



E-ISSN: 2707-8272
P-ISSN: 2707-8264
IJRCET 2022; 3(1): 16-19
Received: 22-11-2021
Accepted: 25-12-2021

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Green entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Green entrepreneurship is a paradigm shifting concept from everyday entrepreneurship. It inculcates values of business and enterprise in harmony with equity and the environment. This study identifies green entrepreneurship as very vital for achieving sustainable development and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. Climate change is presently a burning issue of global concern requiring urgent attention. This study identifies the role and benefits of green entrepreneurship in addressing the challenge of climate change in Nigeria. It further identifies the role and benefits of green entrepreneurship education across communities and institutions to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency for sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria. This study further seeks to draw the attention of policy makers in government, private sectors, non-governmental organizations, educationists and entrepreneurs to the role of green entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria. Through literature review and participant observation, this study proves to be very timely and significant, as it explores new opportunities, practices and policies for green entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Climate change, education, green entrepreneurship, Nigeria, sustainable development

Introduction

An important consideration in the push for green entrepreneurship is public perception towards green services and products. This can either make or mar the development of green entrepreneurship. Furthermore, when green entrepreneurship thrives in Nigeria, the rate of unemployment amongst the youths will be drastically reduced and this will go a long way to help to achieve the sustainable development goals (Richard, Olatunji & Samuel, 2021) [12]. From all indication, Nigeria needs to embrace various methods through which the unemployment rates among the youths can be reduced. One way to do this is to embrace green entrepreneurship, especially as the nation has a population that continues to generate huge amount of waste. As such, investment should be directed towards cleaner production and waste-to-wealth efforts (Richard, Olatunji & Samuel, 2021) [12]. With this recognition was the emergence of Project Green Initiative in 2017 in Nigeria which serves to educate stakeholders in various sectors of the economy toward sustaining green environment for green entrepreneurial activities and opportunities (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Eriobu, 2019) [1]. Green entrepreneurial opportunities abound in the waste management and plastic recycling industry in Nigeria today (Anabaraonye, Ewa, & Hope, 2021) [2, 4]. The reduction and recycling of plastic waste can help address global warming and climate change as they are potent strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The waste management business is one with a plethora of opportunities in its industry. Thousands of businesses operate within several niches in its space, and they all go on to serve a varying number of clients seeking different solutions to their waste management problems (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Eriobu, 2019) [1].

Methodology

This paper examined current progress with the green entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria through existing literature review. The main purpose of this research work was to survey theoretical backgrounds and previous studies on the green entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria and the current progress with the implementation of these strategies in Nigeria.

Results and Discussion

The term ‘Sustainable Development’ has been popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), in its 1987 report entitled, ‘Our Common Future’. The commission defined sustainable development as ‘the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs’ (WCED, 1987). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the interconnected challenges the world is facing, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality. Education plays a vital role in preparing students and learners of all ages to find solutions for the challenges of today and the future. Climate change has been described as an existential threat to human well-being. Globally, it affects the social and environmental determinants of health: clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. The effects of climate change are far-reaching and include heat waves and severe weather, deteriorated air quality, displacement and migration of vectors resulting in increase of a range of diseases related to water and ecological factors. Increasing incidences of mental health issues are being recorded and identified as a consequence of environmental change (Lu, 2016; PAHO, 2013) ^[10, 11]. Generally, climate change is caused by natural and human activities. Human activities are subdivided into those that either emit large amount of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere contributing to the ozone layer depletion or activities that result in reduced carbon absorption from the atmosphere (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Hope, 2018) ^[3, 5]. In the first category are industrialization, burning of fossil fuel and gas flaring. The latter include deforestation, alterations in land use, water pollution and agricultural practices (Lu, 2016; PAHO, 2013) ^[10, 11].

Understanding Green Entrepreneurship Education

Green entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurship that seeks to solve environmental problems while generating income for sustainable economic growth. Green entrepreneurship education involves the strategic training and enlightening of individuals, communities and institutions on the role of green entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development. Green entrepreneurship education across communities and institutions is vital to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of individuals and systems for sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria. Green entrepreneurship education is therefore very important for establishing business support and laying a structure for entrepreneurs who desire to manage sound businesses with a special focus on environmental and social impact.

The project green initiative in Nigeria

From all indication, Nigeria needs to embrace various methods through which the unemployment rates among the youths can be reduced. One way to do this is to embrace green entrepreneurship, especially as the nation has a population that continues to generate huge amount of waste. “As such, investment should be directed towards cleaner production and waste-to-wealth efforts” (Richard, Olatunji & Samuel, 2021) ^[12]. With this recognition was the emergence of Project Green Initiative in 2017 in Nigeria

which serves to educate stakeholders in various sectors of the economy toward sustaining green environment for green entrepreneurial activities and opportunities (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Eriobu, 2019) ^[1]. Green entrepreneurial opportunities abound in the waste management and plastic recycling industry in Nigeria today (Anabaraonye, Ewa, & Hope, 2021) ^[2, 4]. The reduction and recycling of plastic waste can help address global warming and climate change as they are potent strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. “The waste management business is one with a plethora of opportunities in its industry” (Edom, 2016) ^[6]. Thousands of businesses operate within several niches in its space, and they all go on to serve a varying number of clients seeking different solutions to their waste management problems (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Eriobu, 2019) ^[1]. The Project Green Initiative which is an arm of the Benji Poetry And Music Global Concepts, a company registered in 2017 with the corporate affairs commission, is a good example of a social enterprise which is very passionate about educating the communities in Nigeria about the green entrepreneurial opportunities in climate change mitigation and adaptation which includes plastic recycling for sustainable development in Nigeria. In Benjamin Anabaraonye’s poem titled, “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” an emphasis was laid on the need to accentuate our sustainable development by refusing environmental pollution (Anabaraonye, 2018) ^[3, 5]. The poem in its simplicity and originality further enumerated the many benefits of waste recycling which includes ‘Keeping our environment clean and green’, ‘Turning waste to wealth’, ‘Creating job opportunities’, etc (Anabaraonye, 2018) ^[3, 5].

Innovative strategies for green entrepreneurship education in Nigeria

There is great need to educate communities including institutions and companies in Nigeria on the green entrepreneurial opportunities and strategies to ensure sustainable development and sustainable economic growth. Though, there abounds adverse effects inherent in climate change, the following approach could be deployed towards maximizing the green entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria:

- i) Radical awareness approach of information disseminations. The emergence of information communication and technology (ICT) around the world to a large extent has proven as very effective and efficient vehicle of letting people becoming aware of opportunities and benefits in green entrepreneurship. These information dissemination platforms besides the internet (educational blogs, facebook, twitter, Instagram, etc) include radio, television and telephone.
- ii) The government at all levels in Nigeria should provide enabling environment and sustainable fund in form of grants and loans to the teeming unemployed and underemployed Nigerian youths who may want to be involved in the green entrepreneurship businesses in their different capacities. This approach when incorporated into long term policy planning in climate change mitigation in Nigeria will go a long way in reducing unemployment among the youths in the country.
- iii) The use and involvement of non-governmental organizations that are environmental driven and climate change sensitive can go a long way in providing green

entrepreneurial opportunities for a lot of individuals in Nigeria. Awareness of the economic opportunities in green entrepreneurship can be communicated to communities and cities through the various outreaches, seminars and workshops initiated by these environmental sustainability driven NGOs in Nigeria.

- iv) Educational blogs can be used to inform, enlighten and educate researchers, green entrepreneurs and interested individuals in Nigeria especially the internet literate ones about green entrepreneurship. These blogs which are meant to be highly interactive allows individuals to contribute their ideas, suggestions and feedback to the environmental sustainability driven educators and green bloggers (Anabaraonye, 2018) ^[3, 5]. A good example is the project green initiative blog: www.projectgreeninitiative.wordpress.com featuring articles and poems on climate change adaptation and mitigation for global sustainability.
- v) Poetry has also been discovered as a great tool which can be used to educate individuals in Nigeria about the socio-economic benefits of green entrepreneurship (Anabaraonye, Nji, Hope, 2018) ^[3, 5].

Below is a poem advanced by the Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts which further helps to illustrate how poetry can be used efficiently and effectively in educating communities in Nigeria about plastic recycling for sustainability in Nigeria:

Poem: reduce, reuse and recycle

Reduce, recycle and reuse
Accentuate our sustainable development
Environmental pollution we must refuse
To help ensure our world's betterment.

Reduce, recycle and reuse
Keep our environment clean and green
Green entrepreneurship let us use
To give our youths a livelihood means.

Reduce waste, recycle and make some gains
Financial abundance is the promise
For those who engage to regain
Waste recycling is a venture wise.

Waste can be a detriment to health
Inflicting diseases and conflicts
Waste can be turned into wealth
Waste recycling is a venture of profits.

Recycling conserves natural resources
And helps protect the environment
Recycling is a good income source
An engine room for socio-economic development.

Recycling gallantly reduces emissions
Of excess greenhouse gases
Recycling creates job provisions
For the unemployed and under-employed masses.

Reduce, recycle and reuse
A breath of fresh air to the community
Now health and wealth can be induced

With the hope of a brighter future we see (Anabaraonye, 2018) ^[3, 5].

Recommendations

Nigerian government should establish and promote public policies within their borders to increase the awareness of green entrepreneurship for environmental sustainability. Leadership summits on green entrepreneurship are recommended as important tools which can be used in educating communities and cities in Nigeria for sustainability locally, nationally and globally. There are numerous benefits of green entrepreneurship in Nigeria which have been enumerated above. There is also great need for further research in this field of study on green entrepreneurship to enhance adequate knowledge and appropriate adaptation and mitigation to climate change through proper green entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Green entrepreneurship education is obviously needed to ensure a cleaner, greener and healthier environment for sustainable development both locally, nationally and globally (Anabaraonye, Ewa, Anukwonke, Eni & Anthony, 2021) ^[2, 4]. Moving toward sustainable development and economic growth in Nigeria requires lasting efforts at a significant cost. Our planet needs to be preserved for future generations and its inhabitants are in the best position to do that. Let's join hands today to make our world better for our future and that of our children tomorrow through proper green entrepreneurship education.

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