorial classes in the communities rather than Lecturers to teach in a university setting. From 1954 to the time of independence, the Institute concentrated on the intellectual development of Ghanaians through the offering discussion classes in civic education and leadership. Alongside the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies, the PEA also created opportunities for ordinary Ghanaians for self-development through the non-certificated courses it offered. The bedrock of adult and continuing education in Ghana during the colonial era was, therefore, volunteerism, self-motivation, and the desire for community development.

## **Adult Education In Post-Colonial Era**

At Ghana’s independence in 1957, the government of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah saw massive investment in education and wide-ranging changes at the university. First, the CPP government embarked on

an indigenization programme by increasing the number of African lecturers at the university. There was the establishment of the Institute of African Studies and a University Press. Dr. Nkrumah's policy of creating a critical mass of educated Ghanaians to address the gross man-power requirements of the nation at the time of independence provided the justification to widen access at all levels of education. The early years of the government witnessed the mass literacy campaign which saw the active involvement of the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies. Indeed, in 1960, the Director of the Institute, Mr. David Kimble and Mr. Kwa Hagan were selected by the government to represent Ghana at the Second World Conference on Adult Education in Montreal (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 1960).

To further actualize the objective of bringing education to the door-steps of Ghanaians, the name of the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies was changed to the Institute of Public Education. After independence, certification became increasingly the basic qualification for employment. The need for more qualified people was recognized by the Commission on University Education which reviewed university education in Ghana at the beginning of the 1960s (Greenstreet 1979). The Commission recommended the provision of facilities for students who wished to work for degrees on part-time basis and those who wanted to continue their education. Towards this end, Workers' Colleges were established in Accra, Takoradi and Kumasi in 1962 to meet the needs of the numerous workers demanding courses that would lead to certification (Amedzro 2004).

From the 1960s onwards, the Workers' Colleges became centres for Ghanaian workers to prepare to write the General Certificate of Examination Ordinary and Advanced (GCE O and A) Levels to enable them seek entries into sixth Form or university respectively. The Workers' Colleges also provided opportunities for remedial classes in the English Language, Logic, Mathematics and Current Affairs. To provide a link between the Workers' Colleges and the university so that the Workers' Colleges could offer opportunities to workers to pursue university education, a Degree Division was established in 1963 at the Accra Workers' College as the External Degree Centre (EDC). The Institute was charged with the responsibility of offering courses in the Humanities available to full-time students of the University of Ghana on part-time basis.

Indeed, to expand access to education to many more Ghanaians, the CPP government through the Institute of Public Education suggested that some relaxation in university entrance requirements be made in order to ensure that other students with limited entry requirements were admitted as well as non-traditional students also to enter the university. To achieve this objective, the Institute of Public Education introduced a system of special entry for mature students who did not have the GCE requirements. Special examinations designed by the Institute were held for these non-traditional students and complemented with an interview (Amedzro 2004; Greenstreet 1988).

During the 1960s, the Institute embarked on short specialized courses for Trades Unions, Cooperatives, farmers' organizations, women's and other voluntary organizations. The foundation was also laid for the introduction of correspondence

courses for persons in areas far removed from the Institute's main lecturing and teaching centres. Students doing correspondence courses were expected to attend special vacation courses, which were to be run for their benefit.

The overthrow of the CPP government in 1966 offered the Institute the opportunity to redefine her vision to fulfil her core mandate of providing university-based adult education. Hard decisions had to be made with respect to the increased demand for GCE courses from workers and students, vis-à-vis the core mandate of the Institute. Indeed, the Institute had to find answers to questions such as: Which of the programmes offered by the Institute could be regarded as the legitimate responsibility of a university-based institution charged with the organization of university level adult education? To redefine a new vision and new path for the Institute, there was a name change from Institute of Public Education to Institute of Adult Education. However, Greenstreet (1988) has noted that the major decision taken regarding the vision and purpose of a university-based adult education institute after the overthrow of the CPP government was just a little more than scratching the surface of the complex, social, economic and political problems facing the country. While admitting that change was needed, there was little consensus among members of staff as to the nature and direction of the change.

## Developing Adult Education as a Discipline

Adult education has always been a dynamic and changing field of study and practice that has been informed by various disciplines and philosophical schools of thought (Merriam and Andre 2011). The history of development of adult education as a discipline varies from country to country and continent to continent. The field of adult education worldwide went through a process of growth and differentiation, in which a scholarly, scientific approach emerged. Today, an academic discipline focusing on the education of adults exists in several universities around the world including the University of Ghana.

As far back as 1964, Jensen, et al., is quoted by Holmberg (1986, p. 3) to have described the discipline of Adult Education as having borrowed and adapted knowledge, theory and research technology from many other disciplines. One will find that *Social Psychology* has lent to adult education basic knowledge about the processes of learning and change in individuals, groups and communities. *Philosophy* has been used to gain an understanding of the ethics and rationale of the field of adult education and also supported its content, processes and objectives. *Sociology* has offered the concept of society and its implications for adult learning. The information about the desires of the adult population to be educated has over the years has been drawn from *History*. Adult education has taken from the discipline of *Anthropology* the experiences that connect to the introduction and acceptance or rejection of changing cultural ideas about the use of artifacts and technology. The relationship between people's competence and societal well-being and principles for effective use of resources for lifelong learning is what *Economics* has contributed to adult education.

Thus, Adult Education has a unique strength in the integration of psychology, organization studies, human resource development, instructional design and technology, and global perspectives for individual and organizational excellence. By drawing from a variety of fields and disciplines adult education helps to develop the knowledge base for human resource development. The borrowing from other disciplines does not, however, meet all the needs of the discipline, so adult education has developed its own research to test the applicability of existing knowledge to the education of adults. Adult education is also original and unique in the concept of the characteristics of the adult learner. Adult education has also broadened the concept of lifelong learning to replace the obsolete concept of education being terminal.

### *Defining the Discipline*

Adult Education is multi-disciplinary and its study and practice varies from country to country. This has affected the way the discipline is defined. It has been observed that defining adult education depends on where you are standing and how you experience the phenomenon. Observe that defining adult education depends on where you are standing and how you experience the phenomenon. The nature of the practice of adult education in a country determines the definition, hence one will come across different definitions of the discipline. In most instances adult education tends to be conceptualized as literacy training, basic education for adults, functional literacy, education for the out-of-school youth, community development projects and livelihood-related skills training. In a similar vein the target group has mostly been described as compromising women, adults aged 15–45, out-of-school youth, people in rural or disadvantaged areas, personnel in the public sector and businesses requiring continuing education, disabled people, prisoners, refugees, migrants, nomads, former soldiers and the like. Much as these descriptions fit the practice of educating adults to become functional and productive citizens. The discipline of Adult Education goes far beyond that. Here are some of the different ways that the discipline has been defined over the years:

- All forms of schooling and learning programmes in which adults participate (Corley 2007).
- Adult education is activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults (Merriam and Brockett 1997, p. 7).
- The process by which men and women (alone, in groups, or in institutional settings) seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skill, knowledge, or sensitiveness; or it is any process by which individuals, groups, or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways (Houle 1996, p. 41).
- Adult education denotes the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical

or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society (UNESCO 1976).

- Any learning experience designed for adults irrespective of content, level and method used (Gakhar and Saini 2010, p. 29).
- The Exeter Conference in 1969 defines it as the process whereby persons who no longer (or did not) attend school on a regular and full-time basis (unless full-time programmes are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities within a conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes, or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems (Livwright and Haygood 1969, p. 8).
- Adult education is all the activities with an educational purpose that are carried on by people, engaged in the ordinary business of life (Bryson 1936 cited at <http://www.fsu.edu/~adult-ed/jenny/Definitions.html>).
- Education is life—not a mere preparation for an unknown kind of future living... The whole of life is learning; therefore, education can have no ending. This new venture is called adult education not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity defines its limits (Lindeman 1926, p. 6).

From the varied definitions, it is clear that Adult Education can best be understood by looking at the nexus of who an “adult” is and what education she/he is supposed to acquire to meet her/his developmental and intellectual needs. There have been arguments over who an adult is. The definition of an adult could be perceived from the legal point of view which is normally according to the chronological age (Merriam and Brockett 2011); biological, physiological, psychological and social perspectives. Since adulthood varies from society to society, the best way out has been to leave it to every society to define who an adult is UNESCO (1976).

Defining “education” is as controversial as defining “adult” itself. Education manifests itself as a process, product, synonym, an activity or an institution. All these various meanings of education add to the complexity and multiplicity of the term, adult education.

The above definitions do not only depict Adult Education as a discipline with a scientific basis but as a practice with broad perspectives. One can see the different perspectives of adult education in the definitions, be it formal academic programmes, informal or non-formal studies, on-the-job training, continuing education or simply liberal studies. From the dates of the various definitions it could be observed that not only has the definitions been influenced by the practice of the discipline in the author’s continent but by the period of writing as well. For instance, while Lindeman’s definition of 1920s show how Adult Education was perceived from a lifelong learning perspective in Europe during that era, the Corley definition of the Twenty firstcentury predicts the growing nature of the discipline from an American perspective. Could it also mean that because the discipline keeps growing and expanding in practice it has expanded over the period? Well, to clear the confusion, Knowles (1980), one of the founding fathers of adult education describes the multiple meanings of the discipline as follows:

One problem contributing to the confusion is that the term “adult education” is used with at least three different meanings. In its broadest sense, the term describes a process—the process of adults learning... In its more technical meaning, “adult education” describes a set of organized activities carried on by a wide variety of institutions for the accomplishment of specific educational objectives... A third meaning combines all of these processes and activities into the idea of a movement or field of social practice. In this sense, adult education brings together into a discrete social system all the individuals, institutions, and associations concerned with the education of adults and perceives them as working toward common goals of improving the methods and materials of adult learning, extending the opportunities for adults to learn, and advancing the general level of our culture. (Knowles 1980, p. 25 emphasis ours)

Another observation from the various definitions of Adult Education is that it appears that the shorter the definition the broader the perspective and the longer the definition the narrower the perspective. In other words while the long definitions narrow the scope of the discipline and practice, the short definitions broaden the scope of the discipline and practice to make it generic. Adult Education, thus, comprises the spectrum of informal and incidental learning available in a multicultural learning society, formal educational programmes such as university credit courses and non-formal learning activities. Such learning opportunities will include a wide spectrum of programmes be they vocational, technical, career and professional development, leisure and hobby pursuits, personal and social growth programmes, specific training, life experiences or general interest courses—the list can go on and on and on. The formal levels range from primary to post-doctoral in the form of adult basic education, continuing or higher education. The non-formal or informal/incidental learning can be anything and everything. The only limitation is on the learner, who should be an adult by the standards/criteria of the society the person finds him or herself in. Unlike other types of education, adult education is defined by the student population rather than by the content or complexity of a learning programme (Corley 2007). Adult education could therefore mean any educational activity that adults engage in. It does not matter the mode of delivery, content of the programme or level of study.

### ***Purposes and Development of Adult Education***

Merriam and Andre (2011) have identified purposes of adult education as to facilitate change in a dynamic society; support and maintain a good social order; promote productivity and enhance personal growth. Two factors determine the purpose of the discipline of adult education. These include the nature of human beings who seek to self-actualize and the nature of society, which is dynamic and always comes out with new things that must be learnt by the growing population. Specifically, Adult Education seeks to encourage the purposeful use of leisure through life-long learning, creates opportunity for the adult population to develop practical skills for wider career choice, and raises intellectual levels of the people to make them self-determining.



Several developments in society have contributed to the growth and expansion of the discipline of adult education. Access to education and learning for adults is a fundamental aspect of the right to education and facilitates the exercise of the right to participate in political, economic, cultural, artistic and scientific life. A person's desire to participate in an educational programme is often the result of a changing personal, social, or vocational situation. This individual orientation has resulted in the creation of a continually changing, dynamic field able to respond to the varied needs of society. Recognizing the need to update information and skills, the desire for knowledge and information is also increasing among the adult population. Rapidly changing technical fields also require constant updating of information in order for workers to remain effective and productive (International Council of Adult Education [ICAE] 1997). Adult Education programmes are provided by a host of organizations or institutions. These include universities, colleges, community learning centres, folk high schools, libraries, museums, social service institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, corporate agencies, churches, and mosques.

Another major development for the growth of the discipline of Adult Education is the increasing use of information and communication technology such as radio, network television, cable television, internet and other electronic media. Broadcast media are being used worldwide to provide public information, teach reading and writing, specialized seminars, and short courses, as well as to provide university-degree programmes. These electronic media offer the means for reaching populations that are scattered or isolated including rural communities (Kwapong 2007).

The discipline of Adult Education manifests in different related concepts. These include continuing education, life-long learning, liberal education, recurrent education, distance education, community development and community education. The concept of life-long learning depicts adult education as a discipline that promotes learning throughout one's lifetime. In this principle education does not terminate even when one decides to terminate formal schooling. Education has no end; it begins from the cradle to the grave or the womb to the tomb. One never stops but keeps learning formally, non-formally or informally until death.

Liberal education as a component of the discipline of adult education seeks to free people as they study to liberate their minds. Through liberal adult education, adult learners develop the intellectual powers of their mind to become critical thinkers. The concept of continuing education, which is based on the acceptance that formal education is terminal but that does not equip adults with all the skills necessary for solving future problems, portrays Adult Education as a discipline that creates opportunities for further studies in the formal system of education. For instance, a person who completes a Diploma programme could continue to do a Bachelor's degree while a person with a Bachelor's degree could continue to pursue a Master's, Doctorate or any postgraduate degree. Within the scope of continuing education is the concept of recurrent education which describes adult education as meeting the needs of adult learners to be able to make repeated (recurrent) entrances and exits from institutions in the formal system. Since educational levels are spread over an individual's lifespan, adult learners can study, take a break to build career or family

to a level and return to continue schooling after gaining some experience or income. Through distance learning and the use of technology and various delivery modes, adult learners can now conveniently combine work, family, and study while being separated in time and space.

Community education is a component of Adult Education as well. Community education is a process of building the capacity of a group of people who have a sense of shared identity and interest. Such people commit to the education and leisure of their adult population through local participation in the setting of priorities, sharing resources and the study of circumstances. Through community education, we obtain one of the outputs or products of adult education, which is community development. Such interventions bring about improvement into the life of any group of people who identify themselves as having a common interest.

### ***Philosophy of Adult Education***

One cannot discuss the discipline of Adult Education without looking at the philosophical thoughts that have guided it. The philosophical perspectives of adult education serve as a foundation for the nature and the practice of discipline. The philosophies can contribute to improved design of curricula and instruction, better communication with fellow educators, and the development of the field as it offers a vision of where the field of adult education is heading.

Adult Education has borrowed from the Eurocentric and the indigenous philosophies. The major Eurocentric philosophies of education that guide adult education are liberal, progressive, humanistic, behavioural and radical philosophies of education. Liberal adult education is a popular philosophy underlying education in colleges and universities. Progressive adult education, behaviourism and humanistic adult education are the three philosophies that dominate corporate training. Radical adult education is a lesser known, but equally influential philosophy in the field of adult education. The indigenous philosophy of adult education has enhanced the discipline to make it relevant to its local African and Ghanaian environment.

These philosophies are based on ethics, reason and knowledge. Facilitating adult learning in the perspectives of the philosophy of adult education enables adult learners to develop the affective, psychomotor or behavioural skills. Thus, the philosophies help adult educators to put all programmes into composite format, which in turn helps to develop all rounded adults.

Philosophy of Adult Education helps adult learners to find answers to the following questions (Tisdell and Taylor 2001, p. 7):

- What is the purpose of education?
- What is the role of the adult educator?
- What is the role of students or adult learners in the classroom?
- How does one conceptualize differences among adult learners?
- What is one's worldview, or the primary lens used in analyzing human needs?

Philosophy of Adult Education has further helped to influence decision-making about issues such as establishing teaching-learning objectives, selecting instructional content, selecting and/or developing instructional materials, choosing teaching-learning methods and evaluating educational outcomes. We could emphasize that:

- In liberal adult education intellectual development takes centre stage with lesson plans and courses designed to build abilities of critical thinking and logic.
- Behavioural adult education instils survival skills in adult learners to be able to navigate any situation.
- Progressive adult education promotes cultural and social development and change.
- Humanistic adult education advocates total nurturing in education.
- Radical adult education seeks that education should instil a desire to fight for political and economic changes.
- Indigenous adult education situates the discipline in its local environment to make it meaningful in cultural-specific contents.

### ***Adult Education Research***

Adult Education had to define its own methodology because of its peculiar nature of targeting the adult population. The discipline has developed its own research to test the applicability of existing knowledge to the education of adults and to discover new knowledge. It has also been able to develop its own research to explore its relationship with disciplines such as sociology, psychology, social work, economics, or anthropology. The discipline of adult education utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Research in adult education has focused on motivation to learn among adults, participation in adult education programmes, the characteristics of adult learners, media and delivery, evaluation of programmes, self-directed learning of the adult, empowerment of women, peace education, citizenship education, retirement education, learning at a distance, counselling of adult learners among others.

Adult Education providers expect research to be more practice-oriented and results to be delivered in a simplified format in order to gain the interest of busy professionals. Policy-makers are also interested in research collaboration if it produces explicit benefits to their work. This is what should guide current research endeavours as the discipline grows to respond to current trends.

Merriam and Brockett (2011) have argued that the range of knowledge that is relevant to adult education transcends the boundaries of traditional research and scholarship. In examining the nature of knowledge in adult education, practitioners must focus on the knowledge that counts in adult education; the source of ideas and how the ideas should be incorporated into the fabric of adult education. It is clear that much as adult education has attracted more practitioners and experienced growth in research and practice over the past six decades it has lived to some extent on borrowed knowledge from other disciplines.

## From Adult Education to Continuing and Distance Education

The need for professional adult educators necessitated the then Institute of Adult Education to introduce its first academic programme leading to the award of the graduate diploma in Adult Education in 1971. Subsequently the Master of Arts; Master of Philosophy, and Doctorate programmes were introduced in 1985. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Adult Education is the most recent addition, which started in the 2010–2011 academic year. The Institute also offers non-degree programmes including Diploma in Adult Education and Diploma in Youth in Development Work. The design of the academic programmes has been in response to the needs of former students and the society at large. The diploma and masters programmes are delivered in three modes: regular face-to-face classroom lectures; sandwich during long vacations; and distance learning with the use of modules.

The academic programmes of the Institute facilitate forward-looking research that uses multiple methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks. Awards in Adult Education at the University of Ghana are recognized at the community, national, and international levels. The discipline propels the Institute to educate and train future researchers and scholars, practitioners, and leaders for a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The outputs of our Adult Education programmes are sought after as development workers, staff of the university, organizations and local communities who are concerned with improving productivity and fostering life-long work-based learning through individual and organizational development. The academic programmes also offer pathways for the young and older adults to pursue studies for career advancement, the world of work, and community development.

Following global trends that now emphasize the fact that education is a lifelong endeavour that continues throughout the lifespan of people seeking credentials, advancing their careers, changing their careers, and/or enhancing their earning potential, the Institute of Adult Education was re-named *Institute of Continuing and Distance Education (ICDE)* in 2009. The new name reflects the broad range of programmes that the Institute now offers for individuals to meet their diverse learning needs for academic, personal, and professional growth while maintaining jobs and fulfilling family and other obligations. The adoption of the new name was accompanied by a new mission statement—commitment to the development of world-class human resources and capacities relevant to the needs of Ghana and other African countries through continuing and ICT-based distance education. The Institute's new vision is to be the centre of excellence for the efficient delivery of university-based continuing and distance education to meet the challenges of national development and global competition of the Twenty first century.

Another significant change that happened at the Institute is the re-designation of its teaching staff from “Resident Tutors” to “Lecturers” in conformity with current practice worldwide. At the establishment of the Institute, its lecturers were not resident at the university and were in the communities organizing classes in

liberal education and community development programmes. Indeed, teaching at the university was not part of their work. Over the years as the orientation of the Institute changed, the academic senior staff who were appointed to the Institute were expected to teach, conduct research, and engage in public/community service just as their counterparts in other academic units of the university. However, the name “Resident Tutor” was not changed until 2010. The change of designation was also very timely; and significantly enhanced opportunities to recruit more “Lecturers” and researchers to fulfil the vision and mission of ICDE.

## **Distance Education and E-Learning in a Rapidly Changing World**

The challenges of conventional systems and approaches of delivering higher education have provided new strategies and dimensions for distance education to thrive. Open and distance learning hints on flexibility. Students can be at a distance from the teacher and can, therefore, overcome spatial and time barriers, especially for traditionally excluded individuals and groups. Despite the uncertainty about the previous performance of some distance education systems, confidence seems to be growing globally that open and distance learning will be important in future education and training systems. Examples of this growing confidence can be found in many countries including Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan. The European Union has in recent years consistently increased distance education components of its educational programmes, and has included open and distance learning explicitly in its Maastricht Treaty. In Central and Eastern Europe, distance education is seen as an important means of supporting the transformation process towards democratic and market-oriented societies. Similar initiatives and statements had been done from a wide range of individual countries as well as from regional and international organizations and agencies (Chung 1990).

Distance education has been variously described as a discipline and a practice. It has also been given different terminologies at different times and by different writers and scholars on how it is practised. International interest in open and distance learning continues to increase with subsequent expansion of the respective institutions and programmes as the most remarkable development in the field of education and training in recent years (Osei 2008). Through new developments in information and communication technologies, there is no doubt that open and distance learning is in a process of establishing itself as an integral part of educational delivery systems. UNESCO, which since its foundation is committed to the provision of both formal and non-formal learning opportunities within the framework of the principle of life-long education, has continuously encouraged and supported the use of distance education from its early initiatives of correspondence studies for adults (Osei 2008).

## *History of Distance Education*

The history of distance education goes back more than one hundred years in North America and it is now firmly rooted in the education systems of both Canada and the USA. There is a rich variety of programmes and institutions in a range of areas, and there are examples of the use of almost every conceivable technology. Distance education is used for outreach to remote population groups, support of school education, provision of education and training opportunities for adults, vocational courses, corporate and military training, professional training, higher and continuing education, and life enrichment courses. Modalities in frequent use are correspondence education, television and video courses, audio and video conferencing, satellite transmission and computer-mediated communication. North America has more extensive experience than most other parts of the world in the application of advanced technologies of telecommunication in distance education. Increasingly, a mix of different technologies is used in the same programmes. Electronic services and networks are available to a considerable proportion of the population, and governments see a future in expanding capacity and access through “information super highways.”

According to Osei (2008), Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions where the “knowledge gap” between North and South takes on the most dramatic character. There is a tradition of distance education in many of the countries, where governmental institutions were often established after the former colonies became independent. In these countries, distance education has mainly been used to improve access to basic education for an increasing proportion of the population through open programmes, correspondence education and radio. Such programmes had been used to maintain and improve quality in the conventional education system through in-service training of teachers and support for non-formal education and community development activities.

Nevertheless, distance education has shown persistence and there are signs that it is becoming more central to the education policy of many countries. Distance education is seen as a low-cost alternative for the expansion of educational opportunities at all levels (Badu-Nyarko 2000). For instance, Zimbabwe’s expansion of secondary education from 66,000 students in 1979 to 700,000 in 1989 was only possible by using a system of school-based distance education, supported by short in-service training courses for teachers (Chung 1990). Also, South Africa has reinforced its strategy of making extensive use of open and distance learning with the University of South Africa (UNISA) leading the way. Similar ventures in distance learning are established in Tanzania. The main challenge for distance education in the region is to secure continued national commitment on policies and funding at a level needed to enhance quality and economy of scale.

The demand for higher education in Ghana has increased in recent years as a result of population growth and the increase in the number of senior high school graduates. For the past ten years or so, the universities in Ghana have had the unpleasant duty of turning away a large number of qualified applicants every year as

a result of their inability to admit not even half of these applicants. This situation has been attributed to limited and deteriorating facilities. Coupled with these limited facilities is the rising cost of providing quality education at the secondary and tertiary levels. The government of Ghana is finding it increasingly difficult to fund tertiary education all alone. The underlying effect is that the government of Ghana has encouraged institutions to adopt distance education as a viable complement to the conventional face-to-face education. This step is inspired by the vision that all Ghanaians should have access to all forms of education and training regardless of where they live (Article 25 1992 Constitution of Republic of Ghana).

### *Distance Education at the University of Ghana*

Educational institutions in Ghana were few in the 1950s before Ghana's independence and just after. The practice of distance education thus started when persons who desired to obtain higher academic qualifications were compelled to enroll in correspondence courses run by colleges in the United Kingdom and later in the United States of America. Brilliant and enthusiastic students whose parents could not afford the high admission fees demanded, had to secure jobs and study on their own. In the 1960s, many Ghanaians took advantage of the opportunities provided by correspondence colleges in the United Kingdom to acquire higher academic and professional qualifications. Many Ghanaians enrolled as students of Rapid Results College, Wolsley College, Bennett College among others for various academic and professional courses (Aggor 2004).

The Institute's long history of successfully developing and delivering academic programmes through the distance mode includes:

- Serving as the implementing agency for the *University of Ghana's External Degree* programme established at the Accra Workers College from the 1963/1964 academic year until 2002 when the University transformed the programme into the Accra City Campus. The External Degree Programme offered courses leading to the BA and BSc (Administration) degrees for persons who are normally qualified for entry into the university but who, for a variety of reasons, prefer to study as part-time off-campus students over a period of not less than eight semesters and not exceeding 12 semesters; and also for "Mature" persons (aged 30 years and above) capable of pursuing degree programmes but who, do not possess the requisite university entry qualifications.
- Preparing candidates for General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level programme from 1971.
- Offering *Diploma in Youth and Development Work* since 2001 as one of 24 programmes of the Commonwealth Youth Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Coordinating the University of London MSc Programme from 2003 for Ghanaian students to obtain *MSc in Rural Development and Environmental Management*.

- Offering *HIV/AIDS Counselling and Care-Giving*. This is a 4-month course which began in 2003 with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- Offering *Reducing HIV/AIDS Stigmatization by Education*. This is a 6-year project which started in 2005 with support from the Canadian International Development Association (CIDA) and run in partnership with Simon Fraser University in Canada, the University of Cape Coast, and the University of Education, Winneba.

The relevance of Distance Education (DE) was recognized by the University of Ghana as far back as 1986 when the Academic Board set up the Haizel Committee to explore DE as a partial solution to the University's problems with congestion and its inability to admit more qualified students on the main campus. The development and growth of the Distance Education Programme (DE) at Legon to tackle the issues of access and equity started with the appointment of Prof. W. A. Asomaning as the Coordinator in 1997, followed by Dr. E. Dovlo (now Prof) in 1998, Mr. R. A. Aggor in 2001 and Dr. S. K. Badu-Nyarko in 2006. Based on recommendations from the university, the Institute of Continuing and Distance Education (ICDE) was asked to manage the DE Programme. The Institute under the directorship of Dr. D. Oduro-Mensah marshalled its human, physical, and material resources to launch the DE programme with the support of the university in November, 2007.

In 2007, the University of Ghana could only admit about 51 % of qualified applicants, leaving over 9,000 qualified applicants due to limited residential and academic facilities. Distance education, therefore, became an important conduit for providing Legon education to this large segment of the Ghanaian population. The target group for the university's DE programme consisted of workers who qualify but cannot attend school on full-time basis, senior high school graduates with aggregates 6-24, mature students not below 27 years who pass an entry examination and diploma certificate holders from the University of Ghana and its affiliates with a minimum of 2.5 FGPA.

At the outset, a total of 1,127 applicants were admitted with 907 of them duly registering for the 2007/2008 academic year in five (5) disciplines: Geography and Resource Development, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, and Linguistics. As at the beginning of the 2012/2013 academic year, Distance Education courses are delivered in Accounting, Banking and Finance, Public Administration, Marketing and Human Resource Management from the University of Ghana Business School; and Adult Education, Economics, Geography and Resource Development, History, Information Studies, Linguistics, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, and Political Science in the Humanities. With a student population of about 8,400, the university's DE programme is being run at eight Regional Centres (formerly *Workers' Colleges*), namely: Accra (Greater Accra Region), Koforidua (Eastern Region), Kumasi (Ashanti Region), Sekondi-Takoradi (Western Region), Tamale (Northern Region), Wa (Upper West Region), Sunyani (Brong Ahafo Region) and Tsito (Volta Region). The centres provide physical facilities such as classrooms, which are used for tutoring, counselling, group discussions, storing and distributing of study materials.



## *E-Learning at the University of Ghana*

The increased availability of computers and the interactive communication technologies such as video and audio conference, on-line education, and the internet have the potential of solving a myriad of problems and issues associated with the provision of distance education courses by means of giving access to all categories of students and levels of education (Botchway 2010). Thus, the University of Ghana recognizing the shortfall of the print media has decided to adopt E-Learning as a supplement to its distance education provision and to reach more students at a very low cost. The university's approved Information Communication Technology (ICT) policy on E-learning states that: "it is the university's policy to promote E-Learning or integrate ICT in teaching and learning to enhance faculty unit effectiveness."

The primary purpose of E-learning at the University of Ghana is to promote academic excellence through enhanced teaching and learning, and greater interaction between lecturers and students in pursuance of the university's strategic vision. It is also to provide opportunities to prospective students who otherwise would not have access to the programmes offered, either because they work at odd times or are limited by distance. The programme at Legon has been enabled by the completion of the first phase of the ICT-Based Distance Education by the Unisplendour Software System Co., Ltd, Tsinghua University, China with loans and grants from the Governments of Ghana and the Peoples' Republic of China. This project, which has enhanced and improved ICT infrastructure, is a component of the university's five-year IT Strategic Plan, which is also in line with the National ICT Policy on Education developed by the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports.

A significant boost to E-Learning at the University of Ghana is the initiation of the second phase of the ICT-Based Distance Education. The overall goal and objective of Phase 2 which is a follow-up to Phase 1 is to enhance Distance and Continuing Education using Information and Communication Technologies. This is a turnkey project implementation that will involve the Supply, Installation and Commissioning of various ICT Equipment and Services by Unisplendour Software Company of China. This two-year project to commence in 2013 seeks to extend the University of Ghana's computing network (UGNet) to ICDE's ten Regional Centres as well as provide fully-equipped computer laboratories and multimedia classrooms at all the centres.

In order to pursue the national objectives for tertiary education, Phase 2 plans to introduce an Integrated Digital Mobile Learning Platform for Distance Education (IDMP) that will create a convenient and secured environment for learning, and real-time interaction between the Institute of Continuing and Distance Education. This will improve upon the current situation where students are tutored using paper based teaching materials.

The proposed solution will provide distance education students with an internet enabled mobile Tablet device that has been pre-loaded with specialized software (ICDE MobileTM) that will have several App icons to access digital textbooks,

register for programmes and courses at the beginning of each semester, using the internet, enabled mobile device, allow distance education students to work on homework and quizzes, complete and submit these using these devices. In this way, students could be enrolled and access tertiary education from the 10 regions of Ghana.

In addition, the project will adequately equip these regional ICDE centres with the appropriate hardware and software, to diffuse ICT-based education methods. More importantly, these regional centres could be the Key Internet Port connecting local high schools. The proposed platform provides both a hardware and software solution which offers an online web presence and portable mobile solution. This will include the conversion of all the paper-based course modules of the Institute into digital formats that will be accessible, using the supplied internet-enabled mobile device.

### ***Challenges with Distance Education and E-Learning***

Distance Education and E-Learning as education products have challenges that have to be overcome to ensure overall quality of delivery of learning. Much of the quality of instruction in distance education depends on the attitude of the administration and the instructors or tutors. The success of these modes of instruction requires administrators who understand the concept and tutors well trained to deliver course materials at distance and/or electronically. Many times it seems that the administration believes the technology itself will improve the quality of the class. Palloff and Pratt (2000) cited in Osei (2008, p. 4) remind us that “technology does not teach students; effective teachers do.” This indicates that the issue is not technology itself, but how it is used in the design and delivery of courses.

Besides the cost of the technology, there is the possibility of not utilizing all its potential. These problems arise from lack of training, instructor’s attitude about using technology, issues of software and hardware, power stability, and Internet connectivity. Advancement in technology does not lead to effective distance education. The best distance education practices depend on well-informed and creative instructors (cited in Osei 2008). Instructors should thus be trained to take advantage of both their experience and being able to adapt that experience to the new environment of distance education and e-learning. The instructors must be trained “not only to use technology, but also to shift the way in which they organize and deliver material” (Palloff and Pratt 2000, p. 3).

One overlooked factor in the success or failure of electronic learning programmes is the role that technicians play in the instructional process. Technicians could indirectly influence the learning environment by orientating participants to the technology, reducing the anxiety of the participants and the instructor.

In spite of its importance, distance education at the University of Ghana does not only face the problem of institutional organization and effective structures, but also there is no effective institutional policy that differentiates main campus students from those studying at a distance. Thus, requirements and conditions expected of on-campus students are transferred wholly onto distance students. Although we en-

visage a parity of esteem, there is the need for some flexibility in accommodating the varied needs of the distance learners, most of who are adults working and/or raising families. In terms of student support services, orientation, tutorials, academic counselling, library and computer laboratory services are offered to the students.

Admittedly, the University of Ghana has a long way to go to ensure full implementation of Distance Education and E-Learning. However, the Vice-Chancellor in his congregation address to the pioneer graduands in April 2012, affirmed the university's commitment to work with the Institute to "enhance facilities at the Regional Centres to promote effective learning... with the ultimate aim to attract equal numbers of applicants to all our delivery modes, and to ensure that all our students have access to the same level of facilities" (University of Ghana Congregation, April 21st, 2012, p. 23).

## Conclusion

The Institute of Continuing and Distance Education (ICDE) has, for over 60 years, become the vehicle that transported the University of Ghana's teaching, learning, and research into Ghanaian homes. The chapter has provided a critical review of the history of Adult and Continuing Education in Ghana, highlighting the global efforts that shaped such form of education in the country from colonial times, through independence. The chapter evaluated the concept of adult education by examining the various meanings attached to it as an academic discipline and practice. There was a discussion of the expansion of educational delivery at the university to include Distance Education and E-Learning.

With expanded vision, the Institute is now in a position to transform itself into a more visible, resource-enhanced, dynamic Institute that is responsive in providing life-long learning opportunities and distance education to all Ghanaians regardless of where they live. This expanded vision is very timely and reaffirms our resolve to provide wider educational access to Ghanaians in and out of the classroom through the use of ICT, community outreach, inter-departmental and inter-university partnerships. Overall, a well-resourced ICDE at the University of Ghana will contribute to the development of Ghana's human resource capabilities to meet the contemporary challenges of national development and global competition.

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