

REVITALISING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Education for security and economic development (ESED) may be considered as that education that empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, succession, safety of lives and properties, and a just and egalitarian society for both the good of the present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESED is a holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. Its cardinal purpose is the transformation of the society.

Having a clear picture of issues, leads to a better understanding of events. In order to give this paper a better focus, basic concepts would be clarified. The major concepts of this paper may be briefly explained as follows:

Revitalising Education:

Revitalisation here means revival of education for the benefit of the present and future generations. Education can therefore be revitalised when sophisticated and modern teaching and learning methods are employed. There are indeed many teaching methods available to educationist many of which in recent times have been broadly categorized into two namely; the 19th century teaching and learning methods and the 21st century teaching and learning methods.

Economic development

Economic development implies economic growth plus progressive changes in certain important variables which determine well-being of the people. This include health and education.

Modernization, Westernisation, and especially Industrialisation are terms people have used while discussing economic development. Education for economic development should enrich students' understanding of themselves and world (Akinsanya, 2004). It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. It should raise students' productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances where teachers should deliver it in such a way to play a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution.

Security

Security entails safety, it is protection against harm. It is the protection of a country, a building, or a person against attack or danger (Isaac, 2007). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report of 1994 defined human security as:

- i. Safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression.
- ii. Protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily life whether in jobs, in homes or communities. Human security therefore entails ability of individuals to live in peace and harmony free from such threats as disease, hunger, unemployment, political oppression, environmental degradation etc. justice, fair-play, tolerance, protection of human rights and a level playing ground for all citizens to participate.

Education system needs to be developed holistically to meet the requirements of the diversified classrooms. The teachers need to learn to use and view diversity as a boon for the improvement of the teaching learning process. Education system in Nigeria needs to be revitalised in order to meet the increased demand of the teachers who are well-equipped with sufficient skills to handle the diversified classrooms in order to improve the teaching learning process for making the initiatives of the society successful.

Education

Education is seen as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences. From this definition, three strands of education emerged. One is that which sees education as all experience acquired in the process of living. This is the popular definition of education which is too vague.

The second strand sees education as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitude and experiences in institutions of learning. This definition of education is too narrow and restricted because a lot of what is learned is done so outside the school environment. While the third definition regarded as a working definition of education can be that which sees education as a relatively organised learning activity intended to make some persons (adults, youths or children) learn. This presupposes that the teacher/facilitator, learner/student, content/ programme and method must be present in the learning situation.

Sustainable Development

Sustainability is the ability to sustain, maintain, provide for or nourish education for an indefinite period without damaging or depleting it. Sustainability consists of three dimensions: the protection of natural environment, the maintenance of economic vitality and observance of specific social considerations about human development.

Development means the ability of society to achieve a rapid and sustained rise in output of all gainful economic ventures. Focusing on economic and physical wealth in pursuit of development has proven to be unsustainable. This explains why a paradigm shift becomes necessary again in development discourse. This shift is from economic growth to sustainable development (SD).

Ahenkan and Osei-Kojo (2014) defines sustainable development as the development path along which maximisation of human well-being for today's generation does not lead to the decline in the well-being of the future generation. This definitions suggest that sustainable development considers the needs of the future and current generations in tandem, and it is

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rooted in the pursuit of the well-being and welfare of the people (Ahenkan & Osei-kojo, 2014).

Therefore, the objectives of sustainable development will require the protection of the natural resources upon which future development depends. For many advocates of sustainable development, valuing nature and human life in an intrinsic way has also become an integral part of development (Bakar, 2005). Sustainable development could probably be otherwise called "equitable and balanced" development (Suobbotina, 2004). However, the operationalisation of the concept of sustainable had over the years become very difficult especially to Nigeria and other developing countries.

In an attempt to achieve Sustainable Development, African countries have launched several strategies. In Nigeria for instance there have been many poverty reduction strategies by governments at different times and at all levels, all aimed at economic growth, human development and environmental protection and conservation. Just as in Nigeria, there has been an increased number of sustainable development initiatives being implemented across some African Countries.

The overall goal of the Decade for sustainable Development as reported by Ilechukwu (2014) include four key objectives:

- i. Facilitating, networking and collaborating among stakeholders in education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- ii. Fostering greater quality of teaching and learning in ESD
- iii. Supporting countries in achieving their sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education for sustainable development.
- iv. Provide countries with new opportunities and tools to incorporate ESD in education reforms efforts.

The political Development adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, 2002) as quoted by Ilechukwu (2014) states that sustainable development is built on three "interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars" of economic growth, social/human development and environmental protection and sustainability.

The role of Education in sustainable economic and security development

The role of education in sustainable economic and security development can be summarised as follows:

- i. Education is here regarded as an instrument of social change which could transform the society in significant ways. Education is paramount when trying to enable a change in values and attitudes towards sustainability. The report of UN's World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987) recognized that "sustainable development requires changes in values and attitudes towards environment and development" and that education plays a central role in achieving those changes in values and attitudes (Anijah-Obi, 2001)). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is one of the most important tools for raising awareness about the environmental issues within a sustainable development context.

- ii. Education for sustainable Development grows from a variety of sources and it is delivered through casual, informal, non-formal and formal strategies. Topics of sustainable development usually addressed here include but not limited to, conflict resolution, human rights, ethics, gender equity, poverty alleviation, peace, human security, citizenship, democracy and governance, energy, health, water, rural and urban development, corporate social responsibility, social and environmental effects of globalization, production and consumption patterns, cultural diversity, biological diversity, ecological principles and eco-systems, natural resources, management, climate change and disaster prevention (Association of African Universities, 2009).
- iii. Contemporary sustainable development education is therefore expected to be focused on the above issues and must be oriented on future development, ensuring proper quality of present and future life. In addition, sustainable development concepts/issues should be taught formally and informally so much such that they form part of the core of the people's lives in ways that the people develop skills necessary for sustainable development. Educational providers are also encouraged to provide sustainable training to professionals and practitioners and should encourage research on sustainable development issues.
- iv. Education for sustainable development involves learning how to make decisions that considers the long term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities. UNESCO argues that education has a special responsibility to generate the knowledge needed as well as communicate this knowledge to decision makers and the public at large (Bedawy, 2014). As a result, the body calls on all relevant stakeholders to review the programmes and curricula of schools and universities, in order to better address the challenges and opportunities of sustainable development. Therefore, contemporary sustainable development education is expected to orient on future development, ensuring proper quality of present and future life.
- v. Education empowers people for their roles in society. Therefore, formal, nonformal and informal education are key actors in education for sustainable development. Formal education cannot implement education for sustainable development alone. Because education for sustainable development is a life-long process, the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors should work together to accomplish education for sustainable development goals and objectives (DiGiulio, 2006). It is important just as the adult for young people to be educated for sustainable development because they are our future. Doing this will provide them with the opportunity to begin to value the world's cultural diversity and appreciate the issues facing our world and of the impact they have on those issues (Davidson, 2003).
- vi. Education for sustainable development functions to educate, train and undertake research to contribute to the sustainable development of the society. For example the training of people in monitoring of targets and detection of sustainable concerns and graduates with skills, knowledge and attitudes to make sustainability contribution (Pearson, 2005, Bedawy, 2014).

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- vii. In addition education should provide learners with skills, perspectives, values and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities. Education also produces leaders of the country who manage the affairs of government and private sector industries who constitute the stake holders of sustainable development. By so doing, the educational system creates a "vanguard group" of leaders in each sector of society who will take primary and leading roles in promoting the values for sustainable development (Pearson's Honeywood's, O'Toole, 2005).
- viii. To enhance learning about sustainable development different teaching methodologies should be adopted throughout all levels of the educational strata. Methods that will help disseminate information quickly and easily to learners should be applied and should be combined with other methods for effectiveness. Doing so will facilitate learners, involvement, communication skills and critical thinking about sustainable development issues.
- ix. Educational institutions play a leading role in building more sustainable societies and creating new paradigms as they have the mission to promote development through both teaching and research. But it should be noted that sustainable development can be practiced only through a teacher who himself has been trained on values and perspectives of sustainable development. Therefore, teacher education is seen as an important actor or agent of change in promoting the social, economic and environmental values of sustainable development in the society (Johnson, 2007).

Essential Ways to Revitalise Nigerian Education

Our school system is in crisis. The statistics are sobering.

Rather than pressuring students with more ‘rigorous’ standards, tests, and programs, I believe that we need a radically different approach to education revitalisation. Rather than trusting our children’s educational future to politicians, corporation executives, and educational bureaucrats, I believe we should turn to our culture’s most innovative and renowned thinkers.

The following are some of the essential ways education in Nigeria could be revitalised:

To transform the society through the tool of education for security and economic development, the school system should consider the following essential areas among others.

- i. **Teaching and Learning content:** ESED demands integration of critical issues such as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) into the school curriculum.
- ii. **Pedagogy and learning environments:** Designing teaching and learning in an interactive, learner-centred way that enables exploratory, action oriented and transformative learning. Rethinking learning environments in varieties of ways including physical as well as virtual and online and inspire learners to act for sustainable development.

- iii. **Societal transformation:** Empowering learners of any age, in any education setting, to transform themselves and the society they live in. This involves enabling a transition to greener economies and societies by equipping learners with skills for ‘green jobs’, motivating people to adopt sustainable lifestyles, empowering people to be ‘global citizens’ who engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and to resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world.
- iv. **Learning outcomes:** Stimulating learning and promoting core competencies such as critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations.
- v. **Integrate Imagination into School Lessons.** Today, classroom lessons seldom ask students to visualise what they are learning. The imagination is the most underutilised resource in education (and it doesn’t cost a kobo). Children should be closing their eyes and imagining scenes from stories they have just read, taking imaginary journeys through the circulatory system in science, visualising world events in history class. If teachers could only tap into this capacity, they might be amazed to see higher levels of engagement and achievement from their students.
- vi. **Students’ Passion should be unleashed for Learning:** Educators focus so much attention on the acquisition of new learning but they forget about how important it is to be excited about learning. The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said that students need to experience a “romance” with learning, in order to master new learning material. If a student doesn’t feel motivated to learn, how can we expect them to excel? Educators first need to reawaken their own passion for learning, and then let their own enthusiasms trigger their students’ philomathy (Greek for “love of learning”). Without this love, education becomes an endless and empty routine. Love of learning is contagious, those who don’t have it catch it from those who do, but there needs to be a first spark, and the teacher is the one who can light it by starting each lesson with something that’s new and exciting to share.
- vii. **Emphasise Creativity and Learning “Outside the Box”** “It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.” We need to have the same kind of approach in education, where students are encouraged to solve problems and fashion products creatively, even if they don’t fit in with the accepted “standards.” After all, mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn, and wrong answers often reveal a world of possibilities. Every child is born creative but they all too often have their creativity knocked out of them as they grow up. Schools should be places where that creative impulse is given the highest priority, and where students’ fabulous and idiosyncratic ideas are welcomed and considered to be a central part of the curriculum.
- viii. **Feed Students’ Curiosity** – “The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day. Never lose a holy curiosity.”

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Curiosity is critical to human survival. Without it, individuals would remain indifferent to changes in the outer environment, resulting in a failure to adapt, and thus a failure to evolve. Because of this, children are born naturally curious. But in school, most students stop being curious and instead learn to pay unquestioning attention to teachers' lessons, and engage in learning activities that have fixed outcomes allowing for little opportunity to be inquisitive.

- ix. **Cultivate the Individuality of Each Student:** The development of general ability for independent thinking and judgment should always be placed foremost, not the acquisition of special knowledge. . ." Each child is an unrepeatable miracle (even identical twins do not have the same genes). Yet school all too often takes away that precious sense of individuality (or keeps it from developing) with its emphasis on uniform standards and procedures. Increasingly now, student work is being reduced to "data" processed by computer algorithms that are stored and sometimes sold to corporate interests who hope to profit from it. "What we're teaching today is obedience, conformity, following orders," says education historian Diane Ravitch. So-called "personalized" learning turns out to be nothing but computer programs that take student data and use it to determine the level of "content" to deliver to students sitting at their computer stations. In a reformed school system, the nurturing of student "voice" (e.g. expression of their own unique feelings, opinions, and ideas) would become a priority, and students would be encouraged to tackle projects that deeply reflect their own interests and proclivities.
- x. **Cultivate in Students a Reverence for All Living Things:** Our greatest challenge for the remainder of the 21st century is to care for our planet and ameliorate the negative impact of climate change. While schools currently provide a certain degree of information about nature in science class, much more is needed to prepare our students for this challenge. We essentially need to totally reorganise our education system so that it reflects a genuinely "green" attitude toward living. Students should have frequent learning experiences out in nature. They should be involved in projects that serve to protect the environment around them. They should learn to care for and understand the needs of animals and other living things. Ultimately, our schools must commit themselves to the development of individuals who are true stewards of the planet, so that Mother Earth has a chance of surviving and even thriving in the years and centuries to come (Soubbotina, 2004)..
- xi. **Guide children to become tolerant:** While often said that prejudice is learned and not inborn, it may be closer to the mark to say that we come into life primed for bias but that culture has a major role in whether that bias solidifies into intolerance or is transformed instead into a more accepting attitude toward others who are perceived as different. Unfortunately, our schools are increasingly becoming places where hate and ethnic bias, and other acts of discrimination are becoming more common against people with respect to race, ethnic group, gender identification, sexual orientation and other differences. Instead of putting so much emphasis on academic achievement, as it has been doing, our schools should aim to become places where students can have important conversations

about human differences, learn to celebrate diversity in all of its forms, and develop tolerance and sympathy for those who are targets of prejudice.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has looked at education for sustainable economic and security development in Nigeria and other developing countries. The paper can be summarised as follows:

Development paradigm has shifted from economic growth to human development and now, sustainable development where education is the basic objective of sustainable development and an important end in itself. Education remains the surest way to sustainable development in any society. Conclusively, education for sustainable development is the process of achieving sustainable development be it economic growth, safety, human development and environmental protection and conservation. What is needed is the will to make these changes, the courage to stand up for what is right in educating our youth, and the ingenuity in finding ways to make significant transformations in our schools despite the obstacles and roadblocks that stand in the way. We owe it to our children and teens to give them the very best that education has to offer so that they can realise their full potential and ultimately transform the world around them. Accordingly, the paper recommended that:

1. Contemporary sustainable development education should focused on a variety of issues such as economy, security, health, human rights, conflict resolution, ethics, gender, poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability to mention but a few.
2. Sustainable development issues/concepts should be taught formally and informally in ways that they become the core of people's lives.
3. People - students, community members, professionals and practitioners should be encouraged to develop skills necessary for sustainable development.
4. The reorientation of existing education at all levels to include principles, skills, perspectives and values of sustainable development and the professional development of teachers who are responsible for implementing sustainable development should be taken serious.

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