
SUSTAINABLE CURRICULUM FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The topic dealt on sustainable curriculum for economic development for Nigeria. The colonial masters' policies and curricula for African education in general and Nigeria in particular have created a lot of gaps in the workforce of these nations. The effects and its attendant consequences have left the recipients in quest for white – collar jobs, which of course, has not been easy. Lack of alternative means of livelihood after graduation generated a lot of unprecedented hardship that resulted to so many oppressional vices among the youths; which in essence led to insecurity, destruction and loss of lives and property. The ugly situation has attracted many curriculum reforms and changes in the nation's academic history, but not much has been achieved. Nevertheless, the writers stressed that what the nation need now is a sustainable curriculum for economic development, and in the bid to proffer solution, addressed the situation by introducing Entrepreneurship education, technical and vocational education and training as well as ICT education into existing curricula of tertiary institutions; as part of General Studies, for competency skills.

Conclusion and some recommendations made include: (1) Nigeria should mandate the integration of Entrepreneurship, TVET and ICT education in the General Studies Unit and or infuse any of them in the Curriculum/Instruction department. (2) The implementation of the integrated areas for competency skills should be closely and properly supervised to close the gap between the expected and the observed in Nigeria tertiary education programmes.

Africans for many years and decades have been under the influence of colonial masters' curricula and policies in the area of education and these as a result, have led to the production of white – colar job seekers as its products. The situation in effect has given rise to unprecedented economic fall than growth in the lives of these Africans. Many graduates roam the streets today and see it as obligations of their governments to satisfy their yawning, grave quests for white – colar jobs, which in essence, has created opportunities for many oppressional vices in these nations than ever. Okeke (2008) confirmed the above statement by illustrating unemployment distribution in Nigeria in percentage from 1999 – 2006

Year	Urban	Rural
1999	10.8%	13.4%
2000	14.2%	19.8%
2001	11.4%	12.8%
2002	13.4%	13.9%
2003 – 2006	14.5%	15.3%

Sources: Federal Office statistics 2007 (Okeke, 2008)

The issue has caused a lot of curriculum reforms and reversals in the said countries, but not much has been achieved, especially in the case of Nigeria. This is because Nigeria is not only failing to produce citizens who are self – reliant, but also failing to meet the national need for a competitive workforce.

This has brought the Nigerian's revision of the education policy of 1969, 1977, 1981, 2004 and 2010. In addition to this, the vision 20:2020 agenda of the federal government that supports government policy was released in 2009 (NJWG, 2009) to meet demands for all sectors of Education to be “technically efficient, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable through applications of formal and informal educational sources”. It is seen as the major tool of the nation's sustainable social, economic and industrial growth, delivering affordable and relevant technologies useful to concerned individuals. The lurching of Decade of Education Sustainable

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Development (DESD) by the UNESCO's Director General in (2005 – 2014) enables Nigeria to cue in the Education For All (EFA) programme.

The United Nations (UN) has constituted 2005 – 2014 as the decade for educational sustainable development. The decade speaks to the bridges that must be built between academia and the needs of the community as well as need to enact sustainability in higher education in order to positively affect the larger society and biosphere (UNESCO, 2006). This of course, necessitates the need for sustainable curriculum for economic development in Nigeria. Higher institution of learning has a lot to offer in the issue of environmental and sustainability. This is why Rhodes University (2005) drew a community Engagement policy with the following objectives: promoting community service in relation to working with the community towards better future; generating graduates who have a sense of civic responsibility; and promoting learning which benefit the community as well as provide students with the opportunity to apply theory to local, regional and national development issues.

The question now is, what type of curriculum, attitude and reform does Nigeria need? It is imperative that what Nigeria needs in a time like this are good policy expansion and diversified curriculum that will be vigorously pursued with sense of commitment and honesty, policy and curriculum that will catapult the nation into a vibrant, viable, problem – solving policies and curricula with enviable height of economic growth and sustainability. A change in the life of the graduates after undergoing training to become employers of labour instead of being employed through entrepreneurial education, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Technical and Vocational Education. There is also need for a climate change and peace education. A nation without peace can never progress and will ever wallow in poverty. Nigeria needs to develop a curriculum that will lead to a rethink in the new line of action with critical thinking and problem – solving skills and competencies in the (public and private sectors. Kozma 2005) contributing commented, “they will also need to use technology, manage information, communication effectively, think critically, work well in teams and produce new intellectual and creative works that have values to others. Most importantly they will need skills to continuously learn and creat Such are the skills of 21st century needed by the students”.

To achieve the sustainable curriculum for economic development therefore, the following headings are to be explored:

1. Sustainability and economic development
2. Policy and curriculum
3. Entrepreneurship education through technical and vocational education and training and information communication technology.
4. Recommendation
5. Conclusion

Sustainability and Economic Development

To be sustainable means to be in continuance in strength. It shows the continuous existence of issue and being available in strength. For Economic development, it is the process by which a country provides for its citizens all the basic needs of life such as health, education, housing, nutrition etc. it also involves providing the citizens with opportunities to contribute to the very process through gainful employment as well as scientific technological innovations (Amokaya 2004). Ikpe and Ujah (2013) see development as a comprehensive process that involves political freedom and equality of opportunities for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and fair distribution. For Okowa (2005) economic development of necessity include growth, income distribution, poverty alleviation and provision of basic needs of food, shelter, health and education for the masses.

Nwafor (2012) explained that the most important barometer for measuring development is the level of the intellectual and moral development of the citizens, who should have the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through education to transform their lives and their environment. In essence, it could be implied that for a sustainable development to be envisaged, it must involve good education for all and job opportunities available to both public and private sectors, and above all, when its conservation, preservation and protection are assured. Others are urbanization of the cities with good infrastructures and projects, good energy supply and renewable energy resources like water, sun and wind energy; good water supply and management; smart town planning and technologies; affordable health care; public transportation and safety system and super highways (Siemens 2013).

Sustainability in any curriculum has to do with competency skills, creativity, practical knowledge, diverse opinions and productivity, no wonder Brundiers, Wiek and Redman (2010:130) pointed out the three key sustainability competencies as;

The strategic knowledge cluster, clusters past developments, creates future scenerios and sustainable visions which deals with the competency of linking knowledge with action and the collaborative duster which involves the competency to work in teams.

Wals (2010) said, “sustainability has to cope with uncertainty.. . educational spaces, should build a culture of learning awash with uncertainty and in which uncertainty provokes transformative yet precautionary commitment rather than paralysis”.

Sustainable development has to be sought through higher education where learners go and specialize in different specific areas. Aina (2009) agreed with the above

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by saying, “higher education contributes to the formation and development of human capital, the culture and social construction of values and meaning, and the capacity for individual and collective emancipation from ignorance to domination”. For Rhodes (2005) “that level of learning generate graduates who have a sense of civic responsibility, and promote learning which benefits the community as well as provides students with the opportunity to apply theory to local, regional and national development issues”.

Policy and Curriculum

Policy statement is an initiative by the government or body or organization, signifying a plan or course of action in directing affairs as chosen by the body. Educational policies are initiatives mostly by governments that determine the direction of our educational system (Okoroma 2000: 190); such is the process by which knowledge contents are transmitted or ‘delivered’ to students. In Nigeria the introduction of the 10 – year strategic plan for tertiary institutions of higher learning under FME emerged within the framework of UNESCO’s support to national education development. In line with the objectives, the FME initiated a comprehensive and far – reaching reform in the second half of 2006; known by the acronym, “we CAN” meaning “we can Educate for Character, Atitude and our NEEDS. This reform aimed at recognizing the FME in order to restore its roles and responsibilities in formation and coordination of national education sector . . . through federal institutions.

Curriculum on the other hand, refers to contents of any study in learning institutions and their designs. Offorma (2006) defines it as ‘instrument by means of which school seek to translate the hopes of the society in which they function into concrete realty. However, it can still be seen as a programme with three components: programme of studies, programme of activities and programme of guidance.

Nevertheless, policy and curriculum are the most effective tools used by the government in running education system. Aderonmu (2012) suggests that the nation should consider in her National Policy on Education (NPE) the upsurge of some other policy statements and intentions by other interest groups which include the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for tertiary institutions in Nigerian, Education For All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Vision 20:2020, and Decades on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) (2005 – 2014). This is to reduce the unemployment and ‘unemployable’ syndromes and engender sustainability in the face of economic development forces.

United States sees DESD as the period which bridges have to be built between academic institutions and their communities, between academia and the need to enact sustainability in higher education in order to positively affect the large society and

biosphere. Sustainable curriculum needs rethinking and revising education from nursery school to university to include a clear focus of current and future societies on the development of knowledge, skills perspective and values related to sustainability. But for UNESCO, it involves reviewing the existing curricula in terms of its objectives and content to develop trans-disciplinary understandings.

Higher education has to be the level through which the sustainable curriculum will be transmitted as pointed out above by (Aina 2009). Elder (2009) agreed that higher education has a critical role to play by helping students to understand “the complex connections and inter dependencies between the environment, energy sources and the economy”. In actual sense, the type of education expected here is a new way of life – thinking and learning about integrated systematic solutions with interdependent health, social and political challenges.

Sustainable curriculum therefore, refers to a curriculum that can survive the test of time in the economic development like Nigeria. A curriculum that will lead the nation to achieve its economic growth for utilization in solving both educational and workforce problems for the nations upward mobility.

Sustainable Curriculum through Entrepreneurship, FVET and ICT

The term entrepreneurship was derived from the 17th century French word, *entrepreneurship*, which means taking risk for doing something and also doing it differently, than has been done previously (Wikipedia encydoopaedia). It involves taking the initiative, the responsibility and the risk to do what others have not been doing and in different and new ways; and become successful in it (Uchem 2010:681).

Hisrich (2004) related it to a dynamic process of wealth creation that requires individuals to sacrifice their time, show their commitment, and bear the financial, physiological and social risks in order to gain benefits in terms of monetary and personal satisfaction. For Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004), Entrepreneurship is viewed as a process of innovation and creation with four dimensions – individual, organization, environmental factors and process with support from the government, education and constitution. Onuka and Olaitan (2007) said it is the habit of taking risk in investigating in human resources as well as the application of one’s administrative acumen to manage staff and materials in order to produce and market products. An entrepreneur therefore is one who undertakes task of production. Offorma (2005) agrees that “he or she recognizes a money – making opportunity and sets up a business to exploit it”. It involve task in finance, personnel, information , research and development.

This is why Nigerian education should embrace functional skills through entrepreneurship Education, T.V.E. and ICT. Izuagba and Enwereuzoh (2010:173) are

of the opinion that, “to ensure that the Nigerian education system continues to play a crucial role in the development of the Nigerian economy, there is need to integrate entrepreneurial skills and information and communication technologies in the curriculum of teacher education . . .”. The issue of skills acquisition can easily be learnt through technology and vocational education and training. Technology education is designed to empower its recipients through acquisition of general and specialized skills in practical arts. (Oke, 2003). It bothers on training in skills acquisition and geared towards the needs of the job market.

The Federal government liberalization policy in the ICT sector provided the force driving force needed to reposition the nation in the global ICT world. Isoun (2003) identified telephone-line as one of the great interest, he confirmed that at present, there are over two million mobile subscribers in the country, with considerable increase in the number of operating fix telephone lines. Ajayi (2000) commented that the rise of ICT is an opportunity to overcome historical disabilities and become the master of one’s own national destiny. According to him, ICT compresses the time it will take Nigeria to advance rapidly and occupy a position of honour and pride in the comity of nations.

Isoun (2003) says the vision statement of the policy “is to make Nigeria an IT capable country in Africa and a key player in the information society by the year 2015; using IT as the engine for sustainable development and global competitiveness”. Both the vision and mission statements are using human capacity building which calls for education and training, especially in this era of life – long learning. This can only be achieved through sustainable curricula in tertiary institutions.

TVET has been recognized all over the world over as tools for empowering people, especially the youths, for sustainable livelihood and social economic development (Yusff and Soyemi 2012:71). UNESCO and Ilo recommendations of 2008 on technical and vocational education for the twenty first century, defined TVET as those aspects of education process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

It is at the tertiary level that the Technical and Vocational Colleges, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Universities have institutional component structure meant to enhance nation’s technical growth; with three to five years as school duration. The curriculum should involve one hour credit load for two semesters as part of a core course, in General Studies and should go thus:

1. Introduction
2. Meaning and objectives

3. Criteria for the course
4. Characteristics
5. Factors that contribute to their success
6. Integrating Entrepreneurship, TVET and ICT in the curriculum of General Studies
7. Challenges facing, Entrepreneurship, TVET and ICT and in Nigeria.
8. Methods for implementation
9. Evaluation procedures

After the introduction, the criteria needed are honesty, spirituality and ethic as good measures perceived in creating a healthy organization. The characteristics constitutes being creative; having good interpersonal, mental and technical skills to contribute to enterpreuenural success. Being goals – oriented, pragmatic, determined and self – content which adds values to an Entrepreneur. Other factors are competency skills, functional and self competencies.

In areas of integration, the courses – Entrepreneurship, TVET and ICT in their various nature should be taught while the teacher will use any approaches that can enable the learners to grab the contents. Some challenges encountered in these areas include lack of funds, inadequate materials and lack of centres for competency skills.

Conclusion

This work explored the introduction of Entrepreneurship education, TVET and ICT education into the Higher Institutions curricular to enable the learners to explore their environments and learn competency skills for sustainable economic development in Nigeria. This is to avoid a situation where the graduates enter the society without alternative means of livelihood apart from white – collar jobs. Technical, vocational and information technology skills are strongly needed in Nigeria in this era through life-long education to reposition the nation to the globally academic sustainable economy. This will go a long way to harness the quality of future graduates who, will in turn boost the economic development and workforce of this great country Nigeria.

Recommendations

- (1) Nigeria should mandate the integration of Entrepreneurship, TVET and ICT education in the General Studies unit and or infuse any of them in the curriculum/instruction Department.
- (2) The implementation of the integrated areas for competency skills should be closely and properly supervised to close the gap between the expected and the observed in the Nigeria tertiary education programmes.

- (3) Training centres for integrated vocations should be established in all tertiary institutions for practical realities and awareness.
- (4) Undue emphasis on theory and certification rather than skill acquisition and proficiency testing should be removed.
- (5) Give greater attention to student – centered classroom instruction to equip learners with 21st century knowledge and competencies.
- (6) Devise strategies that will improve national economy by establishing the connection/relationship between schooling, productivity, employment and trade.
- (7) Government should sponsor technical, vocational and information technology personnel to both local and foreign workshops for new ideas and development to meet up with challenges of the present time.
- (8) Discriminations against graduates of Polytechnics and Monotechnics with HND, unlike those from the Universities with B.Sc should be constitutionally removed, if this nation should expect sustainable economic development.

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