

Enhancing Adult Education through Institution Building: The Nigerian Experience

Samir Halliru, Audu Semiu Aganah

Abstract:

Adult Education as a humanitarian discipline is critical for ensuring social justice, human capital development and social transformation in different walks of human life. The role of Adult Education in achieving the above objectives could only be visible in Africa with the institution building. The decolonisation process of adult education played a vital role in ensuring such institution building in Africa. The early inception of Adult Education in Africa has received enormous contributions of great scholars and educators, who established and strengthened institutions of indigenous education for proper entrenchment of Adult Education. One of such great scholars was Professor Lalage Bown of blessed memory, who contributed to Adult Education discourse across many African countries. This chapter uses primary and secondary sources of data to establish ways of enhancing Adult Education, while reflecting on the works and legacies of Bown. It discusses the legacies of Lalage in the light of personal reflection of the author, who was privileged to meet Bown at a conference as a student at the University of Glasgow. The chapter draws from the experience of the people who worked or had encounters with Professor Bown in Nigeria and beyond. It examines publications and activities of Bown in the promotion of indigenous knowledge. It offers policy directions arising from the discussions of Bown's legacies in order to provide solutions to the current economic, social and political development challenges facing Africa.

Keywords: Collaboration; Lifelong Learning; Mentoring; Social Inclusion and Social Justice

Introduction

It is not surprising that Adult Education as a humanitarian discipline is critical for ensuring social justice, human capital development and social transformation. The role of Adult Education in achieving the above objectives was to be only visible in Africa, and Nigeria in particular, with the development of Adult Education institutions, which served as a training ground for students, scholars and educators who navigate through life in addressing human suffering (poverty, illiteracy, deficit skills and social unrest) created by the global forces of capitalism, as argued by Allman (1999). The process of decolonising Adult Education curricula plays

Samir Halliru, Bayero University, Nigeria, shalliru.ade@buk.edu.ng, 0000-0002-0101-8072
Audu Semiu Aganah, Bayero University, Nigeria, audusemiu0606@gmail.com, 0009-0004-9317-9122
Referee List (DOI 10.36253/fup_referee_list)
FUP Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (DOI 10.36253/fup_best_practice)

Samir Halliru, Audu Semiu Aganah, *Enhancing Adult Education through Institution Building: The Nigerian Experience*, © Author(s), CC BY 4.0, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-0253-4.14, in Maria Slowey, Heribert Hinzen, Michael Omolewa, Michael Osborne (edited by), *Adult Education and Social Justice: International Perspectives*, pp. 107-119, 2023, published by Firenze University Press, ISBN 979-12-215-0253-4, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-0253-4

a vital role towards addressing the above human challenges, through identifying and acknowledging local resources and talents in teaching and learning processes.

The early inception of Adult Education in Africa has received enormous contributions from great scholars and educators who established and strengthened institutions of indigenous adult education through their activities of teaching, research and publications. One such great scholar was Professor Lalage Bown, who contributed to Adult Education discourse in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia between 1949 and 1980, where she promoted and established many adult and continuing education programmes and units (Innes 2022), and was integral to the establishment of Adult Education institutions in Africa. Bown can never be forgotten for her contribution to the establishment of Adult Education departments. For example, Bown left behind her comfort zone to move from Ghana to Nigeria and other parts of Africa to promote Adult Education. Omolewa (2021) has reported that Bown served in building the Department of Extramural Studies at the University College, Ibadan, moved to Zambia and then to Uganda before, finally, returning to Nigeria, first to the Ahmadu Bello University in the North of Nigeria and then to the South of Nigeria, as Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Lagos (Omolewa 2021). According to Hamilton (2022), one of Bown's African colleagues said, she chose to serve overseas, leaving behind the comfort and serenity of her environment for the more challenging terrain of Africa.

The chapter discusses the legacies of Bown and the personal reflections of one of the authors who was privileged to meet her in 2014 at the Council for Education in the Commonwealth conference as an MSc student and later as PhD student at the University of Glasgow. The chapter also draws from the experience of the people who worked or had encounters with Professor Bown in Nigeria and beyond. It examines the works of Bown in the promotion of indigenous knowledge. The chapter offers policy directions arising from the discussions of the legacies of Bown in order to proffer solutions to economic, social and political development challenges in Africa.

1. Personal Reflection of the Author – The First Encounter with Bown

I was barely three months at the University of Glasgow when I first met Professor Bown on the 2nd April 2014 at the Council for Education in the Commonwealth conference. This is the Professor whose name and work I had heard and encountered as a student of Adult Education and Community Development at Bayero University, Kano in Nigeria. I was so delighted to be introduced to Professor Bown by Professor Mike Osborne (Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning at the University of Glasgow) in the presence of Professor Budd Hall (University of Victoria, Canada) and Dr Bonnie Slade (now Professor of Adult Education and Social Change at the University of Glasgow). I was introduced as one of the few students of Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Glasgow from Nigeria. Professor Bown was so welcoming and she said «my son» and I replied «of course not your son but your great grandson». There was

a laughter and I said «you are the teacher of the teachers of our teachers». Our conversation continued with Bown asking me about the book she co-authored with J.T. Okedara in 1981, which proposed a multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural approach for developing countries. She asked, «is the book still in use in Nigeria?», and I gave her my assurance that the book was still relevant and still in use as one of the earliest books on Adult Education with the African context in mind (Bown and Okedara 1981). It was also one of the earliest attempts at the promotion of indigenous adult education for the purpose of addressing economic, social and political development challenges affecting Africa. Professor Bown was particularly interested in our role in promoting adult education and social change in Nigeria and beyond. She was passionate about adult education, social justice and widening access to education. To this date, the words and works of Professor Bown have significant influence in my actions and life as an educator in Nigeria.

The Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning (CR&DALL) Seminar series in 2017 was another opportunity to meet with Bown again, but unfortunately the seminar was cancelled due to ill-health affecting her. It was rescheduled to 18th May 2018, after I had had my external examination. It was an event that celebrated her 90th birthday and reflected upon her as the former Head of the Department of Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Glasgow and contributor to Adult Education discussion across the globe. The event was organised in her honour to reflect on what was, what is and what will be in the field of Adult Education, captioned as *Adult Education – Past, Present and Future: A Seminar in Honour of Emerita Professor Bown* (CR&DALL 2018). I was privileged to be selected to join a number of speakers who had worked with Bown in the past and many of her former colleagues, all of whom make contributions in open discussion. I was meant to discuss some part of my PhD research, which at the time had reached its climax. I had another encounter with Bown when she addressed students of the International Masters in Adult Education for Social Change at the University of Glasgow and the lessons learnt are still part of my contributions to strengthening Adult Education practices in Nigeria.

2. Reflections of People who Worked or Heard about Professor Bown in Nigeria

This section presents reflections of people who worked or heard about the activities of Professor Bown in promoting Adult Education in Africa and Nigeria in particular. We had the privilege of interviewing a person who was recruited, mentored and assessed to become a full Professor of Adult Education in 1982. This person is none other than Emeritus Professor Michael Omolewa (Professor of Adult Education at the University of Ibadan, the premier university in Nigeria, and formerly Nigerian ambassador to UNESCO). We had a 30-minute productive interview that generated the most important data that would validate some of the documentary evidence on the legacies of Professor Bown.

Professor Bown set the ground for Adult Education in Africa to lift humanity from the shackles of illiteracy, poverty and powerlessness. «Her passion for literacy was a great deal because she knew that Africans need that breakthrough in literacy» (Omolewa 2023, unpublished interview extract). In an interview with the veteran of adult education, Emeritus Professor Omolewa, key themes emerged that show the legacies of Professor Bown. These themes include but are not limited to:

- 1) Recruitment of indigenous adult education lecturers;
- 2) Mentoring and uplifting confidence of other people;
- 3) Sharing learning through national and international Adult Education platforms;
- 4) Publications in support of Adult Education;
- 5) Partnership building by doing.

The above themes will be supported with quotations from the extract of the interviews conducted on the 12th April 2023 with Professor Omolewa. These themes stand as some of the major attempts and contributions of Lalage in enhancing Adult Education through institution building from the African experience.

2.1 Recruitment of Indigenous Adult Education Lecturers

One of the key themes that emerged from the interview was the recruitment of indigenous people into the discipline of Adult Education. It was an emerging field at that time in Nigeria that required setting a foundation for the recruitment of capable people to advance the discipline in an attempt to strengthen the institutions of Adult Education. Omolewa, reflected that:

On the 16th October 1971 Professor Lalage Bown arrived at the University of Ibadan from the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria where she was serving as Professor of Adult education, and Chief Extension Coordinator.

She came as a consultant to serve on a panel to interview applicants for the position of lecturer in the Department of Adult Education which had just gained approval to begin a degree programme in Adult Education. The newly established department required native personnel, who would manage its affairs for the future. Omolewa mentioned that:

I was one of the candidates invited to the interview. On arrival at the interview room, I was asked to describe what I would be doing as a lecturer in adult education ... On the 1st of November 1971 I got a letter from the university council informing me of my appointment as a lecturer ... Lalage was part of the commendable efforts of the University of Ibadan to recruit indigenous lecturers to prepare graduates in the field of Adult Education in Nigeria.

Omolewa was one of the selected few lecturers recruited to advance the direction of Adult Education. The new recruits showed zeal and confidence in the promotion of Adult Education. The recruitment of indigenous adult educators was one of the steps to empower learners' using books written with Africans

in mind. This was one of the courses championed by Professor Bown for the purpose of strengthening institutions of Adult Education which became one of her legacies. She advanced indigenisation as a way of ensuring sustainability and understanding the perspectives of the locals. The educational approaches of the colonial era that might have been one of the factors contributing to high poverty and illiteracy in Africa were discarded. The indigenisation process of Adult Education would help Africans to reclaim their strength. The implication of such indigenisation efforts of Bown led the regional governments to embark on mass literacy campaigns with a view to uplifting large number of people from illiteracy, poverty and backwardness. It was noted by Aderinoye (2002) that in the 1960s, while Western and Eastern regional governments embarked on Universal Primary Education (UPE), the Northern regional government opted for free primary and adult literacy vigorously to eradicate ignorance.

2.2 Mentoring and Uplifting Confidence

Mentoring and uplifting confidence of people is one of the key factors for institution building in Adult Education in Africa. Professor Bown contributed to mentoring and uplifting others through her commitment to humanity. Omolewa reported that:

What I notice about Lalage was that she was always eager to encourage everybody to go to the next level of learning, knowledge, experience and expertise. Lalage was in my own mind an instrument to upgrade the confidence of everyone she came across and that was my experience with her.

Undoubtedly, this shows that Bown helped people to realise their potential in learning, knowledge, experience and expertise. Many African promoters of Adult Education are standing on the shoulder of Bown today because of the legacies she left behind. Omolewa reflected on how she has influenced his life:

Lalage became our external examiner ... When I was to be assessed in 1982 for promotion to the position of full Professor in Adult Education, Lalage was one of the three academics that were invited to assist the University of Ibadan. I do not have the privilege of knowing what she said about me about one decade after she got me into the Department but I know that the Vice Chancellor announced my promotion with effect from 1st October 1982. So, you can then see how my life had been touched, guided, controlled, influenced, and impacted by Lalage at every stage of my professional life.

This was how she impacted positively on the life of others, including myself, to sustain Adult Education institutions in Africa. Omolewa noted that whenever he appeared before UNESCO, «I had declared openly that she was the one who recruited me to the discipline of Adult Education. Thus, on every visit, I had moved from my seat to greet her for everybody to know that without her intervention I wouldn't have got appointed a four decades earlier» (2023 interview extract). Her outstanding contribution is still being enjoyed by Adult Educa-

tion practitioners in Nigeria and beyond. This can be seen later in the section that reports how she encouraged publications for sustaining Adult Education institutions in Africa.

2.3 Sharing Learning through National and International Adult Education Platforms

Learning and sharing are important in the advancement of knowledge and this was one of Bown's contributions. She utilised workshops and conferences to promote the ideals of Adult Education of uplifting humanity from the troubles of illiteracy and poverty. Omolewa reported that:

my professional development, [...] as a member of Nigerian National Council for Adult Education, NNCAE, [...] I again met Lalage who was always making presentations and giving lectures.

This reflects how committed Bown was to learning and sharing, which is one of the great ways to build the institution of Adult Education in Africa. Bown's commitment to supporting the career development of others was what made her active in NNCAE and African Adult Education Association. Omolewa explained that:

Lalage was also active at the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE). There was hardly anywhere that you went without running into the lady in one way or the other.

This is what sustained Adult Education in Africa and as reflected above, when I (Samir Halliru) first met Bown when she was 90 years old, she asked me so many questions on Adult Education and the book she co-authored. Omolewa mentioned that she sustained knowledge sharing aimed at promoting literacy at international platforms such as UNESCO. He mentioned that:

She sustained that passion for literacy promotion throughout her life. It was most satisfying to her and us all that in September 2009 she was invited by UNESCO to present the International Literacy Day address. That was clearly the highest honour you can have globally under the auspices of UNESCO. Before that September 2009, she had visited UNESCO as part of the UK delegation to the organisation.

Adult Education practitioners in Nigeria and beyond accord her respect and in 1997, on her 70th birthday, she was named 'Mother of Adult Education in Africa'. This respect is because of the legacies she left behind for the betterment of adult education in Africa.

2.4 Publications in Support of Adult Education

Publications remain long after the author is gone. This is exactly what Bown did especially in supporting Adult Education institutions in Africa. This was reflected in an interview with Omolewa, when he said:

In 1977 my Head of Department Professor S.H.O. Tomori asked me to go to Ghana and represent him at the writing workshop for the proposed Handbook of Adult Education for West Africa, which Lalage and my Head of Department were co-editing. I was asked to write the Chapter on Libraries as a form of support for Adult Education programmes and I was also invited to join Lalage to write the last chapter of that book on the future of adult education in West Africa.

Bown supported indigenous scholars to publish in the field of Adult Education. She not only published books herself, but also supported others to publish. Omolewa has written the following on the *Handbook of Adult Education for West Africa*:

Lalage graciously transformed the draft into a chapter that was well received by the readers of the Handbook. So, you could see that not only did she recruit me and promote me, she was also a partner in progress in the business of publishing and generally in my professional development.

This early effort sustained the discipline of Adult Education in Africa. Undoubtedly, her contribution in no small measure has helped with education and empowerment of people in the continent.

2.5 Partnership Building by Doing

Partnership building was critical to the development of Adult Education. This partnership sustained the intellectual and developmental relationship between the Global South and the Global North. Bown used her wisdom to assemble scholars so that institutions of Adult Education to be sustained. To buttress the partnership of Adult Education as promoted by Bown, Omolewa has this to say:

What I noticed was that the book which was prepared in Ghana brought together about fifteen of us, including veterans of Adult Education from different parts of West Africa. Among these were Kwa Hagan, head of Adult Education Department at the University of Ghana, Christian Cole the pioneer extramural tutor in Sierra Leone, who came with their own experience and expertise. I observed from the experience of writing the book that adult education involved partnership building and shared experience.

Knowledge, experience and expertise have to be shared among the institutions of Adult Education to flourish and to empower (liberate) people from poverty, exploitation, marginalization, oppression, powerlessness and dehumanization. Adult Education can support people to self-actualize and to exercise the capacity of active participation in social, economic and political in line with the global trends of development. No one has monopoly of knowledge. Therefore, scholars and practitioners have to learn and share knowledge and experience with each other across contexts without any prejudice, as Omolewa explains:

You don't have the monopoly of knowledge. I also noted that adult education humbles you and lets you know that your knowledge is only a part of the wider knowledge that can be developed.

Adult Education as a simple discipline requires people to learn from each other through partnership, collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experience. From the foundations Bown set, departments of Adult Education in Africa are partnering with departments across the United Kingdom, Europe and the US in order to empower people from the troubles created by the global forces of capitalism.

On this note, there are three lessons to learn from the life and time of Professor Bown, as reflected by Omolewa:

1. Bown shows that Adult Education embodies the notion that everyone is equal and has the potential to develop. Adult Education is based on the principle of equality that touches on lives irrespective of status or poverty level of anyone;
2. Bown paid attention to the lives of both the downtrodden and the rich. She often looked at the life behind the vessel of the human body;
3. Bown, by her example and life, showed that learning should only stop at the end of formal schooling and should remain lifelong.

The subsequent sections of this paper will illustrate actions and praxis in the life of Bown as one of the champions of Adult Education in Africa and the world at large.

3. Publication as Legacies of Bown in Africa

Publications are a great source of sharing knowledge and empowering large segments of the population. The act of learning and sharing knowledge was what Bown devoted herself to throughout her lifetime. Hosen and Lau (2020) maintained that sharing knowledge through publication is an important step for authors to empower readers and also for scholars to make their positions known. One such great scholar whose publication has made and is still making an impact in the field of Adult Education was Professor Bown. She published many works, especially in the field of the Africanisation of knowledge. According to Innes (2022), Lalage made an early attempt, after taking a new post, to challenge faculty to reconsider rethinking the African curriculum to reflect the ideals of Africa as a way of empowering them. She suggested that it was important for African students to encounter writing by and about African people. This is the reason why her 1973 book entitled *Two Centuries of African English*, as reported by Innes (2022), features writings by African writers such as Ignatius Sancho, Olaudah Equiano, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere and Chinua Achebe. Bown sought to promote indigenisation of knowledge for empowering individuals through literacy for the purpose of liberating them from the shackles of poverty, illiteracy and disempowerment. However, absence of indigenisation of knowledge invariably might be contributing to the current economic, social and political development challenges affecting humanity especially in Nigeria. Eze (2021) maintained that Adult Education is critical and essential to economic, social and political development of any country.

Moreover, Bown and Tomori's (1979) *Handbook of Adult Education for West Africa* discussed the scope of Adult Education beyond the realm of literacy to cover other important aspects of human life. This handbook, as noted by Ewert (1982), served as a stimulus for African scholars to further develop Adult Education literature based on the existing economic, social, cultural and political circumstances of their own context. This chapter argues that enhancing Adult Education process requires input from Africans as it pertains to their circumstances. Bown served as a strong advocate for supporting the Africanisation of the curriculum and content of learning (Innes 2022). This involved using books and ideas from African origins, and Hamilton (2021) has reported that Bown's social activism and decolonisation of the curriculum continued in Scotland, through knowledge sharing.

Another book, entitled *An Introduction to the Study of Adult Education: A Multi-Disciplinary and Cross-Cultural Approach for Developing Countries*, was presented in 1972 at an international meeting of scholars interested in Comparative Adult Education, under the auspices of UNESCO and the Danish Ministry of Education (Bown and Okedara 1981). It is an attempt to support the building of strong institutions as platform for the promotion of adult education in Africa and beyond.

The need for the book was based on three aims articulated by the authors. The first aim was to apply insights of other disciplines and professions to that of adult education by establishing connections and relationships with them. This is simply learning from other disciplines as a way of enhancing and strengthening the practice of adult education. The need for the book started with academics from Nigeria, but Nordborg had shown that there were fellow adult educationists elsewhere with similar interests. The second aim, as noted by Bown and Okedara (1981), was to apply cross-cultural perspectives to Adult Education. The authors were from three different continents and reflected a range of experiences from their own and others' cultures. This arguably is important in strengthening and enhancing Adult Education teaching, learning, research and practices across cultures. The third aim was to scrutinise the needs, practices and prospects of Adult Education in developing countries, especially in Africa, to look at Adult Education through many lenses rather than from one location. Bown and Okedara (1981) argued that many African countries were affected by ideas and institutions imposed by or copied from colonising powers. The book sets a foundation for learning, and for sharing ideas and practices with developing countries in the Adult Education discipline. This calls for the indigenisation of knowledge in a bid to solve the economic, social and political development challenges in developing countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia.

Bown and Okedara (1981) maintained that it is no longer a case of borrowing from Europe or North America, but an interchange of knowledge and ideas between Latin America, Asia and Africa, which should be the focus, a forerunner to more recent ideas of knowledge co-construction and capacity strengthening, as exemplified by Osborne in this book. For example, the Freirian literacy idea

of 'conscientisation' (Freire 1993) from Brazil was taken across Europe, North America and Africa. This interchanging of ideas has significantly contributed to the building and strengthening of Adult Education practice and prospect in Africa. Bown has a driven policy change and development of Adult Education from her work of interchanging ideas to strengthen development.

4. Contributions of Bown to Adult Education Institutions and Policy through Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

All through her life Bown contributed to many Adult Education learning platforms, including at conferences and within institutions. The first time I met Lalage, as mentioned earlier, was on the 2nd of April 2014 at the Council for Education in the Commonwealth conference. She served as a speaker at the conference sharing knowledge and ideas about widening access to education. It was one of the ways that she preserved knowledge from the past.

Hamilton (2022) reflected on the role Bown played in building and strengthening Adult Education institutions in Africa, particularly through her involvement in establishing the first systematic university training program for adult educators in the region. Bown together with Malam Abubakar Koko, a former Nigerian civil servant, administrator and politician, met with the Secretary of Military Government in 1969 to find out what University can be doing to help citizens.

The government paid attention to adult education and its policies only after the advocacy visits by Lalage Bown to senior government officials in both military and civilian administrations. This has led to the policy development for Adult Education agencies across Nigeria with a view to helping people out of illiteracy and poverty. Bako (2022) has reported that, as part of its literacy campaign, the Kano State government in 1980 promoted the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education to become an independent board called Agency for Mass Education. It was a landmark as it was the first post-independence effort to set up an autonomous parastatal responsible for adult and non-formal education in Nigeria.

Furthermore, it is through advocacy efforts that decree 17 of the Military Government led to the establishment of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) on 25 June 1990 (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2014). It is not surprising to say that some of the activities of Bown through advocacy visits to address illiteracy rates have influenced the development of Adult Education policies that culminated in the establishment of institutions of Adult Education such as NMEC and other state agencies for mass education in Nigeria. The core mandate of these state agencies for mass education and NMEC has been the eradication of illiteracy and providing adult citizens with necessary education *inter alia* for public enlightenment (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2014), which is in line with the thinking and ideas of Bown as advocated in the country. These policies are still very important for the country in the enhancement of literacy rates and addressing social injustice (Eze

2021). Bown's advocacy visits sought to inculcate an understanding about the thinking and expectations of people on the development of their community by universities for now and the future through literacy and engagement (Hamilton 2022). It should be noted that, initially, Adult Education was not included in the National Policy on Education, but, with a review in the 1980s, became a part of the National Policy.

A new policy guideline for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education was developed in 2017 under the leadership of Professor Abba Abubakar Haladu (Executive Secretary NMEC) to guide the implementation of literacy activities in Nigeria. The policy thrust of the document was ensuring education opportunities for all citizens, addressing in and out of schools literacy opportunities that safeguard the over 65 million young persons and adults who missed out on formal education (NMEC 2017). The activities of Bown have impacted on this new development and future developments of Adult Education in Nigeria. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Bown advocated for the necessity of collaboration. That is why the new NMEC policy guidelines emphasize the importance of such synergy in addressing illiteracy in Nigeria. The NMEC policy guidelines emphasize the importance of collaboration and synergy with related organisations (Universal Basic Education Commission [UBEC], National Teachers' Institute [NTI], National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies [NBAIS] and National Orientation Agency [NOA]) in the promotion of literacy and empowerment of citizenry in Nigeria.

The policy guidelines further emphasize the relevance of multilingualism in basic literacy, proposing that basic literacy should be promoted in the language of the learners' immediate environment. Therefore, efforts have been made to develop basic literacy primers using the language of the learners, especially the three major languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Bown sought to promote the idea of using books in the first language understood by the learners as a way of addressing the challenges of literacy poverty. The mass literacy, adult and non-formal education policy documents highlight some key themes in Adult Education discourse such as access, equity and opportunity for all citizens irrespective of gender, and economic and social status. Bown was an important advocate for women's empowerment and widening access to education. Part of gender integration of the NMEC (2017) has been to address the diverse learning needs of women and girls from different socio-economic backgrounds. The following categories of women and girls are targeted by the policy:

- a) Out-of-school and drop-out girls;
- b) Women in purdah;
- c) Divorcees and widows;
- d) Girls;
- e) Vulnerable women;
- f) Market women;
- g) Unemployed and single women.

Bown's efforts were always directed towards the empowerment and uplifting of weaker and non-literate members of society. These aims have seen the light of the day by being incorporated in the national policy of mass literacy, and adult and non-formal education. This new policy has enshrined that all college education in Nigeria should establish Adult Education departments as a way of generating personal power for the development in Nigeria.

Professor Bown served as the first secretary of the African Adult Education Association and was active in building the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE). These institutions played an important role in elevating adult education in Nigeria and beyond. NNCAE serves as an institution that mentors scholars and as a platform for learning and sharing of adult education ideals. Bown, while in Zambia, served as Joint Executive Secretary of the International Congress of Africanists with her friend Michael Crowder, a British Africanist, at the Second International Congress of Africanists, held from 11 to 20 December 1967 at the University of Dakar, Senegal. The theme of the Congress was "Research in the Service of Africa". The congress, under the leadership of Lalage, made great efforts to bring different umbrellas of adult education together for the purpose of developing international cooperation in the field of African studies, through the organisation of periodic sessions, study groups, scholarly publications and the exchange of information between Africanists and served as a forum for discussion of issues related to adult education research. Through all these efforts, as reported by Hamilton (2021), were informed by Bown's strong belief concerning the effect of literacy on personal, social, political development, and especially when it came to women, for whom literacy offers change in self-worth and self-confidence.

Conclusion

We conclude that the decolonisation process of Adult Education in Africa started with scholars such as Bown, who laid the foundation for indigenous Adult Education practice and played a significant role in expanding the scope of Adult Education in Africa. This provided the foundation for the sustainability of Adult Education practice in Nigeria, and Africa more generally. She worked and understood African perspectives of learning and education. She believed that indigenization of knowledge, practice and the system as a whole would have helped to solve economic, social and political development challenges in Africa. The chapter offers directions for policy on the development of Adult Education Agencies such as NMEC and States Agencies for Mass Education as a way of addressing the challenges of illiteracy and ignorance in Nigeria. Learning from the advocacy and activities of Bown, future Adult Education policies would call for the entrenchment of ownership, mentoring, sharing and partnership in Adult Education in Nigeria. How would that happen? Bown as a mentor, scholar and grassroot educator worked in close contact with people, built their trust in her in order to empower them out of illiteracy and ignorance. This has implications for the need of the institutionalisation of mentoring and partnership institutions in Nigeria. It is also concluded that lack of the utilisation of institutions of Adult

Education to empower weaker people and illiterates in Nigeria by authorities might be the triggering factor for poverty, illiteracy, inequalities and widening gaps in access to education.

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