

Incorporating Education for Sustainable Development into Strategic Planning of Higher Education Institutions in Lagos State of Nigeria

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Abstract

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is the educational process of achieving human development in an inclusive, equitable and secure manner which includes education for poverty alleviation, human rights, gender equality, cultural diversity, international understanding among other factors according to UNESCO (2004). The focus of Education for Sustainable Development is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behaviors and lifestyle required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) need to maintain interactive relationship with their economic and social environments, in order to link skills development with the search for solutions to the problems, both within communities and in the country in general strategically. The World Bank (1997) recommended that African universities should develop an institutional strategic plan with key elements of definition of mission statements with an elaborate institutional strategy coupled with an initial three-year rolling plan for the implementation of the strategy. So the study investigated the extent to which ESD is incorporated into the strategic plans of Lagos State higher education institutions. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) of tertiary education institutions in Lagos State was examined in view of the goals of DESD using the checklist Strategic Planning Checklist (SPC). The statistical tool of chi-square was used to analyze the extent of Sustainable Development indices reflected in the ESP. It was found that ESD indices were not significantly subsumed and addressed in the Lagos State Strategic Plan for tertiary education.

Keywords: sustainable development, education for sustainable development, strategic planning, tertiary/ higher education and human capital.

INTRODUCTION

Development deals with the way in which resources, ideas and organizations are combined to bring about improvement in the life of the people. Resources can be increased, renewed and protected, ideas must re-oriented with modern realities and reinforced by recent knowledge, while organizations will see to the actualization of patterns of interactions tilted towards optimal resource management- which include labor, capital, land, information, organizations and technologies. It is through an educated populace that the development can occur as all other resources are optimally harnessed to the benefit of mankind. According to Samuel (1987), the unique position of human capital as a resource in national development is anchored on the fundamental principle that human beings are the prime movers of any development; so investment in education is premised on the basic assumption that investment in human capital will assist a nation to improve both its gross national

product and per capita income of its citizenry. The whole concept of empowerment is anchored on the ability of the individual to have control of his situation in surviving in the society through either earning a living as an employee or employer of labour. According to Fredriksen (2002), education is the ultimate liberator, empowering individuals to make personal and social choices in view of their management of their immediate environment and subsequent sustainable survival. The producers of human capital are the educational agencies especially higher education. So for sustainable development to occur HEIs must plan in their production of human capital in view of the challenges of their various environment to overcome these challenges.

Context

The focus of Education for Sustainable Development is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behaviors and lifestyle required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. Since the ESD enables people to anticipate and meet the challenges that threaten their very

existence as citizens of nations and planet earth. Ensuring sustainable development requires attention not just for economic growth but also to environment and social issues. Unless the transformation of society and management of the environment are addressed integrally along with economic growth, growth itself will be jeopardized over longer term. The core challenge for development is to ensure productive work and better quality of life for all these people. This will require sustainable growth in productivity and incomes in developing countries.

According to a communiqué of Ministerial Round Table on Education and Economic Development (2007) organized by UNESCO, the aim of sustaining development through education is because, education transmits the knowledge, values and the skills needed to make development sustainable, in all parts of the world, especially among youth who take charge of the future; education takes due account of the three pillars of sustainable development which are environmental protection, economic development and social development. It thus includes education for poverty alleviation, human rights, gender equality, cultural diversity, international understanding, peace and many more. UNESCO proposed that the vision of education for sustainable development is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. Community actors are the people that will give life to projects so they need to be sensitized and educated as resources are best managed when people affected by decisions participate in the design and implementation of these decisions. HEIs should seek central government support towards responsive sustainable management of resources so they can become organizers on many fronts for various communities. HEIs should act as link between the communal needs and governmental policies. HEIs should organize and equip the people with necessary skills and these should be included in their strategic planning and plans. Drucker in Zabriskie and Alan (1991) defined Strategic planning as the continuous process of making present risk-taking decisions systematically and with the greatest knowledge of their futurity; organizing systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions and measuring the results of these decisions against the expectations through organized, systematic feedback. So strategic planning has to do with the systematic studying of the needs, resources and the competitive edge of any organization with the view of analyzing alternative courses of action to be taken for its long term survival. It looks into the future of the organization and provides the basis for making current decisions.

The World Bank (1997) recommended that African universities should develop an institutional strategic plan with key elements of definition of mission statements with an elaborate institutional strategy coupled with an initial three-year rolling plan for the implementation of the strategy. Strategic planning starts from developing a clear mission statement linked to measurable and quantifiable objectives, doing a SWOT analysis of the organization, formulating strategic options and translating the strategic plans into every day actions. LIMRA said that is a process that results in an organization having a clear 'north star' that is a well defined picture of where the company is going and how it intends to get there. The Bureau of Strategic Planning of UNESCO sees it as a tool to help do better job, focus talents and energies, assess and adjust directions, in light of performance in a changing environment. They believe that being strategic is to be clear about objectives, resources and expected results and combining these in response to the wider political context in short and long terms. According to Madumere (2005), strategic planning is the formulation of broad and general goals and plans by top managers to guide the general direction of the organization over an extended period of time. Strategic planning starts from developing a clear mission statement linked to measurable and quantifiable objectives, doing a SWOT analysis of the organization, formulating strategic options and translating the strategic plans into every day actions. LIMRA said that is a process that results in an organization having a clear 'north star' that is a well defined picture of where the company is going and how it intends to get there. The Bureau of Strategic Planning of UNESCO sees it as a tool to help do better job, focus talents and energies, assess and adjust directions, in light of performance in a changing environment. They believe that being strategic is to be clear about objectives, resources and expected results and combining these in response to the wider political context in short and medium term. Association of African Universities (AAU) and the World Bank (1997) noted that strategic planning provides university leaders and all other stakeholders with structures and practices that enhance their ability to analyze conditions, to express a vision, to formulate goals, and to persuade a university community to promote the advancement of its institution in a clearly enunciated and programmed manner.

According to UNESCO (2005) ESD stands for education that enables people to predict, to confront and solve the problems that threaten our survival on this planet. This education is hinged on the values and principles that promote equity, gender parity, social tolerance, poverty reduction, environmental protection and restoration, natural resource conservation and just and peaceful societies. Historically, in resolution 57/254, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2005-2014, the UN

Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), UNESCO (2005). The very essence of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) makes it imperative for any developing nation to put in place the where- withal not only to adopt and implement the resolution of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in order to meet the challenge of its products ability to fit into the third Industrial Revolution of the globalised 21st century world but also to make sure that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are achieved before the 2015 which automatically translates to accelerated economic growth and development. Since the ESD enables people to anticipate and meet the challenges that threaten their very existence as citizens of nations and planet earth, Nigeria being a developing nation has realized that education is the most important key to be used in opening the door to economic growth and development and this she enunciated in her development programme- the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

According to the National Planning Commission (2004), NEEDS recognizes education as the vital transformation tool and a formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment. In as much as the educational sector is crucial to achieving the objectives of NEEDS, it also happens to be the sector it seeks to reform. And one of the strategies of this reform is to update the instructional curricula of education to meet the demands of the national economy. This is in tandem with the DESD stakeholder strategy of re-orienting the curricula from pre-school to post-university so that through life-long education knowledge, skills and values will be acquired by the citizenry to improve their quality of life as they contribute to the development of their society.

According to UNESCO (2004) sustainable development refers to the development that meets the need of the present without compromising the future generations to meet their own needs.

The Problem

Lagos State, the commercial capital of Nigeria, with a land mass of 3,577sq.km is the smallest state in land mass but has a population growing ten times faster than New York. This state of aquatic splendor enmeshed with eight lagoons owns four higher education institutions out of seven located inside Lagos.

This study investigated the extent to which ESD indices are incorporated into the strategic plans of Lagos State higher education institutions.

Are the identified challenges of sustainable development addressed by the Tertiary Education objectives of Lagos State higher education institution?

So the following questions are answered by this study;

1. Are the indices of ESD inculcated in the strategic plans

of higher education institutions in Lagos State of Nigeria?
2. If no, are there ways and means through which ESD indices could be inculcated in their strategic plans?

METHODOLOGY

A special purpose checklist, named "Strategic Plan Checklist" (SPC), was constructed to examine the Lagos State Government's Education Strategic Plan (ESP), 2006-2015, with a view to ascertaining the extent to which ESD indices have been factored into this plan. The study population is the four state owned higher education institutions. Data was analyzed using chi-square statistical tool.

Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2006-2016 For Lagos State Tertiary Education (TE)

TE 1: Broaden access for Lagos State indigenes and ensure sustainable cost sharing

arrangement between government and parents.

TE 2: Ensure that formal training provided by tertiary institutions is relevant to the

Needs of the industry and society at large.

TE 3: Ensure that tertiary institutions have increased resources through internally

Generated revenue and collaboration with the private sector.

TE 4: Improve and expand existing infrastructure and facilities.

TE 5: Generate awareness of the prevalence of destructive effects of HIV/AIDS in

Tertiary institutions.

TE 6: Reduce the incident of violence and loss of lives related to cultism and drug

abuse in tertiary institutions.

TE 7: Develop the capacity of personnel in tertiary institutions through training and retraining.

Challenges of Sustainable Development in Lagos State

- Overpopulation
- Environmental Pollution
- Waterways blockage as a result of water hyacinth
- Noise pollution
- Insecurity with street brigand called 'area boys' phenomenon
- Flooding especially in rainy season.
- Unplanned urban development
- Traffic congestion resulting to street hawking and muggings

Research Question

Is the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) indices significantly addressed in the Lagos State Strategic Plan (ESP) objectives for 2006-2016?

Table 1: Observed and Expected frequency on the number of ESD indices addressed by each of the ESP objective

ESPs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Row Total
TE1	0 (0.33)	0 (0.33)	1 (0.5)	0 (0.33)	0 (0.33)	0 (0.83)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.83)	4
TE2	0 (0.25)	0 (0.25)	0 (0.38)	1 (0.25)	0 (0.25)	1 (0.63)	0 (0.38)	1 (0.63)	3
TE3	1 (0.25)	0 (0.25)	0 (0.38)	0 (0.25)	0 (0.25)	1 (0.63)	0 (0.38)	0 (0.63)	3
TE4	0 (0.17)	0 (0.17)	0 (0.25)	0 (0.17)	0 (0.17)	1 (0.42)	0 (0.25)	1 (0.42)	2
TE5	0 (0.33)	0 (0.33)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.33)	1 (0.33)	1 (0.83)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.83)	4
TE6	0 (0.33)	0 (0.33)	1 (0.5)	0 (0.33)	1 (0.33)	0 (0.83)	1 (0.5)	0 (0.83)	4
TE7	0 (0.33)	0 (0.33)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.33)	0 (0.33)	1 (0.83)	0 (0.5)	1 (0.83)	4
Column Total	2	2	3	2	2	5	3	5	24

Key- Education for Sustainable Development Indices

1. Intergenerational Equity
2. Gender Parity
3. Social Tolerance
4. Poverty Reduction
5. Environmental Protection/ Restoration
6. National Resource Conservation
7. Just and Peaceful Society
8. Education for interdependence of environment, society and economy

Table 2: Result of chi-square analysis of the extent to which ESD indices are addressed in the Lagos State ESP (2006-2016)

Variables	(1) Lagos State Education Strategic Plan					
(2) ESD Indices	chi-square calculated	(C-I)	(R-1)	Probability	chi-square critical	Decision
	30.68	42		0.05	55.76	Not Significant

Table 2 above shows that the calculated chi-square value of 30.68 is less than the critical chi-square value of 55.76, given 42 as the degree of freedom and 0.05 as the level of significance. This result upholds that the ESD indices are not significantly subsumed and addressed in the Lagos State Education Strategic Plan(2006-2016)

FINDINGS

To an extent, the tertiary education strategic plans contain a few indices of ESD. The challenges of sustainability in Lagos State environment were not inculcated in the tertiary education strategic plans

DISCUSSION

Beare and Slaughter (1993) advocated that every act of planning, of deriving aims and objectives, of teaching and learning takes place not simply as the result of the push from the past but also because of the pull of the future. Whenever it lacks a future dimension education takes a repressive character and loses touch with reality of the moment and future as statement of aims and objectives usually refer to purposes, goals and intentions, which necessarily refer to a forward in time. Alan (1991) noted that many higher education institutions have weak or nonexistent objectives or mission statements on which to make coherent judgments. He recommended that they should have clearly defined goals or mission statements

since a lack of agreement about objectives and inability to implement them is the cause of innovation failure. The World Bank (1997) noted that higher education institutions must provide strategies that will take care of global developments in technology if they are to survive in a technology driven society of the 21st century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is urgent need to review the ESP of the Lagos State in view of inculcating the indices of ESD. The staff of the higher education institutions especially the teaching staff will require sensitization on ESD and DESD. Awareness of ESD programs need to be created through the mass media for the populace and through training and retraining programs for higher education planners and administrators. There should be a creation of an interactional field between the HEIs and their immediate community based on the analysis of the capabilities and resources available to the community should be adopted as a strategy for inculcating the ESD indices to be forwarded by the institutions to governmental authorities, eg the institutions near where there is perennial traffic congestion should look into a technology that could be adapted to resolve the problem. Those located in high noise areas could mount awareness campaigns to sensitize the local population on ways to reduce noise. These capabilities will include technologies that are relevant to resource management and the compatibility of the technology with people's and aspiration. The HEIs should play the role of adapting technology to meet the local needs in resource management through technology transfer and modification.

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