

Towards a Skill-Based Music Education in Reducing Poverty and Enacting Leadership Quality in Nigeria

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Abstract

Poverty and unemployment has been a social ill that has eaten deep into the economy of the nation. This paper examined the cause of poverty and bad leadership traits among Nigerian youths and look at the role music education can play in reducing it. It discovered that the absence of opportunity for works is one of the causes of much of the present social and industrial unrest in Nigeria. It reviewed some selected developed countries where vocational education is an investment that is giving good yield. The paper concludes that the inability of our educational system to provide the youths with the demands of industries has led to the turning out of restless and disconnected generation of youths. The paper therefore suggests a skill-based music education that can contribute to a modern economy and make Nigerians take its place in the technological society of the 21st century. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that, government should provide teaching and research materials for effective teaching and learning of music education in secondary schools in order to inculcate in the students skills, entrepreneurship values and traits of good leadership.

Keywords: *Poverty, Leadership, Skills, Music Education, Skill-Based Education.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian education for some time has faced some problems of having graduates that are mass-produced every year without job opportunities or adequate provision and this has affected the national economy adversely. Radwan & Pellegrini, 2010 reported that only about 16 per cent of young Nigerians have any job outside of subsistence agricultural economy, suggesting a waste of young talent and potential unrest . Both university and college graduates are busy searching for office work year in year out. This has contributed to increased poverty among the youth and old alike. Moreover the government has not adequately developed avenues by which people can have access to skill training and meaningful apprenticeship scheme. According to Mitra, Abubakar & Sagagi, (2011),

Since 1974, over 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign earnings have come mainly from oil (Joy, 2000). The country is a leading producer of palm oil, cocoa, and rubber. It is blessed with a variety of natural resources. Ironically however, poverty continues to devastate the potentially wealthy country. Figures suggest that 66 to 70 per cent of Nigerians are poor, and the rate of employment is about 15 per cent (UNDP, 2009). It ranks 41st in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and 161st in terms of GDP per capita. The major challenge confronting Nigeria is that of reconstructing its economy in ways that promote new opportunities for social and economic change to help with poverty reduction and wean her away from an over-dependence on its oil reserves. This challenge is symptomatic of the paradoxes that abound in developing nations such as Nigeria, where riches and resources are not balanced by skills levels and technologies with which to create new knowledge and recognize new opportunities.

Skill based education provision is one way of addressing poverty reduction, as there is strong empirical evidence suggesting that enhancement of skill over time is necessary for poverty reduction. Acquisition and utilization of relevant skill

boosts economic growth. It enhances educational attainment and increases the rate of economic growth. The World Economic Forum (2009) argues that the three relationships above are suggestive of productive outcomes emanating from education provision. For example, in eradicating extreme hunger and poverty even if developing countries focus on innovation, creativity, talent and resources to overcome poverty, they lack the infrastructure and the expertise to support such an objective. These deficiencies could be overcome through capacity building through apprenticeship scheme and skill based education to transform these assets into products and services, thereby creating more jobs, enhancing their global trade opportunities and reducing the incidence of poverty.

Skill based education has some role in preparing youth for basic academic skills and perhaps many trade skills, as well. Apprenticeships clearly build needed trade skill training which affords a clear vocational path out of modern urban poverty. The development of human capital is positively associated with new knowledge generation and skills relating to the identification of new opportunities reflecting specific needs in particular economic, regulatory and cultural contexts. Early initiatives in education (e.g. Ashby Commission of the 1950s following Nigeria's independence) were centered on the production of manpower for independence as there were concerns on the availability of skilled people to take over the government jobs that were vacated by the colonialists (Aladekomo, 2004). Against this backdrop, this paper is proposing that a more systemic vision is required in Nigerian educational system. This vision will be that which acknowledges and emphasizes the complementarities of skill-based education and training system and music has a pivotal role to play here.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

It is essential to define and clarify some terms because they are central to this work. The concepts include poverty, skill, leadership and music education.

2.1 Poverty

Poverty as defined by Arcus Dictionary (2013) is the state of having little or no

money and few or no material possession. It can also be defined as the pronounced deprivation of well being. It is the inability to satisfy one's basic needs because one lacks income to buy services or from lack of access to services. For most of history, poverty had been mostly accepted as inevitable as traditional modes of production were insufficient to give an entire population a comfortable standard of living. It also encompasses insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. Poverty has historically been accepted as inevitable as non-industrialized economies produced very little while populations grew almost as fast making wealth scarce. Poverty occurs in both developing countries and developed countries. While poverty is much more widespread in developing countries, both types of countries undertake poverty reduction measures. Despite the recognition of poverty having social, physiological and financial dimensions, in practice the core meaning of poverty for most people remains income poverty (and this can be seen as the dollar- a- day MDG indicator).

Aboyade (1975) views poverty as a subjective and an objective thing, which are not only an expression of life situation but also a state of mind, intellectual and ideological disposition as well as perception of self in the complex web of social relations. Kirk (2010) reiterates that “not all poverty is alike. Some poverty is the result of more systemic problems which requires ‘development’.” He defines ‘development’ as the process of addressing broken social structures over the long haul. Though, development is a long-slow process that takes time to see much result. Not all poverty is alike and so not a set poverty solution will address every situation. Development has to be designed for each circumstance. The restoration process that comes from development is exactly where skill based education steps into the poverty reduction scene.

2.2 Concept of Skill

A skill is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. For example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership,

self motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job. Skill usually requires certain environmental stimuli and situations to assess the level of skill being shown and used.

2.3 Leadership

Leadership is a management skill, an ability to motivate a group of people toward a common goal. A leader is a person who has a vision, a drive and a commitment to achieve that vision, and the skills to make it happen. Leadership skill is needed to hasten the process of reducing poverty by identification and implementation of innovative solutions. As a result new strategy, concepts, ideas are harnessed to meet social needs. Recent experiences have shown that introducing a leadership entrepreneurial spirit into the development process can improve the effectiveness of intervention programs. Moreover, building leadership among people and connecting them to new opportunities could transform poor societies. To reduce poverty, adequate innovative capacity is needed at various levels in public and private sectors to develop leadership qualities in the youth.

2.4 Music Education

Music is a universal language that is known and understood in every culture of the world, the fact that its manifestation in the various cultures of the world undergoes some environmental influences notwithstanding (Mereni, 2007). Music is a major part of basic education and an essential form of communication. It has the potential for being one of the most valuable subjects for enhancing the human personality through complete involvement in inquiry techniques and creative approach to learning. (Onyiuke, 2009). Proponents of music education have claimed that students' participation in music activities has a positive effect on everything from academic achievement to self-discipline. Music has the ability to foster positive attitudes, lower truancy in middle and high school; to enhance creativity; and to promote social development, personality adjustment, and self-worth. Music in the school curriculum provides learning experiences that will promote growth and development in music skills, competencies and attitudes, develop cognitive and psychomotor skills, encourage social and

emotional maturity.....(Ajibulu, 1999). If the purpose of an education is to systematically develop the mind and capabilities of every child, it is clear that music has a unique and necessary role to play (Hodges 2011).

3. MUSIC AND LEADERSHIP SKILL

Music is an art that attracts all ages and level, judging from the rate at which young people listen to and perform music. An average young person listens to music during his or her leisure more than any other activity. Vidal (2008:3) comments that “music has become the craze with which urban youths are pre-occupied”. Music can build character development and leadership skills. Knowledge alone does not create leaders. Leadership ability is built on many of the skills that music education fosters: cooperation and the ability to act in appropriate, socially acceptable ways; letting all who want to be part of the action participate, either individually or as part of a team or group. Music enhances working in unity and harmony towards achieving the same goal.

Citing Maisah 2006,

..... studies have found that music participants more often are elected to class offices, receive academic honors, and achieve higher grades than non-music participating students. Through participation in school music programs, students gain a sense of discipline, self-esteem, and pride of accomplishment, and they learn to excel in teamwork, problem solving, leadership, and creative thinking.

3.1 Education, Skill and Poverty Reduction

Education generally is often linked with a whole host of positive development outcomes, for example, income, fertility and productivity. Education and skills training are usually linked with *alleviation* (of aspects or symptoms), *reduction* (lifting people out of poverty), or *prevention* of poverty. Education and skills

training of all types are usually linked to income benefits and so are concerned with all three kinds of poverty reduction. But different levels of education and skills provision are linked to different types of poverty reduction. For example, traditional apprenticeship training might be more associated with alleviation of poverty since its many weaknesses frequently preclude a graduate apprentice from operating on a level that might significantly raise their standard of living and hence lift them out of poverty (World Bank, 2004a; Palmer, 2007a). When examining the evidence or assertions related to education, skills training and poverty reduction, there is the need to be clear about what aspects of poverty or wellbeing (e.g. biophysical/social, individual/collective) are said to be causally linked with education and training (Palmer, R., Wedgwood, R., Hayman, R., King, K. & Thin, N. 2007). Correlational studies linking education, skills training and poverty reduction tend to focus on individual and biophysical/income-related aspects of poverty that are more easily measured, and pay less attention to the multidimensional nature of poverty.

4. SKILL-BASED EDUCATION

Section 1 of the Nigerian National Policy of Education (FGN, 2004) states the need for functional education to be relevant, practical and acquisition of appropriate skill and the development of competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. This implies that there is need for education to be geared towards inculcating practical skills, and competencies necessary for self-reliance, capacity-building and national development. A good education gives knowledge that gives skills contexts to develop.

A skill based education gives a store of useful facts needed for navigating the world of work and a set of flexible skills to manage change in an uncertain future. Research from NTL indicates that learners remember more effectively when they can use skills to access, process and express their knowledge. Skill based education involves planning, group work, creativity, enquiry, evaluation and self-confidence. It provides classroom environments where independence,

thinking skills, collaboration and active learning are developed at the same time as knowledge is acquired. In the modern world, with rapid changes in technology

and increased demand for skills, education is not sufficient in preparing people for jobs. More education or training is required, a reality that is recognized by international and donor agencies. The World Bank's *Education Sector Strategy Update* (ESSU), for example, specifically mentions the growing importance of the knowledge economy and the need for a more skilled labour force in order to meet changing demands and maintain competitiveness (World Bank, 2005a). Moreover, the importance of education has shifted from preparing people for work to preparing people for higher levels of education, training and employment. As a consequence, education needs to be accompanied by investments in Post Basic Education and Training (Palmer, R. et.al 2007).

According to Williams (2005), Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania have, in the past, attempted to integrate skill acquisition into their mainstream secondary curricula in order to link post-primary education with employment. Ghana's well-established traditional apprenticeship system provides a useful comparison between skills training delivered in the work place and training delivered in institutions as potential devices for poverty reduction. In South Africa, the government has been striving to restructure its education and training system to meet skills shortages and to produce job creators. The inequalities of educational provision in different regions of India are very striking. Here the disparities between educational accesses in the different states provide a useful data set for quantitative analysis of correlation links between education and poverty levels. Both India and South Africa demonstrate the complexity of policy demands where there are effectively two countries within a country, given their high poverty incidence yet advanced industrial sectors. In Rwanda the education system has had to cope with the dual challenge of providing education for all and compensating for the major high-level skills shortages resulting from the genocide. Individual developing countries (e.g. Indonesia) are attempting to design their education systems so as to cater for children's diverse needs and even to provide additional support outside academic classes.

4.1 Skill Based Music Education

Skill based music education is a conceptual approach to learning and developing music skills. These skills are singing, playing musical instruments, dancing, listening and creating or composing music. This approach involves a systematic organisation and classification of knowledge. The knowledge is to develop the students innate skills for self expression and self employment. It also develops their production and manipulation of musical instruments for future income benefits.

4.2 Need for Skill Based Music Education

Skill based music education is needed in order to reduce poverty. Looking at the quantity of musical instrument that are purchased and used in the world today, it is clearly evident that skill acquired in music learning will lead to improvements in productivity, diversity of work and income benefits. Religious groups are on the increase and each of these groups utilizes music in their activities. This calls for knowledge that is needed to utilize and maintain these musical instruments. Poverty can be reduced by creating a market around the need of the masses. Nigeria has some of the most advanced recording studio technology in Africa and provides robust commercial opportunities for music performers. Rooney Graham, an historian who specializes in West Africa has attributed the success of the Nigerian music industry to the country's culture – its “thirst for aesthetic and material success and a voracious appetite for life, love and music, and a huge domestic market, big enough to sustain artist who sing in regional language and experiment with indigenous styles”.

Music is a subject that operates in all the domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor). The psychomotor aspect of it has to do with development of skill in music performance and musical instrument construction. It is imperative that skill acquisition should be emphasized in music learning. This acquisition could be done either through apprenticeship training in formal or informal setting. According to Palmer et.al. (2007), skills training can be in institutions, on-the-job or both. This might be divided into:

- pre-vocational and orientation skills acquired through general primary or lower/upper secondary education;
- traditional forms of education: i.e. (including traditional apprenticeships; Public or private training)
- centre/institution-based skill training; Formal/informal enterprise-based training
- general tertiary education and higher-level technical and professional skills training: i.e. general tertiary education, higher-level training at tertiary level , including training of instructors/teachers.

The praxial philosophy holds that the process of developing musicianship is a particular kind of learning process that students can engage in and learn how to employ themselves. These processes require that students learn how to target their attention on more and more subtle aspects of the musical challenges they are attempting to meet. Implicit in all these processes is the broader requirement that all music students be engaged in rich and challenging music-making projects in classroom situations that are deliberately organized as close approximations of real musical practices (Elliott 2011).

Gardner (1990) reinforces these principles from a developmental perspective that:

“....students learns effectively when they are engaged by rich and meaningful projects; when their artistic learning is anchored in artistic production; when there is an easy commerce among the various forms of knowing . . .; and when students have ample opportunity to reflect on their progress.” (p. 49)

Music education is not only concerned with developing musicianship and musical creativity in the present but also to teach students how to continue developing their musicianship in the future. According to Eze et.al, “In 1989 the Australian Education Council (AEC) set out Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia. These are education goals which are aimed at developing in students:

- acquisition of a training experience that culminates in an industrial experience within a work-oriented society.
- transmission of knowledge and acquisition of skills that are related to various occupations.
- enrichment of the capabilities that influence the cognitive, affective or psychomotor domains of individual in readiness for entry into the world of work in order to satisfy their intrinsic and extrinsic values, work goals and aspirations such that local and national needs would be met.
- inclusion of basic technical and scientific knowledge with the skill-based vocational programmes.

This is the higher level of skills and knowledge required to be taught as advanced learning prior to workplace entry to cope with the emergence of technologies in the workplace.

5. CONCLUSION

Skill based training is usually linked with improvements in productivity, quality and diversity of work, occupational safety, health and income benefits. It also affords the students the opportunity to invest on acquiring requisite skills that will enable them to secure employments and which will be beneficial to themselves and the society. Indeed the importance of the socio-economic context in which education and training is delivered and potentially transformed into developmental outcomes is highly needed. The problem of juvenile delinquency and crime can be reduced if the youths are given the necessary skilful training that will keep them busy. The translation of skills development which results from the capacities that are acquired through different types and levels of education and training into skills utilization, and therefore poverty reduction and or growth, is dependent on many factors, including good quality education and training and the presence of a supportive environment. But the utilization of these capacities requires further facilitative infrastructure. A skill-based music education where students are trained to create music, compose music, sing, dance, play skilfully on western and african musical instrument is urgently needed. This would serve as a measure to eliminate restlessness, social unrest,

corruption, bad leadership traits, and reduce poverty. Therefore, to eradicate poverty and enact good leadership quality, it is very pertinent to have focus on skill based education and music has a pivotal role to play here.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should provide teaching and research materials for effective teaching and learning of music education in secondary schools in order to inculcate in the students skills, entrepreneurship values and traits of good leadership. Skill based music training should be imparted through participatory methods, where local production of musical instrument can be combined with outside knowledge. Such training can assist youths to set up their own self-employment activities or go outside for seasonal employment. The portion of music education pertaining to the variety of skills needed to build and maintain the infrastructure of a developing society are clearly needed in large numbers of individuals, if the society is to move out of poverty or subsistence. This can be achieved through dissemination and re-organization of knowledge, including the creation of a facilitative music business environment, an innovation infrastructure, and the development of human capital through music education and training.

There is need for a supportive environment and the availability of work and employment. Investments in infrastructure are also needed for the results of skill-based music education and training to be fully realized.

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