

ART EDUCATION AS A PANACEA FOR THE ECONOMIC HEALTH CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Art education is an essential area of quality education for peace and sustainable development, quality education cannot be accomplished without quality art education. This paper discusses art education as a major contributor to the social and economic health of a nation, it notes that there are a lot of potentials that needs to be explored in the art, it posits that the fine and applied art are economic drivers preservers of cultural legacies, civic catalyst as well as educational asset, and that the future of Nigeria's economy rests on how she is able to harness her resources, Knowledge and the creative art talents to spur innovations that will respond to the economic challenges. It therefore suggests and outlines strategies toward the accomplishment of this goal.

Key Words: Art, Education, Panacea for, Economic, Challenges

Art, the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power: Works produced by human creative skill and imagination Oxford Dictionaries (2010) When speaking of the economy it should spoken of as if it were an animate object. An economy may be healthy, productive or efficient. Likewise, an economy may be weak, slow or inefficient. So, for art. to act as the innovative catalyst the world desperately needs to restore it to its economic health. Many more corporations, elitists or not, must utilize its powers to effectuate their own evolution and change. Shelley, (2013) wrote that, "Art plays a large part in making our lives

infinitely rich. Imagine, just for a minute, a world without art! (It may be easy to think and say. "So what? But please consider the impact that lack of graphics would have on your favourite Video game.) Art stimulates different parts of the brains to make cause laughter or incite to riot, with a whole gamut of emotions in between. Art gives an individual a way to be creative and express himself. "Art is something that makes someone to be more thoughtful and well-rounded humans." On the other hand, art is such a large part of everyday that the individual may hardly even stop to think about it. Look at the desk or table where you are, right this minute. Someone designed that. It is art. The shoes, the coffee cup, all functional design, well done, are art. So, one could say "Art is something that is both functional and (hopefully), aesthetically pleasing to the eyes." According to Becca, (2010) In the Art world, 'Crafts' is the overall term for artwork or products that are skillfully created by hand by practiced experts - 'the craft of woodworking', 'the craft of glassblowing'. or the 'craft of pottery', in Comino (2010) records, The space between problem that arise and our ability to solve them, the ingenuity Gap is growing everyday at an alarming rate in business, security, research Education.

The environment and world affairs. The society from elementary education to supply-side economics is starved for more imagination, more original thinking, and more creative intelligence".

Gross National Product (GNP)

Economists have devised numerous statistics designed to ascertain the overall health of our

economy. Historically, the most quoted measure of economic activity is 'what is called Gross National Product (GNP). The Gross National Product (GNP) is a nation's total output of goods and services produced by a country in one year. In obtaining the value of the GNP, only the final value of a product is counted (e.g. homes but not the construction materials they were built with). The three major components of GNP are consumer purchases, government spending, private investment and exports.

There is no doubt that the quality of human resources of any nation has a great role to play in the successes and failure of such nations in terms capabilities, strength and productiveness of the workers and leaders(Simonton 2008) says creative geniuses influence and affect cultures through products such as books poems , painting or composition, in the same way extraordinary leaders such as presidents, lawmakers and military leaders exert exceptional influence on their cultures through policies, programs, reforms initiatives, strategies, tactics and laws, also considered as products.

In these economic times, innovation is a critical tool that can grow revenue like never before and catapult our largest companies and newest start-ups to new levels of international competitiveness and profitability that we truly need to not only save, but redefine how we achieve our future economic vitality. According to Dike. (2010) " Part of the problems facing Nigeria is that its educational institutions are not economy, they lack the tools to produce good quality graduates to manage the affairs of the nation, majority of them lack the skills that drives human productivity" inferably, they lack creative skills, because it takes a creative ability to be continuously productive, innovative, adapt to changes, be able to go with the flow and new trends (creativity generates productivity or creativity) Sadly, the education curricular is day by day being designed and redesigned with

apathy and total neglect for art which is the core of innovation, the policies in recent time has introduced the study of entrepreneurship as a compulsory subject both at the secondary' and tertiary levels of education in addition to mathematics and English language studies. While this paper is not trying to underrate the relevance these subjects, it is also of the view that they cannot be effectively learnt and applied to the individual and national productiveness without the creative art skills thus a drive to improve on the Gross national productivity that neglects the creativity aspect of it is an effort in futility ,the creative arts are economic drivers, they are educational assets, civic catalyst ,they are preservers of cultural legacies and can facilitate the economic recovery of a nation.

Economic Drivers

The arts create jobs and produce tax revenue. A strong arts sector is an economic asset that stimulates business activity, attracts tourism revenue, retains a high quality work force and stabilizes property values. The arts have been shown to be a successful and sustainable strategy for revitalizing rural areas, inner cities and populations struggling with poverty.

Educational Asset

The arts foster young imaginations and facilitate children's success in school. They provide the critical thinking, communications and innovation skills essential to a productive 21st-century work force.

Civic Catalysts

The arts create a welcoming sense of place and a desirable quality of life. The arts also support a strong democracy, engaging citizens in civic discourse, dramatizing important issues and encouraging collective problem solving.

Cultural Legacies

The arts preserve unique culture and heritage, passing a state's precious cultural

character and traditions along to future generations.

Incorporating the Arts Improves the Impact of Other State Policies and Services

Small businesses and individual entrepreneurs are critical to every state's economy. Numerous states have recognized this and incorporated the arts into economic revitalization, education, literacy, work-force development, tourism, community sustainability and social service plans.

The Arts are Dynamic Contributor to the Small Business Sector

The creative industries are comprised of many talented workers who are self-employed, freelancers or employed by micro-enterprises. According to National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) analysis of U.S. Census occupational data, artists are 3.5 times more likely than other workers to be self-employed. Nonprofit organizations, too, are small businesses and play an important role in training creative workers and incubating artistic enterprises.

The Arts are the Hallmark of State Innovation

The arts are part of a state's creative capacity, spurring innovation and creating distinctive products and locales that attract tourists, businesses and residents alike. Creativity is part of any state's competitive edge in a modern marketplace where distinctive design and effective communications can spell the success or failure of a business or policy venture.

Business leaders, economists, property developers, tourism officials and community planners have joined with parents, educators and civic leaders to promote public policies that strengthen the arts. They do so because they recognize the benefits that accrue to communities when government helps to foster a robust arts sector.

Economic Benefits

1. The Arts Help Communities to Prosper

The arts are part of a well-diversified 21st-century economy. Along with nonprofit arts organizations, creative enterprises make significant contributions to state and local economies, generating employment and tax revenues and providing goods and services in high demand by the public. The arts put people to work.

By investing in the arts, the public sector is fostering a skilled work force of creative occupations that contribute to economic productivity. The arts employ artists, managers, marketers, technicians, teachers, designers, carpenters and workers in a wide variety of other trades and professions. Like other jobs, arts jobs help to pay mortgages and send children to college the arts attract tourism revenue:

There is noteworthy potential for creative industries in the visual arts, art crafts, and some areas of design. There are already a few internationally known painters, sculptors and plastic artists who circulate in international art venues. The target market for consumption in this domain is largely a higher-income, Cultural tourism is a huge market, comprised of some 118 million cultural travelers—people who include arts and heritage in their trips each year. Furthermore, cultural tourists stay longer and spend 36% more money at their destinations than other kinds of travelers.

2. The Arts are a Sound Rural Development Strategy

The arts help to address some of the unique challenges faced by rural communities, including geographic isolation, infrastructure limitations and population flight. The arts can help to diversify rural economies by creating sustainable small

businesses, improving quality of life for residents, and attracting visitors and investment.

3. **The Arts are a Business Magnet**

The arts act as a magnet for businesses, attracting companies that want to offer their employees and clients a creative climate and an attractive community with high amenity value.

4. **The Arts Give Industries a Competitive Edge**

American companies face an international marketplace where value is increasingly determined by a product's artistic qualities, uniqueness, performance and design. Creative workers help businesses to innovate new product lines and effectively market their services.

5. **The Arts Create a Distinctive State Brand Identity**

Along with a community's physical landmarks, its cultural landmarks, traditions and character are part of its magnetism. A cohesive brand identity-is an economic asset that can help both places and products to prosper.

6. **The Arts Enhance Property Values**

The arts make neighborhoods attractive places to live, work and play. The arts help to revitalize blighted areas and strengthen both commercial and residential housing markets.

Educational and Workforce Benefits

Students engaged in the arts perform better academically. Numerous longitudinal research studies have documented so that, students who receive arts education exhibit improvements in their performance in other subjects, including reading and math achievement, and on standardized test scores.)

7. **The Arts Help Kids to Succeed in School and Life**

Students who receive arts education have stronger social skills, improved motivation to learn and more esteem for themselves and their peers. Arts education helps to create a positive school environment in which learning and human development can occur.

Arts Education Provides Skills Critical to 21st-Century Success

In a global economy that is driven by knowledge and ideas, arts education is a necessity. The best paying jobs require workers with creativity and higher order thinking and communication skills, and companies are increasingly looking for these qualities in the workers they recruit. While studying the arts, students hone their perceptual, analytic and interpretive skills while developing creative thinking, communications and problem-solving abilities.

8. **The Arts Address a Shortage of Creative Workers**

Eighty-five percent of business leaders say they can't find enough job applicants with creativity and innovation skills. Arts education is part of the solution to this challenge.

9. **The Arts Keep Kids in School**

Dropout rates are causing serious academic and economic concerns for many communities. Numerous studies have found that arts education programs can help to reduce dropout rates, increasing the retention and engagement rates of students and raising educational attainment levels.

10. **The Arts Help At-risk Youth**

Participation in arts programs decreases young people's involvement in delinquent behavior, increases academic outcomes for

disadvantaged children, and improves students' attitudes about themselves and their future

Civic Benefit

11. The Arts Contribute to Community Vitality

A growing body of research points to the arts as an engine for civic renewal. Citizen engagement in the arts creates a strong shared identity and instills pride in a state's cultural heritage

12. The Arts Bring Public Spaces to Life

Artworks and arts activities make public spaces livable, attractive and distinctive, engaging residents in the creation of welcoming and sustainable places to live, work, play and raise families.

13. The Arts Foster Civic Participation and a Strong Democracy

The arts enhance our ability to illustrate viewpoints, to dramatize issues, to inspire action and to see things through the eyes of others—all necessary components of a thriving democracy. Americans who engage in the arts are more likely to engage in other aspects of community life, such as voting and volunteering. The arts also enhance civic dialogue, capturing the American experience and giving voice to our joys and aspirations and the conscience of our communities.

14. The Arts Contribute to Wellness and Healthy Aging

According to a national medical study, seniors who participate regularly in the arts report better health, fewer doctor's visits, less medication usage, less dementia, better mental health and higher rates of social engagement.

15. The Arts are a Communications Asset in a Global Society

The arts build bridges among people. They facilitate intercultural

understanding and provide a common lexicon for building relationships in an increasingly diverse and global society.

16. The Arts Contribute to Collective Efficacy

Research has shown that the arts build resiliency, foster social capital, strengthen interpersonal ties and empower residents, all of which nurture the collective efficacy of a community to address major problems, including poverty.

Conclusion

"Works of art are not the products of individual makers, 'artists' who possess a rare and special gift. They are, rather, joint products of all the people who cooperate via an art world's characteristic conventions to bring works like that into existence. Artists are a small subgroup of the world's participants who, by common agreement, possess a special gift, therefore make a unique and indispensable contribution to the work, and thereby make it art. Mark, (2009)

Suggestion

1. There is need for a policy approach that understands how deeply creativity is embedded in urban social structure, especially the importance of diversity (economic, ethnic, household). Then we can come up with strategies that create a creative society, not just a creative economy.)
2. Specific funding opportunities should be developed for local artists, for example to support studio spaces. The current structure and facilities of the Visual Arts Council could be expanded to provide services as a cluster for the visual arts.
3. The national art museum or a national art gallery could be a form of investment in local artists on a regular basis, by exhibiting their work. This would also be a form of exposure

for local artists, and a means of investing in the local art industry. Art works of local artists could also be used for decoration and promotion in public buildings, hotels, national parks etc.

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