
The Role of Music Education in Human Resources Development in Africa

By

PRINCE KUFRE EFFIONG

*Department of Music,
Federal College of Education,
Pankshin.*

And

UZOMA M. U. NWOSU

*Department of Music,
Federal College of Education,
Pankshin.*

Abstract

The importance of Music Education to the growth and development of a nation cannot be disputed. Music education is relevant in all facets of life vis-a-vis cultural, social, religious, political, educational, moral and technological well being of man. In a country and the world at large that advancement is at a seemingly faster rate, music matters greatly in bringing about productive human resource developments and transformation in all sectors. The main thrust of this paper is to highlight the overwhelming, indisputable and outstanding roles of Music education in human development. The paper x-rays the therapeutic, social, religious, political and cultural relevance of Music Education in human resource development. In the midst of today's political upheavals, religious bigotry and other forms of unrest, the paper also suggests the fact that Music Education could be used in conflict resolutions and management thereby enhancing human resource development.

Music education in the world today is an indispensable instrument "per excellence" in modeling lives, enhancing practical and applied skills among students. Creating a deeper awareness for character disposition and in bringing out the inherent/natural prowess in promoting human resource development in the lives of the citizens in any nation. The relevance of music education towards the

actualization of the above are vast. Music itself matters to all because every human being was born into an already existed world of music, and all through his sojourn on earth, music makes life meaningful, exciting, comforting, benefiting and enjoyable. The questions to ponder at in the course of this paper are:

- a) Can one really do without music?
- b) How enjoyable is life devoid of music?
- c) In general human resources development, is music education of any relevance?
- d) How can one harness the importance that music education offers in the human resource development of a society, nation and the world at large?

The paper shall attempt to address some of these issues with a view to bring out possible solutions/recommendations that shall be of immense benefit to the progressive development of nations around the world.

Definition of Music

Music is defined as the arrangement or the combination of well organized, sound which could be pleasing to the ear. Boamah (1990) saw music as an expert skilled creation which man purposely gathers and organizes, sound of definite and indefinite pitches into specific beautiful patterns that are socially acceptable to any given culture'. Effiong (2009: 114), added that it is one of the fine arts which is concerned with the combination of a view to beauty of form and expression of feeling or thought. Music can combine expressive words with instrument like the piano, drums, guitar among others to create a combination of sound that can delight the soul. Music characteristically, move along with rhythm, melody, harmony, pitch, counter-point, style, timbre, and forms to become pleasant, delightful, and pleasurable to listen to and enjoy. Merriam (1959) further saw music as 'the art by which the composer through, a performance as intermediary communicates to the listener certain ideas, feeling or state of mind'. Music is the universal language of the soul, the rhythm of life and the "panacea" for positive whollistic life of an individual,

What is Education?

Education, according to Akinbote (2000:8) is 'the process by which the community seeks to open its life to all the individuals within it to enable them take their part in it'. Akande (2002:26), added that educations is 'the cornerstone of any nation that contributes to its development'. Education, to a greater extent, stands as an impeccable phenomenon in contributing immensely to the nation's development. Ajewole (2010:14) added that education 'remains a potent and salient factor that enhances the changes of the individual to contribute maximally to his/her society'. Okafor ((1998) also opined that 'education is generally perceived to be the

process of discipline through training and study in the acquisition of skills and knowledge'.

Education from the above assertions is generally seen as the process of training, discipline, and learning either in a formal or an informal system. However, Ukeje (1986) viewed education in its functional sense, and in three dimensions, namely; a process, a product and a discipline. Okafor (1998) quoting Ukeje (1986) clearly opined that:

Viewed as a process, education is the means by which men acquire the civilization of the present and make civilization of the future...Viewed as a product, education means change in behavior... As a discipline, education is a body of organized knowledge... (p.204).

Music Education

Music education has been defined variously by several authors, educators and scholars, according to how it appeals to them. However, a few of them is considered thus: Effiong (2009) saw music education as:

That aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic, scientific knowledge to enable one adopt him/herself successfully in the society as well as contribute immensely to the development of the society (p.114).

From the above definition, music education, if properly addressed both for the practical acquisition of skills it offers and basic knowledge it provides, it will greatly lead to the development of any society, nation or the world at large. Hewitt (1985:84) described music education as 'the effective organization of man's experiences in his tendencies and powers...develop in a manner satisfactory to himself and the community in which he lives by the growth of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills'. Okafor, and Maison, (1992) also revealed that music education in the 21st century is geared towards helping man to be able to express himself deeply. Music education helps a man not just to earn a living but also for life itself. It equips the individuals and grooms him/her to be useful to the society through applied and practical skillful acquisitions. Effiong (2009:115) further added that 'music education however, has the potential of being one of the most valuable subjects for enhancing human personality'; Relevance of Music education to human resources development. Nketia (1966) observed that:

People were not educated merely for music, rather music was a basis for educating the members of the community. Music serves as a means of

teaching the norms and values of the society by which individuals are accepted as good members of the society (p. 14).

The relevance of music education to human resource development is as important as the society itself. Music education creates, generates and gears a formidable society as no society can do without music.

Ajewole (2010:17) added that 'music has the ability to motivate, encourage and spur learners into purposeful action'.

In enhancing and fostering a good standard of education to aid human resource development, morally based and educative music should be used to train the pupils, and children from the grass root. This will foster their learnability and enhance comprehension of all subjects. Udensi (2002) supported this assertion thus:

The type of music that could be used as a set of induction in the teaching of other subject topics should be tuneful, interesting, memorable, imaginative and relevant to the topic in order to arrest the pupils attention throughout the course of the lesson (p. 10).

Discussing the relevance of using music as mnemonics to tell stories (folk tales), Effiong (2009) added that:

The children always sit on the floor (mat) round the story teller while they pay close attention to get every details in the story... the songs stand as mnemonics (memory aids) to help them understand, assimilate and comprehend the stories well. (p. 145).

Hence, songs/music assists in a greater way in modeling the young ones right from the grass roots. When proper music lyrics are rightly implored in teaching the younger ones from the pre-nursery stage to their adulthood, it will foster their understanding, enhance their level of assimilation and comprehension, and improve immensely the human resource development of the children, adult in a nation and the world at large.

Plato (1996), further provided the need for music education of every citizen. His reasons were consistent with the ancient Greek idea of ethos-the belief that each mode has an ethnical character. Plato felt that of all subjects music was the one truly educational, for it does not only train the mind, but trains and purified the emotion. Effiong (2009:114) quoting Mason (1988) further revealed the fact that music education from its inception was approved and financed by the Government of United States of America in 1864 for students/pupils to be able to read and sing musical notations by sight and later be able to perform practically. It was also to be

able to achieve the important aim of responsiveness through the study of music by using concept tools in academic discipline.

Effiong (2009:117) further explained that traditionally, music has been included in the curriculum of schools for the reasons of citizenship, character development, team spirit and health benefits.

Imperatively, it has become necessary to see music education as an indispensable tool to enhance the quality of any educational system. Music gives a holistic training of the mind, intellect, soul and spirit. Other functions of music education in human resource development are stated below:

(a) **The Therapeutic Relevance of Music Education**

Human beings generally can easily be prone to worries, condemnation, rejection, negative mindset, inferiority complex among others because of all manners of things they go through in life. The conglomeration of these anomalies have made some to commit suicide, run mad, live in frustration, be immuned to drug addiction and drunkenness in a seeming attempt to overcome their problems. The Irony has always been the repetition of what they were running away from. Psychologically, some have been negatively affected.

Alvin (1975:4) saw music therapy as: 'The controlled use of music in the treatment, education, training and rehabilitation of children and adults suffering from physical, mental, or emotional disorders'.

Mereni (2006) also explained the meaning, benefits and dimensions in which music has therapeutic relevance in the field of medicine, thus:

Music is used in various fields of intervention in medicine: gynecology, pediatry, angiology, cardiology, geriatry, psychiatry etc. In humanistic disciplines such as education and other social sciences, music therapy has proved an efficacious tool for furthering learning among the handicapped and ameliorating the behavior of the poorly comported in the society, (p. 1).

For the resourceful development of the mind, soul, spirit and heart brokenness, music therapy is the antidote. It stands as a panacea for the treatment of the mind and body especially without drugs or operations.

The Holy Bible for instance, gives an account in 1st Samuel 16:23 of how King Saul was cured when the young musically talented boy, David, played the musical harp.

So, music has the divine potency to set the broken hearted free, heal the psychologically affected ones, and create cheerfulness, relief, comfort, and freedom in the lives of those who were formally oppressed and psychologically worried. Music serves as a divine means of healing and soothing the troubled spirit thereby aiding in the transformation, development of the total man who can be useful to his society, nation and the world at large.

(b) Social-cultural Relevance of Music Education

Almost every society in Nigeria, Africa, and the world generally, has its special type of music which could be performed in specially events. As a matter of fact, music making in Africa for instance, is inter-related with social events. Suffice to say that almost every society has its own special music which could be exclusively meant for each occasion alone and not be used for another.

With reference to the Mwaghavul Puus Kaat festival, in Plateau state of Nigeria for instance, Effiong (2008) observed the instrumental form of their folk music thus:

A single drummer could be playing the drum and singing along (most times) during either the funeral dirges or the performance of the Puus Kaat festival. Duet instrumentalist consists of two people playing certain instruments together, with or without singing. Various instrumentalists could be playing together, each bringing out his rhythmic essence but there is always a master instrumentalist who directs and control others, and they all adhere to his stylistic cues (p.7)

Effiong (2008) further explained that in Mwaghavul land, folk music is a very important element in the transmission and preservation of their culture. He cited an example that during the Puus Kaat festivals and ceremonies, there are performances of folk music which assist in the continuity, preservation, and promotion of the Mwaghavul cultural heritage.

In essence, music is an agent of socialization. It assists greatly in the preservation of culture. Music is used mostly for entertainment during any cultural festival. For example, the renditions of folk songs during any of the Nigerian festivals are not just for the enjoyment benefit but the songs are seen as avenues to reveal to the world the value system of the Nigerian society. The songs are rich in meaning and pleasant to listen to. They teach morals, sharpen characters, instill disciplines, mold lives and foster human resource development.

(c) Religious Relevance of Music Education

Idolor (2002:50) opined that music and religion are two great friends that go hand in hand'. In the traditional concept of religion, music is a great tool to appease the

gods. The Christians use music to worship and reference the Almighty God that created all things, gave them life and left the beautiful, rich world at their disposal to rule and have dominion over all things in Jesus name.

Music is the fastest way/medium of reaching the divine God and activating him to answer the Christian's requests. Akponome (1999) saw the importance of music in the church in the worship of the Almighty God, thus:

Nearly all the activities carried out in the church are punctuated by music... Music during worship may fall under the following: praise songs, worship songs and hymns. Praise songs are usually characterized by joy, dancing, clapping and singing. The rhythm is usually fast and danceable.

The religious relevance of music brings spiritual refreshment, healing, and growth to improve the spiritual growth of a child, adult and senior citizens in any nation. It also assists in doing away with all forms of moral decadence in our societies.

Effiong (2009:141), accepted in its totality this claim thus: praise brings spiritual refreshment to a body of any age, be it a toddler, teen, adult, or senior citizen. A family that starts their day praising God, will continue throughout the day praising day'.

(d) Relevance of Music Education in Conflict Resolutions

Virtually all nations in the world are not devoid of political upheavals, religious bigotry, societal ills, communal clashes, inter-tribal wars/conflicts to mention but a few. Nigeria for example, of late has been faced with all sorts of instability, insecurity, crimes, kidnappings, etc from the popular Islamic sect called "Boko Haram", militants, Fulani herdsmen, gun men, assassins etc. These hoodlums have killed innocent citizens in places of worship, force head quarters, homes, market place etc. in most Northern States in Nigeria. These unscrupulous elements have created panics in Nigerians as many would say: "No one knows where the next bomb blast would be" Music education has assisted greatly in installing peace, security surveillance, and in promoting oneness in the face of conflicts and distrust.

With reference to the functionality of the music media in crating peace and in conflict resolution in Plateau state, Effiong (2012) Opined that:

In Plateau State, "peace songs "are always being presented on the radio and television stations to promote peace, unity, love, friendliness, and brotherly affection. The 90.5 FM is even called "Peace FM". To a greater extent, through the musical jingles, promotions, adverts, and rhymes, peace

have come to stay in Plateau state. For example, some popular song always rendered (on daily basis) on Plateau Radio Television Cooperation (PRTVC) such as "Zaman Lafiya" God bless Plateau State among others, have assisted promoting a peaceful co-existence among various tribes, ages, religions, sexes and nations. (p8).

Ogu-Raphael (2009) observed that the functionality of music is no longer in doubt, as many people have come to realize the potency of music in development. He stated that music has the power to influence thought and opinion, and can serve as a popular and effective means of political propagation, economic empowerment and culture diffusion. Oikelome (2010) contributed thus:

Music can function to bring about peace in conflict. An example of the functionality of music is the "Rwandan Ballet Isonga", where songs and dance were employed to mediate in the conflict between the major ethnic groups, the Hutus and Tutsis, in the Rwandan crisis (p.89)

It is however, expedient that the role of music education in a contemporary world supersedes mere entertainment. If it is properly harnessed, it can be used to create awareness of impending doom, teach morals, and spread the message of peace in the face of conflicts thereby, promoting human resource development.

Conclusion

Music education remains one of the most indisputable and indispensable weapon to harness human resource development in any nation. This is so because it has the ability to encourage, motivate, teach, educate, and spur learners into meaningful and purposeful action that can lead to human resource development. Music assists in fostering understanding, improve assimilation, and comprehension. Music trains the mind, mold lives, purifies emotions, soothes the troubled soul, heals the broken hearted and stands as an unavoidable panacea in bringing total peace amidst conflicts.

Instrumentality of peace songs/ messages assist greatly in fostering peaceful resolutions to conflict/warring zones through the media, live concerts and dialogues.

On a whole, the relevance of music education in human resource development is seen in the therapeutic, socio-cultural, religious, conflict resolution among other roles it plays in any nation. No society or nation can exist without music as music creates meaningful, enjoyable, peaceful, comfortable, resourceful and progressive society, nation the world at large.

Recommendations

Music since education has been included in Nigerian curriculum of education, by its reason of citizenship, character development, and team spirit the paper recommend that other nations of the world should do likewise to enjoy its rich valuable prowess. Also, in as much as it has been included in the school's curriculum in Nigeria, it should properly be harnessed, and implemented to the letter. Music education should be taught right from the pre-nursery schools to the higher institution since it molds character and makes learning faster. It should be made to be one of the core subjects in schools across the globe.

Also, the federal government of Nigeria and other nations of the world should empower the mass media with sufficient man power and facilities, and encourage talented musicians to compose peace and unity songs. These songs, should be presented in media houses as often as possible for the citizens of that nation to constantly live by.

Finally, an applied scholastic medium of music education should be introduced, recommended and enhanced. Music is an applied and skillful subject which should be put into practice If human resource development is worth looking for, then practical musicianship should be accepted whole heartedly as a formidable tool in bringing this to reality.

Hence, to be resourceful, instrumental and useful as a person, the theoretical, applied, creative and performing arts of music education should be well harnessed by all interesting citizens.

References

- Ajewole, J.O. (2010). The Role of music Teacher Education in the Achievement of Universal Basic Education (USE). In The Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (ed.). *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. (7), pp. 14-22
- Akande, F. F. (2002). Teacher Education and National Development in the 21st century: Challenges and strategies for improvement, *Ilorin Journal of Teacher Education* (1), 2-35.
- Akinbote, O. (2010). *Universal Basic Education in Nigeria: Issues, Prospect and problems*. A lead paper presented at the 3rd National Conference, school of Education, Federal College of education, Osiele, Abeokuta. (August, 10-14.
- Alvins, J. (1975). *Music Therapy*. London: Hutchinson.

- Boamah, D.Y. (1990) Handout on Music Education (A Mimeograph).
- Effiong, P.K. (2008). *A study of the Mwaghavul folk music of Mangu L.G.A of Plateau State: its socio-cultural Essence in the 21st century Nigeria*. Unpublished M.A Seminar paper presented to the Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Effiong, P.K. (2009a). *The Role of Music in the Promotion of a Healthy Family Life in A contemporary Nigerian society*. In school of Arts science, Federal College Education, Pankshin (ed). *The Family and Cotemporary Challenges in Nigeria*. Jos: Akins Press and Services (Nig.).
- Effiong, P.K (2009b). Perspectives in Music Education: In school of Arts and social Sciences, Federal College of Education, Pankshin. (eds.). *Pankshin International Journal of Arts and Social Science Education* (4) 114-120.
- Effiong, P.K (2012). *Music and Mass Media in the Promotion of National security, Social Instability and conflict Prevention in Nigeria*. Unpublished Conference paper presented at the National Conference of the School Of Arts and Social Science, Education, Pankshin. (21st -24th)
- Idolor, E. (2002). *Music in Africa. Facts and Illusions*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.)
- Masson, L (1998). American Hymnody and Music Education. In Hildegard (ed.). *Grove Concise Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (vol.20). London: Macmillan Publishers.
- Mereri, A.E (2006). Psychosis and Neurosis: Towards music Therapeutically Pathology. In Mbanugo, C (ed.) *Journal of Research in Music* (3),pp.119.
- Merriem, A.P. (1959). African Music in Continuity and Change in African Culture. In W. Bascom and M. Herkovits (eds.). Chicago: University Of Chicago press.
- Nketia, J.H.K. (1966). Music Education in African school: A Review of the Position in Ghana. *British Journal of Education*. Pp. 10-25.
- Ogu-Raphael. I. (2009). *The Medium of Theatre as an Alternative Resolution Mechanism: A case of the Niger Delta*. Unpublished Article.

- Oikelome, A.O. (2010). Music as a Tool for Conflict Resolution in the Niger Delta. In Department of music, Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, awka (ed.). *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts* (7). 83-101.
- Okafor, R.S. & Maison, J.S. (1992). 8as/c methods of Teaching Music in Post Primary Institutions. (A mimeograph).
- Plato, (1996). Contemporary Philosophy. In Plato (ed.) *The Republic*. The University Bachelor's [www.cheathouse .com/essav/essay](http://www.cheathouse.com/essav/essay).
- Udensi, J.K. (2002). Music: An Instructional Medium for Teaching Various Subjects in the pre-primary Schools System. An unpublished paper presented at the 3rd National conference of Music Educators in Nigeria. Federal College of Education, Okene (August 7-10).
- Ukeje, B.O. (1986). *School and Society in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing com. Ltd.