



SOCIOLOGY LEARNING CURRICULUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE SIERRA LEONE RURAL AND URBAN SOCIAL OBSERVATION

Mohamed Bangura

Lecturer One, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Fourah Bay College, University of
Sierra Leone

E-mail: mfbcl7320@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT: *This research sought to explore sociology learning curriculum affairs, teaching and social learning for sustainable development in Sociology Departments in Sierra Leone. Education for Sustainable Development is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation dream which desires at transforming the route to education by accommodating doctrines, attitudes, customs and demands in all sorts of learning. Literature has authenticated the significance of problem resolving, environmentally applicable sociology education, activity dependent and cooperative education as the foundation for sustainable development. Focus has also been lodged alongside the pedagogical and sociology curriculum affairs in assistance of sustainable teaching and learning in developing nations. The methodology recruited consisted of literature search, questionnaires, interviews, observation and documentary analysis. The research was embraced on two rural and two urban university sociology departments. The outcomes disclosed that some departments obeyed a genuinely harmonised sociology curriculum where academic performance was harmonised with industry-based education or learning, while others obeyed an authentically academic sociology curriculum. Results demonstrated that trailing an academic sociology curriculum steered to relevant employment though unemployment was immense due to the absence of competence. The immense rate of employment of those trailing harmonised sociology curriculum seemed to be an inducement. The research concluded that a harmonised curriculum and sociology education was more constructive for sustainable development and entrepreneurship. Advance research is required on the sociology curriculum and approaches for education or industry harmonisation for sustainable development and challenges sociology departments encounter in attempting to execute the Education for Sustainable Development programme in developing nations.*

KEYWORDS: Sociology curriculum, Sustainable Development, Social learning, Sierra Leone.



INTRODUCTION

According to Mensah (2019), sustainable development is recognised by many as a fundamental path for the whole world to move towards development. However, he noted that educating for sustainability was not facile hence all practitioners should make collaborative attempts to its accomplishment. Enduring with transformations in society and the demand for multi-disciplinary dispatch of education was not facile either. An integral and practice-oriented approach of the subject operation was significant for the accomplishment of education for sustainable development. The accomplishment would, however, bank on guardianship legitimacy as an instrument bringing about transformation at institutional position. There is, therefore, amplifying tension on universities to instruct or educate learners for sustainable development in developing as well as developed nations (United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation, 2022). There is a multiplying upturn over the inapplicability of the education endowed with the sociology students today. Employers on their part have lodged displeasure over the absence of essential competences and labour ethics among many university leavers. This has led them to tag the education directly provided by the education system as inappropriate. University leavers are unemployable. If employed they become an unbearable cost due to the fact that they need to be educated or a lot of time is devoted teaching them how to work. This is a price on the employers which they are not ready to pay. Holistically, employers desire what they call “critical thinkers” (United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation, 2022). How can university sociology departments produce critical thinkers? What is being said in brief, is that sociological education, and in specific the teaching and learning as experienced in Sierra Leonean sociology departments and educational institutions cannot sustain development. To answer the question, it is important that a critical look be taken on pedagogy, the curriculum, the learner and the community. This paper, therefore, seeks to describe and analyse teaching and learning for sustainable development in developing countries, with Sierra Leone as a sample. Though attraction is on the latter, the resulting information will effectively relate to developed nations as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education commits to the path the sociology learning curriculum is taught and all the professional or high-tech conditions of learning and teaching. It is debated that work associated learning is sustainable because of its mutualistics connection with the community. However, completely academic education if rigorously restricted to the classroom is isolated from the community, hence not sustainable. The accomplishment of education in sustainable development will be influenced by whether teaching is integral reasoning, project driven, problem or investigation based, and promotes partnership. If lecturers design their materials around these concepts and thoughts, then the result is presumably to guide to sustainable development (Ruggerio, 2021).

Additionally, if teaching is planned and concentrated on problem resolving and is pragmatic as occurs when projects are utilised, then it can be characterised as communal applicable. It has a pragmatic function to resolve problems in the community and an obvious connection is formulated between teaching, learning and the community. Such an avenue boosts learner interaction, and for the learner, lecturer and the content or curriculum synergy too. This strengthens the learning experience involving everyone including the community in which the



university is located. Results of sociology education are obviously visible to the community and are perceived as significant hence integral to sustainable development (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2022).

Similarly, in their planning, lecturers should ensure that learning and instruction is learner-centred. In other words, focus should be on maximum learner involvement with the lecturer giving direction and support. Curriculum should be parcelled up in such a way that a learner-centred approach is possible hence the relevance of project based, problem solving and enquiry-based learning approaches. Strong components of fieldwork, practical work will achieve the objective of teaching and learning for sustainable development. However, this can only take place effectively where an integrated sociology education system is in operation, that is, sociology education and industry working together (Eid, 2018). This can happen if the policy framework is supportive of such integration and is well coordinated in the way it is implemented and practised (Domorenok, 2021). This form of teaching enjoys the benefit of stimulating learner motivation, being more meaningful, easy to understand while the purpose of sociology education is easily appreciated by both learners and the community since knowledge and skills can be seen in application for problem solving (Bacchi, 2020).

However, in order for the teaching and learning to be relevant, attention should be paid to learning activity design. This should begin with needs assessment. This establishes exactly what every learner's needs in the learning environment are, what competencies should be developed. From these, the lecturer's role can be designed so that appropriate approaches can be designed and how learners will participate in the learning process. This, once again, requires that the lecturer examines the environment and how it can be incorporated in the teaching, making learning relevant to the local environment, what learning outcomes are expected, the nature of the learners and other learning materials, people and issues. Planned in this manner, teaching and learning can only be described as addressing real life issues and becoming sustainable to local needs. In their study of problem-based learning, issues involved in designing appropriate problems or scenarios suitable for Education for Sustainable Development were examined. They concluded that use of interdisciplinary problem-based approaches to embed sustainable development in the curriculum was desirable (Covers et al., 2016). The views are corroborated by Corazza (2022) in research that explored sustainable development themes through learning activities in higher education. They reported that exercises and assignments should be designed to encourage learners to test their own abilities and assumptions as they developed their competencies. Activities had to support formal lecture delivery such as fieldwork, role plays and systems thinking. Attention should also be paid to the learning environment for its suitability for developing awareness and relevant skills. They concluded that effective learning took place where there was mutual support as well as adoption of holistic teaching approaches that included assignments, class activities, lectures and access to materials. On the whole, the use of different pedagogical approaches was regarded as vital for success. There was a need to link the classroom and the real world.

Mebert (2022) investigated opportunities to link classroom activities with the real world, key competencies such as problem-solving and collaborative skills needed for sustainability. The research demonstrated the importance of linking knowledge to action, collaborative work and application of concepts and methods from the classroom to the field for sustainability. There were, however, challenges associated with implementation, organisation. Collaboration, coordination and integration were identified as critical success factors. By integrating



classroom activities with real world activities, acquisition of key competencies in sustainability is enhanced. Harris and Jones (2018) endorsed the idea but referred to it as extending learning organisation to learning leadership and community. This meant that not only should the focus be on the learners in the departments but the entire community should be involved through lifelong learning especially in disadvantaged communities. Such an education approach would bring about change at personal, professional, team and community levels through participation, action learning and action research. The research, however, noted that lack of understanding by government agencies who promote education was responsible for poor appreciation of the value of Education for Sustainable Development. This has led to community disadvantage evidenced by high unemployment and crime rates and exclusion from mainstream economy and even higher education. Members of the community needed help to help themselves to achieve positive change through quality learning in partnerships with researchers. Results of the research underline the importance of planning for successful implementation. A learning framework is considered further to enhance education for sustainability.

In their research, on how transformative sustainability learning could be achieved, Aboytes and Barth (2020) reported the need to engage the head, hands and heart as key organisers of learning for sustainability. They argued that use of head, hands and heart as organisers of learning enabled the integration of transdisciplinary research. They expounded the learning framework as follows; transdisciplinary study involved the head (planning and concept building), development of practical skills (hands), translation of passion and values into behaviour in life and work situations (Chirumbolo, 2017). While this happens, the cognitive landscape for understanding the transformative sustainability learning framework would be enhanced as a unifying framework as part of the pedagogy. This would be followed by interdisciplinary, practical and/or place-based evaluation of any course or programme based on appropriate learning objectives. Employing a learning framework such as this will ensure achieving a balance between cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains, key to education for sustainable development embodied in transformative sustainability learning principle. This approach is probably the missing link in Sierra Leonean's education system leading to outcries over irrelevant education systems. The lecturer, among other elements, is the key to the success of implementing education for sustainability.

Planning helps the lecturer defines roles more clearly, both input and outputs. The lecturer may decide to act as a mentor, designer who provides scaffolding to the less significant others (Virtic et al., 2021), identification and selection of relevant tools or easy access to the tools, models, examples and rubrics, facilitator and trainer of participants who are the learners. Thus, for sustainable learning and teaching, lecturers carry out needs assessment, organise the needs to help determine content, conduct workshops to prepare for delivery, monitor activities and evaluate the outcomes (Smilka, 2019). The success of teaching and learning for sustainable development would depend on a thorough appreciation of the components of effective teaching and learning. Hirsh and Short (2020) identified three key components of effective teaching. These are technological, content and pedagogical knowledge.

Once learning needs have been identified, lecturers should decide on the technological knowledge they need for successful learning to take place. This involves deciding on appropriate equipment, gadgets and tools they may need to facilitate delivery of the lecture. Such an understanding is said to help make lectures more interesting, engage the learners by seeing, manipulating and simplifying language. Such technological knowledge helps by



involving learners in practical work which creates a lasting impression as well as help in problem solving and making learning more meaningful for both the fast and slow learners (Cartens, 2021). This is only one step towards delivery of an effective lecture. One can have technological knowledge but without knowledge of the subject matter or content in which case not much can be learnt because the lecture will lack substance and focus.

Subject knowledge also known as subject competence is vital for successful lecture delivery. The ability to identify and use technological knowledge would go a long way if the lecturer has knowledge of the content to be taught. Subject knowledge would enable a lecturer to select what is worth knowing and what is not, choice of appropriate strategies for its presentation and how to facilitate for the gifted and talented and the less gifted. The lecturer will be able to identify aspects of the environment that can be incorporated in the lecture for ecological relevance, what can be done more successfully using projects, practical, theory and problem-solving strategies (Akcaoglu & Kale, 2020). Deciding on time allocation and parcelling up different parts of the curriculum become easier. Such knowledge goes a long way in ensuring effective teaching and learning. However, both technological and content knowledge can only contribute to effective teaching and learning if lecturers have pedagogical knowledge.

Pedagogical knowledge describes the teaching methods or strategies of lecture delivery. Lecturer training programmes have incorporated pedagogy for their students. Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants should be exposed to a variety of methods of delivery, curriculum design and assessment to promote learning for sustainable development. It is the responsibility of every lecturer to plan and identify appropriate delivery methods for every section of the curriculum. The more varied methodologies the better in fulfilling the different learning styles. The methods include, lecture, practical, seminars, workshops, tutorials, use of computer software, project-based and computer assisted. Whatever method is chosen, it must be aligned to learners' needs the content and what the environment offers (Hailikari et al., 2021). All these need to be integrated for successful teaching and learning for sustainable development. A lecturer with pedagogical skills will be capable of coming up with instructional systems design. The latter comprises the learners' profiles (what the learner needs to know); objectives and outcomes (what the learners need to know); learning attitudes and skills (what can facilitate learning) and assessment (how the learner has learned the content). Consideration of all these will ensure a complete learning menu that addresses individual and community needs. All the questions and considerations should be made in the context of learner-centred learning and teaching. This comprises content, interaction, instructional strategies, assessment and the environment which ensures learner engagement. An approach such as this will lead to sustainable learning and teaching, leading to better economic development in the developing countries (Mukli et al., 2022).

An examination of the implementation of Education and Sustainable Development shows that aims and objectives can be right but effectiveness may not be achieved. Wamsler (2020) in their research of Educational and Sustainable Development found out that implementation of Education and Sustainable Development lacked coherence with education reforms at university and local levels. This meant it was irrelevant. They reported that emphasis was given to environmental sustainability hence very narrow. Wider issues such as climate change and an integrated curriculum were neglected. Practitioners did not agree on how to effectively implement Educational Sustainable Development. Guidance for learners to acquire cross-disciplinary perspectives was inadequate. While much has been done to demonstrate



implementation of the Education for Sustainable Development programmes, not much has been done to highlight the constraints individual lecturers and institutions were facing in promoting Education and Sustainable Development.

Lodging the Problem

Learning leads to change of social behaviour. Teaching facilitates the learning process. There are different ways by which learners learn and lecturers teach. Some of these lead to a more permanent change of behaviour which has an impact on the environment, lead to critical thinking, problem solving and show a clear link with community needs. It is relevant to the local environment hence those going through such an education system are able to fit in the socio-economic environment when they graduate. Failure to do so leads to what the employers describe as irrelevant education in terms of development needs of a country or community. It is against this background that the study sought to answer the research problem. What forms of teaching and learning lead to sustainable development in developing countries?

Intent of the Inquiry

It is against the above background and rationale that the study sought to investigate the type of sociology education that leads to sustainable development. In order to answer the research question and address the aim of the study, the following objectives and research questions were presented and investigated.

Ambitions

The goal of the research has been further split into specific objectives: To investigate the role of:

Pedagogy in sustainable development;

Sociology curriculum in sustainable development;

Learning methods in sustainable development;

Education policy on sustainable development; and

Technology on sustainable development.

Exploration Catechisms

What teaching and learning strategies lead to sustainable development?

What sociology curriculum contributes to sustainable development?

What is the role of technology in sociology education for sustainable development?

What role does the environment play in sociology education for sustainable development?



What role does policy play in sociology education for sustainable development?

Assumptions

The research assumed that there were schools that offer the national curriculum differently. It was assumed that information from universities on sociology curriculum and curriculum implementation would be readily available and that members of the community, and other respondents would be willing to provide information on how they are experiencing the curriculum and its impact on economic development in the local area and the country as a whole.

Probe Applicability

The research sought to highlight the nature of the sociology curriculum that promotes sustainable development, the way the sociological curriculum is delivered and learners experience the curriculum contributes to sustainable development. It was hoped that the results would influence how lecturers implement the curriculum, policy formulation and how students learn. In particular, the employment of learner-centred approaches relevant to the environment. Consequently, relevance of education to the needs of developing countries will be enhanced leading to greater motivation to learn and collaboration with industry and community.

Methodology

This was qualitative research using a case research design. Qualitative, because the study sought opinions and experiences of people involved in education. A case study research design was preferred because it enabled the researcher to select departments that delivered sociological education in different ways and to students in different localities, rural and urban. Document analysis, especially Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education policy on syllabus or curriculum documents used by the different universities, assessment records, reports, minutes of universities and departmental minutes, were some of the sources of data. Interviews provided additional information on the experiences of curriculum implementation. Interviews were conducted with heads, heads of departments, lecturers, learners, members of the community, employers or stakeholders and parents. Literature review, document analysis and observations guided the interviews. Where time was inadequate to attend the interview, a qualitative questionnaire was completed by learners and teachers seeking their opinions on their experience of education and what they would recommend be done in future. Respondents were selected from the different schools in urban, rural areas practising largely academic sociological curriculum and those following an integrated curriculum working with industry and community and opinions on sustainability of the education being offered. Document analysis, interviews and observations focused on the following issues: Aims and objectives of the education, sociological curriculum, subjects offered by different departments, teaching and learning methodologies, community involvement, evidence of integration with industry, opinions on relevance and sustainability of the education being offered. Learners, lecturers, heads and stakeholders in universities offering academic and integrated curriculum were the respondents. Responses from the participants were used to analyse the extent to which sociology education offered in a developing country such as Sierra Leone supported sustainable development locally, nationally and globally.



Questions such as: What modules were taught in these departments? How do these modules help the learners after graduating from university? Is there a link with industry or other economic activities in the locality or country? How does the teaching link with the locality and country? What is the reaction of stakeholders to the sociology education provided in the university? What is the reaction of industry when universities work with them as part of their sociology education? How can sociology education lead to sustainable development? What should universities do to contribute to sustainable development? What does the community say about the relevance of sociology education offered? What improvements need to be made to make sociology education contribute to sustainable development? What suggestions can you give for the sociology of education to contribute to sustainable development?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Sierra Leone Education Sector Analysis (United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation, 2020) was examined to find out the national policy thrust or focus. It was observed that the Sierra Leone education policy merely mentioned the ideology to guide education provision and not the type and focus, namely education as a basic human right and that the curriculum would be common for public and independent universities with focus on gender mainstreaming, cost and financing of education, management of the education system, internal and external efficiency, learning outcomes. However, in its Medium Term Education Sector Plan (2022-2026), the government was more specific in its education policy focus which made specific recommendations about the curriculum and the need to review the latter. For example, it was stated that the purpose of the curriculum review was intended to revise and implement a curriculum that would lead towards the achievement of revitalisation of learning quality and relevance. Results agree with Olsson et al. (2022) who emphasised the need for relevant education for sustainable development. It was also emphasised that regular review of the curriculum (curriculum innovation) was necessary in order to ensure that the curriculum remained relevant to meet the attributes of individuals, the economy, society and challenges of the future (Print, 2018). To this end, the Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education would conduct a comprehensive curriculum review in order to bring it up to date as a curriculum innovation by placing greater emphasis on innovative subjects that included Engineering, Information Communication Technology related subjects, civic education which also focused on the environment (Ariyanti et al., 2021). The terms of reference **for the Curriculum Development Unit**, which was tasked to conduct the review (Jackson, 2022), underscored the **government's sentiments** for an education system that would support sustainable development of the country and the world. Policy framework support was described as vital for an education for sustainable development (Bekun et al., 2021). What is presented below supports Sierra Leone National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education (2020). These were to:

- (a) Develop a framework for curriculum in Sierra Leone which reflects the Sierra Leone context and is consistent with internal trends and standards. Mention of “reflect the Sierra Leone context” implies that the education system must support Sierra Leone’s development needs. “Consistent with the international trends” means the education system must not only support Sierra Leone’s development needs but those of the world or global village too. Viewed from this perspective it is clear that the curriculum for the Sierra



Leone education system is intended to achieve sustainable development for the country and the world. It remains to be seen whether what is happening in the schools reflects the policy thrust.

- (b) Develop and implement a process to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum using the framework for curriculum in Sierra Leone as the principal frame of reference. The latter is an acknowledgement that good policies are at risk of not being implemented hence the need to see implementation take place.
- (c) Provide a detailed analysis of quality of current curriculum as defined by the scope outlined in Preface paragraph 3, and
- (d) Make evidence-based recommendations that will provide specific guidance for revision of the curriculum and improvement of related structures and processes within realistic time frames and resource expectations. Thus, monitoring quality and use of research evidence to inform reviews would ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to current needs and continue to support sustainable development of the country and the world.
- (e) Learning activities and tasks should include project work in all the subjects. Research in other countries has demonstrated that the use of project work in learning and teaching was vital for education for sustainable development (Almulla, 2020). The Sierra Leone Education system has in mind their idea of education contributing to sustainable development through teaching and learning activities. This is an example of pedagogy contributing to sustainable development.
- (f) Ensure that schools and learning environments including extra-curricular focused on competence development and not just traditional knowledge acquisition. This implies that if school leavers are competent in some field in their environment they will be able to make a substantial contribution to the development of their locality and cumulatively to the whole country and the world. This supports views by Tappia-Fonllem (2020) and Almulla, (2020) on the importance of education relevant to the environment and emphasis on performance through education. It is argued that competent learners were able to mobilise their knowledge, skills and attitudes independently and creatively to address different challenges and solve problems effectively through teacher or learner, learner or learner interaction as well as school or learning environments and communities also called collaborative learning (Almulla, 2020).
- (g) Similarly, assessment should reinforce curriculum implementation by focusing on demonstration of competence rather than just knowledge. Asking questions such as why, what, how and how well will develop sound learning habits for sustainable development. This can only be achieved if the curriculum is a personal and societal development-centred education system. Content and methods, therefore, should differentiate learning based on the curriculum, formal or non-formal or the unintended and not subject to assessment and social recognition and emphasised by United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation (2020), Haikari et al. (2021), and Mukli et al. (2022).
- (h) Many authors, including Jacobs have stressed the need for regular adjustment of the curriculum to the times in which we live while preparing for the future as well. Print (2018) underscored the view to overhaul, update and inject life into our curriculum and



dramatically alter the format of what schools look like, to match the current times. An educator's responsibility is to prepare the learners in school to care for their world and their future. There is a rising concern about 21st century skills and tools for learners (Jackson, 2022).

- i) The above can only be assured if the following questions are asked about the curriculum: Does the curriculum foster competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes—openness and critical thinking, tolerance and respect, and holistic personal development)? Is it relevant? Is it feasible? Is it assessable? Are there school or community links and integration of school and labour market? Is it practically problem-solving oriented? Is it challenging and motivating? Does it integrate stakeholder views? Does it encourage involvement of stakeholders? Does it foster university/community (community service, project work, counselling and orientation) participation?
- (i) Assessment should ensure that learners are aware of learning objectives, requirements and that they are able to select appropriate assessment means.
- (ii) Test of practical and problem-solving orientation curriculum are: Is the learning content relevant to learners' experiences and environment? Are there appropriate links between theory and practice? Are higher order intellectual and problem-solving skills being fostered? Is there cooperation and teamwork? Is the content fostering connection with daily life experiences? Does the learning content clarify challenges and opportunities in the labour market (technology, entrepreneurship skills)? Does learning content facilitate orientation with regard to further studies?

Key competencies vary from country to country. This is a reflection of the country's needs for sustainable development. For example, Ghana covers the following in their education: communication skills, numeracy, information, problem-solving, self-management and competitive skills, social and cooperative skills, physical skills, work and study skills. Nigeria seeks to achieve the following outcomes from their education: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. For Gambia, communication skills, character development, self-management, social and cooperative skills, thinking skills and creativity, literacy and numeracy, and information skills are their emphasis. What are Sierra Leone's needs in terms of education for sustainable development?

Whatever competencies are valued by any country, it is important that integration of new, emerging issues and cross-cutting objectives are achieved for sustainable development. For example, consideration of integration compared with new subjects (Mcphail, 2017). Carrier subjects such as HIV in Biology, health in science-learning objectives, content and outcomes for each subject (Information Communication and Technology). Relevant and emerging and cross cutting issues are integrated in the curriculum for example, citizenship, intercultural education, climate change, HIV/AIDS disaster and risk management, peace education and conflict resolution. The challenge is how to integrate them. Achievement of challenges faced by schools in dealing with most emerging and cross cutting issues is immense.

Consideration of their impact, effectiveness and presence in the curriculum focuses on the following and seeks to address these questions: Have they contributed to competency development, changes in awareness, attitudes and behaviours? How are learning processes and outcomes assessed?



Answers to these questions should test the suitability of education provision for sustainability.

Having looked at the policy framework, case studies of four departments were conducted to find out how far they were implementing Education for Sustainable Development. As stated earlier, two universities each were in rural and urban areas respectively.

The structure of a curriculum which can address sustainable development issues at any one time. For example, the concentric circles show both the ecological structure and approach lecturers and learners should take whenever examining any topic in the syllabus. The inner circle is the local or immediate environment, followed by the wider environment such as the province or country and finally the most distant environment-region, continent or the global village. The research of any topic that adopts the approach above can only lead to sustainable development, everything else being equal. The link to the environment at different scales, incorporation of environmental issues in teaching and learning and the use of relevant teaching and learning approaches such as problem-solving, projects, practicum, work related-learning can only enhance understanding of the world we live in and enhance the ability to solve problems for a better life. In the case research of departments examined, it was observed that universities generally adopted the curriculum and implemented it in a manner that promoted sustainable development for the country. The urban university with an academic and practical curriculum implemented the curriculum using different approaches which made teaching and learning relevant to daily experiences of the learners, enabling learners to identify themselves with their community. Every topic was studied in the classroom and outside. The link with the local environment made learning more meaningful, interesting and easy to apply knowledge and skills to solve local problems. Project work, problem solving, investigation of issues in the local environment, problem-based learning, field trips all made learning and teaching ecologically relevant, thereby promoting sustainable development as outlined by Stern (2020). Examination of issues in the wider environment enables learners to tackle problems beyond their own immediate areas hence sustainable on a national scale. This makes education contribute to sustainable development at local or national scale. It makes learning more meaningful and helps learners understand more easily because they can associate issues in distant areas with those nearer home making teaching and learning sustainable, leading to development. This can, however, happen if lecturers can be guided through the curriculum, policy implementation as stated by Li et al. (2020). This should be further emphasised during lecturer training by developing appropriate pedagogical skills that are ecologically and environmentally relevant. All the activities planned for the learner should emphasise the importance of the local environment and interrelated nature of phenomena and the value of an interdisciplinary approach to teaching. Compartmentalisation of modules should be avoided to enable learners to see how each module complements the other. This enriches the learning experiences thereby enabling education to contribute immensely to sustainable development of the local area, country and the world.

On the other hand, those in the rural universities integrated their learning with industry. This is a university located on a traditional or cultural estate. In their Rural Sociology, Community Development lessons teachers take the learners to the pure cultural communities to observe the cultural or cultural expressions from the germination of folklore to current stage and later processing of these traditions for effective community socialisation. In fact, learners participate in the seminar discourse at the university's Sociology Department. This approach can be described as integration of academic and industry (Ahmed et al., 2022). It makes education



more purposeful, relevant and meaningful. Some get employed in the community or university on completion of their sociology education. It is the teaching approach adopted by the lecturer and the philosophy to link theory with practice which promotes education for sustainable development. However, in some countries, working in rural communities may be regarded as remote labour yet in a developing country scenario the practice provides deeper understanding of concepts, hands on experience to sustain the community from year to year, and providing livelihood from generation to generation hence sustainable development. This is the same idea described by Mebert et al. (2020) as extending the classroom to the real world or what Yalcin (2017) described as from learning organisation to the learning community. However, the success of offering such an education system would depend on the presence of components of effective teaching and learning: technological, content, leadership and pedagogical knowledge.

Urban and rural sociology departments respectively concentrate more on getting the highest number of top grades in examinations. Rote learning is employed. Drilling and coaching for examinations dominate. There is no time for reflection on what has been learnt. Engagement in problem solving, project work and use of the environment as learning and teaching strategies are regarded as a waste of time. Desire to complete the syllabus as quickly as possible is a pre-occupation. Collaborative learning activities are an interruption of the academic programme. Indeed, the learners come out with very high grades but very little of what has been learnt can be applied in real life situations. While the high school graduates gain entry into higher education more easily because of their high points, finding employment on completion is a big challenge due to lack of critical thinking, problem solving and irrelevant knowledge which today's employers demand. Such an education system cannot lead to sustainable development. As can be seen this is in contrast to what is happening in universities in rural and urban Sierra Leone. The latter departments do not get publicity for their achievements and are worth giving the impression that the education provided by these departments is inferior.

The activities have a symbiotic relationship with the learner in the middle. Planning has focused on maximum engagement of the learner through enquiry or critical thinking, problem solving, project work in the environment and some practical work. Thus, the learner develops competencies during course duration and grows to understand the local environment and its challenges. This is education for sustainable development in demand in both developing and developed countries. Such an education is only possible if teachers design instruction based on identified learners needs - what the learner needs to know, skills and attitudes required to facilitate learning and continuously assessing to determine how well each learner has learned and developed the desired skills. The methodology shows that a needs-based teaching and learning programme leads to continuous improvement leading to sustainable development because it addresses current needs of the individual and the local environment, global and future issues as well as for the teaching learning process for sustainable development. The approaches illustrated may be time-consuming but their long-term effectiveness and impact cannot be underestimated. Key characteristics of lecturer-centred methods are: Approach-Expository: Lecturer talk; purpose is to transfer knowledge while learners listen. On the other hand, learner-centred strategy ensures learners are empowered to seek and acquire knowledge and skills with the lecturer acting as the facilitator and guide throughout.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Literature on the study has shown that education for sustainable development generally requires learner-centred approaches, link with the environment, teachers with technical, content, pedagogical and leadership skills. Implementation of teaching strategies could be by means of projects, problem-solving, critical thinking or enquiry and practical skills. These yielded a cadre that is creative and has entrepreneurial skills to promote development in the local and global community. Results also showed that while sociology departments in the country had the same curriculum document to follow, implementation differed from department to department. Some were more creative, implementing the curriculum in a manner that involved integration with the environment and industry, and developing competencies for the world after university using modern technology while others focused on high achievement rates academically, knowledge acquisition and regurgitating it with very little or no industry relevant skills. The latter has been described as irrelevant for employers' needs. Lecturers must therefore plan to implement the curriculum putting emphasis on learner-centred strategies, making maximum use of modern technology, and integrating academic work with industry. On their part, authorities should ensure supportive education policies are in place and that curriculum is reviewed regularly to keep pace with changes in the environment and the world in general. Further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing sociology education for sustainable development on skills development in learners and how curriculum change or innovation can promote education for sustainable development. Challenges faced by universities trying to implement education for sustainable development can also be investigated.

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