

# Repositioning College of Education for Sustainable Youth Empowerment and National Development in Niger Delta

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This paper focused on repositioning college of education for sustainable youth empowerment and national development. This is opinion and literature-based research work. The aim of this paper is to examine some ways through which college of education can be carried out to bring about sustainable youth empowerment and national development and quality delivery can be achieved in Niger Delta colleges of education. The paper addressed the use of entrepreneurship education, e-learning, and training in the proper use of ICT, amongst others as a method of shifting the focus of college of education towards sustainable youth empowerment and national development. The challenges facing the repositioning of college of education to achieve sustainable youth development and national development were discussed among others lack of entrepreneurship teaching. It was concluded that is necessary for Niger Delta colleges of education to readdress their objectives towards achieving sustainable youth empowerment and national development.

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### **Background to the Study**

The future and development of every nation depends on the leaders of tomorrow as the saying, youth are the future leaders of tomorrow. There is no community, state, or any nation that is complete without the contributions of the youth. Therefore, youths are required to acquire skills that will enable them to meet up the progress of tomorrow events that will improve the environment or society which they find themselves. Every growing youth heart desire is to become better in his/her life, but the negative economic situations always upset the vision of the expecting youth due to the circumstances behind the environment they are in. The economic system of our nation is in a state of disaster, and one cannot fully depend on the white-collar job from the certificate they obtained from colleges of education. The number of jobs in the Niger Delta job market is not equivalent to the number of youths that graduated from colleges of education in every graduation year. The problems would cause lot or different increase in crime rates among the youths due to unemployment that would further lead to different types of deceitful activities to sustain their life, despite the state of the economy they find themselves.

Youths needs to obtain skills that would enable them fit in to the society. The skills will no doubt boost the nation's economy and would certainly bring development to the nation. The world gradually is becoming a global village with invent of technology in every sector of life. These involves the use of information communication technology in teaching and learning process with the use of e-learning services. Use of e-learning methods in colleges of education in Niger Delta would contribute to national development as students would be able to keep up with new era contemporary day training and would also be able to contest with peers in the world. The aim of this paper is to examine some ways through which colleges of education can be carried out to bring about sustainable youth empowerment and national development and how quality delivery can be achieved in Niger Delta. Lot of research works have been done through workshops, conference, seminars, and others, but they may have not carefully detailed the important apparatuses to achieve sustainable youth empowerment and national development through the Niger Delta. The objective is to examine the role of colleges of education in sustainable youth empowerment and national development in Niger Delta. Thus, relevance of this paper will foster sustainable youth empowerment and employment, ways to reposition college of education, address social-economic challenges, contribute to national development and growth among others in Niger Delta.

### **Education**

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through teaching, training, or research. It is often formalized through schooling or other instructional patterns but can also happen informally through experiences and self-directed learning. Education enables individuals to understand the world, develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, and prepare for their future roles in society. It encompasses various subjects, including but not limited to, social sciences (accounting, economics, marketing, entrepreneurship, Research methods etc), languages, mathematics, sciences, humanities, and physical education. Education according to Ofor-

Douglas (2022), refers to the knowledge specified to a learner to enable him/her to progress socially and mentally. It is an essential tool that forms the foundation of humanities. Adedigba (2017) opined that foundation starting from nursery school, primary levels, secondary levels, or tertiary institutions of every economy is grounded on the education level. This implies that quality education should be made a top priority in any society that wishes thorough growth.

One of the national educational goals According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2022) as stipulated in the National Policy on Education provides the accomplishment of appropriate practical skills and the enhancement of knowledgeable, humanly, and communal skills and abilities as device on behalf of the individuals to contribute, subsidize and live to improve the society. According to Nwaokokorom and Ikpeama (2023), education is a sequence that promotes and assists persons in improving their whole lives, including their material, spiritual, passionate, administrative, general, and technical aspects, so that they are able to do their work to the best of their abilities in whatever circumstance in which they may find themselves. According to Otamiri (2014), education is the process of growth of a person's capabilities on all levels, including the mental, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. This implies that positive mental and emotional development through education advances the stages of life of individual's progression.

### **College of Education**

A College of Education is a type of higher education institution that focuses on preparing students to become teachers, administrators, supervisors, counselors, and other professionals in educational settings. The aim of establishing Colleges of education according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) is to substitute national development as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. Some key aspects of Colleges of Education include:

1. **Teacher Training:** Colleges of Education offer programs that train students to become teachers at various levels, from primary to secondary education.
2. **NCE Awarding Institution:** Many Colleges of Education are accredited to award the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). The aim of NCE is substitute national development as enshrined in the National Policy on Education
3. **Academic Excellence:** Colleges of Education strive for academic excellence and integrity in teaching, research, and service.
4. **Research and Scholarship:** These institutions encourage scholarly research and professional leadership in education.
5. **Service and Outreach:** Colleges of Education often engage in community service and outreach programs to promote education and development.
6. **Tertiary Education:** Colleges of Education provide tertiary-level education, often in specialized fields like business education, technical education, primary education, computer education, and economics.

Some of the colleges of education in Niger Delta includes Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku and Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education Bayelsa. The purpose of colleges of education is to serve as centres for the advancement of science and technology, training of entrepreneurs, and creation of highly qualified graduates. This is to say that college of education has a countless advantage to persons who participate in the learning because they will raise in respective ways that they can apply to their forthcoming and profit the lives of people around them and others.

### **Sustainable Youth Empowerment**

Sustainable youth empowerment refers to the process of enabling young people to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to become active and engaged citizens, who can contribute to the development of their communities and the world at large, while also ensuring a sustainable future for themselves and future generations.

Ofor-Douglas (2022) defined Sustainable youth empowerment as the development of youths which would progress to employment. The lives of present and future leaders would improve through empowerment of youths, thereby yielding to the economic growth of the nation in the employment and self-adequacy.

Education and skills development, leadership and mentorship opportunities, community engagement and participation, environmental awareness and action, social justice and human rights education, economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being support, intergenerational collaboration and knowledge transfer, cultural preservation and exchange with technology and digital literacy are the key elements of sustainable youth empowerment. Sustainable youth empowerment is relevance to Niger Deltans because it prepares young people for the challenges of the future, fosters innovation and creativity, promotes social cohesion and community building, supports environmental conservation and sustainability, encourages active citizenship and participation, reduces inequality and promotes social justice, empowers young people to become change-makers and leaders, builds resilience and adaptability, enhances global understanding and ensures a brighter future for all. One of the progressive changes in today's current workroom is the request of employers for e-technology graduates to obtain the specialized skills, leadership qualities, and advanced conceptual information. Youth empowerment will contribution in this part for it advances youth on several services and manners that can be employed in many areas of life.

### **National Development**

National development refers to the process of improving the economic, social, and political well-being of a nation. It involves the creation of wealth, the reduction of poverty and inequality, and the improvement of access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. National development also encompasses the promotion of democracy, human rights, and good governance, as well as the protection of the environment and natural resources. National development comprises economic growth and stability, poverty reduction and inequality, human development (health, education, and social

welfare), infrastructure development (transportation, energy, and communication), political stability and good governance, environmental protection and natural resource management, social justice and human rights, cultural development and preservation, international cooperation, and global citizenship. National development is significant because it improves the quality of life for citizens, enhances economic prosperity and stability, promotes social justice and human rights, supports environmental sustainability, encourages political stability and good governance, fosters international cooperation and global citizenship, helps to reduce poverty and inequality, supports human development and well-being, encourages cultural development and preservation.

Any national development reform without inclusive of teaching and learning skills for job improvement will not succeed to development the society (Utomi, 2021). This entails that teaching and learning skills must be involved in national development for sustainable development because it is the opening point of individual development. Amadioha (2016) asserts that education should result in a country that is both free and contemporary. Education in the modernisation of any nation should focus on result of economic growth. This denotes that for economic growth and productivity in any nation, a training workforce with significant knowledge of research must established for sustainable development. Inclusion of relevance national development activities for sustainable development amounts to supporting cultural development and preservation, addressing poverty, building infrastructure, creates clear and comprehensive development plan.

### **Ways to Reposition College of Education in Niger Delta for Sustainable Youth Empowerment and National Development**

Basically, there are different strategies ways of repositioning college of education for sustainable youth empowerment and national development in Niger Delta;

#### **Entrepreneurship Education**

The word 'entrepreneurship' according to Ofishe (2016) initiated from the French word 'entrepredre' meaning to assume 'Venture and encroach'. Richard Cartillion was the first to describe it as ownership of business ventures in the 17th century. Entrepreneurship involves the readiness and capability of a person to search for investment chances, to start and to run a business positively (Arogundade, 2011). In other way, entrepreneurship is the individual eminence that qualifies human to begin a new business or with innovative ideas of expanding an existing one, thus upholding and vitalising the progress of an economy.

Entrepreneurship education is a process of learning and training that focuses on developing the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to start and run a successful business or venture. It encompasses a range of topics, including business planning and strategy, financial management and accounting, marketing and sales, leadership and team management, innovation and creativity, risk management and resilience, networking and partnerships, adaptability, and continuous learning. The aims of entrepreneurship education are to equip individuals with the ability to identify and

pursue opportunities, develop innovative solutions, take calculated risks, build, and lead teams, adapt to changing environments and create value and growth. The goals of entrepreneurship education in the nations are fostering entrepreneurial mindset and culture, developing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, encouraging innovation and creativity, preparing students for startup success, and supporting economic growth and development.

Entrepreneurship education is essential in today's fast-paced and rapidly changing business landscape, as it helps individuals develop the skills and mindset necessary to succeed in an uncertain and competitive environment.

### **E-learning**

E-learning is an internet-based standardised teaching method by the use of electronic resources such as computers, tablets and smartphones. It can also be termed as a transfer of knowledge and ideas by a well-structured network. Bennett (2020) sees e-learning as a formalised teaching-based learning system that makes use of electronic resources. According to Ofor-Douglas (2020), e-learning can be compared to the internet, and ICT helps to improve the teaching and learning process in a classroom setting. With the help of the internet, the globe has progressively transformed into a global village, and technology use is now ingrained in practically every aspect of daily life. Because tasks are completed more quickly and easily, this has significantly enhanced how people live. It is thus essential to actively incorporate e-learning into the Nigerian tertiary (colleges of education, Polytechnic and University) curriculum and ensure it is applied to all fields of study including entrepreneurship education. E-learning is also a learning platform that allows students to learn online through among others;

- 1 Learning Management System (LMS): E-learning platforms use a Learning Management System (LMS) to manage and organize online courses and learning materials.
- 2 Virtual Learning Environment (VLE): E-learning platforms provide a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for students to access and engage with online courses and learning materials.
- 3 Content Management System (CMS): E-learning platforms use a Content Management System (CMS) to manage and organize online courses and learning materials.
- 4 Online Courses: E-learning platforms offer online courses that are accessible 24/7.
- 5 Self-Paced Learning\*: E-learning platforms allow students to learn at their own pace and convenience.
- 6 Automated Feedback\*: E-learning platforms provide automated feedback and assessment tools to help students track their progress.
- 7 Collaboration Tools\*: E-learning platforms offer collaboration tools such as discussion forums, live chats, and video conferencing to facilitate communication and collaboration among students and instructors.

Overall, e-learning platforms provide a flexible and convenient way for students to learn online, and they are becoming increasingly popular in education and training. Thus, Colleges of education and other academic institutions must involve in innovative and creative academic research work, at same time employ innovative teaching-learning approaches, to develop a standard shift model that will address the many different spheres required to resolve the complex, intersectional crises affecting Nigeria and the world to which the pandemic has further drawn attention (Zhang *et al.*, 2020).

### **Challenges Facing Youth Empowerment in Niger Delta**

In Niger Delta, the following are some of the challenges facing college of education for sustainable youth empowerment and national development in Niger Delta:

**Lack of Entrepreneurship Teaching:** Entrepreneurship education is a practical oriented course that requires skill programme in colleges of education. Practical teachings in entrepreneurship education enables youth to put in practice and perfect in their skills. Regretfully, colleges of education seem to concentrate on theoretical than practical skills.

**Lack of Supervision:** Inadequate supervision has been a challenge in colleges of education in Niger Delta which needs to be addressed to attend to sustainable youth empowerment and development. Mismanagement, embezzlement, and extortion deeply affect the colleges of education development because of lack of supervision.

**Corruption:** Corruption in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a complex and deeply ingrained issue, manifesting in various forms, including bribery and extortion by government officials, illegal oil bunkering, and theft, fraudulent contracts and procurement practices, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds meant for development project, favouritism in government appointments and contracts. All these are causes by weak governance and institutional failure, poverty and economic inequality, lack of transparency and accountability.

**Partisan Politics:** Because of different ideas of members of a particular party, especially the ruling party decisions on the development and growth or affair, they are interested on their own benefit without considering the affair of the people (Kingsley, 2017). The people considered their party members not caring of the implication of such choice on repositioning the youth for empowerment and development.

**Innovation:** Innovation is the driving force behind economic growth and the key to solve future global challenges. This will help to engage the tool of research which tends to search for novel ideas, ways, and best practices in the digital age. This will repackage colleges of education curriculum and programmes alongside the global trends in technological breakthroughs that characterize information era. Such attempt will streamline and integrate entrepreneurship.

**Online and Digital work Opportunities:** The Niger Delta region has various opportunities for online and digital work, including attachment schemes, digital summits, and organisations supporting socio-economic development. These opportunities aim to promote economic growth, decent work, and digital skills in the region. Unfortunately, it is outlined paperwork without implementation of it in the college of education in Niger Delta.

**Education:** Values, attitudes, skills, and beliefs system that people acquire is to aid constructive contribution to self-development and to the humanity at large. Unfortunately, adequate attention has not been to the development and equipping the youth in Niger delta with relevance skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge.

### **Conclusion**

In spite of the economic challenges in repositioning colleges of education, in Niger Delta, government and college of education administration needs to readdress their objectives towards providing, promoting and enhancing youth empowerment and national development. This would encourage and help youths for self-employment, reduction of unemployment rate, love, and unity in the region, among others. Various challenges facing the repositioning of colleges of education empowerment and national development to achieve a better and sustainable society for present-day and forthcoming youth were discussed.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

1. To promote youth empowerment and sustainable national development for Niger Delta youths or students, entrepreneurship education must be enhanced. Facilities for entrepreneurship education should be adequately provided by the authorities involved in order to develop various skills among college of education students.
2. Government at different levels should through relevant agencies and authorities create the environment and adequate awareness for students regarding the objectives and significance of entrepreneurship education in institutions. Government is responsible for the provision of the needed technologies and idea workshop in schools. This will enable students realize the skill of creativity and critical thinking for problem solving.
3. Government should foster a culture of integrity and zero tolerance for corrupt. It is important to note that addressing corruption in Niger Delta requires a sustained and multi-faceted approach, involving government, civil society, international organisations, and local communities.
4. The government should through the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) offer easy-going loans to students on their graduation. This will assist economics education graduates set up their respective skills for sustainable development.
5. Politicians should follow the rules of the law for masses, not for party members alone.



6. Adequate attention should be given to the development and equipping the youth in Niger delta with relevance skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge in education.

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