

PLANNING EDUCATION FOR PEACE BUILDING AND ECONOMIC STABILITY IN A DISTRESSED ECONOMY

EBIRIM, PHILIP UGONNA

Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria

philip.ebirim@alvanikoku.edu.ng; ebirimphilipu@gmail.com +2348037826738

Abstract

Education is very important for peaceful development and economic stability of any economy in distress. Achieving peaceful development and maintaining economic stability in any economy in distress requires adequate and effective planning. Peace building is a dynamic social construct that allows for peaceful development of any economy. Economic stability allows for peaceful development through proper and effective planning. This paper provides a clear guide on how education can be planned and provided in a country under distressed economy for peaceful development and stability. Discussed in this paper are distressed economy, economic stability, peace building, education and planning. This paper also considered the peculiar educational challenges and demands a country under distressed economy presents; the planning framework for different levels of education in any economy in distress and the peculiar educational programmes built into this framework to the peculiar educational challenges. However, this paper concluded that any country under distressed economy needs the combination of informal and non-formal type of education which must be managed and controlled by both the leaders of the members of the society and the correspondence agencies of the government. Sources of funding such education should be by the government with the support of different leaders of various groups of the members of the society.

Keywords: Planning; Education; Peace building; Economic Stability; Distressed Economy.

Introduction

All over the world, the economy of many countries has been characterized with social restiveness, political violence, inequalities, injustices, breed fear and anger; hunger and starvation; desire for devastating levels of destruction, banning of certain cultural tradition, imposition of limitations on public gathering, organizations, expression or participation in certain political, economic and social processes. Since the end of the Second World War in 1945 till the recent times, many continents and countries in the world; Africa and Nigeria inclusive, have been challenged with episode of insurgency and terrorism ranging from attack against the government and its dethronement, insecurity, complex conflicts, state weakness or failure as some cases may be. Undoubtedly, no violence, crises, conflict, insurgency or terrorism has ever left its victims without indelible fear and memories of socio, political and economic woes (Nwafor, 2013).

Nigeria, as a country is faced with many challenges which pose threat to stability and peaceful co-existence of the country. There are cases of violence, riots, demonstration as Ibenwa and Ngele (2010) noted. Similarly, Timothy (2012) identified bombing and unwarranted killings among many other vices. Equally, there are cases of rapping, kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery and other vices in Nigeria (Mbaji & Ebirim, 2013, Onwuka, Onwuka & Mbaji, 2013

and Ebirim, Mbaji &Iwuzor, 2013). The identified challenges have been the characteristics of any country faced with breach of peace. Education is very important for peaceful socio-political and economic development. It is believed that education, if effectively planned and properly provided can institute everlasting peace and guarantee stability of the economy in a country. This paper therefore, focused on how education can be planned and provided for peace building and economic stability in a distressed economy.

Distressed Economy

Distressed economy is the economy that is ravaged with many challenges in terms of employment opportunities, food production, protection of lives and properties, resources control and management as well as administration of inter-relationship of the various sectors of the economy. Distressed economy could be relatively described as an unstable economy. According to Larmore (2013), unstable economy is one that causes a decline in consumer confidence, stunted economic growth and reduced international investment. A distressed economy is characterized with social insecurity, poor standard of education delivery, inconsistency in human capital development, brain drain, instability in infrastructural development, high population growth, low per capita income, high unemployment level, high rate of under employment, incessant industrial strike actions, regular deficit balance of payment, high dependence on external aids, incessant increase in corrupt practices among citizens and public office holders, low mechanized system of agricultural production, poor health care system, wide spread of epidemic and chronic diseases among other socio-political factors. A distressed economy is under pressure to achieve peace and maintain high level of stability of the economy.

Economic Stability

Economic stability is a concept used to explain situations as they affect the welfare and living standard of people in a country. It is a term used to describe a healthy economy. An economy is said to be healthy when it is characterized by increased growth and consistent improvement in infrastructure and human capital development, price stability, low rate of unemployment, improved living standard. Economy per say refers to wealth and resources of a country in terms of natural endowments, technological advancement and human capital. Economic stability is a state in which an economy experiences constant growth and improvement in every aspect and sector of a country's economy. Economic stability is a situation where all the essential economic resources of a country are available to its citizens and no economic savings interrupt their daily lives (<https://www.wallstreetmajo.com>). Economic stability entails that people have the required resources relevant to healthy living in all ramifications.

Economic stability is very essential in the lives of people in any country. It depicts a healthy economy that contributes to peace building and achieving microeconomic stability. As an important factor that affects people's lives, economic stability leads to increased productivity, improved efficiency, and low rate of unemployment, increased domestic and foreign investment in every sector of the economy. It enhances people's standard of living, improves employment and career opportunities as well as contributes to growth and development of a country's economy. The importance of maintaining economic stability in any country cannot be jeopardized as it creates confidence and certainty in the minds and attitudes of government and society towards planning education for peace building.

Peace Building

Peace building is a dynamic social-economic construct. Peace building entails activities designed to minimize or even eradicate the risk of lapsing into many challenges by strengthening national capacities at all stages to provide ground for sustainable peace and economic development. The United Nations in the Brahimi report (2000) defined peace building as activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundation of peace and provide the tool for building on those foundations so that it is more than just the absence of war. Peace building involves complex measures by multiple actors such as the government, individual households and the civil societies to address the deep causes of violence or prevent the resumption of violence and conflict by creating spaces where people relate freely in new ways, expanding experience and honing new means of interactions in the society. Peace building is more effective and durable when it relies upon local conceptions of peace and the underlying dynamics which foster or enable conflict (Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell & Sitea, 2007). Peace building is a multi-dimensional process that requires effective planning, efforts and commitment to accomplish through education (Meenyinikor, Ebirim, Jaja, Ilueme & Mbaji, 2014).

Education

Education is very vital for sustainable peace and development of any economy. No economy can maintain maximum level of peaceful development devoid of qualitative education plan. This is why the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2013) sees education as an instrument per excellence for peaceful national development. Education prepares individuals and countries for peaceful advancement and economic improvement. Education is essential and critical to peaceful development and economic stability of every country. The pride of every country is the attainment of optimal level of socio, political and economic threat-free through qualitative education (Ebirim, Mbaji and Iwuzor, 2013). Nwafor (2013:28) maintains that education aims at ameliorating the escalating level of violence in various forms so that individuals can live and work in a relatively peaceful atmosphere that could ultimately engender a 'global culture of peace'. Education being a potent instrument for socio, political and economic development requires effective planning and provision for peace building and economic stability.

Planning

Planning is an important management and administrative function for peaceful development and economic stability of any country. Planning is a function of initiating and translating useful ideas into programmes and actions that will institute peace and guarantee the stability of economy in any country. Planning involves making alternative choices that will benefit the present and future course of action within the confined of available scarce resources in an economy. Agabi (1999) describes planning as a systematic process by which a given society consciously in a rational manner decides the course of action, pattern the growth and development of the system towards accomplishing the present and future societal needs within the constraints imposed by the resources mix. Planning is a step by step process of deciding in advance how to achieve and maintain sustainable peaceful co-existence and economic development in any country. For planning to be meaningful and useful, Ebong (2006) opined that it must refer to the educational system as a whole. This means that planning must co-ordinate decisions and policies relating to different sectors and levels of the educational system for peaceful economic development in any country.

Planning Education for Peace Building and Economic Stability

War, armed conflict, violence, insurgency and terrorism are the most obstacles to development for many poor and some developing countries. As observed by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (2005) the outbreak of violence is a very real threat to many poor and some developing countries. All development establishments including education are being affected by the incidences of War, armed conflict, violence, insurgency and terrorism. In the bid to plan education for peace building, many factors have to come into play. There is need to consider the peculiar educational challenges and demands that the country under distressed economy presents; the planning framework for different levels of education with regards to the type of education that needs to be provided, who provides the infrastructural framework of whatever type of education, the means of funding, management and control of the education.

The Peculiar Educational Challenges and Demands a Country under Distressed Economy Presents:

A country where socio-political and economic vices such as poor standard of education delivery, inconsistency in human capital development, brain drain, instability in infrastructural development, high population growth, low per capita income, high unemployment level, high rate of under employment, incessant industrial strike actions, regular deficit balance of payment, high dependence on external aids, incessant increase in corrupt practices among citizens and public office holders, low mechanized system of agricultural production, poor health care system, wide spread of epidemic and chronic diseases, armed conflict and violence are the order of the day, the educational system of such country is usually unstable hence, demands appropriate measures for stability. The educational system under such economy is faced with many challenges ranging from less attention from the government as the major attack is on the government who has the role of providing enabling environment for educational activities to strive in the country. Akinkuotu and Olufowobi (2013) noted that the educational system is plagued with increase in violence and indiscipline.

The educational system is also faced with the challenges of insecurity, socio-educational restiveness and limitations on educational financing. Due to the operational nature and characteristics of the country under distressed economy, the activities of the educational system of such country become affected and hampered. This demands total reformation in the educational system of the country to adapt to the situation at stake. The government of the said economy needs to fortify her efforts in providing enabling environment for educational activities to strive by providing socio-political and economic security to the entire economy. This will keep the confidence of the system alive.

Planning Framework for Different Levels of Education

Planning Framework is the underlying structures which need to be in place for successful establishment and operation of any system such as education. At any level of education such as pre basic, basic, upper basic, secondary and tertiary in any country mostly; one faced with many challenges, there is need for planning framework for the different levels of education in such a country. The planning framework among others should look at what type of education needs to be provided; who should make available the infrastructural framework for the type

of education provided; the sources of funding such education as well as its management and control.

Type of Education that Needs To Be Provided; The Infrastructural Framework: By Who?

Any country under a distressed economy needs to provide the type of education that has the strength to curtail or address the issues of insecurity in totality. Insecurity is a threat as against assurance of peace to overall socio-political and economic well being of the society (Ebirim, Mbaji and Iwuozor, 2013). Insecurity involves violence and attack which can manifest in the form of war, armed conflict, insurgency and terrorism usually against any ruling government and, or group of people in a country. These violence and attack result to disruption in the peaceful administration, management and control of every sector in a country which education is inclusive. Hence, the country besieged with the forgoing security challenges needs the combination of not only formal but informal and non-formal type of education.

The informal type of education can be provided and acquired at anywhere be it in the homes, farms, churches, mosques, community, village or town halls, markets, even schools through hidden curriculum and at any point in time. Informal type of education does not have any laid down rules or methods governing the educational activities (Obasi, 2000). In this type of education, learners usually acquire knowledge, skills, value, and behaviours in less organized patterns through such informal means like learning by doing, observations, participations, imitations, practice and others. In the informal type of education, the infrastructural framework should be provided by the members of the society where such type of education exists.

Non-formal type of education can be provided and acquired in a less specifically designated and organized educational setting. According to Obasi (1988), non-formal type of education comprises more of highly specific educational experiences that are provided, not necessarily in specifically designated teaching and learning environment. Non-formal type of education is usually organized outside the formal school setting. In this type of education, distance learning programmes, literacy/numeracy programmes, correspondence programmes, skills acquisition programmes, agricultural extension programmes, induction programmes and orientation/re-orientation programmes can be provided and offered. The infrastructural framework of this type of education should be provided by the government with the support of the different leaders of various groups of the members of the society.

Source of Funding

The source of funding these types of education should be both internal and external. Internal sources are the ones available within the organization while the external sources are those sources outside the educational institutions which require contact with the external bodies (Ogbonnaya, 2005). Internal source here does not mean that the participants will be paying fees or charged levies rather; they can be engaged into certain activities within the frame of the educational system that generate income or provide material resources for the operation of the system. Such activities may include engagement in large sales from poultry operations, farm operations, and agricultural products from the educational environment, arts and craft activities, automobile and other social services rendered. In the case of external source, the government can provide grants, loans and subsidies. Also, appeal can be made for fund from

external bodies such as non-governmental organizations and civil societies either within or outside the economy.

Management and Control

Management has been described as the effective organization and utilization of the human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives (Ogunu, 2000). The management and control of the informal and non-formal types of education provided in a country with distressed economy should be both internal and external. Specifically, the informal type of education under this defined economy should be managed and controlled by the heads of the members of the society. Hence, the management and control can be carried out by the heads or leaders of the various members of the society. In the non-formal type of education under this defined economy, management and control should be carried out by both the leaders of the members of the society and the correspondence agencies of the government.

The Peculiar Educational Programme Built Into This Framework

In line with the peculiar educational challenges in a country under a distressed economy, certain peculiar education programmes must be built into the framework to the peculiar educational challenges under it. The peculiar education programmes that have been built into this framework to the peculiar educational challenges include reformation in the curriculum of the educational system or programmes such as; introduction of entrepreneurship education, establishment of peace education, creative and cultural art education, citizenship education and internet-based education. Equally, other educational programmes built include, distance education, Sandwich education programme, national youth service programme and others.

The Way Forward

1. The government and all the different leaders of various groups of the members of the society should encourage and maintain education programmes such as distance learning programmes, literacy/numeracy programmes, correspondence programmes, skills acquisition programmes, agricultural extension programmes, induction programmes and orientation/re-orientation programmes through the combination of both informal and non-formal education type during the era of security challenges in the country.
2. Both the leaders of the members of the society and the correspondence agencies of the government should be involved in the management and control of the education during the period of the many challenges in the country. The informal type of education should be managed and controlled by the heads of the members of the society while the non-formal type of education should be carried out by both the leaders of the members of the society and the correspondence agencies of the government.
3. The source of funding the education should be both internal and external by the government with the support of the different leaders of various groups of the members of the society. Learners should be engaged in the sales of poultry operations, farm operations, and agricultural products from the educational environment, arts and craft activities, automobile and other social services. In the case of external source, the government can provide grants, loans and subsidies. Also, appeal can be made for fund from external bodies such as non-governmental organizations and civil societies either within or outside the economy.

Conclusion

Any country confronted with many challenges is faced with the problem of improving the standard of education for peaceful development in general. As a country which is confronted with different form of attack, insecurity, complex conflict and many other forms of violence, requires a well planned education that will guide the country to survive for peaceful development and stability of the economy. This paper therefore established that the country needs the combination of informal and non-formal type of education which must be managed and controlled by both the leaders of the members of the society and the correspondence agencies of the government and that the source of funding the education should be by the government with the support of the different leaders of various groups of the members of the society.

References

- Agabi, G. O. (1999). *Introducing educational planning*. ICES Press.
- Akinkuotu, Y. A. & Olufowobi, O. O. (2013). Promoting the culture of school children through the inculcation of philosophical attitudes. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Philosophy*. 24(1), 1 - 9.
- Barnett, M., Kim, H., O'Donnell, M. & Sitea, L. (2007). Peace building: What is in a name? *Global Governance*. 13, 35 – 58.
- Ebirim, P. U., Mbaji, I. N. & Iwuzor, P. O. (2013). Peace and security: Basic necessities for national transformation in Nigeria. *Unizik Orient Journal of Education*. 7(1), 147 – 152.
- Ebong, M. J. (2006). *Understanding economics of education*. Eagle Lithograph.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2003). *National policy on education*. (6th ed). NERDC press.
- Ibenwa, C. N. & Ngele, O. K. (2010). Religion, ethnicity and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. In O. U. Nnadozie, & A. O. (Eds), *Issues in peace and conflict studies and other social sciences*. (122 - 143). Bel's Books and Beams Expressions Ltd.
- Larmore, C. (2023). *What is economic stability?* From <https://www.smartcapitalmind.com>> economic stability
- Mbaji, I. N. & Ebirim, P. U. (2013). Peace education: Roadmap for sustainable national development. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Philosophy*. 24(1), 72 – 79.
- Meenyinikor, J.N.D., Ebirim, P.U., Jaja, D.M., Ilueme, L.M. & Mbaji, I.N. (2014). Budgetary control for peace building and tertiary educational goals achievement in Imo State of Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Education Administration and Planning (NJEAP)*. 14(1), 95-109.
- Nwafor, N. (2013). Peace education and national development: A critical appraisal. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Philosophy*. 24(1), 26 - 33.
- Obasi, E. (1988). *Introductory sociology for Nigerian teachers*. KeeBee Cee Publishers.
- Obasi, E. (2000). *The economics of education in Nigeria*. New Vision Publishers.
- Ogbonnaya, O. N. (2005). *Foundations of education finance. Second edition*. Hallman Publishers.
- Ogunu, M. O. (2000). *Introduction to educational management*. Mabogun Publishers.
- Onwuka, C. J. A., Onwuka, G. T. & Mbaji, I. N. (2013). Education for national understanding: Bench mark for sustainable development. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Philosophy*. 24(1), 80 - 88.
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (2005). *Promoting peace and security*. www.sida.se
- Timothy, O. (2012). *Suicide bombers kill 6 soldiers*. Daily Sun: Monday, August 6, p (5).
- United Nations (2000). What is peace building? – United Nations Peace building Fund. From www.unpb.org/application-guideline