

## TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA

OKORO, John Peter

Department of Governance and Development Management  
University for Development Studies, Wa Campus, Ghana

Research Article

### Corresponding Author\*

OKORO, John Peter

### Article History

Received: 09.06.2020

Accepted: 15.06.2020

Published: 30.06.2020



**Abstract:** Education is unarguably the bedrock of sustainable national development. As a major role player in the socio-economic development of nations, education has the potentials of infusing a culture of peace in the minds of the recipients. Education that fosters positive socio-economic development can help in pre- and post-conflict peacebuilding and of course prevent or solve armed conflicts. Higher education as a very important level of education, however, plays a dominant role in this direction. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have the mandate to build the human capital required to drive socio-economic growth in nations. This mandate is carried out in the form of training, research, and innovation for development. In Africa, tertiary education is still developing in terms of socio-economic development and peacebuilding mindedness. HEIs in Africa are constantly accused of producing graduates that do not match the needs of the industry. These graduates receive less or no training in the area of entrepreneurship, ICT, and peacebuilding, making them completely dependent on governments after graduation which in turn actuates conflict. Poor educational reforms, indiscipline, corruption, poor governance, shortage of resources, and political instability are seen as the major problems. To solve these problems,

universities are urged to orchestrate their training towards ensuring access to quality and relevant education that could divorce the minds of the receivers from being job seekers to job creators. African nations should transform higher education by including entrepreneurial, ICT and peace-building courses in national education curriculums as such could empower youths for socio-economic development and peaceful living. Adopting peace education in all the facets of operations of tertiary institutions in Africa should be encouraged. Therefore, this study presents how transforming higher education can lead to socio-economic development and peacebuilding in Africa.

**Keywords:** *Higher Education, Socio-economic Development, Peacebuilding, Africa*

## INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi once said:

We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated.

Nelson Mandela also added his voice when he said that “education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. Being the bedrock of sustainable national development, education is a major role player in the socio-economic development of nations and of course has the potentials of infusing a culture of peace in the minds of the recipients. It can as well help in the prevention and curation of armed conflicts as it plays roles in pre-, conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding. It is a truism that areas like war-torn countries,

post-conflict areas, poor regions, regions hit by natural disasters, population displacement areas, all yearn for education for recovery and repositioning. UNICEF in 2011 indicated that scholars, international organizations, and world leaders are of agreement that education is an important tool to mitigate conflicts, help economic and social development, and to reduce social disparities. World governments admit that education has a fundamental role for present and future generations which has been manifested through the signing of agendas like Education 2030, Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDG) – ended in 2015, which aim to ensure universal education and lifelong learning opportunities, oversees by the UN and implemented by UNESCO, UNICEF, etc. However, rebuilding and stabilizing a society has a serious problem if a whole generation of adolescents and young adults lack basic knowledge, vocational training and higher education (NORAD, 2016). Bloom (2004) highlights the importance of education in the developing and globalized world, by revealing that education has a central role in promoting good health, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Governments are, however, increasingly realizing that the entire educational system from early childhood through tertiary education must reflect the new social and economic needs of the global economy, which increasingly demands a better-trained, more skilled, and adaptable workforce. For instance, the former president of Nigeria (Goodluck Ebele Jonathan) directed in January 2012, that all Nigerian university undergraduates should be made to offer entrepreneurship as a compulsory course in their degree programs. According to him, the course would ensure that Nigerian graduates were adequately empowered and self-reliant. He added that the course would also open them to other viable employment for entrepreneurship to thrive. Africans could only progress as a nation if its youth are gainfully employed or otherwise engaged in other useful purposes.

HEIs have the mandate of a building that required human capital to drive socio-economic growth in nations. This mandate is carried out in the form of training, research, and innovation for development. In Africa, tertiary education is far beyond expectation in terms of focus on socio-economic development and peacebuilding and therefore calls for more attention in the area. The policymakers and/or program implementers should channel efforts towards socio-economic development and peacebuilding through entrepreneurship, ICT and peace education as important topics for sustainable national development. This paper examines in particular how transforming higher education can positively influence socio-economic development and peacebuilding in Africa, using a three-country case study and utilizing comparative content analysis. The first country, Liberia, represents a post-conflict nation where post-conflict peacebuilding processes have been ongoing, the second country, Ghana, adjudged to be peaceful and armed conflict-free since independence, represents an example of pre-conflict peacebuilding processes, while the third country is Nigeria which represents a nation with ongoing armed conflict, owing to Boko haram, Herdsmen terrorism, and Bandits. As such, the findings here can inform further work on education programming and policy development, for peacebuilding interventions and socioeconomic development.

## **THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Universities and other higher education institutions in Africa are constantly being accused of producing graduates that do not match the needs of the industry. This is evidenced in Ayarkwa, Adinyira, & Osei-Asibey's (2011) assertion that the Ghanaian labor market has become increasingly competitive for recent graduates from higher education institutions without adequate practical education and entrepreneurial skills. According to them, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare in the country drafted a national employment policy in 2009 and noted that Ghana's higher education system was continuing to graduate an unskilled labor

workforce for a job market with limited employment opportunities. These graduates receive less or no training in the area of entrepreneurship, making them completely depend on governments after graduation which can potentially actuate conflicts. The goal of higher education should be geared towards training students who will after their graduation be suitably qualified to do specific jobs, having supposedly been trained in particular areas. But the elephantine question here is, the supposed trainers, in terms of lecturers, are they themselves adequately trained as required in advanced skills acquisition that will enable them to impart more meaningfully on the students at the high-level training? That is to say, are the lecturers sponsored to attend conferences, seminars, technical innovation workshops, etc., that will enable them to possess the necessary skills needed to train the students in the required areas? Are there provision of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, etc., that are capable of enhancing the required training?

Nigerian streets have been flooded with millions of unemployed graduates who roam about searching for already prepared jobs (Ene & Ene, 2015). Many of them who studied courses that require demonstrating of practical skills can not demonstrate during job interviews. Ene and Ene also maintained that lecturers should be blamed for not teaching students well while students should be blamed of depending on exam malpractices for their acclaimed success. Poor educational reforms, poor infrastructure, indiscipline, corruption, poor governance, shortage of resources, and political instability are seen as the major problems (Omega, 2012, Alimba, 2013). Omega (2012), maintains that poor infrastructural development and facilities, poor funding, discrimination on the products of the system, and poor curriculum development are the cause of the higher education backwardness. It has also been established that societal attitude, discrimination and poor funding are the major constraints to the development of effective Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Ghana (Atsumbe, 2012). No wonder, Ali Mazrui (1993) posited that:

African university was conceived primarily as a transmission belt for Western high culture, rather than a workshop for the transfer of Western high skills. African universities became nurseries for a Westernised black intellectual aristocracy. Graduates of Ibadan, Dakar, Makerere acquired Western social tastes more readily than Western organization skills. Those graduates became steeped in Western consumption patterns rather than Western productive techniques. We became wordsmiths – and often despised blacksmiths!

Moreover, in Nigeria's public sector-led economy of the 1960s to mid-1980s, the graduates from Nigerian universities proved their worth in the public service of white-collar jobs. Whilst in today Nigeria's private sector-led economy, Nigerian university graduates cannot meet the employer's needs. They cannot prove their mettle. The graduates are loafers, job seekers, as against graduate workers and job creators (Makinde, 2005). The graduates cannot even engage selves and create jobs but may remain jobless job seekers for many years to come. They are neither employable nor enterprise-ready (ibid). This is because the psychomotor domain inherent in an effective education system is lacking. When the minds are educated and the hands remain illiterates, how can we apply what we have learned in society? Do we apply with minds? No, hands do them. However, infusing entrepreneurship and ICT education in all facets of higher education programs and making them compulsory for all students irrespective of a programme can help bridge the skill deficiencies or gaps between study programs and industry requirements in African countries, and in turn, reduce the unemployment rate. This article advocated for the strengthening of higher education through entrepreneurial, ICT, and peace education, for socio-economic development and peacebuilding in Africa. To achieve the purpose of the study, analysis and discussions are based on the following thematic areas:

- Conceptualizing socioeconomic development and peacebuilding
- The role of Higher education in socio-economic development
- The Role of higher education in peacebuilding
- The state of higher education in Africa

- Transforming higher education for socio-economic development and peacebuilding in Africa

## **CONCEPTUALIZING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING**

Socioeconomic development emphasizes progress in terms of economic and social factors within a geographic unit. Economic development is the process of raising the level of prosperity through increased production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Social development, on the other hand, refers to the complexity of social dynamics (the interplay of social structures, processes and relationships) and focuses on (1) the social concerns of the people as objectives of development and (2) people-centered, participatory approaches to development. Social development is about inclusiveness, social justice and the common good. Indicators of social development provide comparative information about areas such as income, poverty, employment, employment security, education, health, crime and civic participation. The purpose of economic development is to improve the social and material well-being of all individuals and social institutions with the goal of achieving the highest possible level of human development. Socioeconomic development, therefore, requires the integration of economic and social development. The impacts of socio-economic development are seen in changes in laws, changes in the physical environment, ecological changes and changes in security situations of every society (Okoro, 2018). Progress in the quality of social and economic life should only be seen as progress if it is rights-based and minimally affects, conserves, or improves the natural environment. In 2007, the Secretary-General's Policy Committee defined peacebuilding to inform UN practice as follows: *Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore a relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.*

## **THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Higher education (HE) plays an essential and growingly important role in social and economic development globally. It gives greater chance to the people to improve their lives, the lives of their families as it secures job opportunities for them and furnishes them with brilliant ideas to create jobs for others by establishing new businesses and institutions (Mory, 2015). That is to say that HE benefits not just the individual, but society as a whole. HE produces graduates who are more environmentally conscious, a higher level of civic participation and healthier habits. Yizengaw (2008) see HE as a driven tool for economic stability, sustainable peace, social development, scientific innovation and technological advancement. He added that HE is beneficial in many ways; thus, can increase employment opportunities, facilitate salary increment; bring about greater productivity and national development in all domains. It is instrumental to socioeconomic development as it fosters growth, reduce poverty and boost shared prosperity by increasing opportunity for higher earnings, healthier children, and reduction of family size for stronger nations. Pillay (2010) posited that HE system forms the basis for a regionally comprehensive innovation system. According to him, present universities and polytechnics are seen to be key components in the national and regional innovation systems, in which they operate in close interaction with business and industry, and other regional players. As a result of the current technological advances and knowledge-intensive operations, economic and social development is increasingly built on human capital.

In an analysis of 47 World Education Indicators (WEI) in Europe by WEI Programme, UNESCO Institute of Statistics and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, it was found that better-educated people were more likely to be in work and, if economically active, less likely to be unemployed. Consequently,

access to and completion of higher education is a key determinant in the accumulation of human capital, a prerequisite for human rights and civil liberties, good health, a clean environment, and personal safety. In all the WEI countries, it was discovered that the labour force participation rates increased with the level of education attained by individuals; and better qualifications also attracted higher wages for individuals. Similarly, data from 49 countries of the Asia Pacific region has been used to demonstrate the significant effect of HE on the economic growth of nations. The result has shown that the larger the stock of population with HE, the higher the prospects of economic growth (Tilak, 2003). University of Arizona research in 2005 concluded that there are three major ways HE influences the economic well-being of society:

- Direct expenditures by the institutions, their employees, and students, impact local economy.
- Provision of financial and other benefits to the individual who pursues advanced education and to society, in general. The average earnings of individuals are closely related to their educational attainment. The average wage is higher in communities with a substantial proportion of highly educated workers.
- Institutions of higher education are increasingly focused on knowledge creation. Thus, universities are the sources of key research and development innovations that can also be beneficial to society and conducive to economic growth (Hill, 2005).

According to Gigerich (2011), HE and economic development are inextricably linked to one another, and for any country to be successful in economic development, universities must be key partners throughout the process.

## **THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PEACEBUILDING**

Unarguably, education is critical to both pre-conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding, though capable of creating conflict when injustice replete the system. Education policies can create conditions for violent conflict or the conditions for peace. For instance, Seitz (2004) argues that education policies that exacerbate the impact of direct gender-specific, structural and cultural violence, combined with badly-organized education, whether intended or not, can contribute to the escalation of societal conflicts. Education has been shown to reinforce or drive economic and social exclusion, inequality and social fragmentation along ethnic or religious lines (UNICEF, 2014). Management and governance of education can contribute to conflict, especially if corruption is present or wider political processes that are weak and ineffective. Therefore, reducing inequalities in educational provision and resources, as well as fighting corruption may reduce grievances that underpin conflict. The case of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria is evidence of conflict emanating owing to lack of education in the side of the group and directionless policy in the side of Nigeria (Okoro, 2016). It is also not far from the recent Fulani Herdsmen terrorism that has killed many Nigerians and depleted the national economy as the herdsmen lacks education and thus get frustrated when conversing with the residents of their host communities (Okoro, 2018, 2020). Effective education management is critical to the role of education in responding to conflicts and emergencies if they were to arise again (UNICEF, 2014).

Furthermore, proper investment in higher education systems is critical for building peace. Quality education through policies that target job creation can create a violence-free society, and because the curriculum is a critical element, it will be helpful to target entrepreneurship and ICT education to enable receivers to create job by themselves after graduation which will overall heighten constraints against the use of violence and promote human rights. Education that fosters positive socioeconomic development can help prevent conflicts.

## **THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA**



There are three levels of education almost common globally. These are primary, secondary (high) and higher (tertiary) education. Although the primary and secondary education provides the foundation for quality education, this paper focuses more on higher education – known as the third level, and its relationship with socio-economic development and peacebuilding. The range of higher education differ among countries globally, however, it generally involves teaching, research, practical application of knowledge, and social services. A number of countries have undertaken major restructuring of their tertiary education systems to enhance their reach and effectiveness. However, progress has been uneven (Alimba, 2013). Both policies and program degrees need to be better tailored to fit the needs of the local economy (World Bank Group, 2017). Only then can governments realize the gains in tertiary school attainment and turn their successes into increased social and economic development.

### **Higher Education in Liberia**

Mory (2015) opined that the economic benefit of tertiary education in Liberia is nowadays vividly seen as some multinational company might want to employ Liberians at key positions with luxurious salary, but because of lack of qualified Liberians, the jobs go to non-Liberians. In his words: “I had meeting with the Director of Dispute Settlement at the Ministry of Labour Mr. Nathaniel Dickerson, he told me during our discussion that a company approached them for the assistance of having a Liberia geologist to occupy a post, but unfortunately they were not able to meet the qualified target, thus job went to non-Liberia with all its benefits”.

However, the Liberian government designed a ten (10) years higher education strategic plan in the year 2012 to reposition Liberia educationally. In the strategic plan, the vision for Liberia’s higher education system is ‘*a higher education system producing intellectual and human resources focusing on national, social, political, and economic development*’. While the collective mission statements include:

- To develop a sustainable higher education system that provides access, equity, quality, and promotes relevant research and consultancy.
- To facilitate the delivery of quality and relevant higher education programs.
- To aspire for all institutions of higher education to meet national and international standards

Similarly, the government in pursuance to implementing its strategic plan formulated a *National Policy on Higher Education* in the year 2015 which sets forth a framework for the guidance and direction of higher education in Liberia. It defines what is meant by higher education and details the procedures and guidelines for the creation and maintenance of quality higher education institutions in Liberia. It also states the regulatory responsibilities of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE). The policy defined HE or TE education as “those institutions engaged in the delivery of all degree-granting academic programs of study above secondary school level. These higher education institutions (HEIs) are either called colleges or universities” (Liberian National Policy on Education, 2015). The term college has several meanings. In Liberia, there are two-year colleges (often referred to as community colleges or junior colleges) that award only associate’s degrees. There are also four-year colleges that award baccalaureate degrees. As in the policy document, a university has several colleges such as a College of Arts and Sciences, College of Agriculture, or College of Nursing. It may also contain “Schools” such as a Law School or a School of Medicine. In many countries, universities also offer graduate degrees, although this is not a rule. In Liberia, most universities do not offer graduate degrees. Colleges (either stand-alone colleges or colleges within a university) may contain divisions or departments. Stand-alone colleges are headed by a president. Colleges within a university are headed by deans. Meanwhile, in Liberia, tertiary-level institutions are supervised by the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE). At the university level, programmes leading to a certificate last nine months to one year, while those leading to a diploma (associate degree) take two or three years to complete. Bachelor’s degree programmes normally last four years (three years in the case of law; five years in the case of engineering

and geology). In the case of medicine, the doctorate is conferred after seven years of study. The categories of Higher education institutions in Liberia are shown in table 1 below

Table 1: Shows the categories of approved higher education institutions (HEI) in Liberia

Number	Category of Institution	Total
1	Community Colleges	8
2	<b>Health Institutions</b>	3
3	<b>National Teachers Colleges</b>	2
4	<b>Private Tertiary Institutions</b>	15
5	<b>Distance Learning Centers</b>	1
6	<b>Public Universities</b>	2
7	<b>Private Universities</b>	<b>8</b>
Total		48

Source: adapted from <http://ncheliberia.org/> and manipulated by the author, 2018.

### **General Studies (GST) Department in Liberian Tertiary Institutions**

In Liberia, compulsory courses for all students are not called general studies (GST), but Required Courses (RC). Although, varies depending on the institutions, but mostly, English language, Mathematics, Philosophy and Management are made compulsory for all students regardless of doing a diploma or degree. However, there is no entrepreneurship, ICT, nor peace education as a compulsory course for all higher education students in the country.

### **Higher Education in Ghana**

A tertiary institution is defined by Ghana's Education Strategic Plan 2010-2020 as a post-secondary institution of higher or further learning, or professional studies. It is expected to provide advanced academic and/or professional instruction and conduct research in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and career-focused programmes. According to the ESP document, the main objective of a tertiary institution is to train people to be capable of critical thinking, acquire knowledge and skills and also to be able to undertake research that will be beneficial for the development of the community and to advance the frontiers of knowledge. The document enumerated the goals of tertiary sector in Ghana as thus:

- To uphold quality standards in management and teaching and learning to foster the development of world-class human resources
- To contribute to the advancement of knowledge and scholarship; and thereby serve as a resource base for addressing national development challenges
- To support the orderly development of the 1st and 2nd cycle sub-sectors and technical institutions whose products ultimately serve as sources of recruitment into TEI
- To forge partnerships with industry, commerce and international institutions to harness local and international support for tertiary education in Ghana
- To promote professionalism, equity, excellence, autonomy and academic freedom in the tertiary subsector
- To review tertiary curricula in line with current labour market trends.

Consequently, the ESP document indicated the strategies to achieve the tertiary goals in Ghana to include:

- a) Facilitate and increase equitable access to tertiary education, including distance education, for those eligible
- b) Strengthen technical vocational education and training within the universities and polytechnics

- c) Support collaboration between tertiary education institutions, business and commerce, and international and local educational institutions
- d) Facilitate research and postgraduate education
- e) Facilitate quality and excellence in tertiary education
- f) Build capacity in tertiary level governance, planning and management
- g) Promote science and technology education
- h) Support national development priority areas in tertiary education
- i) Support the orderly development of Colleges of Education (Ghana ESP 2010-2020)

Nevertheless, Gondwe and Walenkamp (2011) reviewed that the 2006 national census held by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) shows that middle and higher education (i.e. universities, polytechnics, specialized colleges, technical and general secondary schools and technical training institutes, both public and private) contribute only 9.4% of the personnel in the Ghanaian labour market. All other employees have less than a senior secondary level education (28.6% completed their primary and junior secondary education, 26.7% attended primary and junior secondary school but did not complete the education and 35.3% have no formal education) (Jowi, Obamba, Sehoole, Alabi, Oanda & Barifaijo, 2014). In an attempt to solve the problems of graduate employability and the disparity between university graduates and those of polytechnics, the Republic of Ghana upgraded eight (8) polytechnics to Technical Universities in April 2016. Although the conversion generated some comments from different groups, while some saw it as a welcomed development, some saw it differently. For instance, Nunyonameh (2016) posited that converting polytechnics to technical universities is a brilliant move by the government of Ghana because it will solve unemployment problems and create jobs, but if care is not taken it will not yield the intended results. Technical universities are like mini industries where design, construction, manufacturing, production, etc, take place. Students after finishing technical universities can work on their own and will not wait to be employed by the government. Table 2 presents the categories of higher education in Ghana.

Table 2: Number of accredited tertiary institutions in Ghana per category as of June 2018.

Number	Category of Institution	Total
1	Public University	10
2	Public Degree Awarding/Professional Institution	7
3	Regionally-Owned (West Africa) Tertiary Institution	1
4	Chartered Private Institution	5
5	Private Tertiary Institutions offering degree and HND Programme	81
6	Distance Learning Institution	1
7	Tutorial College	7
8	Public Polytechnic	4
9	Private Polytechnic	1
10	Technical Universities	6
11	Private Colleges of Education	7
12	Public Colleges of Education	39
13	Colleges of Agriculture	1
14	Public Nurses Training College	25
15	Private Nurses Training College	13
16	Registered Foreign Institution	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>

Source: Adapted from <http://www.nab.gov.gh>, 2018



The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) was established by Act 454, 1993 as a supervisory body of TE in Ghana with a mandate to promote quality, relevance and excellence in TE, to facilitate the development of world-class human resources and to support national development. The National Accreditation Board (NAB), answerable to the NCTE, has M&E oversight responsibility for public and private tertiary education. It ensures that tertiary awards conform to normative standards and that institutions meet minimum standards. Any new university, polytechnic or college must apply to NAB for accreditation before being allowed to operate. In addition, NAB is responsible for tertiary-level statistics. NAB accredits all categories of tertiary institutions, be they universities, university colleges, polytechnics, colleges, schools, institutions, academies, or tutorial colleges. By law, all public and private tertiary institutions must seek accreditation (NAB, 2018).

### **General Studies Department in Ghana Higher Education**

The general studies courses in Ghana higher institutions include GEN 102 African Studies, GEN 101 Communication Skills (English), GEN 103 Study Skills, and Statistics. However, the nomenclature is not the same across all universities in Ghana, for example, the University of Ghana (UG) offer them as: Academic Writing, Numeracy Skills, and Introduction to African Studies.

### **Higher Education in Nigeria**

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004) defined tertiary education to include, universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotechnics. Whilst defining higher education as that form of education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, including those institutions offering correspondence courses (NPE, 2004). The policy enumerated the aim of Tertiary education in Nigeria to include:

- a) To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training.
- b) To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- c) To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- d) To promote and encourage scholarship and community services.
- e) To forge and cement national unity; and
- f) To promote national and international understanding and interaction.

However, according to Jaja (2013), the product of our universities are not marketable and cannot be compared with counterparts in other parts of the world. This is translated into the many unemployable graduates roaming the streets of Nigeria. As in the case of Liberia and Ghana, there is usually a quality control mechanism. In the Nigerian case, therefore, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are regulated by various parastatal under the ministry of education, depending on the category of the institution. For instance, the National Universities Commission (NUC) is saddled with the responsibility of regulating and accrediting all university establishments and courses. National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) regulate and accredit all polytechnics, monotechnics, school of health technologies, and other higher institutions of Innovation Enterprises. While National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) regulate and accredit all colleges of education. Table 3 below makes it clearer.

Table 3: Higher education institutions (HEI) and accreditation Agencies in Nigeria

Number	Category of Institution	Total	Regulatory Agency
1	Federal Polytechnics	28	NBTE
2	State Polytechnics	41	NBTE
3	Private Polytechnics	44	NBTE
4	Federal Monotechnics/ Specialised Institutions	22	NBTE
5	State Monotechnics/ Specialised Institutions	2	NBTE
6	Private Monotechnics/ Specialised Institutions	2	NBTE
7	Federal Colleges of Agriculture	17	NBTE
8	State Colleges of Agriculture	19	NBTE
9	Federal Colleges of Health Technology and Allied Institutions	22	NBTE
10	State Colleges of Health Technology and Allied Institutions	13	NBTE
11	Private Colleges of Health Technology and Allied Institutions	6	NBTE
12	Federal Innovation Enterprises Institutions (IEIs)	5	NBTE
13	State Innovation Enterprises Institutions (IEIs)	2	NBTE
14	Private Innovation Enterprises Institutions (IEIs)	131	NBTE
15	Federal Colleges of Education	22	NCCE
16	State Colleges of Education	47	NCCE
17	Private Colleges of Education	16	NCCE
18	Federal Universities	41	NUC
19	State Universities	47	NUC
20	Private Universities	74	NUC
<b>Total</b>		<b>601</b>	

Source: *Author's construct, 2018*

### General Studies Department in Nigerian Higher Education System

The National University Commission (NUC) launched the GST programme into the University's curricula. This was done in order to satisfy the longing for students in Nigerian Universities to be well-grounded in interdisciplinary studies so as to compare conveniently with their mates in other parts of the globe (Nweke & Nwoye, 2016). With the inclusion of this programme to the specialized courses offered by the students, it is hoped that graduates would go out better equipped to deliver in society. Particularly, the GST Programme aims at helping students build necessary and enough competence in the area of employment/enterprise. Equally, it empowers them to gather a body of situational relevant awareness beyond their individual areas of specialization for a better and successful living. It can also socialise the Nigerian students to cultivate acceptable behaviors, attitudes, patriotism, nationalism, and value the status of the constitution as well as create the awareness in students about the roles and obligations of Government at all levels (Charles et al, 2016). With the aim of making Nigerian graduates self-reliant and more resourceful, the Federal Ministry of education introduced entrepreneurship education into the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education curriculum through their regulatory and supervisory agencies – National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). This became pragmatic in order to offer a realistic approach to solving the problems of unemployment facing the nation. Thus, entrepreneurship development has been made a compulsory course for all students in the three levels of tertiary education irrespective of students' areas of specialization (Yahya, 2011).

Table 4: General Studies' Courses in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions

Course Code	Course Title	Purpose
GST 101	USE OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION SKILL	Introduced into Nigerian tertiary institutions to enable students and graduates to express themselves competently in the English language.
CIT 101	USE OF COMPUTER AND APPLICATION SOFTWARE	To equip students in the area of information and communication technology. General application of computer and manipulation of software.
GST 102	PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC	To inculcate in students the values of positive and moral character and the custom of rational enquiry as prerequisite for the struggles of life in a post-tertiary society, etc.
GST 103	NIGERIAN PEOPLES AND CULTURE	Build and promote the cultural heritage of the indigenous Nigerian and African traditions.
GST 104	HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE	Targeted at familiarizing the students with primary knowledge of the humble beginning of science and technology. Scientific reasoning, technology application.
GST 222	PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STUDIES	Designed to open students up to Peace and Conflict Resolution as necessary recipes for national development. Students are exposed to basic concepts of Peace Studies – Conflict, Violence, Peace, Mediation, Ceasefire, Peacemaking, Peace Enforcement, Peacebuilding, ADR, etc
GST 223	ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDIES	To breed graduates with some added values beyond their particular area of study for the sole aim of self-reliance. Focuses on re-channeling education/training for relevance and quality by building in the undergraduate/graduate an entrepreneurial frame of mind and furnishing each with the skills required to begin and manage a business successfully.

Source: *Authors' Construct, 2018*

### **TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA**

Generally, education focuses on three cardinal points; cognitive domain (knowledge), affective domain (altitude), and psychomotor domain (skills). In other words, education communicates knowledge, develops skills and changes attitudes in people. However, it is essential to ingrain three other concepts – Entrepreneurial education, Peace education, and ICT education into the education we offer to the higher education recipients. These concepts are essential to bringing about the needed transformation in higher education in Africa. The idea of conflict-sensitive education and peacebuilding has been limited to students enrolled in some of the new emerging courses like peace studies, conflict resolution, security studies, governance and leadership studies, and so forth in many countries of Africa. This restrictive approach ostensibly misses the mark as it tends to exclude the vast majority of university students enrolled in mainstream social sciences (e.g. sociology, political science and economics) and the considerably non-cognate courses such as the natural and applied sciences, from the vital knowledge and skills of conflict-sensitive education and peacebuilding. Furthermore, transforming higher education through the inculcation of ICT education, entrepreneurial education and peacebuilding into education curriculum targeting all higher education recipients will positively affect socio-

economic development and peacebuilding in Africa. Of course, when socio-economic development is distributed equitably, it will lead to peacebuilding, and the reverse when there is injustice in the distribution. Also, when peacebuilding is sustainable, a culture of peace takes its place in society, which itself could lead to socio-economic development (see figure 1). Thus, it is high time our higher institutions began to train students on skills they can use rather than waiting for government employment.

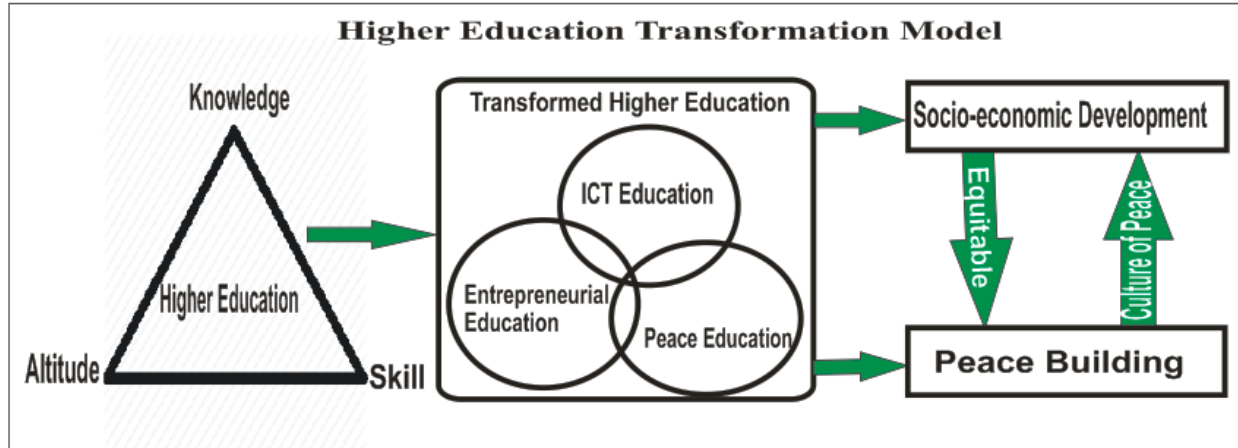


Figure 1: Higher Education Transformation Model  
 Source: *Author's Construct, 2018*

**ICT Education**

Information and communication technology (ICT), within a very short time, has become one of the basic building blocks of modern society. The use of ICT cuts across all aspects of economic and social life. Technological developments in ICT are very rapid. Many countries now regard understanding ICT and mastering the basic skills and concepts of ICT as part of the core of education, alongside reading, writing and numeracy. One of UNESCO’s overriding aims is to ensure that all countries, both developed and developing, have access to the best educational facilities necessary to prepare young people to play full roles in modern society and to contribute to a knowledge nation. ICT adds value to the processes of learning, and in the organization and management of learning institutions. The education curriculum of African Nations should be designed to be capable of implementation throughout the facet of all higher education institutions for students. The programme of teacher professional development should relate closely to the ICT curriculum, as that would expose the teachers to the use of ICT in teaching-learning. The Internet is a driving force for much development and innovation in both developed and developing countries, therefore, African countries should ingrain ICT education into the higher education system for all to benefit from the technological developments. To be able to do so, a cadre of professionals has to be educated with sound ICT backgrounds, independent of specific computer platforms or software environments.

**Entrepreneurial Education**

Education with job-seeking intentions can no longer solve unemployment imbroglio, as the number of graduates have outgrown the number of available jobs in the market globally, thus the need for job creation minded education. Entrepreneurship education plays a role in helping individuals reach their full potential and solving unemployment problems in any society. The Centre for Entrepreneurship should be furnished with a Lab/workshop/Resource room to interface skills acquisition hands-on testing of prototypes for interested students from all areas of study on the academic offerings in the University. Skills requisitions are in 3 categories, A, B, and C. as listed below.

Table 5: Categories of skill acquisition through entrepreneurial education

GROUP A TRADE (SKILLS)	GROUP B	GROUP C
1. Soap/Detergent, Tooth Brushes and Tooth Paste Making 2. Cloth dying/Textile blocks making 3. Rope making 4. Brewing 5. Water treatment/conditioning/packaging 6. Food Processing/Packaging/Preservation 7. Tanning Industry 8. Fisheries/Aquaculture 9. Bakery 10. Leather tanning	1. Photography 2. Paper Production 3. Farming (Crop) 4. Tailoring 5. Interior decoration 6. Printing 7. Animal Husbandry (Poultry, Piggery, Goat Etc) 8. Book - keeping.	1. Bricks, Nails, Screws making 2 Plumbing. 3. Vulcanizing 4. Glassware Production/Ceramic Production 5. Metal Working/Fabrication-Steel Aluminum doors/Windows 6. Refrigeration/Air-conditioning 7. Plastic Making 8. Domestic Electrical Wiring 9 Radio/TV Repairs 10. Carving 11. Weaving 12. Brick Laying/Making 13. Iron welding 14. Carpentry 15. Building drawing

Source: Author’s Construct, 2018

**Peace Education**

The goals for peace education may vary according to the level of tension or conflict in any one society at a given time. Objectives may range from imparting core behavioural skills and values to ensuring an understanding of human rights and preparing for active citizenship. However, for some, peace education is mainly a matter of changing mindsets: the general purpose is to promote understanding, respect and tolerance for yesterday’s neighbors. For others, peace education is mainly a matter of cultivating a set of skills to acquire a non-violent disposition and conflict resolution skills, for still others, peace education is mainly a matter of promoting human rights, while in more affluent countries it is often a matter of environmentalism, disarmament and the promotion of a culture of peace (Sinclair, 2004). Modern peace education is predicated on the progressive achievements of peace research and has been popularly defined as “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth, and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intra-personal, inter-personal, inter-group, national or international level (Fountain, 1999; UNESCO, 2002). Some proponents of peace education have shown a close relationship between peace education and citizenship education, arguing that citizenship education aims to empower individuals to become responsible (legally and socially) functional members of society through civic training while the peace education pursues a similar goal by promoting the concepts of non-violence, human rights, social justice, world-mindedness, ecological balance, meaningful participation, and personal peace (Hicks, 2004; Cook, 2008). Since wars begin in the minds of men, UNESCO (2002) contends that it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed. However, exponents are of the view that in deeply divided multi-ethnic societies emerging from war and ravaged by institutional and infrastructural collapse, as well as extreme poverty and mass illiteracy, peace education could, for instance, be oriented towards the reconciliation of bitterly divided ethnic communities; promotion of institutional reconstruction; provision of public infrastructure, education and skills training; job creation and poverty reduction (Francis, 2008; Alimba, 2013). African countries should, therefore, focus on developing a good constructive curriculum development and training that would enable a healthy impartation of the culture of peace into the minds of all.

**CONCLUSION**



Finally ICT, Entrepreneurial, and Peace Education can aid students to grow in skills and develop the knowledge of their social, cultural and physical milieu which automatically will equip them to operate actively in their society. Efforts should be made to create national awareness of the importance of technical and vocational education. There should be a deliberate effort by the government to create a conducive atmosphere for both the public and the private sectors to enable the graduates of these higher institutions to enter into the industry as early as practicable after graduating. Strong commitments and the injection of money into higher education by all governments can go a long way in creating a conducive environment to the teacher and the students. Higher institutions that are having outdated facilities, research and innovations should be renovated and having them more equipped for practical instead of the traditional theoretical method. Finally, the inculcation of these tripartite concepts (entrepreneurial, peace and ICT education) into the higher education system in Africa will underpin inter alia, these three pillars of employment policy interventions: One is supporting very small enterprises (VSEs), the essential part of the self-employment ecosystem. The second is promoting labor-intensive industries. Building industries could provide a shortcut to overcome the constraints that Africa's business environment simultaneously imposes, and the third is peacebuilding and sustainable national development.

## REFERENCES

1. Alimba, N. C. (2013). *Peace Education, Transformation of Higher Education and Youths Empowerment for Peace In Africa*. International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research Volume 2, Issue 12, December 2013 ISSN 2277-8616. 338 IJSTR©2013 www.ijstr.org
2. Eneh, A.N. & Eneh, O.C. (2015). *Rethinking the Curriculum of Nigerian University Education: Functionality Challenges*. Sustainable Human Development Review, Vol. 7, Nos. 1-4, Dec., 2015
3. Escrigas, C. (2008). *Forward in GUNI Higher Education in the World 3*, Palgrave Mcmillan: London, 2008.
4. GOVERNMENT OF GHANA: EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 to 2020  
<http://ncheliberia.org/>  
<http://www.nab.gov.gh/news1/414-accredited-published-tertiary-institutions-as-at-august-2016-summary>  
<https://www.myjoyonline.com/opinion/2016/April-20th/converting-the-polytechnics-technical-universities-or-inferior-universities.php>  
<https://www.myschoolgist.com/ng/private-universities-in-nigeria/>  
<https://www.nbte.gov.ng/institutions.html>
5. James Otieno Jowi, Milton Obamba, Chika Schoole, Goski Alabi, Ogachi Oanda & Maria Barifaijo, (2014). *Governance of Higher Education Research and Innovation in Ghana, Uganda, and Kenya. OECD 2014*
6. JBT Tilak (2013) "Higher Education and Development," International Seminar, University XXI, Brasilia, November 2003.
7. Jones M. Jaja (2013). *Higher Education in Nigeria: ts Gain, its Burden*. Global Journal of Human Social Science, Linguistics & Education. Global Journals Inc. (USA). Volume 13 Issue 14 Version 1.0 Year 2013
8. Kendra Dupuy (2008). *Building Peace and Transforming Armed Conflict Through Education Systems International Peace Research Institute*, Oslo (PRIO) for Save the Children Norway Report no.ISBN 82-7481-165-8
9. Kenneth Omeje (2015). *Strengthening Peace Research and Peace Education in African Universities*. African Sociological Review Vol 19 1 2015
10. Kent Hill et. al., "The Value of Higher Education: Individual and Societal Benefits," Arizona State University, Oct 2005. P. 4.

11. Larry Gigerich, "The Impact of Higher Education on Economic Development", [www.insideindianabusiness.com](http://www.insideindianabusiness.com) (14 May, 2011)
12. Larry Gigerich, "The Impact of Higher Education on Economic Development", [www.insideindianabusiness.com](http://www.insideindianabusiness.com) (14 May, 2011)
13. Mory, D.A Sumaworo (2015). *Challenges of Tertiary Education in Liberia and Possible Solutions* European Scientific Journal November 2015 /Special/ edition ISSN: 1857 – 7881 (Print) e - ISSN 1857- 7431
14. National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE), Leberia
15. Nweke, C. C. & Nwoye, C. D. (2016). *Higher Education and General Studies in Nigeria: A Philosophical Investigation*. Mgbakoigba, Journal of African Studies. Vol.6 No.1. July 2016 1
16. Nyarko, P.D.A (2011). Polytechnic education in Ghana: Challenges and problems. A paper presented at the Kick-Off Conference, NPT/UCC Project
17. Okoro, John Peter (2016). Humanitarian Challenges Facing Internally Displaced Persons in Camps in Borno State, Nigeria. Unpublished Thesis. National Open University of Nigeria.
18. Okoro, John Peter (2018). *Herdsmen/Farmers Conflict and its Effects on Socio-Economic Development In Nigeria*. Journal of Peace, Security, and Development. Volume 4, No. 1, 2018. Pp.143-158. ISSN: 2360-9435
19. Okoro, John Peter (2018). Herdsmen-Farmers' Conflicts: Implication on National Development (Nigeria in Perspective). *Paper Presented at the 1st International Conference of Social Sciences (ICOSS'2018) held at National Open University of Nigeria. 25th June, 2018.*
20. Okoro, John Peter (2020). Herdsmen – Farmers' Conflict: Implication on National Development (Nigeria in Perspective). International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research Volume 11, Issue 2, February-2020 808 ISSN 2229-5518.
21. Omega, E, M.M (2010). *Repositioning Polytechnic Education in Nigeria*. <http://www.studymode.com>.
22. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee, 'Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Working draft for application period', OECD, Paris, 2008.
23. Pundy Pillay (2010). *Linking Higher Education and Economic Development: Implications for Africa from Three Successful Systems*. Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), House Vincent, First Floor, 10 Brodie Road, Wynberg Mews, Wynberg, 7800.
24. Seitz C. (2004). *Education and Conflict The role of education in the creation, prevention and resolution of societal crises – Consequences for development cooperation*. GIZ, Germany <https://www.giz.de/fachexpertise/downloads/giz2014-en-education-conflict.pdf>
25. The Statesman (2007). Re-visioning Africa's tertiary education in the transition to a knowledge economy. Ghana's Oldest Mainstream Newspaper. Accra: Ghana,.
26. UNESCO, OECD, and WEI Programmed 2002 Edition.
27. UNICEF (2014). *Peace-promoting Education Reform in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific*. UNICEF, USA. <http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Peace-Promoting-Education-Sector-Reform-in-SEA-and-South-Pacific.pdf>
28. United Nations General Assembly/Security Council, Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its First Session: June 2006–June 2007, United Nations, New York, 2007
29. Walenkamp, Gondwe M. J. (2011). *Alignment of higher professional education with the needs of the local labour market: The case of Ghana*, Netherlands Organization for Cooperation in higher education, NUFFIC – THE Hague University of Applied Science, the Hague.