

**VALUES OF INTEGRATION OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN
SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM OF JUNIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA**

BY

DR. SAM A. MEZIEOBI

**Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology
University of Port Harcourt**

&

EZE, ANASTASIA UKAMAKA

**Department of curriculum studies and Educational Technology
University of Port Harcourt**

Abstract

This paper discusses Millennium development goals as a contemporary issues that should be integrated into the junior secondary School socials studies curriculum. It emphasizes the relevance of infusing the MDGS into social studies curriculum. It highlighted on major constraints 'to realizing millennium development goals which are: Inadequate professional trained socials studies teachers, MDGS not fully integrated into the social studies curriculum, teachers not sufficiently conscious of the MDGS, Inadequate funding and poor motivation. Recommendations were made based on the issues raised.

Introduction

The millennium development goals are human development agenda which is not only environmental friendly but includes efforts aimed at maintaining a life – sustaining environment. These MDGS were agreed upon by the international community at the United Nations Millennium Summit held in New York in September, 2000. These are series of eight time bound development goals that seek to address issues of poverty, education, gender equality, health and the environment programmed to be achieved by the year 2015.

Specifically the goals are directed towards:

1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieving Universal Primary education.
3. Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.
4. Reducing Child Mortality.
5. Improving maternal health:
6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensuring environmental sustainability and
8. Developing a global partnership development.

Education is widely perceived and acknowledged as an instrument par excellence development of the society. The propriety of education, as a veritable tool for development is predicated on its relevance to the needs, problems and aspiration of human society.

Social Studies Education is an all embracing education for social living. The society is the main focus of social studies instruction. Osakwe (1997) noted that Socials Studies Education is veritable avenue for educating young people and preparing them for nation building. The national policy on Education (2004) posited that Social Studies is an interdisciplinary Curriculum

Education (2004) posited that Social Studies is an interdisciplinary Curriculum content that attempts to unify knowledge that cut across the various disciplines of social sciences in dealing with societal problems of family relations, Civic affairs, Community life, health, production, Consumption, recreation and so on.

Curriculum Scholars (Mezieobi, 1993, Mbakwem, 2000, Anukam and Anukam, 2006) defined Social Studies Curriculum as planned and unplanned... positively oriented learning activities, experiences, contents and methods which learners are provided with and exposed to in and outside the school (Class) under the guidance of teachers. Mezieobi,(1993). Said "It is planned what to teach in social studies contained in a document or programme". Social studies is a dynamic course of study which ought to incorporate contemporary issues into its curriculum.

Functional social studies curriculum ought to reflect contemporary issues to equip learners with prerequisite knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to fit into the dynamic society. Responsive curriculum is such that make effort in meeting diverse human needs that accommodate new knowledge and new use of knowledge (Anukam 2000). In line with the above view Ivowi (2005) said that the relevant education is the one that equip the learner with prerequisite attitudes, skills, values and knowledge to solve common place problems or environmental problems.

Therefore Social Studies education will fail to offer responsive education if it fails to imbibe contemporary education reforms. The focus of this paper is on the values of integrating Millennium Development Goals in Social Studies curriculum.

Conceptual Framework

Social Studies is meant to equip the learner with reflective thinking Value cognition and skills to identify and address the problems of the society (Mezieobi. 2006:4). The ultimate objective of the social studies programme in

Nigerian secondary schools is the improvement of social living, not merely in the classroom but in the community, the nation and the world (Joof 1994). Social studies unlike other subjects areas has a peculiar nature, primarily, it is culture bound as the focus is on man and his problems. Its curriculum contents are derived from many cultures which are subject to constant changes and innovation. Social studies is environmental focused and respond to dynamic changes in the society.

Social studies curricula of secondary schools in view of the dynamic changes and education reforms in Nigeria, need to be integrated with new ideas, concepts, knowledge and teachers in training should be equipped with contemporary education skills, in order to train their products to be creative, reflective in thinking, rational in decisions so as to move the society forward. Mezieobi (1994) argues that social studies curriculum which is bereft of contemporary issues is doomed to failure. This is because it is the place of social studies to mirror prevalent social issues and problems for learner's cognition and citizens' consumption. The millennium development goals (MDGS) as mentioned earlier are the eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development-challenges. The millennium development goals are drawn from the action and target blue print contained in the millennium Declaration, that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads government during the U.N. Millennium summit in September, 2000. The education sector in Nigeria is making effort to ensure total compliance to achieve the MDGS by 2015. It has been noted that MDGS has implications for restructuring and rebuilding Nigeria nation. This restructuring and rebuilding of Nigeria provides framework for integration of millennium development goals into social studies curriculum. Social Studies education is a veritable avenue for educating young people and preparing them for nation building (Osakwe, 1997:8).

The Relevance of Teaching Social Studies

The inclusion of Social Studies as one of the core subjects in the Junior Secondary School curriculum in Nigeria education system portrays its importance in nation development.

1. **Citizenship education:** Citizenship education is the heart of social studies education in Nigeria. Social studies is centered on teaching the child nationalism and patriotism. The child should think of national development and not ethnic development, the child should have respect for elders and constituted authority. The above point is in line with Fedeye (1981:2) who observed that the need for social integration and national unity in Nigeria is of prime importance. He further states that social studies offers ample opportunities for the promotion of much needed national unity in our country. He further posited that the subject is taught in schools because it would help to inculcate in pupils/students direct training in citizenship.
2. **Education for self-reliance:** Confidence is inculcated in the learner, skills for handwork and scientific inquiry is developed, thus social studies equip the learner with education for national survival and social living.

Social Studies education is highly focused on issues of social living and how the learner can be equipped with values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that will make him functionally fit as an individual in the progressive development of the society. (Mezieobi, 2006:3).

3. **Attitude formation development:** The learning of good values, direct ones attitudes for perception toward others or issues in the society. A good citizen should show positive attitudes in actions that could help national development such as participation n an election. In addition without doubt, social studies is a subject which could be used to address on long-term basis some of the problems in Nigeria arising from inter

ethnic conflicts, racial and ethnic prejudices, mutual suspicion etc. (Udoh, 1993:29- 30).

4. **Skill acquisition:** The learner acquired the skills or capabilities of communication, research, analyzing issues, location of information and assessment of events from social studies content of information. Furthermore, various experts reported that social studies was introduced in Nigeria's secondary schools as a medium of equipping the learner with functional citizenship skills, values attitudes and knowledge to fit into a dynamic society (Osakwe 1997, Esu and Daina, 1999 and Mezieobi 2005).
5. **Intellectual advancement:** The learner is exposed to events and issues within and external environment. This enlarges the scope of learning and experience.

Values of integration of millennium development goals in social studies curriculum

Social studies is defined as an integrative field of study which probes man symbiotic relationships with his environment, endows man with the reflective or contemplative capacities, intellectual, affective, social and work skills to enable him understand his world and its problems and to rationally solve or cope with them for effective living in the society (Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi 2008).

Social studies is the only subject designed to inject in the learners, reflective thinking; attitudinal and psychomotor components, to make the learner(s) acquire the education that will make him functionally fit in the society. Mezieobi, (2005) said in addition social studies has social, political, economical and technological relevance to national development. This is because its contents are organized around social environment issues affecting man's existence and his capacity to manage, preserve their environment for

sustainable development. Therefore, the place of national policy on education in given social studies a preeminent place in our educational system is ideal.

Social studies reflects contemporary issues

Social studies is a dynamic subject and its content is fluid hence integration of Millennium Goals into social studies curriculum is a sure way of attaining the millennium development goals by 2015.

The dynamic and fluid nature of social studies equips the programme and makes it apt to teach contemporary issues that feature prominently in present day life. Such topics include human right education, population education, death education, sex education and public education. Human right education enlightens citizens on their rights as members of the country. Environment education empowers a learner on how to manipulate his environment for his better survival and public education on the other hand ensures that the learner acquires skills, values and potentials to help him contribute his quota to the unity and progress of his country and global world.

Social living

Ezegbe (1988) revealed that the integration of millennium development goals into the social studies curriculum of junior secondary school is suitable because social studies is focused to study the entire life of man's social life and well being and also that issues affecting man should be studied from its interconnectedness. In addition millennium development goals should be incorporated into social studies because social studies is the heart of citizenship education which is an instrument par excellence in national development.

Information Development Skills

Millennium development goals are global issues focus of education, directed at improving the lot of less developed nations and advance nations of the world. It is imperative that we integrate the millennium development goals

into the junior secondary school curriculum in order to impart in the learners early enough the relevant information, knowledge, attitudes and skills to improve education, thereby achieving universal primary education, alleviate poverty, accentuate citizens health status, manage the environment productivity for national development.

Citizenship education

Jihoku (1980) defined social studies as a specific learning that is centered on one's environment, physical as well as human, and how to develop those skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that characterize a responsive and responsible citizen in a free society. We agree with Jihoku and we argue for incorporation of millennium development goals into the Junior Secondary School social studies curriculum because responsive citizenry development is the heart of social studies education and responsive and responsible citizen will make frantic effort to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve not only Universal Primary Education but sustainable education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce death rate in all ramification, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other deadly diseases.

Peaceful co-existence

Social studies imbibe in learner cooperation and team spirit through activity packed teaching methods like discussion, simulation game, problem-solving and so on. Thus, they learn that no man or community is self-sufficient and that for survival of an individual, community and national development we have to depend on exchange of goods and services between ourselves, and between one nation and the other. Then integration of millennium development goals into social studies will facilitate the development of global partnership in the sense of teaching international social, economic and political interrelations in its content.

Constraints

1. **Inadequate experienced teachers:** Professionally trained social studies teachers are inadequate. Many teachers in social studies education took teaching as a last resort having been rejected in other professions. They lack pedagogy required to impart necessary skills, knowledge for building functional citizens and promoting contemporary education as the MDGs.
2. **Non-integration of millennium development goals into the social studies curriculum:** The millennium development goal has not been fully integrated into Junior Secondary School curriculum, because of slow pace of curriculum reforms and revision in Nigeria.
3. **Inadequate materials on millennium development goals:** Some available social studies textbooks do not reflect millennium development goals adequately. Also there are inadequate innovative materials to enhance teaching and learning of social studies to reflect contemporary education.
4. **Non-awareness of millennium development goals:** Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the millennium development goals. This is because they are scarcely exposed to seminars, workshops to update their knowledge about millennium development goals objectives.
5. **Inadequate funding:** The acute shortage of funds to procure modern teaching materials like computers is also a major set back to the realization of MDGs., including the use of information communication technology materials.
6. **Poor motivation:** Teaching is a noble work if attached with good incentives. Unfortunately, this is not true. Teachers are not given sufficient opportunity for professional growth and development in their career. Poor remuneration has always discouraged teachers from carrying out research that will result in innovation and change along side with contemporary issues in the world.

Conclusion

Millennium development goals are not substantially integrated into social studies curriculum of Junior Secondary Schools. However, social studies education given its dynamic curriculum is apt for promoting millennium development goals. Teachers and specialists of social studies in view of dynamic changes in the globe had to update social studies text books and materials by reflecting contemporary issues. Teachers' professional development and growth is essential in order to be functional and resourceful in the classroom. Effective reflection of contemporary issues in social studies curriculum through periodic reforms and review of curriculum is a veritable means of equipping the learner with current learning in line with the MDGs.

Recommendations

- Professionally and competent social studies teachers should be employed to man the social studies classes.
- Social studies curriculum should be revised to incorporate contemporary global issues.
- Social studies teachers should be attending seminars, conferences and workshops to update their knowledge.
- Funds should be made available to purchase instructional materials, especially the modern ones.
- Social studies teachers should be continuously retrained in view of the dynamic nature of the society.
- Both government and stakeholders in education should work jointly in transforming education (social studies education) which is a sure way to achieving the millennium development goals.

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