

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 develop 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 suggests 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, improvement of 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. 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 **can contribute to national development**. It is a nation that is **endowed with many youths** 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 **the extent to which the workforce is 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 sustain its development when the youths are the engine **for** development? These youths that are not

50 engaged in any activity are morally, politically, economically, socially, psychologically
51 and culturally depressed, which is dangerous to the entire society as their actions of anti-
52 social activities pose a threat to the nation's economy. Also, they cannot contribute
53 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 to building and sustaining the nation. Youth as defined 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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68 The slogan of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) is stated thus "*Build the*
69 *Youth, Build the Nation*". In other words, if the nation must be developed, the youth must
70 first be developed because they are the corner stone that determines the economic
71 developmental shape and structure of that nation. Youth development can be by engaging
72 them through empowerment or employment processes. Youths' empowerment and
73 employment can be realized through developing a well organized Technical Vocational
74 Education Training (TVET) to offer skill acquisition for self reliance and development.
75 UNESCO (2012) asserts TVET as a comprehensive term involving in addition to general
76 education, the study of technologies and related sciences, acquisition of practical skills,
77 attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to occupation in various sectors in
78 economic and social life. According to Mclean and David (2009), TVET is concerned with
79 the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work, to increase opportunities for
80 productive empowerment and socio-economic development in knowledge, economics and
81 rapidly changing work environment. Based on this, if TVET is develop for the youths to
82 key into the programmes, the nations' economy will be developed and sustained through
83 the contribution of the youths using skills and knowledge acquired from TVET.
84 According to Deebom and Zite (2016), one obvious means of meeting the economic needs
85 of the society is by training the youth and giving them some industrial or commercial

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

- 115 • **What is sustainable development?**
- 116 • **What is TVET and what might be its role in sustainable development?**
- 117 • **What are the best TVET strategies for sustainable development?**
- 118 • **Who are the youths?**

- 119 • **What is** TVET for youth development?
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125 **The Concept of Sustainable Development**

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

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

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

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

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

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

183 *“those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general*
184 *education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the*
185 *acquisition of practical skill, attitudes, understanding and knowledge*
186 *relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life”.*
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188 From the above definition, TVET prepares an individual for skilful performance on
189 practical task. It involves the acquisition of skills and competencies that can help
190 individuals to function productively in industrial and commercial occupations (Wapmuk,
191 2011). It is a training characterized **by the** element of sustainable development. Today,

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

259 260 **Who are the Youths?**

261 Youth is a period which is important in the development of any nation as well as a
262 sensitive period for the individual youth and by extension, the society and nation as a
263 whole. Youth are not only actual leaders in some role or the other but are also future
264 potential leaders and are actually the greatest investment in any country's development.

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

275
276 According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012) of National Population Census
277 (NPC, 2006), the total population of the youth (15-35 years) is about 64,086,797 while
278 youth of age bracket (18-35 years) was about 52,183,686. For the purpose of this paper,
279 Nigerian youths are citizen of Nigerian between the ages of 18-35 years which form about
280 52 million persons; with 24,548,835 (47.2%) being males and 27,634,852 (52.8%) being
281 females out of an entire population of about 140,003,542 persons. The youths thus
282 constitute about 37.3% of the total population. This is equivalent to one youth out of every
283 three Nigerians. They are the backbone of the development of the country. Indeed, if
284 Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity, there must be a very good plan to tap the
285 energy and resourcefulness of the youth population to fast track national economic
286 development of the country through TVET (The Tide, 2013). The National Youths Policy
287 recognizes that the youths are a key resource that can be tapped for the benefit of the
288 whole country. As earlier pointed out, the youth has a crucial role to play in the efforts of
289 achieving national and sustainable development anywhere in the world. The place and
290 importance of the youth in the development process is aptly described by the National
291 Youth Policy in this way:

292
293 *“Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not*
294 *only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are*
295 *potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's*
296 *development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a*
297 *country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their*
298 *vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively*
299 *correlated with the development of their country” (FGN, 2001).*
300

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

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315 **Concept of TVET for Youth Development**

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

335
336 According to Sachs (2004) in Alhassan and Abdullahi (2013), development is a process
337 where an economy undergoes social and economic transformation leading to a rise in the
338 standard of living, **and** access to basic amenities for all through knowledge. It is in
339 recognition of the above concept of development that TVET **as a means for poverty**
340 **alleviation** should be given utmost priority by government, having in mind the future
341 consequence and task ahead for sustainable development. Technical and vocational
342 education and training plays an essential role in improving the wellbeing of youths and
343 communities. It increases productivity, empowers individuals to become self-reliant and
344 stimulates entrepreneurship. Investors are more willing to invest in a community with
345 strong human resources (Chinwe, 2008). Skills development can therefore contribute to
346 strengthening the social links of a community by promoting employment creativity and
347 sustainable means of existence for the youths. By implication, TVET delivery system
348 (Audu, Karim & Balash, 2013) has the potential to train the skilled workforce that the
349 nation needs and create employment for the youths and emerge out of poverty,
350 underdevelopment and technical backwardness.

351 **2.0 Conclusion**

353 From literature reviewed in this paper, Nigerian youths are still wallowing and languishing
354 in poverty and lack because the nation has not been able to identify **the importance** of
355 TVET. In as much as the youths are not built, the nation cannot be developed and its effect
356 is that the national economy cannot be sustained. Papers reviewed show that many
357 developed nations around the world were able to **be** where they are today because the
358 youths and TVET were simultaneously identified **as an instrument for** sustainable national
359 development. Nigerian youths are left behind because of poor policy formulation and
360 implementation concerning TVET and its impact on national development. TVET
361 programs suffer poor sponsorship in Nigeria.

362 **3.0 Recommendations**

364 From the above, the following were recommended:

- 365 i. The period of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) should be converted to be a
366 compulsory training period for all graduates on different types and kinds of TVET
367 skills. Internship should be made compulsory in selected special vocational areas.
368 The more versatile and knowledgeable experts or adult educators who could employ

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

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