

**ENHANCING TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE CAPACITY BUILDING IN NIGERIA**

Mrs. JANE ITOHAN OVIawe
Department of Vocational and Technical Education
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma,
Edo State
E-mail: janeoviawe@yahoo.com
08055601983

Mrs. PATIENCE ALUYOR
Department of Vocational and Technical Education
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma,
Edo State

ABSTRACT

The paper examined ways of enhancing Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) programmes for sustainable capacity building in Nigeria. It considered building capacity as economic capacity building because it increases the capability of any developed or developing society to improve trade, employment, economic development and quality of life. Capacity is seen as the proven ability of key actors in a society to achieve socio-economic goals on their own. For sustaining capacity building in Nigeria, sufficient financial resource must be released to meet the capital and recurrent monitoring system TVE programmes. Emerging issues in TVE in Nigeria highlighted in this paper include: parental influence due to misconception, inadequacy of training equipment and facilities, and lack of relevant curriculum. Finally, this paper recommends among others that: Government at all levels should mount elaborate enlightenment campaigns on the essence of TVE for self-

reliance, prestige and capacity building as way forward in enhancing TVE for effective capacity building.

Introduction

Education is a veritable tool for both national and economic development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (FRN) 2004). The awareness of and the demand for education have made the society to continue to plan for accelerated educational development as well as the expansion of educational opportunities. Education in Nigeria is currently being faced with reforms to make it functional. In recognition of this fact, the federal government has made substantial investment on education at all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary. The country's educational goals have been set out in terms of their relevance to the needs of the individual and those of the society, to align with the realities of our environment and the modern world. The national goals of Nigeria, which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the national policy on education amongst others, are the building of (a) a united, strong self-reliant nation; (b) a great and dynamic nation, and (c) a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. The need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria is believed to be the nation's philosophy of education. In view of this, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcating in part, the acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of 1999 is comprehensive in content and well equipped to inculcate in the young all the necessary attributes that will ensure their "acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life long learning" (FRN, 2004). The above objectives aptly align with the general goal of tertiary education which amongst others include (a) developing and inculcating proper values for the survival of the individual and society; (b) developing the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; and (c) acquiring both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (FRN, 2004). According to FRN (2004), Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) is considered as a veritable tool for preparing students for the world of work as employees, employers, entrepreneurs and to be self-employed. TVE is an aspect of educational programme offered at the higher institution of learning which prepare students for careers in all occupational related fields.

Conceptual Framework

Ulifun, (1986) defined TVE as "education for and about business". He/she further asserted that TVE is that aspect of education which provides instruction and preparation for occupations. This aspect of education provides knowledge, skills and understanding of the economic, financial, marketing, accounting, management system and other branches of career endeavour. In other words TVE prepares students to function intelligently as actors, entrepreneurs, consumers and citizens in any economy. It is expected that at the successful completion of training in TVE programmes, TVE graduates should be able to (i) Function as economically literate citizens through the development of personal consumer economic skills, a knowledge of social and government responsibility, and an understanding of business operations; (ii) Demonstrate interpersonal, teamwork, and leadership skills necessary to function in multicultural business settings; (iii) Develop career awareness and related skills to enable them to make viable career choices and become employable in a variety of careers; (iv) Select and apply the tools of technology as they relate to personal and business decision making; (v) Communicate effectively as writers, listeners, and speakers in social and business settings; and (v) Use entrepreneurial and technical skills and procedures to make decisions about planning, organizing, and allocating resources.

Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizenship. The national education goals, which derive from the philosophy, include the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his/her society (FRN, 2004) is capacity building, the ability to perform appropriate tasks effectively, efficiently, and sustainably.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1991) defined capacity building as the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation, human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems, adding that, UNDP recognizes that capacity building is a long-term, continuing process, in which all stakeholders participate (ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and groups, professional associations, academics and others). According to Philbin (1996), capacity building is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need

to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world. For organizations, capacity building may relate to almost any aspect of its work: improved governance, leadership, mission and strategy, administration (including human resources, financial management, and legal matters), program development and implementation, fundraising and income generation, diversity, partnerships and collaboration, evaluation, advocacy and policy change, marketing, positioning, planning, etc (Hilderbrand and Grindle, 1994). For individuals, capacity building may relate to leadership development, advocacy skills, training/speaking abilities, technical skills, organizing skills, and other areas of personal and professional development (Linnell, 2003). Capacity building is the elements that give fluidity, flexibility and functionality of a program/organization to adapt to changing needs of the population that is served.

Capacity building is the business of equipping all actors to perform effectively both in doing their own thing in their own field and level of operation, and in working in collaboration or partnership with others operating in other fields and at other levels. It is an essential component of both empowerment and enabling.

Capacity Building

For capacity building to be effective, it must embrace the following three aspects: human resource development; organizational development; and institutional development.

- *Human Resource Development (HRD)* is the process of equipping people with the understanding and skills, and the access to information and knowledge to perform effectively. It includes motivating people to operate constructively and efficiently through the development of positive attitudes and progressive approaches to responsibility and productivity. Good human resource management provides incentives and rewards; opportunities for continuous training and re-training; clearly recognizable career opportunities; and competitive pay scales. To achieve these aspects of HRD, the organizational environment must be dynamic and responsive.
- *Organizational development* is the process by which things get done collectively within an organization, be it a central government, ministry, a local authority department, a private sector enterprise, a non-governmental organization (NGO) or community group. It is to do with management practices and procedures; rules and regulations; hierarchies and job

descriptions: how things get done. It is also to do with working relationships; shared goals and values; team-work, dependencies and supports: why things get done. The increasing demand for more flexible and responsive management styles for the development and management of cities and settlements, calls for new and very different organizational structures and relationships particularly within local government. It also calls for new relationships between different organizations that have a role in urban development and management. However, bringing about such organizational changes often depends upon institutional changes that are beyond the capacity of any single organization or network of organizations.

- *Institutional development* encompasses the legal and regulatory changes that have to be made in order to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities. It embraces such issues as regulations controlling the financial management, borrowing and trading capacity of government agencies and municipal authorities; the ability of local government to negotiate contracts and form partnerships with private enterprises and community organizations; centrally regulated conditions of employment, salaries and career structures; land use and building bylaws, and other development controls; and democratic legislation that allows, enables and encourages communities to take responsibility for the management of their own neighbourhoods and services. Such institutional issues generally need the political and legislative authority of national government to bring about effective change.

Capacity building is concerned with a set of cross-cutting, functional capacities, which are sector neutral and common to all organizations, institutions and systems. The capacity to build a strategy, translate it into a plan and prepare a budget; the capacity to implement a programme or a policy and the capacity to monitor its implementation and evaluate results are all fundamental capacities that organizations, institutions and societies need in order to be effective and function well. These cross-cutting, functional capacities are not just merely management capacities; they hinge on, and are closely connected with, effective and good leadership capacity; the existence of effective and well functioning institutions and institutional arrangements, including a structured system of incentives; an environment conducive to knowledge sharing, knowledge acquisition and skill acquisition for self-reliance; as well as transparent and independent accountability systems.

Technical and Vocational Education for Sustainable Capacity Building

The need to design sustainability into TVE programme as a means to capacity building cannot be overstressed. According to Ajakaiye and Olomola (1999) in Adediran (2002), project sustainability has several dimensions such as financial, institutional, political and environmental. Finance is an essential input in successful implementation and operational sustainability of TVE. This implies that for sustainable TVE to solve the problems, sufficient financial resource must be released to meet the capital and recurrent monitoring system, and where both the private and public sector have to benefit from the sustained TVE programme, financial profitability must be considered.

Issues in Technical and Vocational Education Programme for Sustainable Capacity Building

1. *Parental influences due to misconception:* Some parents do not want their children to study TVE courses because they believe that it is meant for the never-do-wells, drop outs, and instead they opt for courses like Law, Medicine, Accountancy, etc. (Olaitan, 1985).
2. *Inadequacy of training equipment/facilities:* In leaning, there is the combination of people, materials, facilities, equipment and procedures that interact to achieve a goal or objective (Imogie, 1999). These are grossly inadequate for effective teaching and learning (Shehu, 2003). A substantial number of TVE equipment and facilities in our institutions are obsolete and non-functional. In TVE, emphasis should be on instructional materials such to enable learners acquire the needed skills for the current labour market requirements.
3. *Lack of maintenance of workshop equipment and instructional facilities:* Another current issue in TVE in Nigeria is that of maintenance of workshop equipment and instructional facilities. Since students ought to be exposed to those machines, the rate of breakdown is bound to be high. Unfortunately, there are no spare parts (since most of the machines are outdated by the new technologies) and repair/service specialists. The consumables are very expensive to many institutions. Perhaps, this explains why some institution acquires these machines for accreditation purposes only. They lock them up immediately the accreditation/approval team departs, so that the students are neither exposed to them nor allowed to see them (Nwosu, 2003). Lack of maintenance, proper usage and storage also afflict the available ones.

4. **Curriculum contents:** the need for relevant curricula for the training of professionals in various occupations to meet current labour market requirements necessitates that we continuously seek new and better ways of measuring the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. This means that business teacher education curriculum must be based on current reported needs and requirements in business and industry as well as needs of students (Toby, 1995). There should be a reasonable degree of correlation between the curriculum in use and the knowledge and skills required by employers. There is therefore the need for a review of the business education curriculum and the knowledge and skills required by employers. The need for curriculum planners, evaluators, scholars, students, industry and TVE educators to set appropriate machinery in motion in order to save the business education programme from total collapse and obsolescence cannot be over-emphasized (Osho, 1994).
5. **Industry–Institution Collaboration:** it is evidently clear that given the rate of technological changes, there is need to upgrade the skills of existing stock of labour force. Manpower development should be viewed as a continuous process through the work life and not just a one short effect that prepares the individual for entering the labour market with his occupational certificates without regard to his suitability to the needs of the industry. In view of cementing certificates without regard to his suitability to the needs of the Industry. Ijeoma (1995) opined that TVE educators should track graduate to monitor their progress on the job and in their chosen occupations. Industry and other employers (users of labour) should engage in meaningful appraisal with a view to identifying problems where they exist so that appropriate training solution can be applied to prompt remedy situations calling for training solution.
6. **Challenges of information and communication technology (ICT):** No doubt one can easily conclude that (ICT) has revolutionized all aspects of human and organizational life. Some identified challenges are: (a) ICT is having serious effect on TVE syllabus. All aspects of TVE syllabus should be reviewed without delay; (b) Power supply (electricity) is nothing to write home about in Nigeria; (c) Telecommunication is expensive and it is within the reach of a few people the GSM is still having some problems; (d) Illiteracy- the percentage of illiterate people in the country is high. How can they enjoy ICT when they do not understand what is going on (Okoji, 2003).

Fostering Technical and Vocational Education for a Sustainable Capacity Building in Nigeria

1. ***Parental influences due to misconception.*** The populace, especially the parents and youths should be enlightened on the need to embrace programmes of TVE at all levels. Government at all levels should mount elaborate campaigns on the essence of TVE for self-reliance, prestige and capacity building. The enlightenment campaign should at least equal the scale adopted for the UBE.
2. ***Inadequacy of training equipment/facilities.*** Necessary infrastructures and training facilities for the teaching of TVE programmes should be provided, repaired or upgraded as the case may be. These, according to the implementation Guidelines for the UBE (2005) refer to the physical and spatial enablers of teaching and learning. The include : classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops, tools and equipment, textbooks, etc.
3. ***Curriculum contents:*** there is no substitute to the pursuit of excellence in TVE. The quality of TVE programmes in Nigeria should be reviewed periodically and improved as at when due to ensure that: (i) the programme training environment adequately replicates the real work environment rather than resemble it; (ii) the training meets the demand of the labour market. There is the urgent need to re-design TVE curriculum to incorporate the modern skills required for effective performance in the workplace in an ICT age. The curriculum should be revisited to include both employable and entrepreneurship competencies and skills
4. ***Industry-Institution Collaboration:*** government cannot fund TVE alone in this country. The consumers must be involved in this regard. Companies who are the consumers of TVE products should help to build vocational centres
5. ***Challenges of information and communication technology (ICT):*** For Nigeria to address the socio-economic changes currently taking place in the world, TVE must be ready to amend and revise some of its policies and strategies where necessary so as to effectively become a driving force for the implementation of the adjusted socio-economic development strategies. Nigeria policies on TVE must revolve TVE that is flexible and adaptable to capture the rapid changing demands on Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Conclusion

No nation can be self-reliant or survive economically without a strong economy. There can be no strong economy without economic understanding of the citizenry. TVE is perceived to be ideally positioned to continue its technology role, and making meaningful contribution to the task of preparing men and women young, middle aged and aged citizens - for the acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance through the building of appropriate societal, organizational and institutional frameworks. There is a strong belief that TVE can contribute immensely to the current national efforts towards boosting capacity building for self-reliance and poverty alleviation of the citizenry.

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