

**COUNSELLING FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

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**THEME: COUNSELLING FOR PEACE IN NIGERIA**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper assessed the strategies to be employed through the various services of Guidance such as information services, Counseling services, appraisal services, referral services, placement and follow up services.

Some recommendations as to the way forward in empowering the youth by counseling services were also forwarded, amongst which are:-

- a. Adequate and equal educational opportunities should be provided to the youths throughout the Country, for either paid or non paid employment.
- b. Youth employment centers should be set-up in all urban and rural areas, so that a great majority of our youths are informed of their potentials.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The phenomena of our youth roaming the streets unemployed has been a source of concern to all, educational opportunities are becoming less day by day and jobs are no where to be found due to economic factors and as a result of the development in science and technology. Manual jobs that were hitherto done by the able bodied in the society are now taken over by machines as a result of which many young men are thrown out of job and those that do not get cannot think of getting. The realities of our economic hardship also comes to mind when thinking of a paid job so an alternative measure has to be thought of, so that the youth who represents the future of our country are not left unguided the resultant effect which could be disastrous.

Counselling which is globally accepted to be a tool for helping individuals out of their educational, vocational and psycho-socio problems has a great role to play in empowering the youth for a better future. All necessary counseling techniques have to be employed so that the youth are helped to identify their potentials, abilities and weaknesses and a way forward shown to them, so that they become useful members of the society. This paper examines how counseling can be used to harness the potentials of youths through empowerment programmes, even if they are not able to be highly educated to secure high jobs in government offices and companies.

### **Counselling and Youth Empowerment**

The purpose of counselling is to provide, learning experience to enable the client to acquire knowledge, skills and competences related to making personal, educational and career decisions (Clark 1999), while the UN described youths empowerment as creating and supporting conditions under which young people can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their societies and gain self fulfillment. This includes education, knowledge, information and skills, access to health and other social services, and employment opportunities. From the foregoing discussion on the two terms it becomes clear that, counselling is the most appropriate profession to

handle youth empowerment programmes for counselling is aimed at helping the client to, as Mallum (2000) asserts:-

1. To understand and accept himself as an individual with the knowledge of potentials and his point of strength and weaknesses.
2. To understand that part of the world in which he lives and to develop the ability and desire to understand the changing world of the future and to make one's own contribution to its value.
3. To be increasingly self directive in making one decision and plans and to be willing to accept responsibilities for them.
4. To lay the basis for a well balanced life in all aspects e.g. physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, ethically and psychologically.

Since, counselling has similar aims and objectives with youth empowerment programmes, one needs now to see how the youth can be empowered through counselling.

### **Strategies to be Employed by Counselling to Empower the Youth**

The United Nations defined the youth as the age group between 15 and 24 years old. In Nigeria the age range falls within those that are in secondary schools or about to finish and those in tertiary institutions or have finished depending on their course of study and institution attended, but there are out of school or have not gone to school at all. All of these constitute the population of our youth who needs to be empowered for healthy living. Those in schools need counselling to be empowered in educational and vocational choices while those out of school or who have not gone to need to be empowered to learn jobs and trades that could make them fit comfortably into their various societies.

The document for youth empowerment programme in Nigeria states amongst other things the role of youth empowerment centers as follows:

- a. **Practical Information:** About local services and opportunities for young people, addresses, discount cards, entertainment, cultural and leisure activities accommodation;
- b. Youth Rights, social welfare entitlement, right at school and in the family, changes in legislation concerning, people military service and alternative to military service.
- c. Access to specialist information services (health and sexuality, youth initiative and youth exchange programmes, opportunity for young people, legal advice).
- d. Information about studies, careers, qualifications and training courses.
- e. Individual counselling in relation to personal or family problems.
- f. Access to internet services.

The foregoing are roles of youth empowerment centers in Nigeria. For counselling to effectively par-take in the programme the following strategies could be employed:

1. **Information Services:** These services would help inform youths of available opportunities such as educational, occupational and social IPaye (1983) identified the following general objectives of the services as:
  - i. To develop a broad and realistic view of life's opportunities and problems at all levels of training.
  - ii. To create an awareness of the need and an active desire for an accurate and valid occupational, educational and personal social information.
  - iii. To provide an understanding of the wide scope of educational, occupational and social activities in terms of broad categories of related activities.
  - iv. To assist in the mastery of the techniques of obtaining and interpreting information for progressive self-directiveness .
  - v. To promote attitudes and habits which will assist in the making of choices and adjustments productive of personal satisfaction and effectiveness.

- vi. To provide assistance in narrowing choice progressively to specific activities which are appropriate to aptitudes, abilities and interests manifested and to the proximity of definite decisions.

If youth are well informed of the various opportunities that abound around them both those educated and the less privileged, then a healthy competition would emerge as to which job or occupation one seeks for or which social services that are around him that can accommodate his aptitudes and abilities. This services should as much as possible be made available to those in school and out of school through the empowerment centers, religious organization, youth clubs and the media.

2. **Counselling Services:** This service which is seen as an open ended face to face, problem solving situation within which a client with professional assistance, can focus and begin to solve a problem or problems considering the age range of youth, it is most un likely that you find them without one problem or the other, so the face to face encounter between the client and the counselor would help the youth to explore their problems and come up with their probable possible solutions on their own. If individuals happily come up with solutions to their problems, they would surely lead a sound progressive life.
3. **appraisal Service:** For a purposeful empowerment of the youth, the need for collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data is of importance so that the individual is seen in his true form and that is what appraisal service stands for, in this regard, test and non-test techniques can be utilized. The purpose of this technique as identified by Lar et al (1992) is as follows:
  - a. To determine pupil achievement level and progress.
  - b. To gain data for diagnostic purpose
  - c. To ascertain attitudes
  - d. To provide for the identification of interests
  - e. To improve instruction

- f. To determine existing self concepts and attitudes
- g. To ascertain social adjustments
- h. To identify underachievers and over achievers.

If the above mentioned are achieved then the individual can now be assisted on vocational, educational and personal-social adjustment with little or no difficult.

4. **Referral Service:** Mallum (2000) asserts that there are circumstances, issues and situations that are problematic that cannot be successfully resolved to the logical conclusion or be objectively handled by the counselor which may be better handle by other agencies and institutions where some experts in such areas or disciplines can handle better. The referral service, therefore, means referring some cases to the appropriate agencies at the right time and place for further expert knowledge and specialized attention and consultation psychotherapy.

Counselling can do a lot of services in the area of youth empowerment by identifying clients with problems and referring them appropriately.

### **Placement and Follow-up Service**

Placement provides clients with assistance in choosing course/vocations and in making decisions on which job to choose. Follow-up activities ascertain the appropriateness of a course of action for such clients after he embarks upon it. For counselling to adequately cater for the much of youth counsellors need to be involved at various level of the educational development of the youth and to follow the sequence of progression or retrogression of such client, so that, the effectiveness of the training received by clients at school or appropriate centers can be determined.

### **Recommendations**

1. Adequate and equal educational opportunities should be provided to the youth throughout the country, for either paid or non paid employment, for if majority

of our youth are informed educationally a lot of maladjustment ad deviant behaviours could be averted.

2. Sensitization of the Youth should be carried out in both print and audio-visual media for participation in the youth empowerment centers programmes.
3. Qualified, trained and interested counselors should be attached to the various youth empowerment centres, so that they can be helped out of their problems and assisted to identify their capacities aptitudes and possible vocations to enter into.
4. Youth empowerment centers should be set-up in all urban and rural areas, so that a great majority of our youth are informed of their potentials.

### **Conclusion**

Counselling services and programmes if properly provided in our settings should go along way to make our youth informed of their abilities, aptitudes and weaknesses, so that a progressive future is determined.



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