



# Educational Challenges and Wakirike Development: A Solution Kit

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## Abstract

No human society can develop and transform beyond its levels of education. In every educational endeavor, community stakeholders play crucial roles in the socio-economic and educational development of the area. Hence, for Wakirike to achieve sustainable development in the area of education, there must be a deliberate and conscious effort to work out an educational module for its growth and development. To mitigate in the challenge of education in Wakirike means that there must be deliberate, continuous, persistent involvement and shared responsibility of critical stakeholders to set standards based on our own peculiar micro dynamics and challenging environment. To get things done, it is recommended that Wakirike needs to urgently develop an educational master plan with the communities properly integrated into the plan, get community undiluted involvement, participation and the establishment of a central coordinating committee to drive the process for a vibrant, robots and sustainable Wakirike nation.

**Keywords:** Educational, Challenges, Wakirike, Development, Solution

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## INTRODUCTION

The importance of education in the development process of man and society cannot be underscored. Education was conceived by Plato as the most important instrument with which to structure and produce a good society within which citizens can achieve utmost perfection. According to Plato in his *The Republic* cited in Ofoeze (2008), education is the ‘one great thing’ by means of which the leader can shape human activities in the right direction to produce a harmonious state. This is true because if the citizens are properly educated, they could easily see through the challenges before them and tackle exigencies as they may arise.

Education contributes to the growth of a people and by extension enhances their socio economic and even political development since it is a process through which the people get trained consciously to achieve relevant knowledge for functional living and development of the

community (Ofoeze, 2008). Education develops in every individual intellectual empowerment and endowment and the society as a whole the relevant abilities and skills necessary for concretizing her development agenda (Ukeje, 2008). According to Ofoeze, (2008) education constitutes a 'development value' preferred for its epistemic sake. Education opens up, and broadens the human mind, leading it out to consider ideas, issues and activities objectively in their various ramifications. It allows the individual person, the capacity and facility to critically examine and choose between alternative competing courses of action for solving problem in a rational way.

Education satisfies a basic human need for knowledge, provides a means of helping to meet other challenging needs which helps to sustain and accelerate overall community development. It provides vital skill manpower for both the formal and informal sectors of the economy, provides the tool for knowledge, skills and productive competences of the labour force, and acts as a vehicle in encouraging modern attitudes and aspirations (Ibiayemie, 2017). Education equally helps to find out not only the income of the present generation but also the upcoming distribution of income and employment. It is important not to forget that education does not only influence social welfare through its indirect effects on health fertility and life expectancy, it also increases the profitability of other types of social and physical investments (Robert-Okah & Osiobe, 2014).

The relevance of education to our development can only be appreciated when compared to other major communities and ethnic nationalities in Rivers State and Nigeria at large.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS**

### **Education**

Education has been described as the key that unlocks the door and windows of modern development. It is the systematic process of human growth for which a person gains greater understanding and control over himself and his world, a process and doings characterized by continuous development and changes, the end product of which is learning. According to Ilume and Kpokpo, (2015) education is a whole aggregation of all the processes by which an individual expands his abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviors which are of positive value to the society. It is the form of teaching and learning which propels the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable a person to adjust and contribute positively to one's socio economic development. In the views of Toby (2001) education is simply a process by which every society try to preserve and upgrade the gathering of knowledge, handiness, ethics, and attitudes in its heritage and cultural setting.

The quality of education presupposes that it should constantly change and adapt to new demands and circumstances. Blessing (2016) argues that education produces different kinds of manpower including engineers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, nurses, etc. Quality education in any society strives to ensure that all citizens irrespective of sex, age, faith etc, benefit from the dividends of sound qualitative educational process. No doubt, education is the only panacea for Wakirike Development.

## **Development**

Development from the context of our discuss is taken to mean the qualitative realization of a state of affairs typified by adequate and equitable distribution of social and material services and happiness, free individual contribution in the affairs of the state and an overall human mastery of his environment in a structurally changed society (Ofoeze, 2008). Development according to Ilume and Kpokpo, (2015) is the systematic use of scientific and technological knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements.

## **Wakirike**

Wakirike simply refers to a set of Ijaw speaking people presently found in Okrika, OguBolo and parts of Port Harcourt South in Port Harcourt Rivers State. They constitute a traditional society in transition in contemporary Nigeria (Zep-Obipi, 2017). It has nine major traditional towns and a myriad of several emerging towns and villages. The nine major towns in Wakirike kingdom before 1913 include, Kirike, Ogoloma, Abuloma, Bolo, Ogbogbo, Ibaka, Isaka, Ogu, and Ele. Fishing, trading and farming are their main source of livelihood.

## **How Education can Contribute to the Development of Wakirike?**

Like we mentioned earlier, what education does is to principally train the human mind to make him functional and a willing tool to transform society optimally. Education has contributed to human and community development in the following ways:

- It trains the individual for better appreciation of his cultural environment, technological realms and equips him with the ability to sop up new ideas, information and new data for determining the constantly changing micro dynamics of his environment (Ibiayemie, 2017);
- It trains an individual to relate and interact meaningfully with others and to appreciate the importance of cross fertilization of ideas and effective organization for human society;
- It fosters in a people those values that make for good citizenship such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard work and integrity and good leadership;
- It heartens the culture of productivity among the people, making possible individuals to discover the intellect in them and accordingly apply it to the improvement of the existing skills and technique of performing specific task, thus increasing the efficiency of his personal societal efforts (Chuka-Okonkwo, 2015);
- It improves personal health, enhances reproductive health and promotes child health and welfare through better nutrition and higher immunization;
- Education encourages the development of the youths who are presumably future leaders to assume efficient leadership positions;
- Education brings the needed manpower for community development;
- It trains the individual mind to be able to tell and interact meaningfully with others in the society and to be grateful for the importance of effective cooperation for human and societal development; and

- Education enhances natural resource management and human capacity development for disaster prevention and the use of global best practices in his relationship with the environment.

### **Educational Challenges and Wakirike Development: A Solution Kit**

From the discussion so far, there is a consensus that education plays pivotal role in the overall development of a place, in this instance Wakirike. It is the above conviction that prompted Ofoeze, (2008) to argue that countries such as Nigeria allocated huge sum of resources to education as evident in the various national development plans. Notwithstanding these huge sectoral allocations, however, the reality before us is that educational development of Wakirike has not only been unimpressive, but negative to say the least. For instance, it very evident that Wakirike is host to some of the largest oil facilities in the country, including the Alesa Eleme Refinery Company and the Oil and Gas free zone authority and myriad of over 500 oil servicing companies, yet this has not significantly impacted our socio-economic and educational development. These negative and unimpressive attitudes of multi nationals operating within Wakirike soil has become so worrisome such that student drop out, hunger and poverty has taken refuge in our lands.

Again, the absence of degree awarding educational institutions in Wakirike has been one of the greatest challenges to our educational progress. From Bolo to Ogu to Ogoloma, the story is the same; our children cannot access higher education for want of scholarship, funds, accommodation, security, quota system and host community influence. The situation is reportedly worst in Primary and post primary institutions where only a hand full of students can comfortably write the West African Senior School Certificate Examination.

To understand the educational challenges facing us as Wakirike people means to first identify what the problems are. The following though in exhaustive are considered the challenging problems confronting Wakirike Educational Development. These challenges have been categorized into three broad perspectives namely:

**Socio-cultural factors:** These factors include moral degeneration in society, inverted value systems, poor reading culture, poor family upbringing, poor teacher student relationship, insecurity and low quality and cultural practices. The above factors have today given birth to several issues related to poverty, illiteracy, sabotage and security concerns manifestly in form teenage pregnancy, managerial negligence, dropouts, cultism, kidnapping and lately oil bunkering activities.

**Institutional factors:** this explains roles played by school management and teachers' in our various institutions of learning which has aided to the slow pace of educational growth. Negligence and outright display of greed, improper management of school resources, examination malpractice, money for grade, automatic mass promotion, insufficient manpower, lack of teaching aids, obsolete facilities, poor welfare package for teachers, poor supervision, and low ICT knowledge content account for institutional failure. Problems of poor policy implementation, obsolete/inadequate school infrastructure, lack of qualified/experience teachers and low work morale have greatly impeded our development.

**Students Factors:** lack of interest in academics, hunger, poverty, get rich quick syndrome, exaggerated life styles, lack of commitment, shortsightedness, faulty philosophy about education, examination malpractice and cultism have made most students to think less of education in pursuit of getting money from any source available. For this category of students, education is used for personal self-aggrandizement both in terms of wealth and power and not necessary for the benefit of 'kirikebese'. This group is still a major factor in our discussion.

## **A Solution Kit**

In my view, the above challenges can be settled through:

- Planning for the Creation of Wakirike Educational Development Master Plan.
- Community Involvement and Participation
- Creation of a Coordinating Wakirike Educational Study Group.

Others will include proper implementation of policies that promote health and safety, regular payment of bursary and scholarship especially for orphans and the vulnerable by Okrika, Ogu Bolo, and Port Harcourt Local Government Councils, placement of sufficient qualified teachers at each level of education and the abolition of students' mass promotion in primary and secondary schools. Promotion of students' must be purely on merit. Let's consider the first three;

**Planning for the Creation of Wakirike Educational Development Master Plan.** A master plan for Wakirike educational roadmap is long overdue. Planning is vital for any endeavor. It may be short, medium and long time plan. Planning according to Hornby (2011) is the act or process of arranging or organizing something or developing an idea or a goal. Planning is the preparation of steps to achieve a quality outcome. Planning is concerned with setting objectives, targets and formalities to accomplishing them. Planning helps a people to reflect on their past, examine present realities and identify ways attaining the desired position in future.

Community involvement in planning is critical to any meaningful development process. To ensure the sustainability of the plan, a systematic action plan to co-opt the chairmen of councils and any serving political appointee as compulsory members of the committee must be put in place. The plan will enable Communities to set minimum standards or benchmark for her individual growth and development. The plan should be simple, clear, concise, all inconclusive and easy to understand.

## **Why do we need an Educational Master Plan in Wakirike?**

The essence of an educational master plan is to:

- It will facilitate the proper coordination of all effort towards educational development and reduce to the barest minimum incidences of overlapping among activities and eliminate unproductive acts.
- It will uncover future opportunities, strength, weaknesses and threats. Planning for our future needs and goals cannot be underestimated.
- It provides a roadmap for action by advancing what should be done in a given area at some point in time.

- It sets the minimum best standards for controls and quality in our schools both public and private.
- It helps managers of the system to improve future performance by establishing goal line objectives and selecting a course of action for the benefit of Wakirike.

### **Steps in Putting a Development Master Plan for Wakirike**

In striving to beat the challenges of educational development in Wakirike, we must endeavor not to fail but to get it right. Hence, the following steps are recommended for the setting of a working development master plan in Wakirike.

**Step One**= developing the premise (foundation) for the plan,

**Step Two**= identifying alternatives,

**Step Three**= evaluative alternatives,

**Step Four**= selecting alternatives,

**Step Five**= implementation of action plan, and

**Step Six**= periodic reviews.

**Community involvement and participation:** Communities have to take preemptive roles for her own growth and development. The current School Based Management Committee (SBMC) arrangement in Rivers State gives further backing to this because the place of SBMC policy in primary and post-secondary schools is intended to fast track Community involvement and participation in the educational process. We must take advantage of this structure and consolidate accordingly. Individual community can key into this module by setting up educational committees in all clans and village across Wakirike Kingdom.

**Creation of a Coordinating Wakirike Education Study Group:** Because eradicating illiteracy and poverty remains one of the greatest challenges of 21st Wakirike Communities, there is the urgent need to have a central coordinating committee in the module of Wakirike development coalition. This committee can be effectively empowered with an unbiased people centered mandate to coordinate and implement the proposed master plan. Tenure of office, composition and spread can be resolved.

### **CONCLUSION**

The presentation so far indicated that education is the bedrock of growth and development. It is the producer of critical skill and manpower needs of a people for community and national development. Education does not only open up and broadens the human mind, it affords individuals the capacity and facility to scrutinize, and choose between competing alternative courses of action for problem-solving. The impact of education to Wakirike development however has not only been unimpressive but has indeed become negative because it is now in a sorry state of disrepair. Increased number of school drop-outs, shallow philosophy about education by students, teachers' negligent conducts to students' welfare needs, absence of higher state and federal institutions in the area, lack of qualified manpower and managerial sabotage, cultism, examination malpractice, and absence of critical infrastructure to boost teaching and learning. This is in spite of the presence of multi nationals and huge oil and gas companies across

the area. It is so bad that urgent intervention is needed to arrest the situation from impending doom. To fast track Wakirike development, we urgently need to develop a master plan involving all communities in Kirikese kingdoms with a central coordinating body of renowned, dedicated, trusted persons of proven records. In all, sensitization plays a lot role of information dissemination. The people need to know how bad is the situation and the grave danger it poses to Wakirike in the years to come.

## **Recommendations**

- The challenge associated with our education journey is partly attributed to the lack of awareness on the part of our people about the true situation of things in Wakirike. Hence, there is need to embark on aggressive public sensitization. Advocacy has a lot to do in this regard. Advocacy here means any activity intended to raise consciousness among about an issue with a view to bringing about desirable changes in policy and improvement in their situation. In another tone, it could be a process made up of series of activities undertaken over a period of time aimed at challenging or changing a situation or issues.
- There is need to build strong synergy with existing institutions particularly, primary and post primary schools. The School Based Management Committee presently in place is timely and appropriate for this. Communities must take advantage of it by constantly liaising with the authority on educational issues. Community members cannot be indifferent to their own development. A society that sees development as purely government business tends to ignore the important role of community participation in educational development.
- There should be increased annual undiluted scholarship awards from multi nationals and well-meaning individuals and payment of bursary be made compulsory without excuse.
- An education master plan for Wakirike to chat the educational roadmap is long overdue and thus urgently recommended.
- The establishment of central Coordinating Wakirike Education Study Group is also advocated. This can also be extended to the town and village levels.

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