

THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON THE CARIBBEAN REGION

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ABSTRACT

Globalization poses both benefits and challenges for the Caribbean Region. Three benefits of globalization to the Caribbean are more educational prospects for citizens, the development of a popular culture, and increased income for citizens due to the development of the tourist industry. Three challenges of globalization to the Caribbean Region are diminished foreign markets for Caribbean products, increase in globalized criminal activities, and a shortage of skilled and qualified personnel in many Caribbean countries. Adult education programmes can help Caribbean citizens grapple with the challenges of globalisation. This can be done through the hosting of parenting education programmes, technical vocational education and training, entrepreneurial education, ICT training, and citizenship education. An adult education policy in each Caribbean country can go a far way in ensuring the success of the afore mentioned programmes. Also, the hiring of trained and qualified facilitators to execute the programmes will add to success. Furthermore, the involvement of relevant stakeholders in programme planning, implementation, and evaluation is another effective strategy in guaranteeing programme realization. Finally, each Caribbean country should establish an Adult and Continuing Education Coordinating Unit. This unit will monitor and evaluate adult education activities in each country, ensuring that they function within the guidelines of an adult education policy framework.

Key words: Globalisation, Caribbean Region, adult education programmes, benefits, challenges.

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This essay examines the ways in which adult and continuing education can assist the Caribbean region to take advantages of globalization. It comprises a literature review of the benefits and challenges of globalization to the Caribbean and discusses some of the kinds of programs with socio-cultural and political emphasis that adult and continuing education institutions may implement to exploit the advantages and challenges of globalization. In addition, recommendations are offered on how to plan, implement, and evaluate the programmes, giving emphasis to the socio-cultural and political features.

The Benefits and Challenges of Globalization to the Caribbean Region

Many writers have established that the term globalization can be defined in varied ways. However, for the purpose of this assignment globalization is defined as a social process that deals with the interconnectivity and flow of production, communication and technologies across the world. It also involves the spread of economic and cultural activities (Infed, n.d.). Some of the benefits of globalization to the Caribbean Region are the availability of more educational opportunities, the development of the Caribbean's popular culture, and increased income for citizens due to the development of the tourist industry. Three challenges of globalization to the Caribbean Region are diminished foreign markets for Caribbean products, increase in globalized criminal activities, and a shortage of skilled and qualified personnel in many Caribbean countries.

Globalization has led to the increase in educational opportunities in the Caribbean (Alabi, 2010). This has been made possible through the expansion of communication technologies, such as the internet (Chacon, 2011). Access to the internet has contributed to the expansion of distance education, which many adults are able to access. Many persons because of their busy schedules have been unable to access higher education and professional development. However, this is now possible through the internet. Hundreds of thousands of adults are participating in online programmes that are run by countries throughout the world, for instance, many Caribbean students pursue their Bachelor and Masters degrees by enrolling in American and European universities. Globalization has indeed contributed to the expansion of educational opportunities for Caribbean people.

Another benefit of globalization is the advancement of the Caribbean's popular culture both regionally and internationally (Ho & Nurse, 2005). Popular culture is referred to as the production and consumption of films, TV, books, music, dance and other forms of expression and their circulation through live shows, recordings, and advertising (Ho & Nurse). When people migrate they take their cultures with them and practice it where they settle. This has happened with the cultures of the Caribbean, where people migrated to Britain and the USA and hosted shows to perform reggae and calypso songs which were well received by the citizens of those countries. Thus, the shows led to the expansion of these types of music which were appreciated by the Americans and Europeans. Globalization has thus resulted in the expansion of the Caribbean's popular culture, such as the music industry.

A further benefit of globalization is increased income for the people of the Caribbean. In 2002, Sylvester acknowledged that tourism has created many jobs for Caribbean nationals. Many Caribbean countries, for example, The Bahamas, Barbados, and Antigua depend on tourism as a principal foreign exchange earner (Sylvester). Tourism has expanded partly through the development of both air and sea travel (Chacon, 2011). Many Caribbean nationals are employed in the tourist industry; from this they earn a satisfactory income, which they use to improve their standard of living and their quality of life. The country also benefits from tourism through taxation, which is used in the development of infrastructure for the benefit of the citizens as well as the tourists. Tourism as a globalized economic activity has led to the creation of increased income for Caribbean nationals.

One challenge of globalization to the Caribbean is diminishing foreign markets for Caribbean products, such as bananas and sugar (Ellis, Ramsay, & Small, 2000). The banana and sugar producing countries of the Caribbean had enjoyed preferential markets for their products. This meant an assured market which led to increased production and more income but globalization resulted in trade liberalization and the reduction of this preferential treatment. This has led to the reduction of traditional markets for our sugar and bananas and we are now forced to seek other markets. Sugar and banana producing countries no longer enjoy preferential treatment in the sale of these products due to globalization.

Another challenge of globalization for the Caribbean is increasing globalized criminal activities, such as money laundering and the drug trade (Benn & Hall, 2000). Globalization has improved

communication links, for example, air travel. Chacon claimed that air travel is available and reasonable, thus making it easier for persons to travel as drug mules and move kilogrammes of narcotics from the Caribbean to other parts of the world. It is a widely known fact that the Caribbean is a transshipment point for drugs. Globalization has also made it easier for foreign nationals to invest in the Caribbean. Some investors launder money in this way. A recent case of money laundering in the Caribbean with a foreign national is with Stanford who had several businesses in Antigua. He has been found guilty by a United States court of running a \$7 billion Ponzi scheme (Kreider, 2012). Globalization has contributed to an increase in the drug trade and money laundering in the Caribbean.

Additionally, globalization has contributed to brain drain in the Caribbean. In 2011, Chacon noted that many Caribbean nationals are contributing to the development of the United States of America. Recently, the United States of America targeted Caribbean teachers to work in American schools. This is just one example of brain drain occurring in the Caribbean due to globalization. Many persons have migrated and taken their families along, who take their knowledge and skills to the visiting country and leave the home country with a shortage of skilled and qualified persons. Globalization has led to the problem of brain drain in the Caribbean.

The Kinds of Adult and Continuing Programmes that can help the Caribbean to Deal with the Impacts of Globalization

According to the World Bank (2003) adult education programmes should be geared towards equipping citizens with attitudes, knowledge, and skills in order to be competent in the global economy. Some of these programmes are parenting education, technical vocational education and training, entrepreneurial education, ICT training, and citizenship education.

Ellis, Ramsay & Small (2000) acknowledged that parenting education is important in the Caribbean. One challenge of globalization is the increase in criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and money laundering (Benn & Hall, 2000). Parenting education is likely to reduce these activities. The home is the foundation of society. It is in the home, through the socialization process that values and societal norms are transmitted. Parenting education will provide parents with the skills necessary to adequately train their children and to develop close relationships with

them. Children who have been properly socialized and who have close relationships with their parents are less likely to get involved in criminal activities (Rice&Dolgin, 2007). The parenting classes should have topics dealing with the training and educating of male children. This is very relevant in the Caribbean especially since there is widespread male underperformance in education and it is likely that because they lack basic qualifications, males will be unemployed or may be faced with lowerpaying jobs. Consequently, likely targets for the criminal world. Parenting education would play a significant role in reducing globalized crimes in the Caribbean.

There is a need for adult and continuing education institutions to feature programs that will equip learners with the skills needed for self employment (Ellis, Ramsay & Small, 2000). Adult education institutions should focus more on providing technical vocational education and training. This will help to create self employment for workers who have been displaced due to the downsizing of businesses that have been affected by global market competition. Both genders should be exposed to training in technical and vocational areas, such as carpentry, masonry, tailoring, catering, skin care specialist, engineering, and auto repairing. Once both genders are exposed to non-traditional programmes, they are likely to get into these occupations, thus creating employment for them and providing a local service to the people. Self employed persons will reduce the unemployment rate in the region and will provide taxes to the governments and foreign exchange as the businesses export their products. The taxes will be used in the further development of the region. Resulting from the educational programmes to create self employment is likely to see a number of women carpenters and engineers and men as skin care specialists and caterers.

Another adult and continuing education programme that should be held to combat the impacts of globalization in the Caribbean is entrepreneurial education (Ellis, Ramsay & Small, 2000). Entrepreneurial education is necessary for owners and employees of small businesses. Ownership of small businesses will help in poverty alleviation because employment will be created for the owner and possibly for family members. Legg et al (2009) acknowledged a small business may fail because the owner lacks self employment experience. Training in how to manage a small business will provide the owner / manager with the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are necessary for successful management of the enterprise. Training programmes may include how to prepare a business plan. A business plan defines the business, explains in detail

how the business will function and allows the owner to identify business goals and to stay focus on those goals which can lead to the survival of the business. A business plan is also a requirement by loan agencies. One criterion that they use to appraise the business probability of success is a business plan. One reason for the failure of small businesses is the lack of funding to develop the venture (Hormozi, Sutton, McMinn, & Lucio, 2002). Therefore, a small entrepreneur may gain funding for the businesses if there is a good business plan. Training is thus a vital component that will provide the owner and his or her workers with the tools needed to successfully manage the business.

Alfred, Robertson, & Alfred (2011) noted that adult education programmes equip adults with modern workplace knowledge and skills so that they can function in the modern work environment. This can be done by offering adult and continuing programmes in Information and Communication Technologies (Ellis, Ramsay & Small, 2000). In today's knowledge economy nearly every occupation makes use of ICTS, thus the need for training in this area. Researchers have noted the age- related differences in the use of digital technology; this has led to a digital gap between both the younger and older generations. The younger generation has grown up with computers and the internet and is known as "digital-natives". On the other hand the older generation was born decades before such technology, they are known as "digital immigrants" (Waycott, Bennett, Barney, & Gray, 2009). Trainers of adults in the use of ICTs need to be cognizant of this fact and plan their instructions with this in mind. Information and communication technologies will not only provide "digital immigrants" with job skills but the confidence to execute the job. Training in information and communication technologies is also important for the self employed. Such knowledge can be used to advance the business. Individuals can surf the internet for ideas on how to develop the business, sending emails to clients and suppliers, and for advertising of the business. Training in information and communication technologies is likely to assist adults in the effective performance of their job.

Another type of program that can help the Caribbean to compact the effects of globalization is citizenship education (Torres, 2004). One aspect of citizenship education that should be featured is environmental education. According to Ellis, Ramsay & Small (2000) environmental education is important so as to promote environmental protection. Many Caribbean countries depend on a large extent on tourism as a principal foreign exchange earner (Wood,

2000). Globalization has led to stiff competition from tourist providers in Asia and other parts of the world, it is therefore, imperative that Caribbean countries preserve their tourist products. The tourists come to the Caribbean mainly to enjoy the sand, sun, and sea. Citizens should be educated to preserve the physical environment so as to attract more tourist arrivals in the Region. In many Caribbean countries the culture is to litter the environment and to exploit without considering sustainable development. Environment education will create the awareness in adults of the need to keep the environment clean, to plant trees, and to practice less deforestation. Many persons are aware of such a need; however, many still practice environmentally harmful behaviours, such as dumping of garbage in isolated areas and wanton cutting down of trees. Environmental education is expected to persuade Caribbean nationals to conserve the environment.

Recommendations on how to Plan, Implement, and Evaluate the Educational Programmes.

The educational programmes that were discussed in the afore-mentioned paragraphs would be successful in combating or promoting the effects of globalization if there are plans in place to implement and evaluate same. There is a need for each Caribbean country to develop adult education policies, train instructors to deliver the programmes, and lobby governments, NGOs, and the private sectors to fund programmes. To evaluate the successes and weaknesses of the programmes it is necessary for each country in the Region to establish Adult Learning and Continuing Education Monitoring Units.

One recommendation given to governments of Caribbean countries on the planning, implementation and evaluation of adult education programmes to deal with the influences of globalization in the Caribbean is the establishment of adult education policy. Jules (1994) noted that an adult education policy will formalize the system, thus removing the ad hoc nature in which it is done in many Caribbean countries. The adult education policy will specify areas of emphasis, such as types of programs to be held, access, and tuition. One important area that Jules acknowledged that should be contained in an adult education policy is the language of instruction, such as the language spoken by most of the people. He also advocated that adult education policy should be formulated in a democratic way to allow for as many views as possible.

Another recommendation is that facilitators should be adequately trained to meet the needs of adult learners (Jules, 1994). The World Bank (2003) contended that adult education facilitators should receive continuous training to keep them up to date with recent knowledge, andragogical and technological skills. Over the last years there has been an increase in the immigrant population in some Caribbean countries, such as Guyana. This country has seen an increase in its Chinese population (M. Nadir, personal communication, April 17, 2013), thus the need for programmes to teach English as a second language. Adult educators through training would learn how to relate to other groups of people, by taking note of their culture when planning for instruction (Sparks, 2001). Aspects of culture that should be considered when planning programmes other than language are ways people think, when they can participate in adult learning programmes, and the social roles that they play. Having an idea on the way different ethnicities think will help adult educators to plan programmes to meet their needs and interest and to structure lessons effectively. Due to the multiple roles that adults play they may be unable to participate in adult and continuing education programmes. Having knowledge of this will help adult educators to schedule programmes at times convenient to adults and to determine the need for distance learning.

An added recommendation on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of adult education programmes is the involvement of stakeholders such as, government representatives, NGOs, and private sector (World Bank, 2003). The involvement of as many different categories of stakeholders as possible will entail varied views of both socio-cultural and political nature being brought to the planning table. The different groups will bring their experiences, expertise, and financial resources that will likely lead to effective programme planning and implementation. For instance, the government may offer to fund programmes and the private sector may be able to identify programmes that will provide adults with skills needed for the job market. The National Report (2009) posited that lack of finance is usually a reason some adults do not participate in continuing education programmes, thus the private sector may provide funding for training programmes to meet the needs of their workers. Governments may offer study leave with pay to their workers. Many people see certification as being tangible evidence of having completed a course, thus the institution should offer certificates of participation and completion, which will serve as motivators to engage courses.

An additional recommendation to plan, implement and evaluate adult education programmes is the establishment of an Adult and Continuing Education Coordinating Unit in each Caribbean country (National Report, 2009). Such a unit will be tasked with monitoring and evaluating adult education activities in each country ensuring that adult and continuing education functions with the policy framework and that maximum use is made of the resources available and that there is not duplication of activities that targets the same group. The monitoring and evaluation unit will guarantee that adult and continuing education is planned with the socio-cultural and political aspects in mind. They will therefore, ensure that programmes are available to all ethnic groups in the country and that they are effectively managed through governmental or non-governmental funding and effective leadership.

In conclusion, globalization has indeed brought many benefits to Caribbean countries as well as a number of challenges. In dealing with both benefits and challenges of globalization, adult educators need to plan and implement educational programmes and bear in mind their socio-cultural and political features. Additionally, these programmes should be monitored to ensure that they are indeed exploiting the advantages of globalization and controlling its disadvantages.

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