

**THE PLACE OF MUSIC EDUCATION FOR JOB CREATION AND  
SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

A nation cannot be developed if there is no unity amongst its people. Music is a magnetic agent that draws people together, creates room for the sense of brotherhood and instills the sense of belonging and collective responsibility. The paper sees music education as a subject that fosters national development. National Policy on Education in Nigeria sees music education as the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence, both mental and physical, for a citizen of Nigeria to live and contribute to the development of his society. The paper therefore discusses the role of music education in national development with emphasis on job opportunities for musicologists in Nigeria. It recommends among others that attempt should be made to properly educate the Nigerian public on the need and essence of music education at all levels of our educational institutions for this will go extra mile in changing peoples perception towards the study of music as a subject.

**Introduction**

Music education is a concern that all societies share since music is central to the cultural life, and monitors the mental advancement of a society from generation to generation. Idolor (2007) stated that:

Music is a phenomenon which accomplishes purposes in the lives of individuals or group of individuals. Africa has had remarkable pressures from foreign administrative invasions, social interactions, mass media, new

curricular in formal education, alien religions, new job opportunities, and emerging technologies leading to some changes in the lives of individuals and indeed the entire society.

Music education has equally helped in national development in Nigeria today.

Music education is a concept formed from two different words-Music and Education. Taking the two words separately, music is described by Hornby (2006) as “sounds that are arranged in a way that is pleasant or exciting to listen to”. Music is a living analogue of human knowledge, feeling, sensitivity, emotions, intellectual *modus operandi* and all other life going forces which affect human behaviour and knowledge. On the other hand, education is “a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills”.

Precisely, music education has to do with the sum total of all skills, knowledge, principles and strategies which a music educator needs to perform the task of equipping a learner to acquire music knowledge and practice (Olorunsogo, 2008).

Also, national development is a concept formed from two words-national and development. Taking them separately – the word ‘national’ is an adjective derived from the word nation. While nation means “a country considered as a group of people with the same language, culture, and history who live in a particular area under one government”, national is

described as “connected with a particular nation; shared by a whole nation, owned, controlled or paid for by the government. Development means “to gradually grow or become bigger, more advanced, and stronger; to think of or produce new idea, product, etc and make it successful” (Hornby, 2006). Development is the process of social change which has as its goal the improvement of the quality of life of all or the majority of the people... and which seeks to involve the generality as closely as possible in the enterprise.

Precisely, national development as the case may be has no definite definition. Nevertheless, the coinage of the two words could possibly mean developing a nation to attain greater heights. The growth of any nation is multidimensional. It extends to both environmental and human development. It also involves social reformation, freedom from political colonialism otherwise called political emancipation.

Eghagha (2006) defined national development “as the process of harnessing all the resources of a country with a view to making them useful to the largest majority. It includes building or developing infrastructures, improving social services, and creating a just and caring society” (P.215)

Okafor (2005) opined that music education is designed to equip the individual not only to earn a living but also for life itself, through the encouragement of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills. All these and more is what this paper seeks to address.

### **Music Education in Traditional Nigerian Societies**

In the traditional Nigerian societies, music is not considered simply as a distillation of experience. Music is integrated into social, political, religious and economic transactions of humanistic existence. Transmission of musical knowledge is an oral process.

Before the invasion of foreign cultures, Nigeria had a well-rationalized system of music education that effectively sustained the transmission of age-old indigenous music knowledge, the systematized practices and creative advancement. Mass musical cognition was coerced through active participation in communal musical events and spontaneous criticism of life performances.

There was also the indigenous apprenticeship in specialized music types that enabled the apprentice to acquire exceptional expertise, contextual application and performance dynamics from a master and the critical society (Adeogun, 2006).

In some cases, cultural contact leads to cultural assimilation when the stronger absorbs the weaker culture, or to a neo-traditional culture as is possible and often prevalent in the cities. The Nigerian traditional music heard in the cities is, for instance, different from the same music performed in the country but it still has strong "Nigerianness" about it and is identifiable with the original. The difference is that music integrates elements of other cultures to which the city folk are exposed but the rural folk are not. The slow absorption method of trado-musical

education is slow but sure. Its results abide and endure.

Other method of music education in traditional Nigerian societies includes active participation in musical activities and tradition of the land. Nigerian music performances are mass-oriented, usually folk-conceived, since they are predominantly communally based.

### **The Place of Music Education for Job Creation and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria**

Development involves the creation of opportunities for the realization of human potentials. In order for human beings to function properly, they must satisfy certain basic needs such as comfortable shelter, sufficient food, enough employment opportunities, good and sufficient health care services, proper sanitation, good roads, good and sufficient water supply, security, proper education, and the elimination of the kinds of inequality which could lead to poverty, militancy and any form of conflict or unrest. As put by Melkote (2006), development may be described as "a process that should provide people with access to appropriate and sustainable opportunities to improve their lives and the lives of others in their environment".

Emeka (2004) believed that meaningful development may not occur except when people receive, understand, accept and act upon new ideas. Ekpo (2010) opined that development cannot occur in the midst of poverty, civil unrest and mass unemployment.

One of the national objectives in the National Policy on Education (2004) quoted in Oloruonsogo (2002) expressed music education as the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. One impression of the public is that music has no vacancies for his graduates in the labour market. It is not untrue that one scarcely hears on the radio or television or finds on the pages of the print media any advert declaring vacancies in music. One reason is that most employers of labour who may need music experts realize that they can hardly get them because of the small number of those who study music in our society. Following this is an impression that the only job open to music scholars is the teaching profession, as observed by Idamoyibo (2002).

Presently, employment opportunities abound for musicians, music educators, musicologists and music technologists, to mention but few. The opportunities are located not only in schools but in churches, electronic media, arts and culture councils, the disciplined service, and cultural management organizations. Also, a much bigger market abound in the private sector, entertainment industry, music processing industry, theatres, advertising and films as well as tourism. Qualified and endowed musicians, music educators, musicologists and music technologists etc have exploited these opportunities to their advantage, that of the society and that of the national economy.

Musicians are good investors and investments to the nation which make good profit to themselves and good returns towards national development. The popular music field produced giants like Fela Anikulakpo Kuti and Zeal Onyia who were widely recognized intellectually as stars of no mean repute. Prof. Fela Sowande, Prof. W.W.C. Echezona, Prof. Akin Euba, Prof. Richard Okafor, Prof. Laz Ekweme, Prof. Sam Akpabot, Prof. Chukwuemeka Mbanugo, Prof. Emurobome Idolor, Prof. Joshua Uzoigwe, Prof. Dan C.C. Agu, Prof. M.A. Omibiyi-Obidike, Prof. Tunji Vidal, and many others have their mark on various territories of music and are invaluable exports as well as excellent returns on national investment (Okafor and Okafor, 2009).

Music in its broadest sense includes many distinct participants.

- 1) **The Educator-** The music educator trains the trainee to acquire the skills, knowledge, principles and strategies for the purpose of equipping the later to acquire music knowledge and practices.
- 2) **The Composer-** The composer combines notes and melodies (harmony and counterpoint), based on principles or musical construction (form) and utilizes various devices for combining sounds for the voices and instruments.
- 3) **The Conductor-** The conductor interprets the music to reveal the creative ability and concepts of the composer.

- 4) **The Entrepreneur-** The entrepreneur presents the finished art work to the consumers or public who in turn pays the bill.
  - 5) **The Music Critic-** The critic appraises musical works and assesses the ideas expressed in the medium of their presentation.
  - 6) **The Historian-** The historian records the history of music personalities, their family upbringing, educational and musical training, and their achievements and contributions to the development of music in world perspective.
  - 7) **The Publisher-** The music publisher disseminates the literature about musicians and their works. He publishes music books on all aspects of music.
  - 8) **Instrument Builder or Technologist-** The builder or technologist develops the art of instrument building, how they work and the utilization of the knowledge in improving the quality and the productivity of those instruments.
  - 9) **The Music Dealer-** The dealer supplies to the public music books, musical instruments, tools and materials for instrument repairs.
  - 10) **The Copier-** The music copier prepares the composer's draft for publications.
  - 11) **The Studio Technician-** The technician records the music for the consumer and posterity.
  - 12) **The Architect-** The architect builds studios and concert halls, with various acoustic devices.
  - 13) **The Ethnomusicologist-** The ethnomusicologist traces the origin of musical practices of the community for the benefit of posterity.
  - 14) **The Entertainer-** The entertainer provides musical entertainments at functions – government and private functions.
- These are no small contributions to the wealth of the nation.
- In fact, the music practitioner has employment opportunities in the following areas:
- Ministries of Education, Information, Culture and Tourism.
  - The media Houses
  - Recording Studios
  - Publishing Industries
  - Examination Bodies such as JAMB, WAEC, NECO, etc
  - Schools, Colleges, Universities
  - Churches and other Religious Organizations.
  - Publishing Industries
  - Private and Personal Choirs, Bands, Orchestra, etc.
  - Military and Paramilitary Bands – The Army, the Police, the Navy and the Air Force Bands.
  - Company Entertainment Units
  - Arts and Culture Councils
  - Music Libraries
  - National Orchestra
  - Music Industries

- Consultancy Units and Centres
- Musician and Sound Archives
- Research Fellows in Governmental and Non-Government Organizations (NGO).
- International Centre for Music and Dance

There is probably no other discipline which is more lucrative than music studies. Gone are the days when many admission candidates flocked to medicine, law, engineering and other science related courses, thus neglecting courses within the arts and especially, the performing arts – theatre arts and music.

The dictionary meaning of wealth is “a large amount of money, property, etc. that a person or a country owns” (Hornby, 2006). Also, the state of being rich, wealth creation in this context does not only mean creating opportunities for monetary gains. It includes creating opportunities for intellectual, social, emotional, moral and even therapeutic benefits, which music does.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has tried to x-ray music education in both the traditional and western settings/societies in Nigeria, and has discussed the place of music education for job creation and sustainable national development in Nigeria. Some recommendations were given on how music education should be promoted for national development. It is strongly believed that the adoption of the ideas raised in this paper would give Nigerians a better opportunity than what it has now.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

No society can thrive well and function effectively without music, and to build a strong and visible society, the role of music as a binding force must be taken into cognizance.

Nwaneri (2000) affirmed that any society that wants to forge ahead and make a meaningful progress should not discard music because of its position as one of the strongest life wire of the society and the nation in its entirety. He maintained that society should not in any way neglect music, rather it should be given recognition and seen as a binding force in the society which does not only create easy room and avenue for peace, harmony, unity and progress, but also for reconciliation and development both locally, nationally and internationally.

Abolagba (2010) asserted that music affects man in all ramifications of life, culturally, religiously, academically, emotionally, economically, socio-political life and the like. It serves a multi-purpose functions. Music should be given its rightful place in the society.

Music educators have the added advantage and should use their skills and potentials to impart this awareness to learners who will in turn use such knowledge acquired to make the society a better place. Television stations should de-emphasise foreign films; government should make it mandatory for T.V. stations to show musical clips that promote nation building. Our museum nationwide should have music documentary room where various nationalist composers' pictures and works in tapes/video cassettes are kept for

posterity and for the coming generation to learn from.

Also, attempts should be made to properly educate the Nigerian public on the need and essence of music education at all levels of our educational institutions. This will go extra mile in changing their negative attitude to the subject. The poor status of the subject is a result of poor funding, government, and policy makers' attitude as well as the nature of the Nigerian music and musician. Considering the importance of music education in national development the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) should invest reasonable amount of money to develop talents in music profession.

Our institutions of learning should offer music courses that will enable students to make music practically both within and outside of the school settings. They should seek to provide maximum exposure and an unbiased presentation of all types of music in our educational institutions (Faseun, 2005).

National honours should be given to art musicians/nationalist composers on a regular basis. This will ginger them up the more to compose more songs.

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