Reconceptualising Education for Sustainable Development in Post-Colonial Nigeria Democratic Governance System: Assessing Chief (Barr.) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike Administration, 2015-2023

By

Nwala Paul, PhD.
Department of History & International Diplomacy,
Faculty of Humanities, Rivers State
University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
+2348037750746, princepaulnwala@gmail.com
&

Ogunniyi, Olayemi Jacob
Department of History & International Studies,
Faculty of Arts, Lagos State University,
Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria. +2348033207633, +2348057737342,
olayemi.ogunniyi@lasu.edu.ng,
ayoyemlove@yahoo.com, temyem2014@gmail.com

Abstract

The global context of education more recently has brought a new attention to education policy and practice. This 'global-character' of contemporary education has become evident in educational policy and discourse, including the practice of teaching development education, and education for sustainable development. The education of today is crucial to enhancing the ability of the leaders and citizens of tomorrow to create solutions and find new paths to a better, more sustainable future. However, the Nigerian state, in the early post-colonial dispensation in comparism with its counterparts in sub-Saharan Africa, could not perform creditably well in the area of making education to be sustainable**.** As the chapter argues in the real democratic governance system good leaders need to enhance good quality education which would further lead to an increased economic growth because the Sustainable Development Goals decided by the United Nations include a goal centred on learners gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, while education for sustainable development centres on a new vision of education which empowers learners to assume responsibility for creating

and enjoying a sustainable future. Therefore, the chapter employed documentary data from government annual reports, newspapers and correspondence and also the secondary sources used were subjected to internal and external criticism for authentication, to reconceptualise Chief (Barr.) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike Administration reform processes within education and education for sustainable development since public spending demand increased transparency regarding accountability, efficiency and measurement. The chapter submits that education is central to learning and to a more sustainable future and that the responsibility for a more sustainable future is borne by governments, civil society as well as individuals.

Key words: Education, Sustainable development, Sustainable future, Governments, Policy

Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world

Nelson Mandela

Introduction

Education is a necessary tool for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that current economic development trends are not sustainable and that education, public awareness, including training remains important in order to move society toward sustainability. Aside this, people argue about the meaning of sustainable development and whether or not it is attainable. They have different visions as well as perceptions of what sustainable societies will look like and how they will function. These same people wonder why educators have not moved more quickly to develop education for sustainability programmes. Thus, lack of definition and agreement definition has stymied efforts to move education for sustainable development forward. It is curious to note that while we have difficulty envisioning a sustainable world, we have no difficulty identifying what is unsustainable in our societies (McKeown, 20O2).[1]

Progressively we can institute a laundry list of problems - inefficient use of energy, conservation, absence of water, increased pollution, human rights abuses, overuse of personal transportation, consumerism, etc. But we should not chide ourselves

[1] McKeown, R. (20O2). Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit.. Energy, Environment and Resources Center University of Tennessee 311 Conference Center Bldg. Knoxville, TN 37996-4134 U.S.A

because we lack a clear definition of sustainability. Indeed, many truly great concepts of the human world - among them good governance under democracy and justice - are hard to define and have multiple expressions in cultures around the world. However, governance as Aliu (2014) define it is "the total ability to synthesise, organise, and direct the various actions of the government's working parts machinery so as to allow government perform creditably well to a meaningful expectation and much desired standard".[2] Therefore, it means that business of governance entails both the governed people and the governing class.

Put succinctly, as a matter of necessity good governance must be democratic, be accountable and entail basic freedoms in order to ensure popular participation by the people. As argued by Omilusi (2013), act of governance covers clearly all segments of the complex and myriad relations in existence between the people and the government.[3] Fundamentally, Omodia and Aliu (2013, p.36) postulated that governance within the confine of democratic system is rooted deeply in the liberal democratic and neoliberal economic agenda and thus, it is a normative judgment which ideally indicates a preferred relation that would govern relations between state and society and between the people and the government.[4]

Be that as it may, education is essential to sustainable development. The education of today is crucial to enhancing the ability of the leaders and citizens of tomorrow to create solutions and find new paths to a better, more sustainable future. Ironically, present collective pool of human skills, knowledge, and experience does not contain the solutions to all the contemporary global environmental, economic, and societal problems. Although in the past humanity has faced crises and successfully navigated them, the scale of current problems is greater and the size of the world population larger than ever before. While we can draw upon experiences of the past to solve the problems of today and tomorrow, the reality is that citizens of the world will have the task of learning their way towards

[2] Aliu, M. (2014). "The State, Development and Governance in Africa: The Nigerian Experience" *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IOSR-JHSS)* Vol.19, Issue 4, pp. 21-45.
[3] Omilusi, M. (2013). "Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Key Issues and Challenges, Akure: Adex Printing Press.
[4] Omodia, S.M. and Aliu, M. (2013). Governance and Threats to National Security in Emerging Democracies: A Focus on the Nigerian Fourth Republic, Research on Humanities and Social.

sustainability. Education is therefore central to learning and to a more sustainable future.[5]

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity that unites global development goals in one framework. It comprises integrated and indivisible several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social, and environment. The fourth sustainable development goal (SDG4), i.e. quality education, is intended to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and has been appointed as the universal education goal (UNESCO, 2017b). [6] The quality education goal (SDG4) comprises seven outcome targets and three means of implementation. The Education for Sustainable Development is educational process of achieving human development in an inclusive, equitable and secure manner (UNESCO, 2014c).[7]

The target of Education for Sustainable Development is to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non- violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016). [8] Education for sustainable development is an appropriate educational programme to educate people from an early age to reduce human dependence on natural and social environments. It educates people to participate, be active, and have knowledge of nature, equality, and social justice; thereby it enhances consciousness and form human behaviour.

[5] AFRODAD (2005). The Politics of the Millennium Development Goals and Nigeria; A Critical Appraisal of The Global Partnership for Development (Goals 8), Harare, Zimbabwe, AFRODAD
[6] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2017b). Peace: Building Sustainable Peace and Global Citizenship through Education. Paris: UNESCO.
[7] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014c). Country Programming Document: Indonesia 2014-2017
[8] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2016). Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030. Paris: UNESCO

Furthermore, Omotola (2008) argues that Education for Sustainable Development aims to improve the capacity and commitment required to build a sustainable society, where individual and group decisions are being considered for saving natural and ecological processes, which would sustain the quality of life of both in the present and in the future.[9] Suduc et al. (2014) stated that the contents of Education for Sustainable Development implementation include various categories, namely, health education, ecology education, traffic education, sports education, hazard response education, citizenship education, democracy education, and others.[10] These categories show that Education for Sustainable Development does not only emphasize to the concern for the natural environment, but also social elements, namely, human beings.

The responsibility for a more sustainable future is borne by governments and civil society as well as individuals. All must contribute in their own way. The 40 chapters of Agenda 21 describe ways forward in many areas, from agriculture to waste disposal. Education is a cross-cutting theme and is mentioned in each of the 40 chapters.[11] This demonstrates how the education community has a special role to perform. It is through education that the next generation of citizens, voters, workers, professionals, and leaders will be prepared for life-long learning about sustainability. The United Nations uses sustainability as an over-arching paradigm to address numerous interrelated challenges (e.g. poverty reduction, environmental protection, social justice, and education for all).[12]

At the end of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) and the beginning of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development, many nations are poised to begin

[9] Omotola, J. S (2008). "Combating Poverty for Sustainable Human Development in Nigeria; The Continuing Struggle'' Journal of Poverty, Vol.12, No.4, p.490

[10] Suduc, A. M., Bîzoi, M. & Gorghiu, G. (2014). Sustainable Development in Romania in Pre-school and Primary Education. Procedia - *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Volume 116, pp.1187–1192.

[11] Agenda 21 is the official document of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also called the Earth Summit, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Agenda 21is a comprehensive blueprint for action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the UN, governments, and major groups.

[12] Baylis, J. & Smith, G. (2001). The Globalisation of World Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

scaling up Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2014).[13] Efforts began with raising awareness, moved to capacity building, then to experimentation and finally, implementation of good practice. In effect, the Decade provided proof of concept for formal education and non-formal educational settings, including public awareness and training.

In spite of widespread implementation and success of Education for Sustainable Development, the expansion of Education for Sustainable Development in primary and secondary education will require the Education for Sustainable Development community to provide evidence that it is effective and contributes to the overall quality of education. In today's interconnected world, information is easily acquired. Facts that professionals once collected as a result of years of study are now readily available on the Internet. Today's education requires knowing what to do with information, that is, how to analyze it; make sense of its abundance and complexity; cooperate with others to synthesize information; and communicate the results. Consequently, quality education is no longer based primarily on fact acquisition. As education based on fact acquisition becomes increasingly outdated, policymakers debate the basis for transforming their education systems (Cooper, Levin & Campbell, 2009).[14]

Evidence-based decision making is both encouraged and of growing importance in the formal education community (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2007).[15] The chapter therefore is structured into six sections. Section one serves as the introduction; section two examines sustainability as a purpose of education and Nyesom Wike agenda 2030; section three looks at sustainable development and its principles; section four discusses thresholds of education and development sustainability in Nyesom Wike Administration; section five reflects on the components of education in democratic governance system sustainability; while section six of the chapter gives the conclusion.

[13] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014). Roadmap for implementing the global action programme on education for sustainable development. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 16 April 2023, from: http://unesdoc. unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf

[14] Cooper, A., Levin, B., & Campbell, C. (2009). The growing (but still limited) importance of evidence in education policy and practice. *Journal of Educational Change*, Volume 10, Issue 2, pp.159–171

[15] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2007). Evidence in education: Linking research and policy. Paris: OECD. Retrieved 15 April 2023, from http:// www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/evidenceineducationlinkingresearchandpolicy.htm#1

Sustainability as a Purpose of Education and Nyesom Wike Administration Agenda 2030

The concept of quality education is based on the premise that educational aims are met and purposes fulfilled. In the Foreword to the 2005 Global Monitoring Report for EFA, UNESCO Director General Koïchiro Matsuura wrote, 'Quality must be seen in light of how societies define the purpose of education' (UNESCO, 2004).[16] For instance for several years, the purpose of education in the United States of America and in other industrialized countries was to educate a workforce. Then, the purpose of education shifted within the economic realm to international economic competitiveness. Although economic well-being remains an important outcome of education for countries, communities, families and individuals, the focus seems to be drifting away from economic competitiveness and towards global citizenship, social justice and sustainability. To a large extent primary and secondary education are expected to ensure that all pupils acquire the knowledge, skills and values necessary for the exercise of responsible citizenship' (UNESCO, 2004).[17]

Left with a greater sense of urgency about the necessity to improve the education of Rivers children by better supporting the development of their higher order thinking skills and their ability to apply these skills effectively to a broad range of problems, Rivers State Governor and former minister of education, Nyesom Wike, has advocated for what he calls 'Agenda 2030 on Education', saying Nigeria cannot make progress or achieve meaningful growth without specific goals on knowledge-based education and skills empowerment. As what Wilhoit (2011) earlier mentioned 'It is, in part, these skills that will enable them to invent and contribute to the new world'.[18]

The former minister of education Wike, while declaring open the 64th meeting of the National Council on Education (NCE) in Port Harcourt on Thursday, 2019,

[16] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2004). The quality imperative: Education for all global monitoring report 2005. Paris: UNESCO.
[17] Ibid
[18] Wilhoit, G. (2011). Foreword. In V. B. Mansilla & A. Jackson, Educating for global competence: Preparing our youth to engage the world (pp. viii–ix). Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers' EdSteps Initiative & Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning. Retrieved 14 April 2023, from http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/GlobalCompetence-04_21_11%20 (2).pdf

mentioned specifically that the nation can only attain development when the citizens are empowered with the right knowledge and appropriate skills to contribute to national growth. This was also in line with what former minister of education in Canada argued that 'We are committed to providing Manitoba students with engaging and high quality education that prepares them for lifelong learning and participation in a socially just, democratic and sustainable society' (Allum, 2012).[19]

It is worthy of mentioning that Ban Ki-moon, while in office as the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), launched the Global Education First Initiative (UN, 2012).[20] This initiative seeks to answer the call of parents everywhere for the schooling their children deserve— from the earliest years to adulthood.
The Global Education First Initiative focuses on three priorities:

- Putting every child in school. Every child—regardless of gender, background or circumstance—must have equal access to education.

- Improving the quality of learning. Many children are in school but are learning very little year after year. Also, too many young people graduate without the tools and skills for today's job market. Children need to acquire relevant skills to participate successfully in today's knowledge based society.

- Fostering global citizenship. Education is more than literacy and numeracy and preparation for entry to the job market—it is also about citizenry. Education has the power to shape a sustainable future and a better world. It must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful and tolerant societies (Ki-moon, 2012).[21]

The values underlying the sustainability paradigm, such as human dignity, fundamental freedoms, human rights, equity, and care for the environment, are

[19] Allum, J. (2012). Minister's Message. Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/minister.html
[20] United Nations (2012, September 26). Remarks on launch of Education First Initiative. New York: UN. Retrieved 15 April 2023 from: http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/search_full.asp?statID=1676
[21] Ki-moon, B. (2012). Global Education First Initiative. Retrieved 15 April 2023, from :http:// www.globaleducationfirst.org/289.htm

the values that underlie Education for Sustainable Development. The values to be contained in a particular Education for Sustainable Development programme are a matter of discussion for the stakeholders (e.g. teachers, school administrators, parents of pupils, community members and where acceptable the pupils themselves). The goal is to create a locally relevant and culturally appropriate values component to Education for Sustainable Development. By this, Nyesom Wike administration argued that educational empowerment will equip the citizens to sustain themselves. As he maintained: "No country in reality can be politically stable, economically robust and socially secure and cohesive if the citizens are not empowered with knowledge, appropriate skills and the right values to sustain themselves and contribute meaningfully to the progress of the country.

Wike advocated for the promotion of inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.He said: "Agenda 2030 is therefore a call to action as a collective commitments to transformative education by addressing all forms of exclusion, disparities and inequities and ensuring that every child, irrespective of social background, cultural affiliation, location and family or income status is left behind but have equal and equitable access to quality and transformative public education(Ignatius, 2019).[22]

Informed by the principles and values inherent in sustainable development, it is of essence giving values more attention. Values shape many things within a society (for instance, our worldview, how others are treated, how we view ourselves, and peoples' expectations of the government, including the use or abuse of natural resources). Values shape human actions in the world from small (e.g. how personal decisions are made) to large (e.g. how national legislation is written). The ways in which countries decide how to approach sustainable development will be closely linked to the values they hold. Understanding values is an essential part of understanding an individual's own worldview and that of other people.

Each country, cultural group, and individual must learn the skills of recognizing their own values and assessing them in the context of sustainability. A good

[22] Ignatius, C. (2019).Education: Wike calls for Agenda 2030. Business Day Newspaper Retrieved 16 April 2023 from: https://businessday.ng/uncategorized/article/education-wike-calls-for-agenda-2030/

starting point for addressing values in Education for Sustainable Development-related teaching and learning is the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter is an ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace. The Earth Charter is the product of a decade-long, worldwide, cross-cultural dialogue about common goals and shared values. The Earth Charter has been used successfully in education programmes around the world over the past few years (Earth Charter, 2009).[23]

Administration of Nyesom Wike provided the enabling legal framework, adopting the right policies and programme of action, deploying adequate resources and manpower, including qualified teachers in addition to a strong political will at all levels. Put succinctly, lack of political will by government, inadequate allocation of resources; lack of commitment and by parents, teachers and school leaders, lack of or ineffective monitoring policy implementation are some of the serious factors responsible for the deteriorated status of education and education for sustainability across the country.

Wike administration initiated and implemented several policies and programmes, such as the Girl-Child Education programme, the Almajiri education policy and programme, and the Special Vocational/Basic Education programme for boys as well as the national policy on Albinism apart from strengthening the quality of learning with the provision of modern e-libraries for the Federal Government Colleges.

Nyesom Wike administration has invested in the development of Education for the rapid growth of the state with the sole aim of providing equal opportunity to all Rivers state children to attend great schools, be taught by committed and well-motivated teachers at all levels and enable them to acquire the training and skills they need to realise their full potential and be successful citizens. Wike administration have successfully renovated, expanded the carrying capacity of all tertiary institutions with additional faculties and infrastructure to enable more youths access tertiary education and equipped over 400 basic education schools

[23] Earth Charter (2009). Earth Charter Initiative: Values and Principles for a Sustainable Future. Retrieved 16 April, 2023 from: http://www. earthcharterinaction.org/content/

while he constructed well over 68 new schools. Asides effectively banning the collection of all forms of levies from parents in the public-school system, his administration released adequate funds through the Ministry of Education to school heads for the sustainable administration of all our public schools (Ignatius, 2019).[24]

Sustainable Development and Its Principles

Sustainable development is a difficult concept to define; it is also continually evolving, which makes it doubly difficult to define. One of the original descriptions of sustainable development is credited to the Brundtland Commission: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p 43).[25] Sustainable development is generally thought to have three components: environment, society, and economy. The well-being of these three areas is intertwined, not separate. For example, a healthy, prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water, and clean air for its citizens.

The sustainability paradigm rejects the contention that casualties in the environmental and social realms are inevitable and acceptable consequences of economic development. Thus, the authors consider sustainability to be a paradigm for thinking about a future in which environmental, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and improved quality of life.

Principles of Sustainable Development

Many governments and individuals have pondered what sustainable development means beyond a simple one-sentence definition. The Rio Declaration

[24] Ignatius, C. (2019).Education: Wike calls for Agenda 2030. Business Day Newspaper Retrieved 16 April 2023 from: https://businessday.ng/uncategorized/article/education-wike-calls-for-agenda-2030/

[25] World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). Our Common Future. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

on Environment and Development fleshes out the definition by listing 18 principles of sustainability.[26]

- People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
- Development today must not undermine the development and environment needs of present and future generations.
- Nations have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, but without causing environmental damage beyond their borders.

Thresholds of Education and Development Sustainability in Nyesom Wike Administration

Education for Sustainable Development has essential characteristics that can be implemented in many culturally appropriate forms. Education for Sustainable Development: is based on the principles and values that underlie sustainable development. Further it; includes all three spheres of sustainability – environment, society, and economy – with an underlying dimension of culture; uses a variety of pedagogical techniques that promote participatory learning and higher-order thinking skills; promotes life-long learning; is locally relevant and culturally appropriate; is based on local needs, perceptions and conditions, but acknowledges that fulfilling local needs often has international effects and consequences; engages formal, non-formal and informal education; accommodates the evolving nature of the concept of sustainability; addresses content, taking into account context, global issues and local priorities; builds civil capacity for community-based decision making, tolerance, environmental stewardship, workforce adaptability and quality of life; is interdisciplinary: no single discipline can claim ESD for itself alone, but all disciplines can contribute to ESD (UNESCO, 2005).[27]

These essential characteristics of Education for Sustainable Development can be implemented in diverse ways, so that the unique environmental, social and economic conditions of each locality are reflected in teaching and learning processes in local schools. Consider for instance, that when education levels are

[26] United Nations Department of Public Information, DPI/1344/Rev.1-97-01888-February 1997-5m, EARTH SUMMIT AGENDA 21 The United Nations Programme of Action From Rio.

[27] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2005). United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014): International Implementation Scheme. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 17 April, 2023 from: http://unesdoc. unesco.org/images/0014/001486/148650E.pdf

low, economies are often limited to resource extraction and agriculture. In many countries, the current level of basic education is so low that it severely hinders development options and plans for a sustainable future. A higher education level is necessary to create jobs and industries that are "greener" (i.e., those having lower environmental impacts) and more sustainable. The relationship between education and sustainable development is complex. Generally, research shows that basic education is key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. Research has shown that education can improve agricultural productivity, enhance the status of women, reduce population growth rates, enhance environmental protection, and generally raise the standard of living (Baily, F. J. et al 2017).[28]

Nyesom Wike-led administration established The Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA). It was set-up to promote programmes and activities aimed at eradicating poverty, developing rural areas and empowering the youth. **RSSDA is no doubt one of the state's most strategic agencies saddled with the responsibility of championing sustainable development in the state.** It is geared towards improving the human capital base of Rivers indigenes through target programmes, which include the overseas undergraduate scholarship, ICT training, Greater Horizon and Opportunities Programme, Overseas Technical Training programme among others. Following the escalating nature of poverty in Nigeria, poverty alleviation initiative should be, on the first hand, well-articulated and made to be a short term, targeted at the poor basically. Amaghionyeodiwe and Adediran (2012)[29] contend that, if poverty alleviation programme is re-structured and re-designed and made to be centered on the 'basic needs' approach, it would, on the other hand, bring about a permanent reduction of poverty.

Improvement in education, health and nutrition directly address the consequences of being poor, thus, investing in human capital, especially in education, shelter and social services increases the productivity of the poor and at the same time,

[28] Baily, F., J. Flaherty, O. & Hogan. D. (2017). "Exploring the Nature and Implications of Student Teacher Engagement with Development Education Initiatives". *Irish Educational Studies*. Retrieved 16 April 2023 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03323315.2017.1327367

[29] Amaghionyeodiwe, L. A and Adediran, O. A. (2012). "An Assessment of Poverty Eradication and The Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria" International Journal of Research in Social Sciences Vol.2, No.2, p.1

attacks some of the most important aspects of poverty. Furthermore, all various levels of government must make reaching the poor a priority. When the Federal Government relinquishes most of its responsibility in the social sector to the state and local governments, they would be autonomous to evolve poverty alleviation programmes/ projects that will meet al needs of the populace. In addition, collaboration between the private sector, civil society and even the donour community will promote better harmonization and implementation of pro-poor policies. Significantly, participation and involvement of the relevant stakeholders will promote collective ownership of the development plan as against previous practices and strategies dominated largely by the state (Ogunniyi, 2015).[30]

Another educational threshold is primary education for women. At least a primary education is required before birthrate drops and infant health and children's education improve. Nine to twelve years of education are required for increased industrial productivity. Education benefits a woman in life-altering ways. An educated woman gains higher status and an enhanced sense of efficacy. She tends to marry later and have greater bargaining power and success in the "marriage market." Educating women creates more equitable lives for women and their families and increases their ability to participate in community decision making and work toward achieving local sustainability goals (Ojedele, Arikewuyo, & Njoku, 2016).[31]

A basic education also helps farmers gain title to their land and apply for credit at banks and other lending institutions. Effects of education on agriculture are greatest when the proportion of females educated to threshold level equals that of males. This level of education also increases the probability of employment in a changing economy. Few studies have been carried out on how education affects environmental stewardship, but one study suggests that a lower-secondary education (or approximately nine years) is necessary to intensify use of existing land and to provide alternative off-farm employment and migration from rural areas. Finally, a subtle combination of higher education, research, and life-long

[30] Ogunniyi, O.J (2015).Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria; Issues and Prospects: an Historical Paradox. Inquiry-Sarajevo Journal of Social Sciences, Volume 26, pp.77-79.
[31] Ojedele, P.K., Arikewuyo, M.O. & Njoku, A.C. (2016) (eds). Challenges in Education Development in Nigeria. Ondo: NIEPA

learning is necessary for a nation to shift to information or knowledge-based economy, which is fueled less by imported technology and more by local innovation and creativity (Heyn, M. et al, 1997).[32]

Nyesom Wike administration argued on ways that stakeholders can assist young person transform into entrepreneurs, particularly in a non-oil economy. Created ways on improving opportunities for young people to go ahead and become entrepreneurs through the enactment of policies geared towards promoting youth entrepreneurship, such was the Rivers State Amnesty programme and the opportunities it provides to build a safe and secure Rivers State with the sole aim of allowing youths in becoming leaders and entrepreneurs. Though the current realities have had adverse effect on the implementation of various human capacity development programmes and projects of the Agency, just like any other Ministries, Departments and other Agencies in the country. To Nyesom Wike administration, human capital development is encompassing and multi-functional, and this allows the administration to drive it from a skills and non-skilled development perspective including educational and business development perspective.

Wike-led administration came up with the LEAD Summit; bringing together onboard business trainers and motivational coaches as well as business financiers under the LEAD Platform for the improvement of youth enterprise development. The administration had discussion with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to deplore their Enterprise Development Learning Curriculum for Business Start-up and Expansion Management in the State. Eventually his administration got approval of two facilities (Songhai Rivers Initiative (SRI), Bunu-Tai Farm and Workmanship Technical Training Centre (WTTC), Bori as Learning Centres.

Far more importantly, the NEW Rivers Vision of Wike-led administration is a comprehensive development plan that guarantees improvement to live and well-being of the Rivers people through massive infrastructural development and

[32] Heyn, M; Katrina, L; and Charles, M. (1997). "Education and Economic Development: Sustainability, Threshold, and Equity." Proceedings of the Third UNESCOACEID International Conference Educational Innovation for Sustainable Development. UNESCO: Bangkok, Thailand.

improvement, sustainable human capacity and empowerment programmes, job creation as well as provision of social and health amenities. RSSDA as the sustainable development agency, are cross-cutting and ensure that the people and the State are developed in sustainable manner – utilising resources, adequately, for today without compromising its future utilisation. At the onset of the administration, the Agency was very much involved in the preparation of a State Development Blueprint, which is built on the NEW Rivers Vision.

Further afield, RSSDA had implemented various youth-targeted entrepreneurial development schemes which include the Promise Franchise, Pottery and Leather Works development, various streams of enterprise development support that involved the provision of enterprise/business starter kits, training & capacity building, and mentorship and hand-held coaching. RSSDA at one point or the other organised and supported women groups (both young and old) to form cooperatives and access the CBN's N220Billion MSME Loan Fund.

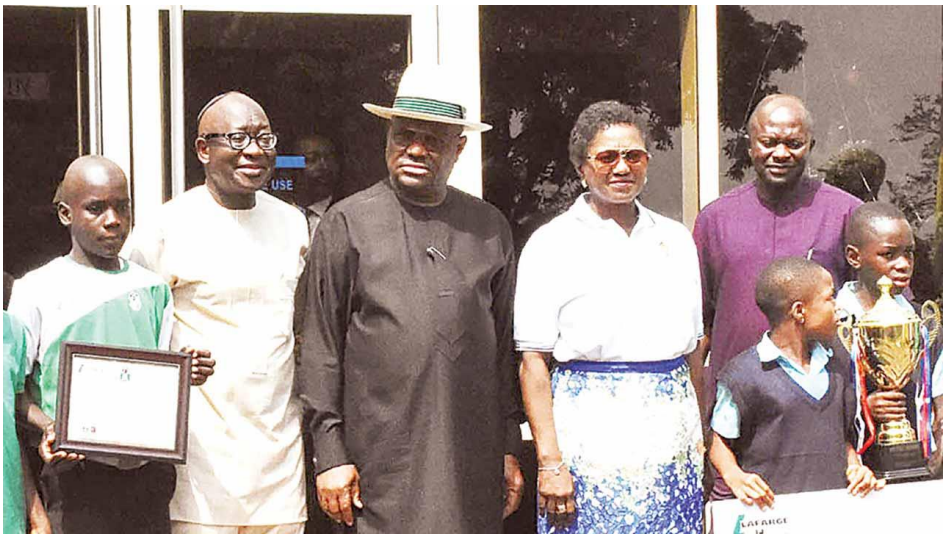
Wike-led administration went to the drawing board with some partners like the Second Opportunity Africa Foundation for the conceptualisation and design of a capacity building Specialist Programme that provide certification and accreditation for young people. Administration of Wike is trying to encourage youths to go into enterprise development but not at the detriment of available youths that will take-up white collar jobs (RSSDA CEO, 2016).[33]

The Components of Education in Democratic Governance System Sustainability

Education is held to be central to sustainability. Indeed, education and sustainability are inextricably linked, but the distinction between education as we know it and education for sustainability is enigmatic for many. Education for Sustainable Development carries with it the inherent idea of implementing programmes that are locally relevant and culturally appropriate (Dovros &

[33] RSSDA CEO.(2016). Nigeria: Our Programmes Ensure the Sustainable Development of Rivers State-. African Leadership Magazine Retrieved 15 April, 2023 from: https://www.africanleadershipmagazine.co.uk/nigeria-our-programmes-ensure-the-sustainable-development-of-rivers-state-rssda-ceo/

Makrakis, 2012).[34] All sustainable development programmes including Education for Sustainable Development must take into consideration the local environmental, economic, and societal conditions. As a result; Education for Sustainable Development will take many forms around the world. Education for Sustainable Development was first described by Chapter 36 of Agenda 21.[35] While Agenda 21 clearly identifies critical issues that governments around the world need to address, the concept of sustainability continues to evolve as societies change and as our awareness and perceptions of Earth, humanity, and human-environmental interactions correspondingly change.



Chairman, Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board, Venerable FynefaceAkah (second left); Governor Nyesom Wike; Deputy Governor, Mrs. Ipalibo Harry-Banigo and some pupils of the state's Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme who represented the state at national competitions during their visit to the governor in Port Harcourt

[34] Dovros, N., & Makrakis, V. (2012). "Transforming the Classroom into a Reflective Community: A Blended Learning Instructional Approach." *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*14 (2):
[35] Chapter 36, Agenda 21: Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21chapter36.htm

Source: The Guardian Newspaper (2020) Wike Unveils N90m Education Trust Fund to Enhance Pupils' Performance https://guardian.ng/news/wike-unveils-n90m-education-trustfund-to-enhance-pupils-performance/

Improving Basic Education - The First Priority. The first priority of Education for Sustainability Development was the promotion of basic education. The content and years of basic education differ greatly around the world. In some countries, for instance, primary school is considered basic education. In others eight or 12 years is mandatory. In many countries, basic education focuses on reading, writing, and ciphering. Pupils learn to read the newspaper, write letters, figure accounts, and develop skills necessary to fulfill their expected roles in their households and community. Girls, for example, may learn about nutrition and nursing. Pupils also learn how their government functions and about the world beyond their community. Simply increasing basic literacy, as it is currently taught in most countries, will not advance sustainable societies (Liddy, M., &Parker, J. M, 2013).[36]

Because of the fact that governance has to be truly democratic in nature, and that it should incorporate both the followers and the leaders, to be popular it must involve people, responsible and permits people's will to stand the test of time,[37] administration of Nyesom Wike inaugurated State Universal Basic Education Board charged with the responsibility for the development of the schools in the rural schools and improvement of academic services. Further Nyesom Ezenwo Wike-led administration established an Education Trust Fund worth N90m for nine pupils of basic education schools who emerge victorious in national educational competitions between 2015 and 2019.Invariably pupils of Universal Basic Education schools represented the state at National Competitions and won awards and Wike directed the opening of special accounts to fund the university education of the nine pupils.

Put succinctly, the pupils had won awards during the National Literacy Competition, National Quiz Competition on Water and Hygiene, National

[36] Liddy, M., and Parker, J. M. (2013). *Education That Matters*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
[37] Arowolo, D.E. &Aluko, O.A. "Democracy, Political Participation and Good Governance in Nigeria". International Journal of Development and Sustainability, Vol.1, Issue 3, (2012), pp.797-809.

Mathematics Competition, as well as Science, Creative Writing and Computer Science. Wike's investments in rural schools led to the emergence of outstanding students from schools in the hinterland(Ann, 2020).[38] Indeed, if communities and nations hope to identify sustainability goals and work toward them, they must focus on skills, values, and perspectives that encourage and support public participation and community decision making. To achieve this, basic education must be reoriented to address sustainability and expanded to include critical-thinking skills, skills to organize and interpret data and information, skills to formulate questions, and the ability to analyze issues that confront communities.

Reorienting Existing Education - The Second Priority: The term "reorienting education" has become a powerful descriptor that helps administrators and educators at every level (i.e., nursery school through university) to understand the changes required for Education for Sustainable Development. An appropriately reoriented basic education includes more principles, skills, perspectives, and values related to sustainability than are currently included in most education systems. Hence, it is not only a question of quantity of education, but also one of appropriateness and relevance. Education for Sustainable Development encompasses a vision that integrates environment, economy, and society.

Reorienting education also requires teaching and learning knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values that will guide and motivate people to pursue sustainable livelihoods, to participate in a democratic society, and to live in a sustainable manner. The need to reorient basic and secondary education to address sustainability has grabbed international attention, but the need at the university level is just as great. Society's future leaders and decision makers are educated there. If these young people are expected to lead all sectors of society (e.g., government, medicine, agriculture, forestry, law, business, industry, engineering, education, communications, architecture, and arts) in a world striving toward sustainability, then the current administration and faculty members must reorient

[38] Ann, G. (2020). Wike unveils N90m education trust fund to enhance pupils' performance. The Guardian Newspaper Retrieved 17 April, 2023 from: https://guardian.ng/news/wike-unveils-n90m-education-trustfund-to-enhance-pupils-performance/

university curriculums to include the many and complex facets of sustainability (Andrews, 2005).[39]

Public Understanding and Awareness. The Third Priority: Sustainability requires a population that is aware of the goals of a sustainable society and has the knowledge and skills to contribute to those goals. The need for an informed voting citizenry becomes ever more important with the increase in the number of democratic governments. An informed voting citizenry, which lends support to enlightened policies and government initiatives, can help governments enact sustainable measures. Citizens also need to be knowledgeable consumers who can see beyond the "green wash" (i.e., public-relations efforts that highlight the activities of corporations that are more environmentally responsible while ignoring or hiding the major activities that are not).

In today's world, people are surrounded by media (e.g., television, radio, newspapers, magazines) and advertisements (e.g., bill boards, banners on World Wide Web sites, and logos on clothing). As a result, people must become media literate and able to analyze the messages of corporate advertisers. Years of resource management has shown that a public that is aware of and informed about resource-management decisions and programmes can help achieve program goals. In contrast, an uninformed public can undermine resource-management programmes. Education has also been essential in many other types of programmes, such as public-health efforts to stop the spread of specific diseases (Gresch & Bogeholz, 2013)[40]

Because Education for Sustainable Development is a lifelong process, the formal, non-formal, and informal educational sectors should work together to accomplish local sustainability goals. In an ideal world, the three sectors would divide the enormous task of Education for Sustainable Development for the entire population by identifying target audiences from the general public as well as themes of

[39] Andrews, R.(2005). "The Place of Systematic Reviews in Education Research." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 53 (4): 399–416

[40] Gresch, H., and Bogeholz, S.(2013). "Identifying Non-Sustainable Courses of Action: A Prerequisite for Decision-Making in Education for Sustainable Development." *Research in Science Education.* 43 (2): 733–754.

sustainability.[41] They would then work within their mutually agreed upon realms. This division of effort would reach a broader spectrum of people and prevent redundant efforts.

Knowledge: Sustainable development encompasses environment, economics, and society. Therefore, people need basic knowledge from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities to understand the principles of sustainable development, how they can be implemented, the values involved, and ramifications of their implementation. Knowledge based on traditional disciplines supports Education for Sustainable Development. The challenge for communities in the process of creating Education for Sustainable Development curriculums will be to select knowledge that will support their sustainability goals. An accompanying challenge will be to let go of those topics that have been successfully taught for years but are no longer relevant. In the event that your community has not defined sustainability goals, you can substitute principles and guidelines for sustainability (Robert, L. et al, 2016).[42]

Conclusion

Not only does education contribute to sustainable development and the transformation of society; the reverse is also true. Sustainability improves education and has the potential to transform education. As countries and communities struggle to cope with contemporary challenges accompanied by major life-changing events (e.g. climate change-induced drought or the rise in sea level), the purpose and relevance of education itself have been questioned (Baily, Flaherty, & Hogan. 2017).[43]

[41] Ibid

[42] Robert, L., Yuko, N.T., Rosalyn, M. & Charles, H. (2016). Contributions of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to Quality Education.*Journal of Education for Sustainable Development* Volume 10: Issue 2, pp. 226–242

[43] Baily, F., J. Flaherty, O. & Hogan. D. (2017). "Exploring the Nature and Implications of Student Teacher Engagement with Development Education Initiatives". *Irish Educational Studies*. Retrieved 16 April 2023 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03323315.2017.1327367

By and large, because education is one of several mechanisms available to governments and communities to bring about social transformation and thus create more stable, equitable and resilient societies, Wike-led administration since year 2015 till date has performed creditably well in the area of Education for Sustainable Development. Therefore, from the perspective of sustainable development, it is time to rethink, reorient and restate the purpose of education. Education that promotes sustainability, global stability and resilient societies could help create a more sustainable future for the planet.

Wike administration believes that education, within an Education for Sustainable Development framework, can address difficult changes and contemporary challenges— whether environmental, social or economic, or whether they are local or global in scale. Aligning primary and secondary schooling with the purpose of sustainability will help create an environmentally robust, socially equitable and economically fair world. Wike's administration has equally drawn board with other partners such as the Second Opportunity Africa Foundation for the conceptualisation and design of a capacity building Specialist Programme that provide certification and accreditation for young people so as to encourage youths to go into enterprise development but not at the detriment of available youths that will take-up white collar jobs. Education for Sustainable Development is our hope for this type of world.