

Developing the Youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria is a country characterized with natural resources in its abundance which can cater for the well-being of the citizens, yet the citizens especially the youths are living below poverty level as many are victims of unemployment and cannot offer meaningful and positive contribution to the development of the nation. The unemployment rate is as a result of the abandonment of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) that can offer skills to the youths for self-reliance and employment. In this vein, this paper seeks to address how a developed TVET programme can developed the youths in order to build the nation for sustainable national development in Nigeria. The following outlines provide a guide to the content of this paper; the concept of sustainable development, the meaning of TVET and its role in sustainable development, how to develop TVET for sustainable development in Nigeria. Others were the definition of youth and the concept of TVET for youth development. The researcher suggest that TVET can be developed for sustainable development in Nigeria through making a flexible TVET policies, establishment of TVET special training centres on local basis, improve the linkages between training institutions and the industries, provision of adequate training facilities, giving of grants to individual who successfully complete TVET training, granting of soft loans to established business, establishment and effective management of financial institutions such as Micro-Finance Banks, Bank of Industries (BOI), employment in both public and private sectors should be centre on psychomotor contribution rather than certificate among others. The implementation of these strategies will enhance the development and sustainability of TVET programmes in Nigeria. Based on the discussion made in this paper, the study recommends that the period of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) should be converted to be a compulsory training period for all graduates on different types and kinds of TVET skills, For non-graduates youths, there should be a skill training organized and supervised through government agencies such as Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and other commissions, Government should grant soft loan to those venturing into TVET as this will enable the establishment of the acquire skills. Also, loan should be given to graduates who have completed a training programme for easy establishment.

Keywords: Skill Acquisition, Sustainable Development, TVET, Unemployment, Youth

1.0 Introduction

Nigeria as a country is endowed with natural resources that are capable to catapult the nation to a maximum level and height in terms of development. It is a nation that is characterized with the youth who are the prime movers of any form of development (political, economic, social, cultural etc.). The development of any nation depends on the workforce available and to what extent is the workforce viable and capable. According to www.tradingeconomics.com, youth unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 25.20 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 from 25 percent in the third quarter of 2016. The National Population Census (NPC, 2006), asserted that the total population of the youth (15-35 years) is about 64,086,797. Out of this population, about 16149873 Nigerian youths are unemployed. If these large populations of the group suffer and become victims of unemployment, how would the nation move forward and sustained its development

50 when the youths are the engine room of any development? These youths that are not
51 engaged in any activity are morally, politically, economically, socially, psychologically
52 and culturally depressed which is dangerous to the entire society as their actions of anti-
53 social activities poses a threat to the nation's economy. Also, they cannot contribute
54 meaningfully to the development and sustainability of the country's economy.

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56 In order to make them useful, meaningful and to be an active partner in the nation's
57 economy, they must be employed and empowered. Through this, the youth can contribute
58 in the building and sustaining the nation. Youth as define by the National Policy on Youth
59 Development (NPYD, 2001), is any individual who is a citizen of the Federal Republic of
60 Nigeria, between the ages of 18-35 years. The National Youths Policy affirms that the
61 extent of the youth's *"responsible conduct and roles in society is positively correlated
62 with the development of their country (FRN, 2001:1)"*. This is true because the youths
63 constitute about 33% of the entire Nigerian population (NYCN, 2011) which when they
64 are fully integrated into the society through knowledge utilization, skill training for
65 empowerment and employment have the ability to skyrocket the nation positively.

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69 The slogan of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) is stated thus *"Build the
70 Youth, Build the Nation"*. In other words, if the nation must be developed, the youth must
71 first be developed because they are the corner stone that determines the economic
72 developmental shape and structure of that nation. Youth development can be by engaging
73 them through empowerment or employment processes. Youths' empowerment and
74 employment can be realized through developing a well organized Technical Vocational
75 Education Training (TVET) to offer skill acquisition for self reliance and development.
76 UNESCO (2012) assert TVET as a comprehensive term involving in addition to general
77 education, the study of technologies and related sciences, acquisition of practical skills,
78 attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to occupation in various sectors in
79 economic and social life. According to Mclean and David (2009), TVET is concerned with
80 the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work, to increase opportunities for
81 productive empowerment and socio-economic development in knowledge, economics and
82 rapidly changing work environment. Based on this, if TVET is develop for the youths to
83 key into the programmes, the nations' economy will be developed and sustained through
84 the contribution of the youths acquired from TVET. According to Deebom and Zite
85 (2016), one obvious means of meeting the economic needs of the society is by training the

86 youth and giving them some industrial or commercial skills as a means of livelihood. The
87 National Youths Development Policy recognizes that the youths are key resources that can
88 be tapped for the benefit of the whole country. It also asserts that youths are the foundation
89 of a society as their energies; inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of
90 development and security of a nation. Through the youths' creative talents and labour
91 power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political
92 attainments. This also leads to national sustainable development. The Food and
93 Agricultural Organization (FAO) (as cited in Okwelle & Ayomike, 2014) defined
94 sustainable development as the management and conservation of the natural resources
95 base and the orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to
96 ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future
97 generation. By this definition, TVET and the youths are now seen to play an integral role
98 for the attainment of sustainable development. At this point, the researcher deem it
99 necessary to examine whether developing a well organized TVET programmes can build
100 the youth in order for them to develop the nation through their contributions, innovations
101 and ideas. It is no longer a gainsaying that the youths are the leaders of tomorrow. They
102 are also the prime mover of any developed economy. The question to be asked is that how
103 can Nigerian youths move and developed the economy when they are not developed? This
104 was buttressed by Deebom and Okwelle (2016) who opined that poverty and its symptoms
105 dominate as majority of the youths lack the skills for employment or self-employment.
106 Developing the youth simply means making them to be self-reliant through empowerment
107 or employment. This could be realized through TVET which is the only education that
108 offers skills and knowledge. For instance, Mark Elliot Zuckerberg, the founder and
109 inventor of the most populous social network (face book), who at the age of 20 launched
110 face book on February 4, 2004 which have contributed and sustained his country's
111 economy (United State) through his skills, talents and knowledge acquired which are the
112 essential ingredients of TVET. Also, Ukranian, Jan Koum who at the age of 33 years in
113 2009 launched and became the founder of WhatsAPP, a mobile messaging application for
114 communication have sustained the economy of Ukraine through skills and knowledge.
115 This study intends to achieve the following:

- 116 • The concept of sustainable development.
- 117 • The meaning of TVET and its role in sustainable development.
- 118 • How to developed TVET for sustainable development in Nigeria.

- 119 • Who are the youth?
- 120 • Concept of TVET for youth development

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126 **The Concept of Sustainable Development**

127 According to Ahiakwo (2015), to sustain means “to provide enough of what somebody
128 needs in order to live or exist”. A sustainable situation involves “the use of natural
129 products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment”. Sustainable
130 development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is
131 that “Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present
132 without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need”
133 (<https://iisd.org/isd/>). The draft post-2015 agenda proposes 17 goals to promote well-being
134 for all at all ages. According to the agenda, some of the Sustainable Development Goals
135 (SDGs) were to:

- 136 ✓ End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- 137 ✓ End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable
138 agriculture.
- 139 ✓ Promote and sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and
140 productive employment, and decent work for all.
- 141 ✓ Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- 142 ✓ Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization,
143 and foster innovation.
- 144 ✓ Conserve and sustainability use the oceans, sea and marine resources for
145 sustainable development.
- 146 ✓ Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for
147 sustainable development (The Guardian, May 19, 2015).

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149 Also, TVET is understood to contribute to sustainable development. In this context, the
150 UNESCO-UNEVOC Bonn Declaration on Learning for Work, Citizenship and
151 Sustainability in 2004 stated that “since education is considered the key to effective
152 development strategies, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) then
153 must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the
154 environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development”
155 (UNESCO, 2005). The concept of sustainable development has been defined in many

156 widely differing ways. One of such broadly accepted definition is that of Brundtland
157 commission report in 1987 in Redclift (2005), which defined sustainable development as a
158 new form of developmental perspective which integrates the production process with
159 resources conservation and environmental enhancement to meet the needs of the present
160 without compromising our ability to meet those of the future. Furthermore, Kurya and
161 Hassan (2007) posited that sustainable development is a continuous and progressive
162 increase and expansion of the volume of goods and services provided in a given economy
163 with improvement in the social, political and economic life of present as well as future
164 generation. To this end, Arokoyu (2004) argued that sustainable development is inherently
165 a value-laden concept, in that it implies responsibility for both present and future
166 generation. TVET is a sure way for achieving a sustainable development through
167 inculcating the youths that has the innovation, stamina in moving and making the
168 economy more productive and competitive.

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170 **The Meaning of TVET and Its Role in Sustainable Development**

171 Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) mean different thing to different people
172 from a general perspective. To some people, it means a non-formal training mainly for
173 school drop outs that cannot survive in formal university training. For others, it is a
174 programme that is used in semi-skilled labour. TVET from a general and professional
175 point of view is a formal training needed by all. It is an education program that is
176 organized to orient people into skills acquisition, and as well teach them the attitude and
177 knowledge necessary for the appropriate utilization of such skills. Also, it is education
178 designated to develop specific occupational skills (Butterfield, 2000). According to
179 Adenle and Shobowale (2009), TVET exposes the learners to acquire demonstrative skills
180 that could be transformed into economic benefits. The United Nations Educational
181 Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour
182 Organization (ILO) recommendations of 2002 on TVET for the twenty-first century,
183 defined TVET as:

184 *“those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general*
185 *education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the*
186 *acquisition of practical skill, attitudes, understanding and knowledge*
187 *relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life”.*
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189 From the above definition, TVET prepares an individual for skilful performance on
190 practical task. It involves the acquisition of skills and competencies that can help
191 individuals to function productively in industrial and commercial occupations (Wapmuk,

192 2011). It is a training characterized with element of sustainable development. Today,
193 TVET is increasingly recognized globally as effective means of empowering young people
194 to engage in productive and sustainable livelihoods. Sustainable development is about the
195 development of individuals and that of the society and national economy. TVET
196 empowerment improves a nation's economy, provides job opportunities, reduces crime
197 rates and encourages creativity and competitiveness in nation building. TVET facilitates
198 the adjustment of the skills and knowledge of man to the changing demands within the
199 society. Skill and knowledge as well as social values acquired through TVET allow an
200 individual to manipulate the natural and physical environment for making life more useful
201 for improved sustainable scientific, technological and economic development (Okwelle,
202 2008). Thus, TVET and sustainable development are inevitably connected. TVET as a
203 programme has an essential role to play in raising awareness, and providing skills and
204 values considered necessary to put sustainable development into practice. As the goal,
205 sustainable development lies at the heart of the TVET system, and become the platform
206 among the society it serves (Chepkemi, Watindi, Cheron, Ng'isirei & Rono, 2012). In the
207 new economic environment therefore, TVET is expected to produce an educated, skilled
208 and motivated work force for sustainable development and nation's growth. Today, TVET
209 is increasingly recognized globally as effective means of empowering young people to
210 engage in productive and sustainable livelihoods.

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213 Youth empowerment is crucial to sustainable national security, because when youths are
214 empowered by equipping them with employable skills they will be engaged and will
215 eschew violence and embrace peace. The term "youth" varies in its significance and age
216 range from culture to culture. It may universally be defined as a transitional concept.
217 Adenle and Raheem in (Ogbuanya & Obiajulu, 2015) viewed youth as a very specific
218 stage between childhood and adulthood, when people have to negotiate a complex
219 interplay of both personal and socioeconomic changes in order to manoeuvre the
220 'transition' from dependence to independence, take effective control of their own lives and
221 assume social commitments. The National Youths Policy recognizes that the youths are a
222 key resource that can be tapped for the benefit of the whole country.

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225 **How to Developed TVET for Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

226 Though, TVET system in Nigeria like other African countries is threatened with many
227 challenges, one of such major problems upon which other problems seem to emanate from

228 is that of image of TVET. Evidence from studies indicates that many youths, parents and
229 even government perceive TVET as not valuable as a general education (Afeiti, 2008,
230 African Union (AU), 2007, Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). This negative view has grossly
231 discouraged many young people from enrolling into TVET programmes, undermining the
232 importance of this form of education to national and sustainable development.

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235 It has been noted that TVET provides the needed employable skills and attitudes required
236 for job performance at the workplace. It can be perceived that the world of TVET
237 constitutes technical education and vocational education. Technical education is defined as
238 a formal training that enables the application of the techniques of applied sciences and
239 mathematical principles for the services of mankind; whereas vocational education is the
240 educational preparations and training provided to individuals to enable them become
241 specifically qualified for a particular vocation. Okoye and Okwelle (2014) argued that
242 while technical education is aimed at nurturing skills and practical development of an
243 individual, vocational education is imbued with strict adherence to guiding principles for
244 effective professional performance in an occupational field. TVET therefore is defined by
245 UNESCO (2012) as those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to
246 general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of
247 practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various
248 sectors of economic life.

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250 The researcher suggest that TVET can be developed for sustainable development in
251 Nigeria through making a flexible TVET policies, establishment of TVET special training
252 centres on local basis, improve the linkages between training institutions and the
253 industries, provision of adequate training facilities, giving of grants to individual who
254 successfully complete TVET training, granting of soft loans to established business,
255 establishment and effective management of financial institutions such as Micro-Finance
256 Banks, Bank of Industries (BOI), employment in both public and private sectors should be
257 centre on psychomotor contribution rather than certificate among others. The
258 implementation of these strategies will enhance the development and sustainability of
259 TVET programmes in Nigeria.

260

261 **Who are the Youths?**

262 Youth is a period which is both extreme importances in the development of any nation as
263 well as a sensitive period for the individual youth and by extension, the society and nation
264 as a whole. Youth are not only actual leaders in some role or the other but are also future

265 potential leaders and are actually the greatest investment in any country's development.
266 The extent to which the youth of any nation possesses the assets of intelligence,
267 responsibility, creativity and patriotism determines the potentials of a nation for
268 development. The way in which a nation defines its youth is related to the objective
269 conditions and realities that exist in its immediate environment. By way of definition in
270 the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a youth is defined as a citizen of Nigeria of aged between
271 18-35 years (NPC, 2006). This age bracket represents the most active, dependable and yet
272 vulnerable segment of the country's population socio-economically, emotionally and in
273 other respect. Also, the youth policy defines the youths as all young persons of the ages
274 18-35 years. Predominantly, Nigeria's population is characterized with youths occupying a
275 high percentage of its population.

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277 According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012) of National Population Census
278 (NPC, 2006), the total population of the youth (15-35 years) is about 64,086,797 while
279 youth of age bracket (18-35 years) was about 52,183,686. For the purpose of this paper,
280 Nigerian youths are citizen of Nigerian between the ages of 18-35 years which form about
281 52 million persons; with 24,548,835 (47.2%) being males and 27,634,852 (52.8%) being
282 females out of an entire population of about 140,003,542 persons. The youths thus
283 constitute about 37.3% of the total population. This is equivalent to one youth out of every
284 three Nigerians. They are the backbone of the development of the country. Indeed, if
285 Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity, there must be a very good plan to tap the
286 energy and resourcefulness of the youth population to fast track national economic
287 development of the country through TVET (The Tide, 2013). The National Youths Policy
288 recognizes that the youths are a key resource that can be tapped for the benefit of the
289 whole country. As earlier pointed out, the youth has a crucial role to play in the efforts of
290 achieving national and sustainable development anywhere in the world. The place and
291 importance of the youth in the development process is aptly described by the National
292 Youth Policy in this way:

293
294 *“Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not*
295 *only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are*
296 *potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's*
297 *development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a*
298 *country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their*
299 *vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively*
300 *correlated with the development of their country” (FGN, 2001).*
301

302 Youths of a nation serve as the building blocks that link the past with the present. The
303 youths represent the future and the hope of every society and this has been more apt in
304 Nigeria especially if taken in the context of the country's 50 years of nationhood (Walter
305 & Anikeze, 2017). However, the youth being a vulnerable group with peculiar but unmet
306 needs and aspirations, majority of them faces several problems which include
307 unemployment, underemployment, and poverty among others. These have hampered
308 sustainable development as they cannot meaningfully contribute to the economic viability
309 of the nation due to lack of skills for self-employment, paid employment and
310 empowerment. This was evidenced as Yakubu (2012) and Akpan and Udoh (2014) opined
311 that lack of productive and marketable TVET skills has been identified as the major cause
312 of unemployment as many youths are not adequately prepared to fit into the productive
313 sector of the economy and cannot provide the services that can generate sustainable
314 income.

315

316 **Concept of TVET for Youth Development**

317 The development of the youth depends on their readiness and the availability of the
318 programmes that can enhance such development. Youth development cannot be achieved
319 without proper integration and incorporation of programmes for empowerment and
320 employment. This is certain because development is the end product of empowerment and
321 employment. From the above assertion, it is convince that Nigerian youths needs TVET as
322 the only platform that can usher in place the desire and expected development through
323 empowerment and employment. It is a form of education that aims at self-reliance and
324 sustainability. Technical and vocational education is a form of education designed to equip
325 the learners (youths) for gainful employment and empowerment. It is also that part of
326 education that provides the skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for effective
327 employment in specific occupation. According to Dawodu (2006), TVET are the most
328 reliable vehicles for self sustenance, economic prosperity and political supremacy of a
329 nation over others since it prepares an individual for employment in any industry for
330 specialization. By this, it implies that it will make the youth flexible and employable in the
331 labour market. A graduate of TVET must be embedded with skills, attitude, knowledge
332 needed in the industry for utilization. It is important to know that the world today has
333 advanced to a point where only certificate degree cannot give employment. It is a period
334 where skills acquire and posses will edge or single an individual out of mix-multitude

335 hunting and searching for a particular job. A well organized TVET programme that is
336 rebuild will actually bring about youths development.

337

338 According to Sachs (2004) in Alhassan and Abdullahi (2013), development is a process
339 where an economy undergoes social and economic transformation leading to a rise in the
340 standard of living, access to basic amenities for all through knowledge. It is in recognition
341 of the above concept of development that TVET in empowering youth for poverty
342 alleviation should be given utmost priority by government, having in mind the future
343 consequence and task ahead for sustainable development. Technical and vocational
344 education and training plays an essential role in improving the wellbeing of youths and
345 communities. It increases productivity, empowers individual to become self reliant and
346 stimulates entrepreneurship. Investors are more willing to invest in a community with
347 strong human resources (Chinwe, 2008). Skills development can therefore contribute to
348 strengthening the social links of a community by promoting employment creativity and
349 sustainable means of existence for the youths. By implication, TVET delivery system
350 (Audu, Karim & Balash, 2013) has the potential to train the skilled workforce that the
351 nation needs and create employment for the youths and emerge out of poverty,
352 underdevelopment and technical backwardness.

353

354 **2.0 Conclusion**

355 From literature reviewed in this paper, Nigerian youths are still wallowing and languishing
356 in poverty and lack because the nation has not been able to identify and walk on the
357 corridor of TVET. In as much as the youths are not built, the nation cannot be developed
358 and its effect is that the national economy cannot be sustained. Paper reviewed shows that
359 many developed nations around the world were able to attained a tremendous height where
360 they are today because the youths and TVET were simultaneously identify as an
361 instrument of sustainable national development. Nigerian youths are left behind because of
362 poor policy formulation and implementation concerning TVET and its impact on national
363 development. TVET programs suffers' poor sponsorship in Nigeria. Researches reveal that
364 many developed nations have adopted the dual system (incorporating TVET with youths)
365 to ensure productive economy through TVET programs with every seriousness. Dual
366 system involves technical and vocational training provided on special vocations in
367 government approved industries and commissioned agencies to get the youths involved.

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370 **3.0 Recommendations**

371 From the above, the following were recommended:

- 372 i. The period of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) should be converted to be a
373 compulsory training period for all graduates on different types and kinds of TVET
374 skills. The internship should be made compulsory in selected special vocational
375 areas. The more versatile and knowledgeable experts or adult educators who could
376 employ a range of learning models, not just competency-based training, should be
377 recruited as instructors in such training centres or industries selected for the purpose.
- 378 ii. For non-graduates youths, there should be a skill training organized and supervised
379 through government agencies such as Niger Delta Development Commission
380 (NDDC), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and other commissions. Also,
381 Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Community-Based Organizations
382 (CBOs), philanthropists, public and private industries should venture into organizing
383 free skill training programme for youths empowerment.
- 384 iii. There should be a synergy between tertiary institutions offering TVET and the
385 industries that can offer practical knowledge on subject area. This linkage could be
386 through the Students' Industrial Attachment Period (SIAP). In this way, theoretical
387 knowledge that seems that be abstract in the classroom will be translated into reality
388 which will enhance easy acquisition of skills in a chosen area of specialization.
- 389 iv. Government, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Philanthropists and others
390 should partner in providing infrastructural facilities to TVET institutions. Also,
391 industries should transfer the obsolete tools, equipment to the institutions as a way of
392 making acquisition of skills easily realizable.
- 393 v. Government, public and private should be involve in establishing more registered
394 TVET programmes centres at an affordable and reduce cost of training fee.
- 395 vi. Government should grant soft loan to those venturing into TVET as this will enable
396 the establishment of the acquire skills. Also, loan should be given to graduates who
397 have completed a training programme for easy establishment.

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