Chapter 10

Globalized Workforce Development and Responsible Global Citizenship through e–Literacy Capacity Building Programs for Low Income African Countries

Benjamin A. Ogwo
State University of New York, USA

Vincent E. Onweh
University of Uyo, Nigeria

Stella C. Nwizu
University of Nigeria, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The skewed global workforce interactions during the agricultural and industrial revolutions which still bother the antagonists of globalization could be straightened by progressive workforce development policies that will mutually benefit high and low income countries. In addition, the e-literacy and information technology boom have further narrowed spatial perception of geographic distance thus providing low-income countries insights on policy dynamics of high income countries and its impact on the rest of the world. Thus in order to attain equity and balanced global workforce development, this chapter explores the rational and different paradigms for capacity building on e-literacy in low income African countries so that their workforce would contribute to the globalized economy and civic responsibility. The chapter contends that e-literacy empowerment should be regarded as a human right issue and that through other ethical globalization efforts every person on earth should form part of the workforce for sustaining the global village.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-60566-820-8.ch010
INTRODUCTION

The exponential global impact on workforce development as well as the politico-social changes occasioned by the agricultural/industrial revolution era makes global interaction a familiar issue, with perhaps, different connotations for the two global economic divides (haves and have-nots). At that time there was explicit coercive muscle drain from the colonized territories (have-nots) to the imperial lands (haves). Several cruel methods and policies were employed by the rich and powerful (haves) to balkanize and exploit the colonized peoples of the world. Whereas previous global interactions had questionable imperialists’ intentions for the colonized territories, its poor human right fallouts created appalling feelings on the moral spectrum of thinking global citizens. It is against this backdrop that some civil rights activists resent globalization. Be that as it may, various forms of economic thoughts have been acclaimed to guide the actions of governments of different independent nations namely, capitalism, communism, socialism, and the mix economies. These economic thoughts have faced serious litmus tests in the recent past, collapse of Russian socialism and, questionable state of China’s communism and the bedridden condition of capitalism in United States of America, such that economists are in doubt on the practical relevance of these countries’ claims to be abiding by any of these economic principles. Hence this chapter would refrain from discussing the needed reengineering of the world economic order from the framework of any of the aforementioned economic thoughts rather the focus would be to institute an ethical basis to develop the workforce potentials of low income countries in a manner that would optimize their human capitals and guarantee responsible global citizenship for all.

The workforce development experiences of countries in Asia occasioned by outsourcing and recent trends on globalization in which cost reduction informs contracting foreign supply of service/parts/products, have proved profitable for low income countries. Incidental or not, outsourcing as fallout of globalization by high income countries has proved a veritable source of direct foreign investment, technological learning, reverse engineering as well as capacity building for skilled workforce in these countries. Specifically, Japan, and lately India and China have gained immensely from outsourcing in information communication technology. The developments of human capitals in information communication technology (ICT) in these countries have beenphenomenal. It is noteworthy that governments of these countries pursued diligently policies that engendered sustainable workforce development of ICT professionals. The result among others is increased income per capita and relatively more responsible participation in global affairs by citizens from that region.

On the other end of the spectrum, the low income countries in Africa have not significantly profited from globalization. The desperate efforts for illegal migration to Europe and North America by Africans are some of the practical showcase of the checkered workforce imbalance/perception in that region. Whereas there was need for muscle drain during the agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe and North America from healthy Africans in the 18th and 19th centuries, same is not true today. At best what is preferred is the brain drain of proficient Africans professionals (with ICT competency) who migrate to the West for greener pasture. Without sufficient e-literacy even with all their muscles Africans migrating to Europe and North America would not make good slaves now. Worse still, in these African countries, outsourcing cannot be feasible because the human capital therein is relatively undeveloped and not e-complaint hence they would remain “non-outsourcing” locations. The irresponsible acts by Somalia pirates, restive youths in Nigerian Niger Delta and the debilitating poverty in the region are acclaims that global efforts are needed to enhance capacity building on e-literacy in Africa.