

**GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING AND THE CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**BY**

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## **Abstract**

The view held by Brundtland commission that the sustainable development implied the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs was adopted for the purpose of the paper. Education for sustainable development was discussed in relation to Guidance and Counselling and the challenges of education. The issue of what can guidance and counseling as an educational services do to arrest the problems faced by education due to globalization, changing pattern of life due to urban and rural migration. Some suggestions were put forward, for guidance to be effective as an education service to resolve the challenges education is facing for sustainable development, such as the professionalisation of guidance counseling to allow for effective and adequate performance from members. The paper concluded by asserting that guidance and counselling should be fully incorporated into the curriculum of schools for the challenges the education sector is facing to be overcome

## **Introduction**

To consider a country developed, the level of education of its populace must be highly significant. No nation can rise above the quality of its education, as such once a country has high level of illiterates we don't call it developed no matter of its economic capabilities. Therefore education is strong tool for sustainable development of any nation for it is through education that all facets, economic, social, political religious activities etc are learned and carried out. Through education the world is fast changing by globalization and technological breakthroughs which require a new approach by every nation to catch up with the new challenges. Education delivery is now facing a lot of challenges in this country because Nigeria continues to undergo changes in its occupational, social and economic structures. Occupational and industrial specialization continue to increase dramatically, increasingly size and complexities are the rule rather than exception, often creating job invisibility, making the transition from initial school-to-work and throughout further education and work difficult. This paper discusses the roles Guidance and Counselling can play within education to arrest the challenges education faced for sustainable development.

The discussion centred round sustainable development as a concept, education for sustainable development and what Guidance and Counselling can do within education to

help overcome the numerous challenges education is now facing, so that the future generations can reap from the vision of this generation.

### **Sustainable Development**

Okebukola (2007), opined that in spite of the agreement among numerous scholars on the meaning of sustainable development, as would be expected, a good number hold the view that it is an ambiguous concept. The concept has included notions of weak sustainability, strong sustainability and deep ecology. Different conceptions also reveal a strong tension between centrism and anthropocentrism. Thus, the concept remains weakly defined and contains a large amount of debate as its precise definition. However, for the purpose of this paper, a look of the usage of the concept forwarded by the World Commission on Environment and Development, set up by the United Nations General Assembly, the Brundtland Commission which coined what was to become the most often quoted definition of sustainable development, as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Going by this definition can one say that for any meaningful sustainable development education has to be carried along because it is through it that the skills for present and future development are imparted and sustained through the years. Education been dynamic can always catch up with the demands of circumstances around a Nation through meaningful and objectives curriculum reviews and implementation.

### **Education for Sustainable Development**

Mahdi (2008), saw education as a universal phenomena which allows all human societies to develop the requisite knowledge, experience and skill for their self-preservation and growth. This implies that education is an integral component of the process of socialization and its nature and scope is suitable to every society relative to its state of development. It should be borne in mind that the phenomena of human development involves around how man applies his knowledge to master and control his environment. The lesson to be learnt is that civilizations and centres of power and wealth have been keen on shifting in a historical process to which education is a paramount driving force. Nations rose and declined or fell commensurate with the seriousness or otherwise with which they took education. History has also taught us that although the

availability of local resources mattered, lack of them did not constitute an obstacle to growth once the requisite knowledge exist.

The United Nations in recognition of the importance of education for sustainable development declared the 2005 – 2014 as the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. Okebukola (2007). Stressed that, the UN recognized that there can be few more pressing and critical goals for the future of human kind that to ensure steady improvement in the quality of life for this and future governments, in a way that respects our common heritage – the planet we live on. As people we seek positive change for ourselves our children and grand children, we must do it in ways to respect the right of all to do so. To do this we learn constantly – about ourselves, our potentials, our limitations, our relationships, our society, our environment, our world.

It is in line with statements that, Mahdi (2008), lamented that, the modern world is driven by education, the modern global economy as a whole is knowledge driven. This why virtually all the developed countries of the world are not happy with the state of education in their respective countries. When Tony Blair, the former British Prime Minister was elected in the 1990's, a Journalist asked him about his priority to which he quickly answered: "Education, Education and Education". In his valedictory speech at this end of his Presidency of the European Union in 2006, Blair warned Europe about the danger of relaxing in the pursuit of education in these instructive words: he asserted that

*The new world we find ourselves inhibiting us indifferent to tradition and past reputations, unforgiving of facility and ignorant of custom and practice success will go to those countries which are swift complain, often and willing to change. The task of modern governments is to ensure that our countries can rise to these challenges. More important today than ever, they need sustainable development in Science, Education and lifelong learning to make the most of the skills and talents of all their people to create a true knowledge economy...(Mahdi 2008 p. 13 – 14).*

Education for sustainable development is a life wide and lifelong endeavour which challenges individuals, institutions and societies to view tomorrow as a day that belong to all of us, or it will not belong to anyone. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 emphasized that education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving capacity

of the people to address environment and development issues. Ever since sustainable development has been a common consensus that education is a driving force for the change needed. It has been pointed out that peace, health; economy and democracy are mutually prerequisites for sustainable development. The 2002 Johannesburg summit broadened the vision of sustainable development and reaffirmed the objectives of Millennium Development Goals and the education for all (EFA) Dakar Frame work for action, the submit proposed the Declaration of Education for sustainable development, and the United Nations National Assembly in it 57<sup>th</sup> session in December, 2002, proclaimed the Decade of Education for sustainable development for the period 2005 – 2014 and education for sustainable development, the paper now narrows down to Guidance and Counselling and the Challenges of education for sustainable development.

### **Guidance and Counselling and the Challenges of Education for Sustainable Development**

Guidance and Counselling an educational services is aimed at assisting individuals discover themselves, their worth, aptitudes, capabilities, weakness and through counseling to know the way to move forward in life to be useful to oneself and his community. The value and relevance of guidance to sustainable development can not be contested. Even in its embryonic stage guidance was used by Frank Parsons in the USA after the Second World War to alleviate the post-war psychological trauma and the effect of joblessness that devastated the Americans during the economic depression years.

The challenges to education that guidance and counseling could help correct could be noticed as Tambuwal (2006), posited that social structure, social and personal values continues to change became diverse with emerging social groups challenging established groups seeking equity. People are on the move from rural to urban areas and back again from one region of the country to another in search of economic, social and psychological security. As a result, our population is becoming increasing diverse and the trend is forecasted to continue.

All of these changes are creating a substantial challenge for our children and youth. Our rapidly changing world includes changes in the work place and the labour force and increased violence in the home, school community, as well as divorce rates,

substance abuse and sexual experimentation. These challenges are real and they are having and would continue to have substantial impact on the personal social career and academic development of our children and young people unless checked and tackled by use of guidance and counseling within education. Okon (1984), identified the reasons and influencing forces that shows the importance of guidance and counseling in our educational system which could ensure sustainable development:-

- social change
- need for skill workforce
- growing needs of young people
- concerns and problems of students in Secondary Schools, Colleges and University,
- problems of National integration
- change in the family and home life
- increase environment in the Nigerian education
- Need to prepare youth for life.

The aforementioned issues have so far not been addressed by the Nations education system. They would continue to emerge as problems that have to be tackled by the proper meaningful inclusion of guidance and counseling and in all facets of educational implementation. Attention is now focused on globalization, our educational system too have focused on it, but then how can guidance and counseling within education be able to help sort out the challenges mentioned earlier on this paper.

In this regard Tambuwal (2006), opined that, the rapid technological development we are witnessing in this early years of twenty first century, together with factors of globalization, are likely to lead to radical changes in the world of work. In fact, changing nature of work is already perceptible in both urban and rural centres and rural communities. It follow therefore, that human development of which education is such a vital tool must keep in step with these societal changes if people are to lead production, sustainable, peaceful and satisfying lives.

During the last decades a mismatch has been evident in this country between skills imparted by the educational system and those demanded by the workplace. This mismatch has been exuberated in recent years with the introduction of new technologies

in almost every sphere of professional activity. Narrowing the gap between education and the world of work is thus a priority for our education because of the potential economic and social benefits to be derived from increasing the proportion of the population that is engaged in productive livelihoods.

The mismatch between education and world of work are so noticed because, there is no proper placement of students in our schools from the primary up to the tertiary. Talents are not identified earlier and placed appropriately, equipment are not readily available in our schools for skill acquisition and training. The required manpower is our school lacking. If guidance and counseling is given its proper place in the educational system, students would be guided right from the primary schools up to the University on which type of courses to pursue for a living and for those found not able to catch up with rigours and challenges of academic work suitable placement could be done for them so that they grow-up with the right orientation towards work and livelihood.

To address the issue of restive youths, truants, drop-out and violent militant behaviour. Guidance and Counselling emphasized that peace is the greatest facilitating sustainable development. Here as Denga (2009), asserted that counseling psychology is replete with behavioural contingencies that can be used to modify maladaptive behaviour, chronic frustration, misplaced aggression, excessive love of cupidity (money) and other assorted or variegated cargo of criminal behaviours. Guidance and counselling can introduce what Denga (2009) referred to as “Education for poverty eradication. An educational system that promote self-reliance, sense of industry and build people’s capability will go along way in mitigating economic frustration. Job creation at the grassroots will keep people gainfully employed and reduce criminal tendencies.

If adequately delivered guidance and counselling could help resolve the problems of Human Capital which entails the production and empowering of individuals who have the competence, who are physically, mentally and socially healthy to be useful to develop physical Capital for the nation, because manpower that is deranged can not participate effectively in sustainable national development.

In terms of critical infrastructure of the country which subsumes power, transportation, national gas distribution and telecommunication, guidance and counseling within education is as Denga (2009) opined, potentially equipped to prospect for talents

which can be developed to produce the necessary manpower to improve and develop the nation's infrastructure. Aptitude testing, interest prospecting and appropriate placement of youths in education programmes will save the nation from waste resulting from uninformed choices of subjects and careers on the basis of whims and caprices. Guidance and Counselling as an educational service has appropriate programmes to train youths to handle the nation's infrastructural needs for sustainable development.

The issue of rural urban drift could also be addressed by guidance and counseling within education, because the programme view the dreadful review the concomitant ills of the rural urban drift, namely the spread of diseases urban poverty and the resultant mental problems of youths. The major contribution of guidance and counselling is to outline a programme of job creation through the establishment of large scale and small scale industries in rural cities to keep the youths gradually employed in the rural settings. This will alleviate rural poverty that has been around in terms of antiquity and ubiquity. Counselling centres can be created in rural areas to assist in personal-social problems, health concerns and educational development.

### **Conclusion**

The importance of guidance and counselling within the education can not be overemphasized; it is a recognized fact that for a meaningful sustainable development education has to be a top priority for it's is the spring board of all development. By incorporating fully guidance and counselling in the curriculum of education the challenges that bedeviled the education sector would be summounted and thus give room for sustainable development.

### **Recommendation**

- Government at various levels should stop lip service to the implementation of guidance and counselling services in the educational sector.
- There is an urgent need for training and retraining of professionally qualified and committed counsellors in our educational sectors.
- Guidance and Counselling should be recognized as a profession so that practitioners can function effectively under guiding rules and regulations.



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