

Non Formal Education and Poverty Reduction in Tanzania: A Case Study of Catholic Nuns' Institutions in Kilimanjaro Region

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on a study that examines how Catholic Nun's institutions (CNIs) use non formal education (NFE) to reduce poverty in Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania. The article analyzes how CNIs provide NFE to bring about social development in Kilimanjaro communities. The study employed the theory of Constructivism to ascertain participatory and collaborative methods as principles of teaching youths and adults in CNIs. The study revealed that after attainment of independence in Tanzania, missionary institutions were also obliged to adhere to government's education policy and regulations in their running of educational institutions. Such changes made CNIs form another way of providing non-formal education. Furthermore, due to technological advancement, the changes in teaching methodology ushered in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This caused CNIs to face lack of qualified and enough teachers. Lack of NFE therefore is the source of missing self-employment and confidence to create new skills for reducing poverty. The study concludes that NFE provided by CNIs in Kilimanjaro communities have been supportive to social development. The study insists that CNIs should upgrade their provision of non-formal education which can bring economic changes and facilitate the achievement of high standards of life in Kilimanjaro and elsewhere.

Keywords: *Roman Catholic Church, Nuns' Institutions, non-formal education, social development and poverty reduction*

INTRODUCTION

Within the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), there are female members who take vows of poverty, chastity as well as obedience in Catholic faith and devote their lives to God. These Religious women are referred to as nuns, who generally view their way of life as a career and calling vocation for serving different people in the communities. Firoj (2012) observes that,

active nuns divide their time between private prayer, communal worship and service work. Each active nuns' congregation has a particular mission, for which it was founded, ranging from educating children and adults, to caring for the sick and doing social activities.

Thus, working for people's needs is a special call for nuns' vocation. Thus, nuns have duties comprised of serving God and people in society. Within such context, provision of education and teaching is a crucial element of CNIs which serve the purpose of motivating millions of people worldwide to cherish learning and bring about social development.

History has shown that, since the arrival of missionaries in Tanzania in the 19th century, most underprivileged societies could get education, non-formal education (NFE) in particular, from CNIs system. This system would not have been possible if not for the generations of dedicated religious female nuns who have been facilitators of teaching to youth and adults (Bjornavold, 2000). CNIs have also strived to provide NFE according to the needs of communities whereby learners have a chance to brace for coping with social-political and economic changes.

At present, NFE is a learning that can mobilize youths, adults and the elderly to join education programmes for social development. Through NFE programmes, individuals learn the use of various techniques anytime, anywhere and throughout their lives. This has led to the transformation of learners, as people become capable of utilizing acquired competences for their livelihood. Such confidence contributes to a more positive attitude (Cusack *et al.*, 2003). More evidence points to learning as a case for health promotion. Results of a survey in the UK of participants aged 40-60, reported the direct benefits of learning as reduced stress, reduced depression, feeling more positive, achieving goals, and more energy. (Cusack *et al.*, 2003). Indeed, lifelong learning has a positive and lasting impact on cognition. As can be seen from the international approaches to lifelong learning, the format or structure of the learning process can be flexible and learning can occur in a variety of formats, not just in a college classroom.

Normally, Catholic schools are committed to the 'critical communication of human culture and the total formation of the individual. They work towards this goal guided by the Christian vision of reality "through which

our cultural heritage acquires its special place in the total vocational life of man” (Hermn, 2000). What we therefore see or should see in Catholic schools is a symbiotic relationship between culture and faith, and faith and life. CNIs are therefore expected to carry out their function of developing the whole person in obedience to the solicitude of the church, and in the awareness that all human values of finding their fulfilment and unity in Christ. The education that is the focus of Catholic schools therefore ‘aims at securing the Supreme Good and changing the attitudes of societies to social development as ways of reducing poverty (Battell,1990).

The epistemological view of the history of provision of NFE in the convents shows that the management, administration and the infrastructure of the convents have been used to provide education to adult and youth. The missionaries mould the system of NFE in the convent through apprenticeship approach, even the people around and nearby the convent were allowed to learn what the nuns use to mushi (2009) comments that, the missionary education program initiated by missionary apart from literacy, freed slaves and spread of Christianity, were elementary teacher training, nursing, clerical work, agriculture and vocation crafts. NFE activities had the impact not only in mission areas but also in the rural areas. The areas around the missions have shown not only quantitative but also qualitative improvement in all spheres of life and guide adult learners on how to reduce poverty.

Currently, about 1.5 million children in Tanzania are nearly missing or dropped out of primary education. Several studies from the ministry of education in Tanzania show that this problem's source is the traditional approaches and culture of some tribes in Tanzania which limit children to attend and finish primary school education. To cater for this group, the government and religious institutions provide NFE to this group (Wenglinsky, 2002) comments that, although the government and religious institution provide NFE, only few studies have focused on how CNIs use NFE programmes to reduce poverty.

Presently the number of primary and secondary schools in Kilimanjaro is so high compared to other regions in Tanzania because the region has a small area while the population is very high. The study has also revealed number of Vocation training centres (VTCs) in Kilimanjaro which are few compared to t formal schools.

METHODOLOGY

Philosophical underpinnings of the study were informed by constructivism research paradigm which stipulates that reality is constructed by participants. Yin (2009) comments that, constructivism is a theoretical view that says all knowledge is generated from human experience as opposed to discovered self-evident knowledge. Yin insisted that constructivism is a view in the philosophy of science which maintains that scientific knowledge is constructed by the scientific community, who seek to measure and construct models of the natural world. Constructivism also assumes that knowledge of the world is constructed by individuals by using their experiences. Constructivism is an approach to learning that holds that people actively construct or make their own knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner (Debashis, 2012). Hence, the researcher gathered the views of nuns, parents, education stakeholders, learners and teachers who were in CNIs in order to ascertain reality about how CNIs use NFE to reduce poverty in the communities. Teachers and learners had the chance to analyze their experiences, feelings and knowledge of their world together (Fred, 2010). Therefore, the study used constructivism in order to capture the meanings and operations of CNIs practices as experienced and expressed by participants in this study. Epistemologically, the study intended to gain knowledge from participants. This study proposed to get the experiences and opinions from CNIs participants. The researcher believed that knowledge is the creation between researchers and the researched. The researcher had the intention to know how NFE offered by CNIs in Tanzania can help the youths and adults to gain social development, reduce poverty and improve their lives. Thus, learners from NFE provided by CNIs are supposed to become critical thinkers and get the wide knowledge of transforming their lives (Mlan, 2005). The researcher was interested in finding out what learners do after their study from CNIs and how they are able to apply the knowledge which they gain from CNIs. *Research and design.* The study adopted the *qualitative research approach*. The approach was adopted because it provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the informants' points of view. It could clarify the context which cannot be achieved well with a quantitative method (Ian, 2007). Moreover, the low level of education of the respondents in NIs required research instruments that are interactive, with open-ended questions. The study also used a case study design so as to obtain rich information from the targeted sample (Colin, 2014). The cases were two convents in

Kilimanjaro region. The units of analysis were teachers, students, and heads of institution, mother superiors and the members of CNIs from selected districts.

Area of Study

Three out of seven districts of Kilimanjaro Region were selected. These were Hai, Moshi Municipality and Moshi Rural. These districts had convents offering NFE in nuns' centres which are St. Francis NI from Hai, Eldegold from Moshi Municipality, Imani VTC from Moshi. Two of these CNIs are from the selected districts from congregations of nuns or sisters from Sister of Our Lady of Kilimanjaro and Grail sister. Areas with rural characteristics include St. Francis from Boma District and Mtakuja from Imani VTCs. The last one was from Moshi Urban as indicated in Figure 1.1 are the institutions where sisters used to teach adult learners.

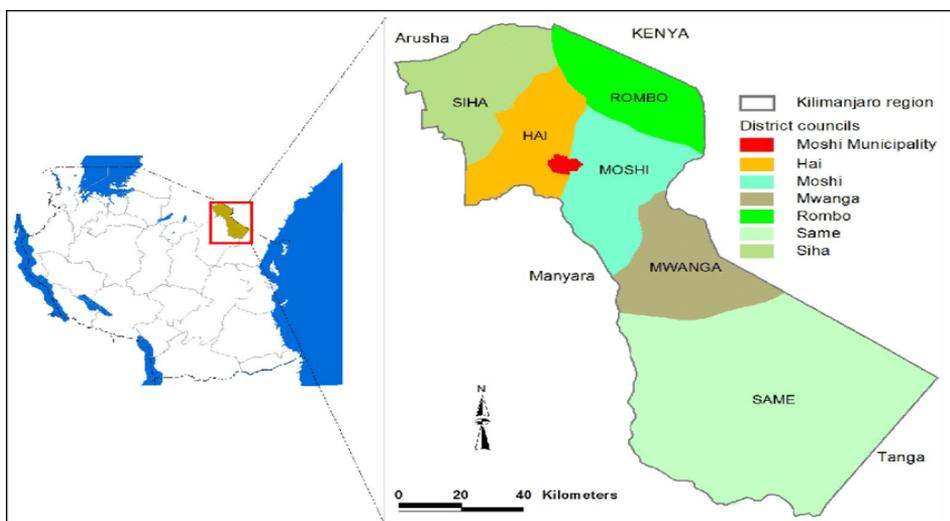


Figure 1: A map showing the area of the study

Source: Kilimanjaro Region Education Officer (2019)

Target Population

A target population is a group of individuals that the researcher intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from selected area of research work. Examples of target population could be all the people in an organization's local community, everyone in the state, or people living at or below the poverty level within a given community (Greswell, 2012). In this study the target population were participants from selected CNIs

from Kilimanjaro region. The participants were teachers from NIs, learners, heads of CNIs, heads of convent comprising mother superiors, district quality assurers, zonal quality assurers and parents who were closely related to learners. Board members of the institutions were selected and participants from CNIs were also selected. The participants were from three selected CNIs from Moshi rural, Moshi municipality and Hai.

Sample and sampling procedures

The total sample size for this study comprised of 71 participants from three selected CNIs. There were three heads of the convent, three heads of institution, two education officers, 14 teachers include nuns' teachers in CNIs, 14 learners from CNIs, 20 graduate learners and 14 parents. Table 1. shows the Composition of the sample

Table 1: composition of the sample

Districts	Learners Inside NIs.	Learners from outside NIs	Parents	Head of NIs	Mother superiors	Inspectors & DEOs	Number of. Teachers	Total
Hai	5	5	5	1	-	1	5	20
Moshi Municipal	5	5	5	1	1	1	5	23
Moshi Rural	10	5	5	1	1	1	5	28
Total	20	15	15	3	2	3	15	71

Source: Field data - 2019.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select three heads of the convents who were the heads and owners of the selected convents. The researcher had permission letters from mother superiors who were the owners of two institutions to visit the institutions. Fourteen CNI teachers were selected from selected institutions that had information on performance of students and curriculum contents of the institutions. The teachers were teaching NFE programs in CNIs. Seven teachers were selected from selected CNIs. They were required to provide inputs concerning the respective institutions in relation to how teachers teach and encourage learners to study. Fourteen continuing learners from each selected institution were also included. They were required to provide their views regarding content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge they acquire from respective CNIs. These were second year learners because they had advanced further terms of learning compared to other students.

The learners were selected by teachers following the criteria given by the researcher.

Snowball sampling technique was used to select graduate learners to get information on how they used NFE skills after their studies. The researcher used learners who are inside NIs to explain where the graduate learners were working or doing their self employment. Snowball sampling technique was also used select to parents of graduates from CNIs. They were involved in this study to give their opinion on how CNIs use to reduce poverty and the outcome to their children who were graduate learners doing self employment.

District education officers were selected through purposive sampling to provide information concerning CNIs. They were selected on the basis of their positions and responsibility which they had regarding the NFE programmes offered in their districts. Two district education officers, one from Hai District and another one from Moshi Rural District, were purposively selected. The researcher wanted to know how district education officers help to motivate and to implement teaching and learning processes. For example, do district education officers distribute teaching and learning materials such as modern home economics apparatus for teaching and text books or any learning/teaching resources as required?

Purposive sampling was used to select nuns from each convent who are teaching in CNIs. These included sisters who had past experience of management of the CNIs and were now retired teachers. The researcher involved nuns who had background information about nun institutions' programmes and activities so that she could get reliable information about CNIs. Purposive sampling was also used to select experience teacher who had been teaching in one institution at least for 3 years. The total number was 15 teachers from three selected institutions.

Purposive sampling was also used to select heads of convent from CNIs. The head of a convent is known as mother superior who leads the convent and owns all the convent resources including land, houses and financial resources. She is the organizer and leader of the institutions and ought to know about workers and the teaching staff. Therefore, she is the head of the institution and the peak member in CNIs.

Methods of collecting data

Qualitative information on provision of NFE programmes and adult education in CNIs as the strategies of influence social development and reduce poverty. The study used sampling procedures such as purposive sampling, pilot research and snowball sampling technique. The methods of collecting data were interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) and observation. An interview used face to face interview which had both open-ended and close-ended questions. Guide questions were used during the discussions while the observation was guided by a list of issues to be observed and reported together with quotations from respondents. The methods of collecting data were interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) and observation. An interview guide open-ended and close-ended questions. Guiding questions were also used during FGDs while observation was guided by an observation check list.

FINDINGS

The study findings show missionaries used participatory methods and made learners learn by practice. Through interviews, it was revealed that graduated learners insisted on the usefulness of NFE in reforming the learner's style of life. One graduate learner explained that,

The educational institutions support students to learn how to think for themselves and act for the common good. Such studies make learners think and be creative about the purposes of education (Graduate learner from Moshi municipal)

Non formal education is used to motivate learners to be free and able to create other new skills. Hence the heads of institution in the interview, urged the learners to rethink the challenges regarding diverse aspects of digitalization which is still waiting to be dealt with by adult educators and researchers. One head of insisted that:

NFE is a hope to learners that will inspire them to engage with modern challenges and develop creative answers to many questions that have been raised and that definitely will be raised (Head of CNIs in the Moshi municipality)

More specifically, the findings showed that the selected three CNIs in Kilimanjaro offered adult education programmes which have a specific goal of reducing poverty at the individual level and at the level of the community. The document of life skill for example insisted that:

The role of teachers in VTCs is that of felicitators in the learning process. The document insists teacher to use methods of teaching such as field visits, discussions, demonstration and work in competitions of group work. (VETA revised syllabus for life skills, p. 5, 2013)

Programmes that were offered by these CNIs included carpentry and joinery, electrical installation, masonry and brick laying. These programmes provide important skills and competences by which young people can sustain and improve their livelihood resulting in poverty reduction. During interviews with teachers, one of them explained that;

We have two categories; the first set of programmes help learners to prepare for their future jobs be it employment or self-employment. The second set teaches them the skills of good communication and good ethics which at the end will make them to be good citizens in the community. So, learners must select and learn one programme out of electrical installation, welding and metal fabrication, building and masonry skills, cloth technology, carpentry and joinery, food production and knitting. In our institutions students decide and select which programmes to study (Interviewed one teacher from CNI, 2019).

The study found that there are three problems of learning outcomes that become even more challenging when seen in the light of critical thinking. The first problem is concerned with interpretation as the use of learning outcomes is dependent on advanced but implicit interpretative frameworks. The second is the problem of educational goals that cannot be expressed through learning outcomes, and the third is the risk that learning outcomes may establish a ceiling for student ambitions. It is argued that the example of critical thinking shows the seriousness of the epistemological critique of learning outcomes and how the use of learning outcomes can divert teachers and students' attention away from important goals.

Catholic Church in Africa has made tremendous contributions towards educational development in Africa and in the global South which has been heroically acclaimed as facilitating personal and cooperative development of the people. In this way, the Church is a popular stakeholder in the quest for educational development in Africa and the world at large (Perraton, H. 2000).

Virtually in most parts of Africa, adult institutions at all levels are run by the Church. One of the key actors in this practice of running schools is the religious sisters(nuns), who toil endlessly to keep the Church at the

forefront as an indispensable agent of development (Eze, 2013). One of the heads of CNIs commented that:

Nuns' institutions face the challenges of understanding the needs of different learners from different families who are coming to learn in the institutions. Adult facilitators need to study learners' interests. Therefore, nuns must change their ways of teaching according to the needs of learners. This is a big challenge in CNIs. (Head of one CNI in Mtakuja 22/ 9/ 2019)

CNIs face some challenges based on lack of appropriate education or misuse of skills for the sisters who are challenged to be competent in discharging their duties. In accordance with the achievement of Millennium Development Goals as having been explained (Wikipedia, 2013), a certain amount of pressure is levelled on the sisters who need to be effective and efficient facilitators of adult education as a tool for personal and social change. To address this problem, this paper focused on competence and performance theory to interrogate the sisters' current educational training. Educational development is needed by the sisters towards improving their capability in responding to the demands of mission and service, particularly in terms of institution management and everyday teaching/learning situations and attitudes.

In this regard, the study gained information for this paper from a doctoral research thesis that interrogated 18 sisters from religious sisters' identity construction based on their lived experience of religious life within their religious institutions from the Church Nigerian society (Eze, 2013). Segments of the doctoral thesis interview narrative data which were used as the basis for surfacing the current prospects and challenges of the sisters' teaching experiences and what they need to improve their performance. Based on the findings, one parent who participate in CNIs insisted that:

To make recommendations for educational improvement of CNIs to enable the Church ought to continue providing effective educational services to nuns that could promote human development in our communities and help adult learners to get the global world's skills and knowledge (A parent from the village in Hai district 24/ 9 2019)

CNIs need to study learners' background and prepare the skills which can fulfil and satisfy learners

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DISCUSSION

Missionaries and African Nuns

The study revealed that during the colonial era, missionary nuns in co-operation with African nuns came to work from various parts of Africa to spread Christianity and educate the people by using NFE (Morio, 2000). A set up numerous primary and secondary schools and education centres were used to educate adults and young Africans in rural and urban areas (Madueke, 2014).

However, while formal schooling remains an essential means of providing basic education, NFE provided in Tanzania constitutes an integral part of lifelong learning or continuing education. NFE deals with any organized educational activities outside the established formal education system and is aimed at serving the intended groups (Harma,2009). Although the Tanzanian government recognizes and appreciates the contribution of the nuns in education and health, several drawbacks slow down this motive. These include first, unsuitable curricula and a realization that educational and economic growth and skills of job creation did not emerge directly as a result of educational inputs.

Second, the nationalization of mission schools after independence in an attempt to secularize the institutions to expand educational opportunities to non-Christian students in Tanzania, President Julius Nyerere requested the Maryknoll sisters to start a new post-primary school, which would prepare girls with the education and skills needed to promote development in their rural areas (Maryknoll Sisters, 2000). After independence, Nyerere saw education as a critical strategy to realizing his vision towards a unified nation. He wanted the church to serve all people, Christians and non-believers (Nyerere Centre for Peace Research, 1968). It is, therefore, no wonder that he would challenge the church to

recognize the need for a social revolution (Nyerere, 1974). Churches' role in education was critically weakened when the government in the late 1960s nationalized church schools and institutions. So, nuns insist on the provision of non-formal education as the way to reduce poverty.

Nuns and Provision of NFE in Tanzania

The epistemological view of the history of the provision of NFE in the convents shows that the management and administration of the convent and the infrastructure of the convents used to provide education to adult and youth before the introduction of the system of formal education in Tanzania (Msambure and Rwemamu, 1989). The missionaries mould the system of NFE by use convents (NIs) through an apprenticeship approach. The communities around the convent used to imitate what the nuns do. Mushi (2010) comments that the missionary educational program initiated by the missionary apart from literacy, freed slaves and spread of Christianity were elementary teacher training, nursing, clerical work, agriculture and vocation crafts. NFE activities had an impact not only in mission areas but also in rural areas.

The areas around the missions show not only quantitative but also qualitative improvement in all spheres of life. In this regard, the key areas are citizens who were educated at different levels, health centres and infrastructures in general (Eze et al., 2013). The findings also show that, most of the VTCs are taught by retired teachers and few teachers who had skills in teaching vocational skills. The findings revealed that 37 teachers out of 71 in VTCs from NIs in Kilimanjaro had the teaching experience certificates, but they do not have teaching methodology qualifications. The study proved that there are few teachers from teachers' colleges in Tanzania who had the methodology of teaching the VTCs subjects. So, it is not easy to get enough teachers for CNIs.

Even in this regard, it is only geared towards employment and not just the person's integral formation. A good academic result or certificate is needed to get a good employment or work in a good organization. This situation has given rise to a culture of cheating and other forms of examination misconduct (Hart, 2006). So, NIs used to provide NFE (AE) geared to self-employment with the confidence of what learners earn after studies. Non-formal education can influence learner to study very hard although the government considers private adult institutions as a kind of old external curriculum for learners. Under enrolment of learners in

Catholic schools as the private institutions depend on funds from the fees which make institutions management to survive, and as the popular saying goes, 'the higher the number of students, the higher the revenue'. Many schools then, tend toward accepting too many students so that they can get the necessary revenue to be able to provide for the needs of the school.

Many secondary learners had the intention to go for higher education at university. They regard vocation studies as for those who failed in form four or six examinations. So, there are few students in private institutions and particular NIs because this is an attitude of thinking. Lack of accurate organization is another area of the challenge facing CNIs. Most Catholic institutions are caught between functioning as public organizations which are under 'private' organizations controlled by the Church hierarchy and at the same time under the government organization. The situation is often resolved, favouring control by the Church. While this has its advantages, which we cannot examine in this paper, it should be stated that excessive centralization sometimes hinders creativity. The Catholic institutions of the twenty-first century need the motivation of the relationship between the government institutions and the communities' needs.

Lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Lack of some teaching material in CNIs including modern technologies like enough computers is also a problem. With the rate of advances in media and information technology, adapting their benefits into the educational field has brought many changes, notably in the mode of delivery and equipping students to become actively involved in their learning. Unfortunately, the application of ICT in many Catholic institutions' teaching and learning process is still poor. Various reasons have been adduced, ranging from the high cost of equipment to the view that computer education in Tanzania today is enrichment programmes and not a required subject and sometimes it is still not one of the subjects that students are required to sit for during the terminal examinations and last national examinations. As an improvement programme, learners may pursue it only for those who are interested (Biesta, 2016). In advanced countries where technology has become the way of life, teachers have also discovered the importance of the World Wide Web. Through the Web, students are no longer isolated learners; they can easily connect to the network and tap into the collective knowledge of millions of people and from diverse fields. In essence, according to Cohen and Marion

(2007), lack of information and communication technology (ICT) to adult learners is lack of knowledge in our modern time.

CONCLUSION

Responses to this challenge of provide NFE in nuns institutions reveal that the relationship between the CNIs and the parents can face and solve several challenges so the management of CNIs had the chance to create the relationship between the parents and NIs. Parent's responsibility is a preparation for life of their children and Catholic parents are obliged to provide a Catholic education for their children and bearing in mind the unequal distribution of wealth in the nation. Head of institutions including mother superiors need to find ways of motivating teachers and learners for outstanding performance. Catholic schools and institutions must improve the ways of motivating members of their institutions in terms of salary packages to match the government scale.

Also, the church must invest more in vocation training centres since the goal of true education is the person's holistic development. Opportunities must be provided for individualized learning who had the interest in learning or otherwise many students will be left behind or assumed into the mass of average that are promoted every year. The only way to attract more students to the VTCs institutions is to add value to the available traditional services. Today, CNIs have included some several extra-curricular activities in their curriculum, in so doing they are giving and adding motivation to many parents to choose CNIs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NFE programmes in CNIs can bring and create a great sense of dignity and self-esteem among country members, enhancing respect of others, building the ability to take control of one's life and generating a desire to participate in the social development. On the basis of the research findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations for action

The study reveals that, in Kilimanjaro region the head of institutions can have parent's day where they are called for fund raiser which they use to help poor students. So, parental educational attainment has long-term influences on student educational attainment. CNIs should be designed in such a way that teaching and learning can motivate youths and adults to learn many vocation skills. The programmes of teaching and preparing

teachers should be implemented by the management of CNIs with relationship with government authority (VETA) in order to form outstanding and committed teachers and competent teachers. NFE through CNIs should encouraged youths and adults by arranging short seminars for deferent groups of people to attend on their time of holidays (Hermn, 2000). In our modern time CNIs ought to enhance the provision of NFE programmes as part of lifelong learning. CNIs must address the most relevant topics on the subject including; continuous learning as it relates to technological, economic and social changes. Above all the Catholic institutions or religious institutions should build education centres for spiritual and social activities. Throughout the CNIs nuns can engage several groups to study and arrange topics that will help participants improve their lifestyles. and cope with globalization problems (Baur, 2001).

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