

# Music Education as a Pillar to Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The paper attempts to reveal the importance of music education as an art as well as indispensable aspect of every single culture which serves as indisputable support to sustainable development in Nigeria. It is a veritable avenue that enables societies to transmit music and musical skills from one generation to the incoming ones. The research is based on a comprehensive literature review on the impact of music to sustainable development. This paper contextualised that music education is imperative to Sustainable Development, to the adult it is a vital force of self-expression, communication and empowerment economically, in growing children, involvement in music education will promote their creative ability, thereby contribute to the full development of intellectual capacities, apt emotional development that gives the right values and feelings to various events and happenings, music helps to develop skills, innate and instinctive talent in human being and recommend that the informal music teaching should be incorporated into school system so as to transmit and preserve the cultural music and that the study of music should be made compulsory at all levels of the Nigerian educational system.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, Music Education, Music as a Pillar to Sustainable Development

## Introduction

Presently, the entire world is in awful need of inventive keys to the challenges of sustainable development which has to do with almost every facet of human life. The major goal is to satisfy the needs of the present generation, balancing public welfare, economic development interests, ensuring the observation of the environmental requirements and the preservation of natural diversity in order to avoid the reduction of possibilities to satisfy the needs of future generations (Jonathan, 2000). Therefore, the scope of the sustainability classic will be a successful response to global challenges that will create a way to developmental policy which will promote the economic growth, improving the quality of life of each member of the society, ensuring the social unity and safety, as well as the necessity to preserve the ecological environment for future generations.

However, Music for too long has been overlooked as a resource to effectively address these and other social and economic issues. Since the earliest days of human existence, music has been engrained into our very being. All humans are born with an innate sensitivity to tone and rhythm. Music has been and is still being used as a vital force of self-expression, communication, empowerment and healing in a wide range of activities: social, political, educational, religious, and as a release from the daily tensions of life. Ogunrinade (2013) affirmed this when he explicates that:

African music practices are first and foremost meant for, and directed by the community's ideology, economic, social, religious, recreational tendencies and rite of passage rituals. Thus there is an inseparable link between the community way of life and musical practices. Community cultural practices are directed and transacted through music. P 4

Current research shows that music, as well as other forms of cultural expression, is an effective resource in the healing process of individuals and groups who have been emotionally and physically afflicted (Robertson, 2000). Naturally, Music is an extremely cost-effective and powerful language that all cultures relate with, a direct and potent tool that sustain urban and rural community building as well as the healing process of individuals and Communities.

Moreover, it is a natural resource, visible with various organisations such as private sector, music industry, academia, and health organizations with the aim of using it to enhance community health, well being and the quality of life. It is understood by everyone (good), found everywhere (cheap), and readily available (fast). Therefore, to achieve an apt sustainable development in Nigeria, there is need to include the study of art subject especially music education for it has to do with cultural heritage of every nation. This to provide the foundation for learning in all level of our education and develop required competencies as means of achieving lifelong learning. The need to address this phenomenon and its attendant problems necessitated this study.

## Concept of Sustainable Development

Increasingly, sustainability has become the word we use in relation to environmental movement. But it means more than recycling, planting trees, or driving less. Sustainability encompasses three pillars, or spheres: the ecological, the social, and the economic. It is a model that looks at all areas of life, the natural and the man made, and recognizes that you cannot look at any one of these without considering the others. Sustainability, and

sustainable development, is about developing an ecologically aware, socially just, and economically responsible society. Its part is a fluid concept that is relatively new in the development discourse. It was first mentioned in the work of Leister Brown (1981), and six years later the Brundtland Commission defined it as “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs” (WCSD, 1987). It could also be simply summarized as a way of satisfying the needs of the present generation without diminishing the prospects of future generations to come. Despite more than half a century of development cooperation, very little has been achieved because the donor community thought sustainable development in developing countries means higher gross domestic product growth rates. The so called ‘experts’ should try to understand that the culture of people they intend to help and should take the social and cultural perceptions which include Music into consideration rather than denigrate and relegate them to the background in development interventions. A practical approach to sustainable development will contextually take into consideration issues of cooperation, stakeholder participation, commitment, long, medium and short term effects of current actions, common concerns, inter and intra generational equity, justice, and moderate production and consumption habits. It requires efficient communication, tacit knowledge and its transfer between and within generations, capacity and willingness to act based on the knowledge available.

### **Music Education**

Music education can be defined as a process by which musical knowledge and skills are developed through learning at school, colleges and University and the informal traditional setting (Ogunrinade et al 2012). It is the means that societies use in order to transmit music and musical skills from one generation to the next. However, music education also involves, implicitly, ideas about what music is (and is not), where music comes from, and what is the purpose or function of music. The most basic means of sustaining music from one generation to the next is by both informal or formal teaching and learning. Different social groups transmit their music through different kinds of education. Within any large social group many kinds of music education take place. To have a sustainability of music education in Nigeria, cultural music (Traditional music) should be properly placed to have its role in the curriculum because of the special function it performed and that the child grew up and trained with such musical background. Historically, music education especially in African setting shows differences and sometimes philosophical disagreement in three areas. The first area of difference involves the distinction between formal instruction with lessons and written musical notation in the schools versus informal learning that takes place in a family or neighborhood setting by imitation and oral tradition, usually without lessons and almost never with notation.

The second area of disagreement, which takes place in colleges, universities, and conservatories, is the balance in the curriculum and the structure of the musical institution between, first, practical instruction in performing music; second, theoretical knowledge in the history of music and how music is designed and structured; and third, courses in music education below the university level

The third area, which takes place at all levels of formal learning, whether in elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and conservatories, is the balance in the curriculum and the institution between Western art music and multicultural music, including folk music and world music.

Either formal (class room setting) or informal (Traditional) music gives opportunity to skills development which is very valuable to any organisation that enable individual employable, contributes to economy of the society as well as self reliance.

### **Music Education as a Pillar to Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

The importance of skills acquisition to sustainable development is essential to the present and incoming generation. In any given country skills development is very indispensable to the manufacture of goods and services which is done by individuals or groups of individuals. To do this the individual or groups will need skills to perform competently. With skills, individual can be employable and determine their own destiny. With music education, both traditional and western music have varieties of skill development peculiar to their instruction. This is an imperative to the youth empowerment programme of the country, a good number of students who have completed their secondary education but failed to secure admission into institutions of higher learning are in dilemma. This is because they are not equipped with the requisite skills for self or paid employment (Igwe 2007).

The process of empowerment should begin with training, which will lead to professionalism and career sustainability to the nation at large. Certain motivational and social factors are therefore implicated in the continuation of activities that promote skill-acquisition, such as practice in Music education. A vocational course of this nature should be encouraged at all levels of the Nigerian educational system in that it allows for creativity, develops innate and the musical talent of individual thereby create job opportunity and allow them to contribute to the economy advancement of the society at large. Generally, skills are quite important to develop a society and Music education is one aspect of education that allows such acquisition of skill that brings about suitability.

Looking at the popular music industry in Nigeria, as in most parts of the world, it holds great economic potentials. In Nigeria, this is testified to by increasing record sales which seems to defy Nigeria's unstable economy. For example, statistic of record sales in Nigeria shows that in 1981, 4.5million records were sold; in 1986 5.5million; in 1991 8.5million and in 1995, 12 million records were sold nationwide (Gronov and Saunio, in Emielu, 2008).

Furthermore, in the year 2000 the World Bank estimate of music sales around the world stood at 6 billion dollars per year. An estimate of (\$1.5 billion dollars) is said to be derived from African music, especially the popular music genre and for this huge potential of the music industry in Africa, the World Bank agreed in principle to divert a substantial part of its annual \$300 million dollars allocation for culture to some African countries (Emielu 2008). Apparently, the nation can easily tap into this enormous prospective and the economic salvation provided by the World Bank, that can turn into genuine requisites of definite sustainable empowerment to our country, Nigeria.

In addition, the importance of skills to the individual, it is important that every individual accesses training so that he or she is able to determine his destiny. However, an apparent solution to trim down the level of poverty in any society is the provision of skills to allow people participate in the production of goods and services as individuals or as members of group. Music education is one of the vocational subjects that give room for acquisition of skills and talent which enhances an individual's performance brings an increased productivity and competitiveness. Vocational education is a skill-based programme designed for sub-professional level education and based on a specific vocation. Therefore, Music education is a practical course that embraces both talent and skill that is necessary for nation building. It is a natural inbred resource that sustains a meaningful development of a nation. It involves training which is very cardinal to any economic and sustainable development of the country. Training in general has potential benefits which accrue to the individual, organization and to the country as a whole. To an individual, training enhances their future earning potential, career progression and employability. To the unemployed, training offers them capacities to find ways of earning a livelihood. This can be through self-employment or setting up of businesses.

Looking at the enormous roles of music to the live of man, it also serves as an entertainment tool, for instance, in an occasion or event music plays a vital role that makes the event to be lively and acceptable to the people. Similarly, it creates cordial relationship among the people; serves as a tool for corrective measure, tells the people about habits that are acceptable to the society. Music is also an agent that educates the people. For example, if a leader or power to be in control of a particular society is bad, music is one of the medium to expose, condemn and correct such a leader.

Another area with which music supported the sustainability of development is in the area of serving as a message or symbol that indicate occurrence that is going on in a particular place or event. Example of such is visible when there is sad occurrence in a particular place; the type of music played in such situation shows the audience or listeners what has happened. During naming ceremony, wedding and so on the type of music played will indicate the mood of the listeners. Ogunrinade (2013) explain that "music integrates mind, body, and spirit as well as provides opportunities for self-expression, bringing the inner world into the outer world of concrete reality, which in turn offers the avenue to "flow states" and peak experiences. It also creates a seamless connection between motivation, instruction, assessment, and practical application leading to "deep understanding."

In addition, during war, Music brings serenity, happiness and hope. After war it brings dynamism and energy for reconstruction, galvanize juvenile minds for action and make happiness an object of desire. During peace, it brings comfort of mind, awareness on love and motivation for the future. In front of different cultures or ideologies it brings cooperativeness, understanding and create unperceived ties among people. Even in front of different languages, songs become understandable for everyone and appreciated when your mind is touch. . There is no doubt of shadow that the roles of music for human lives as narrated above are crucial as well as imperative to the sustainable development of any society.

## **Conclusion**

Sustainable development as a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs, is an enormous task that requires combined efforts for its implementation. This paper fronted music education as one of the major practical course of study as a tool for sustainable development. It is a cultural development phenomenon that has to do with the values, beliefs, codes and conventions of behaviour that emerge through our relationships with others which also promote peaceful coexistence. Furthermore, the paper concludes that the process of empowerment should begin with training, which will lead to professionalism and career sustainability. A professionalised music industry will midwife institutionalisation of specialised sectors, which will become the engine for growth, development and empowerment for youths with interest in the music industry if properly implemented.

### Recommendation

The informal music teaching should be incorporated into school system so as to transmit and preserve the cultural music. Also, the study of music should be made compulsory at all levels of Nigerian education at least as a course of study for everybody. In order to make music training and education accessible to all, there is need to set up resource centres in districts where groups could be going to access training for acquisitions of musical knowledge and Skill.

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