



Integrating Community Development into Basic Education Curriculum Programmes

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Abstract: *School programmes are meant to create positive impact on the all-round life of the society but more often we find that schools isolate themselves from the core-life of their communities. The purpose of this paper therefore is to see how community development could be integrated into curriculum programmes. The concept of community development was considered while curriculum programmes were seen as instruments for the attainment of the Nigerian national education goals, community development being a part of the goals of education. The needs, potentials and aspirations of the community must be known and put into consideration before using curriculum programmes of studies, activities and guidance as basis on which to build community development. The challenges of integrating community development into school programmes were seen from the angles of the learners, teachers, the community and the government. Recommendations were that learners should be encouraged to see community development as a part of school programme and not forced, the teachers who stand out in school community development programmes should be motivated and encouraged with recommendations, awards, accelerated promotions and other incentives. The community and their leaders were advised not to allow any opportunity for the development of their communities to pass them by.*

Keywords: *School programmes, community development, curriculum programmes, basic education.*

Introduction

Schools do not exist in isolation neither are their functions and operations alien to that of their immediate and remote environment. Education is meant to cater for the needs of the society and in any community where schools are located there should be some mutual benefits derived from the school. The school therefore is expected to help their host and surrounding communities to recognize and develop their potentials so that they will be able to organize themselves and find solutions to their problems and needs accordingly.

The discussion in this paper will be guided by the following sub-headings:

- Explaining community development
- National education goals and curriculum programmes
- What to do before integrating community development into the school programme
- Integrating community development into curriculum programmes
- The challenges of Integrating community development into school programmes
- Recommendations
- Summary and conclusion.

Explaining Community Development

Community development as defined by United Nations is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems (wikipedia.org Retrieved online 1/19/2017). Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritizing the actions of communities and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. Community development is action that helps people to recognize and develop their ability and potentials and organize themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share (www.scdc.org.uk Retrieved online 1/19/2017)

National educational goals and curriculum programmes.

The national educational goals of Nigeria which is drawn from the nation's philosophy are:

- a) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- b) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
- c) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and
- d) The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. (FRN; 2013).

Looking at the above stated goals, it would be seen that the end point of education is the development of the nation through the education of the individual members of the society. This is reiterated in section 1 sub-section 9(a) of the National policy on education, "efforts shall be made to relate education to community development" (FRN, 2013). Therefore conscious efforts must be made to make education relate to community needs by way of integrating community development strategies into school programmes.

The national policy on education already confers on education via the schools, total rights and powers to effect change that will lead to the realization of stated national goals and objectives. Schools are located in communities and these communities give stance to the material life of the schools, therefore there is an expectation of mutual benefit to be derived from each other. The school being at the fore for development should consciously integrate planned and well structured educational programmes that will bring about development in the communities where they are located. Kanno and Obih (2016) explained that "curriculum can be seen as a medley of various school programmes (of instruction, guidance and activities) which help to promote the ideals of the society, the function of which lies in the school as a social unit" (p.50). In summary therefore the three components of curriculum/ education are:

- i. Programme of instruction/studies
- ii. Programme of activities
- iii. Programme of guidance

These programmes form the means through which learning contents and schools can reach out to learners, society and also attain the nation's set goals. The school should practically programme community development into the school programmes as the discussion in this paper will unfold.

Integrating community development into curriculum programmes

The curriculum is always structured through varied programmes that will lead to the attainment of set goals. The three components of curriculum according to Ogunyemi, (2009), Kanno and Obih (2016) are : programme of studies, programme of activities and programme of guidance. Programme of studies refers to curriculum as a matter of subject content to be studied in schools like English language studies, Mathematics, Biology, Physics and others. Programme of activities lends support to the programme of studies, it involves all the extra-curricular activities like school club activities (like literary and debating societies, young farmers club, choral group and others) field trips/excursions and school exhibitions, inter-house sports competition and school open-day. These activities enrich learning by providing additional insights and clearer understanding of subjects' content. Lastly is the programme of guidance where the school gives support to learners to enable them derive maximum benefits from learning activities based on interest, abilities, aspirations and other attributes that are personal to them. Programme of guidance could be divided into educational guidance , vocational guidance, , and socio-personal guidance (Ogunyemi, 2009). With programme of guidance the learner can receive proper guidance for his education, future career, and personal matters that have to do with his/ life and relationship with things and people in the environment. These programmes work symbiotically to get the desired change in the learner, his/her community and the nation at large, therefore the school should conscientiously integrate community development in her programmes. The triad programmes (studies, activities and guidance) and how they could be used to build up community development will now be discussed.

Integrating community development into programme of studies: programme of studies has to do with all the subject discipline like English Language studies, Mathematics, Physics and others. In integrating subject matter areas or disciplines into community development, the school authorities or the subject matter specialist should do the following:

- Draw examples and inferences from the local environment instead of those from foreign lands, this will make learners appreciate their environment.
- Instructional materials should as much as possible be from the community. It will encourage local production and of economic benefit.
- Homework, assignments, projects, and others should be relevant to community development by way of meeting their needs, using local materials and human resources.

Integrating community development into programme of activities: according to Kanno and Obih (2016), programme of activities refers to all those activities provided by the school which enhances and supports the concepts, skills and abilities contained in the programme of studies. They have to do with extracurricular activities organized by the school, for example the dramatic and literary club, young farmers club, French clubs, JETS club, choral group, inter-house sports competition, school open-day and exhibition, cultural day others.

The school programme of activities should carry on its sleeves the aspect of community development that can be handled be the level of the school in place. For instance a primary or secondary school could integrate community development into her programme of activities by organizing inter-house sports competition, open-day, school exhibition and quiz competition which will require inviting other schools, dignitaries and personalities within and outside the community. This will afford the community the opportunity to learn new things as they interact

with the school, they will also relax which is beneficial to their health, there will be commercial activities alongside the event which will bring in money to those involved. On the higher cadre, the events bring in personalities and dignitaries who would interact with the ones at home and along the line develop linkages that would benefit the people.

Service to community is one of the main functions of institutions of learning and this is in tandem with section 1 sub-section 9(a) of the national policy of education which states that

From time to time and following a well planned and structured programme of activities there should be lessons

At the tertiary level the school programme of activities could integrate community development into her scheme by:

- i. Organizing tutorials for examination candidates in the community, adult literacy programmes for interested adults.
- ii. Organizing sensitization programmes on health and family matters, safety and security, anti- thuggery and violence for the communities.
- iii. Providing agricultural extension services to the community that has agricultural related priorities. Schools ensure that they are agents of community development wherever they are located.
- iv. Extending school environmental clean-up exercises to the communities for example students clearing up bushy areas not too far from the school community.
- v. Organizing cultural activities for exhibition of the peoples creative art, and culture to keep community relics a life.

Integrating Community Development into the Programme of Guidance: The programme of guidance entails directing, guiding and helping the learner to solve his/her educational, vocational and socio-personal problems, (Kanno and Obih, 2016). This the school can do by:

- i. Allowing the counseling unit of the school to organizing counseling sessions for interested members of the community.
- ii. Establishing (where possible) a unit for alternative dispute resolution forum for resolution of family and communal conflicts to save time and money that would have been spent on court sessions. Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, in Nigeria took this step when it formally launched the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) centre in 2016 as one of the measures of reaching out to the university community and its environs.
- iii. Organizing vocational, educational and socio-personal programmes for the youths of the community like seminars, workshops and conferences on career, make-up educational programmes for school dropouts, character and relationship sessions and any other that will guide the youths and other members of the community in their vocational, educational and socio-economic lives.
- iv. Organizing economic empowerment programmes that will help them in wealth creation. For instance the school could teach the community how to process and market some of

their agricultural produce to make money. It could also be on how to make their local crafts marketable or just how to find markets for their products.

What to do before Integrating Community Development into the School Programme

- i. Conduct a needs analysis of the community to know what they really need so that the programmes will be tailored to meet those needs.
- ii. Find out the potentials of the community to know what they have, what they can do and what they already know so that whatever the school will offer will be an addition which of course will be relevant and welcomed.
- iii. Find out the aspirations of the community to know what they really desire, where they want to get to and if possible how they intend to achieve their goals.
- iv. Design ways of doing i – iii above and then state in a document, how they will be assisted to get their aspirations fulfilled which will ultimately lead to community development.
- v. Design ways of assessing the extent of success made at each level and how to get back to work again.

Challenges

The curricular content is sometimes crowded and students may not want to get involved in activities that would require time or money like in organizing cultural day or sensitization programmes. On the other hand students especially in higher institutions of learning can get negatively indulged when it comes to helping out in community development if not properly supervised.

Integrating community development into curriculum programmes demands extra effort and sacrifice too which may not be appreciated by all. It may not be strange to find that some teachers may not be willing to take any additional responsibility other than that which involves teaching the students in the school especially when they are poorly remunerated.

Another challenge is the unimpressive attitude of the community. If the community is not responsive and appreciative the whole exercise will be fruitless. One thing that can lead to this is when there is division among sections of the community or there is disagreement among the leaders of the community. This will make the coordination of the programme difficult.

The challenge on the part of government is that government support and provision to schools are not inclusive of community development services. This makes it difficult for schools when there is need for funds in this regard.

Conclusion

Since education is an instrument for national development schools should serve as instrument for community development in their various locations. There should be a conscious and conscientious effort in the integration of community development into school curricular programmes. The programme of studies, activities and guidance would serve as guides for reaching out to communities in order to help them recognize and develop their potentials and be able to organize themselves to respond to their common problems and needs.

Recommendations

1. Students should be given the orientation that community development is a part of the school programme so that they will easily hook up to it when it is called for. They should not be forced into it but should be encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunity.
2. Teachers just like students should be encouraged to incorporate community development into the scheme of work since the implementation of the curriculum programmes lies in their hands. This encouragement could come in the form of official recognition, meritorious award for community service, exceptional opportunities, accelerated promotion and any other that is applicable and possible.
3. Communities should ensure that no singular opportunity for development eludes them. Therefore they should do all that is required of them to allow the schools in their communities rub off on them by impacting them positively for posterity.
4. The government should device a means of identifying and rewarding schools that take on community development as a part of their programme and are actually creating impact in those communities.

Summary

The paper, integrating community development in curriculum programmes was discussed looking at the concept of community development. Curriculum programmes were seen as instruments for the attainment of the Nigerian national education goals and community development was seen as part of the goals of education. Before integrating community development into the school programme, factors like the needs, potentials and aspirations of the community must be known and put into consideration. Curriculum programmes of studies, activities and guidance were seen as basis on which to build community development. The challenges of integrating community development into school programmes were seen from the angles of the learners, teachers, the community and the government. Recommendations were that learners should be encouraged to see community development as a part of school programme and not forced, the teachers should be motivated and encouraged with recommendations, awards, given rare opportunities, accelerated promotions and other encouraging incentives. The community and their leaders were advised not to allow any opportunity for the development of their community to pass them by.

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