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Lifelong skills a tool for adult development in kwara state, nigeria

Kemahiran sepanjang hayat: alat untuk pembangunan dewasa di negeri kwara, nigeria

Sadiq kayode, Toyin
Department of Adult & Primary Education Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, 1515, P.M.B, Ilorin, Nigeria

OJI, Emmanuel Wichendu
Faculty of Education Ignatius Ajuru University of Education P.M.B. 5047 Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria.

Sholagberu, A. O
Department of Adult & Primary Education Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, 1515, P.M.B, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abdulwahab R
Department of Adult & Primary Education Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, 1515, P.M.B, Ilorin, Nigeria

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Keywords: Lifelong, Skills, Adult, Development, lifelong learning

ABSTRACT

Abstrak

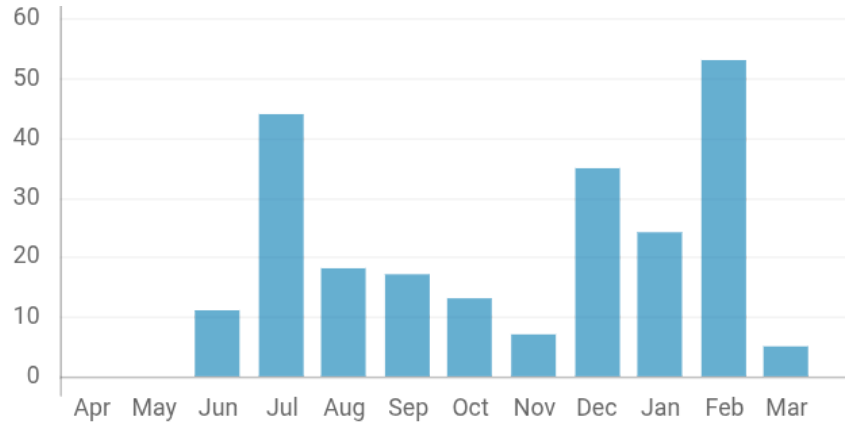
The paper examined the lifelong skills as a tool for adult development in Kwara State, Nigeria. The acquisition and refinement of lifelong skills are pivotal in the continuous development of adults, fostering both personal and professional growth. Lifelong learning encompasses a broad spectrum of skills, including cognitive, technical, social, and emotional competencies, which are essential for adapting to the ever-evolving demands of the modern world. This paper explores the significance of lifelong skills as fundamental tools for adult development, examining their impact on career advancement. The paper recommended among other things,

the government at all levels should expand access to adult education programmes, including literacy, numeracy, and vocational training, particularly in underserved, areas, Provide flexible learning opportunities such as part-time courses, evening classes, and online education to accommodate working adults and those with family responsibilities,

Abstract

Kertas kerja ini mengkaji kemahiran sepanjang hayat sebagai alat untuk pembangunan orang dewasa di Negeri Kwara, Nigeria. Pemerolehan dan penambahbaikan kemahiran sepanjang hayat adalah penting dalam pembangunan berterusan orang dewasa, yang merangsang pertumbuhan peribadi dan profesional. Pembelajaran sepanjang hayat merangkumi pelbagai jenis kemahiran - termasuk kecekapan kognitif, teknikal, sosial dan emosi - yang penting untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan keperluan dunia moden yang sentiasa berubah. Kertas ini meneroka kepentingan kemahiran sepanjang hayat sebagai alat asas untuk pembangunan orang dewasa, dengan meneliti kesannya terhadap kemajuan kerjaya. Antara cadangan dalam kertas ini ialah kerajaan di semua peringkat perlu memperluaskan akses kepada program pendidikan orang dewasa, termasuk literasi, numerasi, dan latihan vokasional, khususnya di kawasan yang kurang mendapat perkhidmatan; menyediakan peluang pembelajaran yang fleksibel seperti kursus separuh masa, kelas malam, dan pendidikan dalam talian untuk menampung keperluan golongan dewasa yang bekerja dan mereka yang mempunyai tanggungjawab keluarga.

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LIFELONG SKILLS A TOOL FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

Kemahiran Sepanjang Hayat: Alat Untuk Pembangunan Dewasa Di Negeri Kwara, Nigeria

***Kayode, Sadiq Toyin[1], Oji, Emmanuel Wichendu[2], Sholagberu, A. O.[1], Abdulwahab, R.[1]**

[1]Department of Adult & Primary Education
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin,
1515, P.M.B, Ilorin, Nigeria

[2]Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
P.M.B. 5047 Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt
Rivers State, Nigeria.

*Corresponding author's email: kayode.st@unilorin.edu.ng

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Abstract

The paper examined the lifelong skills as a tool for adult development in Kwara State, Nigeria. The acquisition and refinement of lifelong skills are pivotal in the continuous development of adults, fostering both personal and professional growth. Lifelong learning encompasses a broad spectrum of skills, including cognitive, technical, social, and emotional competencies, which are essential for adapting to the ever-evolving demands of the modern world. This paper explores the significance of lifelong skills as fundamental tools for adult development, examining their impact on career advancement. The paper recommended among other things, the government at all levels should expand access to adult education programmes, including literacy, numeracy, and vocational training, particularly in underserved, areas, Provide flexible learning opportunities such as part-time courses, evening classes, and online education to accommodate working adults and those with family responsibilities,
Keywords: Lifelong, Skills, Adult, Development and lifelong learning

Abstrak

Kertas kerja ini mengkaji kemahiran sepanjang hayat sebagai alat untuk pembangunan orang dewasa di Negeri Kwara, Nigeria. Pemerolehan dan penambahbaikan kemahiran sepanjang hayat adalah penting dalam pembangunan berterusan orang dewasa, yang merangsang pertumbuhan peribadi dan profesional. Pembelajaran sepanjang hayat merangkumi pelbagai jenis kemahiran - termasuk kecekapan kognitif, teknikal, sosial dan emosi - yang penting untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan keperluan dunia moden yang sentiasa berubah. Kertas ini meneroka kepentingan kemahiran sepanjang hayat sebagai alat asas untuk pembangunan orang dewasa, dengan meneliti kesannya terhadap kemajuan kerjaya. Antara cadangan dalam kertas ini ialah kerajaan di semua peringkat perlu memperluaskan akses kepada program pendidikan orang dewasa, termasuk literasi, numerasi, dan latihan vokasional, khususnya di kawasan yang kurang mendapat perkhidmatan; menyediakan peluang pembelajaran yang fleksibel seperti kursus separuh masa, kelas malam, dan pendidikan dalam talian untuk menampung keperluan golongan dewasa yang bekerja dan mereka yang mempunyai tanggungjawab keluarga.
***Kata kunci**: sepanjang hayat, kemahiran, dewasa, pembangunan, pembelajaran*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kwara State, located in the central region of Nigeria, is a diverse and dynamic area characterized by its mix of urban and rural communities. The state's economy is primarily based on agriculture, with a growing emphasis on trade, education, and small-scale industries. In recent years, there has been a notable push towards economic diversification and sustainable development, highlighting the need for a workforce equipped with a broad range of skills.

Adult development in Kwara State faces several challenges, including limited access to quality education, inadequate vocational training opportunities, and socio-economic constraints. These issues are compounded by a rapidly changing job market that increasingly demands proficiency in both traditional skills and modern technological competencies. As such, there is a pressing need to focus on lifelong skills development to enhance the adaptability and resilience of the adult population. However, adult learners in Kwara State could cont access lifelong skills for several reasons among which are:

2.0 CONCEPT OF LIFELONG SKILLS

Hasan, A. (2012). Lifelong skills encompass various competencies, including literacy and numeracy, critical thinking, digital literacy, and socio-emotional skills. These skills are crucial for adults to navigate the complexities of contemporary life, pursue continuous personal growth, and contribute effectively to their communities and the economy. In Kwara State, the promotion of lifelong learning is essential for fostering economic stability, reducing poverty, and improving quality of life.

Efforts to promote lifelong skills in Kwara State are supported by various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector initiatives. Programmes aimed at adult education, vocational training, and community development play a pivotal role in equipping individuals with the skills necessary for personal and professional success. Additionally, the integration of technology in education and training programs has the potential to bridge gaps in access and enhance the quality of lifelong learning opportunities.

This paper examines the current state of lifelong skills development in Kwara State, highlighting the initiatives, challenges, and potential strategies for fostering an environment conducive to continuous learning. By focusing on the unique socio-economic context of Kwara State, the study aims to provide insights into effective approaches for promoting lifelong skills as essential tools for adult development.

3.0 LIFELONG SKILLS AND ADULT EDUCATION.

Adults engage in learning activities everyday as they encounter changes and challenges in their lives. Hence, learning is a continuous process throughout life, involving collection, construction and reconstruction of new ideas and experiences. According to World Bank report (2002), most experiences encountered by individuals in the course of their lifetime as well as formal training or formal instruction, apprenticeship, all forms of learning in the family, mentorship, counseling, engagement in voluntary self-motivated pursuit for personal reasons, constitute lifelong skills and lifelong learning. The paper therefore, recommended among other things:

Adult and Lifelong Learning in Nigeria It is a matter of logic, conscientiousness and insightful thought that continuing education has been used to promote lifelong

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learning for meeting both the educational and career advancement needs of youth and adults who combined productive work with professional development that is schooling. This view is consistent with Omolewa (1985) assertion that continuing education is a desirable extension of educational response to trends in societies' demand for education which is relevant to work and professional development. One fact that is deducible from the above is that continuing education has continually Ojo-Ajibare: Implications of Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development 122 been used to break the cycle of repeated examination failures which restrained many youth and adults from transiting from high school to college or university.

Effort by prospective candidates to obtain mandatory results to meet university admission requirements induced many of the students with deficient results to enrol in learning-assistance centres popularly referred to as coaching centres where students are prepared to write the General Certificate Examination (GCE) 'Ordinary' or 'Advanced' level papers. This is exemplified by 1948 list of provisional admission of students into extra-mural and continuing education programmes of the University of Ibadan presented by Omolewa (1985:79) as inherited from the Oxford University Extra-Mural Delegacy. As exemplified by the attendance records, about one hundred and forty-one (141 persons) students mostly workers drawn from different occupational backgrounds such as clerical work, teaching, agricultural extension services, technical works, civil service and land surveying to mention but a few were offered admission. Although the University of Ibadan Extra-Mural Studies and Continuing education started continuing education programmes in Nigeria with the students inherited from the Oxford University Extra-Mural Delegacy, nonetheless, other private providers outside the purview of university extension classes quickly took advantage of the trend to provide remedial and continuing education programmes through correspondence, open and distance learning for the benefit of youth and adults seeking to write London University Matriculation and Intermediate degree examinations and Senior Cambridge School Certificate Examinations. These include Wolsey Hall and Rapid Results College, University of London with its registered Satellite Study Centre (Exams Success and Correspondence College) located at 10-12, Labinjo Avenue, Off Shipeolu Street, Palm Grove area of Lagos. Some of the courses offered include economics, accounting, law, banking and finance, commerce, store keeping, salesmanship and marketing, secretarial studies, public administration, industrial relations and personnel management and other disciplines.

As stated above, many private and public institutions took a clue from University of Ibadan Extra-Mural Studies and Continuing education programmes to provide post-secondary school evening classes and remedial education for the teeming youth and adults who desired remediation of examination results. Among the most prominent forerunners of these programme providers were Dotun Oyewole Continuing Education Centre, Abeokuta in Ogun State, Jubril Martins Continuing Education Centre, Surulere, Lagos, Premier College and Continuing Education Centre, Jibowu, Yaba Lagos. Others include Nigeria Peoples' High School and Continuing Education Centre, Kadara Street, Ebute-Metta Lagos, DAVOC Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Services, Ketu Lagos and Obokun General Makerere Journal of Higher Education 123 Certificate of Education (GCE) and Continuing Education Centre, Ilesha, Oshun State. While these learning-assistance centres and continuing education centres lasted, teaching and learning was conducted in the evenings and part-time usually during weekends. Saturday part-time classes were always participative laboratory practical teaching and experiments in science subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Agric. Science. The laboratory practicals were always conducted in collaboration with invited University of Lagos teachers in each subject area to enhance students' learning achievement.

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Effort by government to reduce the rate of failure among high school graduates and facilitate youth and adults' admission to colleges and universities led to the establishment of higher school programmes (HSC) in schools through which students were prepared to write GCE "Advanced" level papers. Some of such schools included Federal School of Arts and Science (FSAS), Victoria Island, Lagos, Federal School of Arts and Science, Ondo in Ondo State. Others were Loyola College, Ibadan, Christ High School, Ado-Ekiti in Ekiti State, Aquinas College, Akure in Ondo State, Adeola Odutola College, Ijebu-Ode and Saint Gregory's College, Obalende, Lagos. The concentration of Nigerian evening schools, higher school programmes including some universities' extramural classes on remedial education (Genera Certificate of Examination, GCE) attests to the fact that Nigerian evening schools were not initially designed to meet the same requirements as that of their British counterparts which aimed to promote life-long learning with teaching directly related to professional development and employment creation.

4.0 CONCEPT LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning means different things to different people. Since its popularization in the 70s, it has entered a wide range usage. According to UNESCO (2001) lifelong skills and lifelong learning connotes a way of connecting the various stages of formal education and linking them with informal, non-formal learning. It encompasses all forms of learning and schooling from the family, early years, and preschool learning through tertiary education, work and adult life. To many, Lifelong skills and lifelong learning means lifelong education and others may perceive it as learning for life. Nzeneri (2024) perceived it as part of life, integrated with and inseparable from life and it must involve change (i.e. learning). Furthermore, Longworth (2020) viewed LLS as a way of seeking to broaden education and foster lifelong education for all,, while promoting education for both social development, economic growth, lifelong manpower development, employability and up skilling of workers in their work place. Hence, man continues to expend his energy to acquire new ideas, new skills, new knowledge and experiences through formal, informal, non-formal and continuing education among other which will enable him survive and become productive participant in development.

These litanies of incidental or planned educational activities are expected to bring about change in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, habits and behaviour of man and the society. Lifelong learning takes place at all time, irrespective of people, space and diversity. (Delors (2021) informs us that it spans a wide range of education activities and training issues resulting from integration of formal, non-formal and informal education and speaks to many different audiences. Incidentally, adults who are the largest population of this audience generally bank what they learn and apply them as the need arises such as in constant development of self, adjustment, managing life problems/uncertainties and maintaining a healthy co-existence with people in one's environment. Even in later life such as retirement, adults still need to learn; as such they ought to seek new knowledge for their personal fulfillment through learning activities that cross traditional academic bounds taking divers forms such as recreational activities. This explains why most adults even at retirement are still very active, articulate and calculative because most of the day to-day activities engaged in their homes, in the church and community where they make valued contributions also promote lifelong learning. Anyanwu (2021) opined that desirable changes highlight the roles of the adult population in community development or national development. Continuing, the author noted that in any community or nation, it is the

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adults who participate effectively because they hold the destiny of the society and not children. Torres (2003) chipped in that it is the adults who take decisions that affect their children, formulate and implement policies and not children. Reiterating, the author maintained that it is the adults who determine the survival of the society, the level of the society can attain educationally, socially, culturally and politically, not children. Considering the relevance of adults in the society and knowledge explosion which has posed serious challenges to new trends in adult learning process, it becomes imperative that adults must remain in constant tough with trends in development. They need to frequently apply their knowledge in some practical fashion to learn effectively so that they can assume highly responsibilities in their family, community, work place and society. Adults therefore, must upgrade and update themselves with information on emerging issues in the society to enable them keep pace with the time they find themselves and not lose out in this period of dynamic, scientific and technological advancement. This is very necessary because there must be a reasonable goal and expectation the new knowledge will help them further. Take for instance, the use of computer worked enhanced learning which uses mobile telecom equipment and mobile phone usage are becoming increasingly common place in every home and facets of the society.

Computer has been recognized for its importance in developing in the learner an inquiring mind, critical and reflective thinking. It has created an opportunity for self-directed learning to both the educated and non-education, young and old who are desirous to acquire basic skills that will make them become relevant and more conversant in the use of these technologies in their work place. In fact, it is in response to the ever changing society and need for acquiring knowledge throughout life, that even the nomads have also aligned themselves with the use of mobile phones. The more complex the society becomes the more adaptive strategies are fashioned out by individuals so that they will not lose out in the wind of change.

5.0 THE IMPACT OF LIFELONG SKILLS

The impact of lifelong skills on the nomads ability to mainstream from one technology (radio) to another is a proof that the need and advantage of these technologies on learning throughout life cannot be overemphasized. Again, the impact of mobile nomadic education programme introduced in 1987, geared towards the education of the ever migrating cattle Fulanis has helped them to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies in improving their livestock products through the application of modern technology; and to also appreciate the need to use modern savings and bank credits among others (Oyedele, 2023). The mobile lifelong education engaged by the nomads is in line with the National Policy on Education, NPE 2004, Section 6 sub-section 31, which specified on the need to: provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education who did not complete their primary education. This includes the nomads, the migrants and their families. In contemporary societies such as ours undergoing transformation in all facets of development, lifelong education provides opportunities for all categories of learners to be able to flow in the positive direction of change. It is worthy to note that , the only integral part of general education that is capable of providing hope to educationally disadvantaged teeming adult population is through adult and non-formal education. According to Ugwu (2021) adult education is a means of sharing the latest and most pertinent knowledge with people and through it human resources can be developed. Adult and non-formal education can be used to create and offer new educational programmes organized for learners outside the

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bricks and mortar and four walled conventional school setting. For example, Cyber Café where people go to acquire computer skills can be used successfully to promote LLS, provide self-employment opportunity and improve the standard of living of thousands of today's socio-economically challenged individuals.

6.0 BENEFITS OF LIFELONG SKILLS

Lifelong skills, encompassing a range of cognitive, technical, social, and emotional competencies, offer numerous benefits that extend across various aspects of an individual's life. These benefits are particularly significant for adults as they navigate the complexities of modern society and the evolving demands of the workforce. The primary benefits of lifelong skills include the following but not limited to:

1. Enhanced Employability and Career Advancement:

a) Adaptability: Lifelong skills enable individuals to adapt to new technologies and changing job requirements, making them more competitive in the job market.
b) Career Progression: Continuous learning and skill development can lead to promotions and new career opportunities.
c) Job Security: A diverse skill set reduces the risk of unemployment by making individuals more versatile and valuable to employers.

2. Personal Development and Fulfillment:

a) Self-Esteem and Confidence: Acquiring new skills boosts self-esteem and confidence, contributing to a positive self-image.
b) Cognitive Health: Engaging in lifelong learning keeps the mind active and can help prevent cognitive decline associated with aging.
c) Life Satisfaction: Pursuing personal interests and hobbies through lifelong learning enhances overall life satisfaction and happiness.

3. Social Integration and Community Engagement:

a) Social Skills: Developing interpersonal skills improves communication, empathy, and relationships, fostering better social interactions.
b) Civic Participation: Lifelong learning encourages active citizenship and community involvement, promoting social cohesion and a sense of belonging.
c) Cultural Awareness: Exposure to diverse ideas and perspectives through continuous learning promotes cultural sensitivity and tolerance.

4. Economic Growth and Development:

a) Workforce Productivity: A skilled workforce is more productive, driving economic growth and innovation.
b) Entrepreneurship: Lifelong skills support entrepreneurial ventures by providing the knowledge and competencies needed to start and sustain businesses.
c) Poverty Reduction: Education and skills training are critical in reducing poverty by improving employment prospects and earning potential.

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5. Health and Well-Being:

a) Mental Health: Engaging in lifelong learning activities has been linked to improved mental health, reducing the risk of depression and anxiety.
b) Physical Health: Knowledge about health and wellness acquired through lifelong learning can lead to healthier lifestyles and better health outcomes.
c) Resilience: Continuous learning fosters resilience, helping individuals cope with life's challenges and changes more effectively.

6. Technological Competence:

a) Digital Literacy: In a technology-driven world, digital literacy is essential. Lifelong learning ensures that individuals can effectively use and navigate digital tools and platforms.
b) Innovation: Exposure to new technologies and ideas encourages creativity and innovation, enabling individuals to contribute to technological advancements.

By investing in lifelong skills, individuals can achieve personal growth, improve their professional trajectories, and contribute positively to their communities and the broader economy. These benefits underscore the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning and development throughout adulthood.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Lifelong skills are crucial for personal, professional, and societal advancement in today's rapidly changing world. They equip individuals with the ability to adapt to new challenges, embrace technological advancements, and foster personal growth. By promoting lifelong learning, we can ensure that adults remain competitive in the job market, engaged in their communities, and resilient in the face of life's challenges. For regions like Kwara State in Nigeria, the development and promotion of lifelong skills are particularly vital. Addressing the unique socio-economic challenges faced by the adult population through targeted educational initiatives and supportive policies can lead to significant improvements in quality of life, economic stability, and social cohesion.

Stakeholders, including governments, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations, must collaborate to create an environment that values and supports continuous learning. This includes investing in educational infrastructure, leveraging technology for accessible learning, fostering workplace training, and ensuring inclusive and equitable access to learning opportunities.

However, the commitment to lifelong skills development empowers individuals to pursue their aspirations, adapt to evolving circumstances, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader economy. As we move forward, prioritizing lifelong learning will be key to building a resilient, skilled, and thriving society.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROMOTING LIFELONG SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

To effectively promote lifelong skills development, it is essential to implement strategies that support continuous learning across various stages of adulthood. The following recommendations aim to create an enabling environment for lifelong learning and skill acquisition:

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1. ***Strengthen Educational Infrastructure:***
    a) Access to Adult Education: Expand access to adult education programs, including literacy, numeracy, and vocational training, particularly in underserved areas.
    b) Flexible Learning Options: Provide flexible learning opportunities such as part-time courses, evening classes, and online education to accommodate working adults and those with family responsibilities.

2. ***Promote Workplace Learning:***
    a) Employer-Sponsored Training: Encourage employers to invest in employee training and development programs that enhance both job-specific skills and broader competencies.
    b) On-the-Job Training: Facilitate on-the-job training and apprenticeships that allow employees to learn while they work, integrating practical experience with theoretical knowledge.

3. ***Leverage Technology:***
    a) Digital Literacy Programmes: Implement digital literacy initiatives to ensure that all adults have the necessary skills to navigate and utilize digital technologies effectively so as to enable them to function effectively in the society.
    b) Online Learning Platforms: Develop and promote online learning platforms that provide accessible, affordable and high-quality educational resources for lifelong learners (adults).

4. ***Foster a Culture of Lifelong Learning:***
    a) Public Awareness Campaigns: Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of lifelong learning and its benefits for personal and professional development among adult learners.
    b) Learning Communities: Establish community-based learning centers and groups that encourage peer-to-peer learning and provide support networks for adult learners.

5. ***Government and Policy Support:***
    a) Supportive Policies: Formulate and implement policies that support lifelong learning, such as tax incentives for education-related expenses and funding for adult education programmes.
    b) Partnerships: Foster partnerships between government, educational institutions, businesses, and NGOs to create a coordinated approach to lifelong learning.

6. ***Ensure Inclusivity and Equity:***
    a) Target Marginalized Groups: Develop targeted programmes to support lifelong learning among marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including women, rural populations, nomadic groups, and individuals with disabilities.
    b) Affordable Education: Ensure that lifelong learning opportunities are affordable and accessible to all, removing financial barriers to participation of lifelong skills.

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7. Monitor and Evaluate:

a) Continuous Improvement: Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating lifelong learning programmes to ensure their effectiveness and make necessary improvements.
b) Data Collection: Collect and analyze data on participation rates, outcomes, and barriers to lifelong learning to inform policy and programme development.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can create a robust framework that supports lifelong skills development, enabling adults to continuously learn and adapt to the changing demands of the modern world. This, in turn, will contribute to personal fulfillment, economic growth, and societal well-being.

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