

# **Purpose-driven and Values-driven Higher Education**

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# “PURPOSE-DRIVEN AND VALUES-DRIVEN HIGHER EDUCATION” FIFTIETH CONVOCATION LECTURE DELIVERED ON 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH, 2023, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

## 1. PROTOCOLS, ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND GREETINGS

### 2. PREAMBLE: This is not time for despair, rather an opportunity for re-shaping the future

Let me start with a sentence of belief in humanity: In the past sixty years, particularly since the landing of astronauts on the moon (July 1969)\* the world as we know it has changed dramatically. These developments have unleashed for our times, courageous inventions and creativity of what positive inventions the “HOMO SAPIENS” is capable of making out of our universe (Gen I: 28). The manifold positive contributions and achievements made in the various sciences and arts, literature and communications, engineering and technology, nanoscience and robotics, economy and politics, spacecraft, medicine and agriculture, education and theology, information and technology, culture, religion, sports and music continue to grow. The list is endless. It is indeed possible to have a better world serving the needs of the majority of human beings.

Yet, we face myriad challenges. Unprecedented material and technological achievements co-exist with unconscionable and in some cases increasing poverty, inequality and injustice. Advances in science have unleashed remarkable powers, but these very powers as presently wielded threaten to undermine the very future of our planet. In spite of these, the potentials and capabilities of the human being for development and progress with technology and arts remain undaunted. Killer-sicknesses and viral infections which wiped off nations in the past and killed peoples in millions have received modern medically-curative solutions. Compared to earlier times, more and more people enjoy longer Lifespans with improved quality of life despite growing global poverty and inequality index. There are relatively better housing, education and workplace ambitions achieved for people in every country even if these privileges belong to a growing minority.

Many issues previously thought of as ‘*beyond time and space*’ and considered “*NOUMENA*” have been reduced to the sphere of the “*PHENOMENA*” with data and numbers. I am amazed at how Mark Zuckerberg with his near 2 billion customers on Facebook (Metaverse) has become the largest country (virtually) on earth. It has more than the populations of the entire African continent, of China and of India. These achievements of mankind in our times have led to a greater integration of peoples more than a century ago, with more economic exchanges, cultural influences and technological advances and understanding that the whole world has become a ‘global village’. Reality teaches that much more needs to be done and the achieved milestones are not comparable to the many needs and challenges ahead.

Questions arise on the purpose and meaning of it all? – (“Wozu das ganze, wenn wir sowieso sterben muessen”? (Adam Schaff) - for being in the world – and how to respond with certainty to the fundamental questions of life - WHY, WHAT, WHO, WHERE, WHEN AND HOW for a life of happiness which remains a constant basic need – thus the question and search for answers. Widely acknowledged is the belief that the **science of religion** contains the promise to resolve the deepest and fundamental questions of life and meaning, vis-à-vis meaninglessness, and offering salvation and transcendence in continued life even after death (annihilation). Education for knowledge and action is the next and highest primary source for illumination. Rational and critical thinking assists the true independence and yearning for fulfilment by the human being. I believe that humanity has the ability and possibility to use these two faculties - **spiritual and mental** - to solve the myriads of problems all of us face at this time. To achieve this however, we owe ourselves some reckoning as we reflect on **purpose-driven and values-driven “Teleology” in higher education.**

## **Purpose-driven Higher Education – The UNESCO Conference for post-colonial African Education**

Nelson Mandela once said that *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”*. In 1962, the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) convened its first conference for all African Universities and institutes of higher learning on the African Island of Madagascar, in Tananarive. That conference addressed issues that bothered on a vision for the future, the nature of the university in Africa, and the urgency for research, teaching and training towards contextual solutions to problems. This was happening at a time some other African countries were still under colonial subjugation and tutelage. The challenge was to see in the emerging new nations of post-colonial Africa, the role of universities becoming citadels of a new Leadership, producing inspiring and innovative ideas with initiatives that lead to broad based social movements for change.

The expectation was that university education and teacher/students movements would progress ideas of liberation and freedom (*Uhuru*), visionary pragmatism (*Zikisim*) and the authentic philosophy of community *“Ubuntuism”* on the continent. African education for communalism and community consciousness was expressed in Zulu thus: *“a human being is human through other humans”*. Or in the words of Professor John Mbiti: *“I am because we are. Since we are therefore I am”*.

Recognizing that education is at the Centre of every human settlement, it helps learning on how to be truly and fully human in freedom and balanced with responsibility. Such education helps us rediscover our ultimate goals and destiny as humans. No wonder the renowned author C.S.Lewis cautioned while making the point quite succinctly that *“education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make humans more clever devils”*. It is therefore through ethical and values-driven education that we strive to nurture future leaders that will put ethical considerations above all others when taking decisions. As a center of learning, the university with its institution, teachers, professionals, and beneficiaries shape future leaders. The long-term prosperity of our societies depends on what kind of education, learning, skills and character content we offer to the young who pass through Higher education institutions. The transformation of human society is made possible through the instrumentality of education. Education is the critical driver of socioeconomic, political, cultural and technological development of any society. And it is of critical and strategic importance for all to be involved.

The UNESCO 1962 conference strongly encouraged African Higher Education institutions to adapt their teaching, research and training to contextual African post-colonial problems. These included issues of using research to build the integration of knowledge for multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral collaboration as an anchor for the university. This was seen to offer solutions that contained a true and integral path for sustainable human development beyond merely economic and material indices. Values, character and integrity matter more than mere formal knowledge. Values elevate the human quality and spirit and bring the rich cosmo-vision of most traditions to the fore, with sharing, participation, communality, tolerance, inclusion, respect, civics and co-existence considered as part of the content of university education. This is the crux of the matter in Africa.

The Association of African Universities (AAU) which was conceived at this meeting and officially launched in 1967 stated as its Mission:

*“to identify and formulate a new philosophy of higher, particularly university education for Africa, in the hope of evolving institutions that are not only built, owned and sited in Africa, but drawing their inspiration from Africa, and intelligently dedicated to her ideals and aspirations”* (AAU, 1969; Report of the Second General Conference of the African Universities Association, Kinshasa Zaire: Louvanium University).

The conference called on all African Universities to undertake necessary reforms to make themselves more relevant and useful to the African people and the societies they serve. The multi-dimensional problems confronting humanity today have their roots in an outdated industrial-era education system that was designed to produce obedient, unquestioning workers to fill standardized job positions and perform standardized repetitive tasks. The Service Economy we have transitioned into necessitates a paradigm shift in the way we educate present and future generations. The commonly held view that natural resources drive development is not only fallacious but utterly misleading. If this were to be true, African countries would have been the most developed, prosperous and peaceful countries in the world today. However, we all know that most African countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are still characterised as developing or least developed. Nature is incredibly generous to the continent of Africa as it is one of the most endowed continents of the world. As is widely acknowledged, many African countries are extremely rich in diamonds, gold, iron, cobalt, uranium, copper, bauxite, petroleum and other minerals. Yet many parts of the continent exhibit chronically underdeveloped index of development criteria or measures. *“This illustrates the fact that mere possession of natural resources is not enough to drive development or ensure peace and unity. On the other hand, countries that are naturally barren in terms of resources have made significant progress in the enterprise of development. Countries such as Singapore, South Korea, China, USA, Malaysia and many others are resourcefully poor but have attained notable milestone in the development process. It may look contradictory to say that resource poor countries are leading in the field of development while resource rich ones are trailing far behind”* to quote Audu Nanven Gambo, Vice-Chancellor of Karl Kumm University Vom, as delivered recently in a convocation lecture at the Plateau State University Bokkos on 26 February 2023

His analysis with the experience of People’s Republic of China (PRC) is very instructive in the context of our conversation. It is common knowledge that China is the most populated country in the world. It has a population of well over 1.4 billion people. It is one of the least endowed countries of the world in terms of natural resources, but as it is today, China has through sustained effort, succeeded in building a moderately prosperous society. Put differently, China has against all odds, reduced poverty to a tolerable level. This rare feat was achieved in the year 2020 (Golwa, 2020). This is yet another evidence in support of the claim that the possession of natural resources alone is not enough factor to drive development

What really explains the gap between countries that are heavily industrialized and those that are still contending with some challenges of development? Leadership. Dynamic Leadership is one of the services a University provides to society. Such leadership is the product of research, teaching and training in character and has to be energized by courageous individuals, innovative organizations and the rising aspirations of a global society to achieve peace, progress, development and happiness. Such leadership is characterized by vision, values and goals. And such development is a social process, not a program. Governments and international institutions alone cannot provide the leadership required to achieve these goals. University education plays a vital role in providing this contribution.

The primary functions of universities are to educate students, perform innovative and horizon-broadening research and transfer new knowledge for the benefit of society. Higher education furthers research and thinking that makes a positive vision of the future of humanity possible through identifying untapped resources, developing critical leadership qualities of the young students and generating strategies, which make knowledge a productive activity. To achieve this in a globally changing and challenging environment, universities need to be flexible enough in their structures, management and culture to establish new interdisciplinary, interdepartmental Centers for working on the scientific fields of tomorrow. There is the current challenge and call by the National Universities Commission Abuja for local content contribution by institutions in the CCMAS program. Such current challenges help provide trans-disciplinary education that is recognized and transferable around the world.

As we write, it is doubtful, if the ambitions of the last fifty years have become reality. Are Higher Education Institutions not caught up with what Kamran Mofid called *“the age of perpetual crisis seemingly spinning out of control... and their remarkable chaotic characteristic being their deepening*

*and continuity*”. And he goes on to assert that what has become an unfortunate conclusion across nations is that “the current education systems which ordinarily would be useful tools for the change all of us envisage has failed especially in developing countries but also globally due to conflicts of interest because education has shifted from pedagogically-based academic values to market-based values”. Whereas education was designed to serve the pursuit of wisdom, the moulding of human character, the cultivation of virtues and beauty, taking to the examples of Socrates and the wise sages of history in all cultures and civilizations through time, the reality is quite different in many African countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is truism that “education is been designed, controlled and implemented by political and business elites, indulged in a reckless ideology of neoliberalism that advances market forces and market values even in the field of education where access is lacking for many”. By making education a tool for profit maximization, consequences have signaled not only a change in the fundamentals of education philosophy in tertiary education but also presented us, using the words of Emiliano Bosio “*with a real-world crises of economic irresponsibility, displacement, exclusion, division and inequality.*”

The reality as is commonly expressed in many places, using the strong words of the Founder of the Globalization for the Common Good Initiative (GCGI) is that:

*“students are called customers; education described as a commodity; universities are labelled service-providers and centers of business, trading commodities, buying them cheap and selling them to the highest bidders; teaching is not a vocation; learning is not a sacrament; education is all about the rankings and targets; it is all about running low quality courses, with no heart and spirit and meaning, just to get “bums on seats”, taught by stressed, fatigued, overworked and not-valued faculty; when it is all about delivery of the lowest possible costs; and exam results are hugely inflated to keep the customers happy and not complaining; then, we have opened the doors to the destruction of all that makes life good and worthwhile.”* (Kamran Mofid). It is in response to this challenge that we make the agenda of integrating ethics in Higher Education Institutions a categorical imperative for all universities in our time.

### **3. Defining Purpose for the founding of the University of Nigeria**

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the historical founder of the University of Nigeria far back in his activist years in the 1940’s and 1950’s saw the need for change and respect for the black man and the African identity in the comity of nations because the newly independent African nations and its peoples had experienced a near century of inhuman, unjust and crude colonial burdens and structures which dehumanised and nearly annihilated indigenous African cultures, distorted their history; undermined their identity and questioned the African personality. Universities under colonial rule were designed to serve the foreign colonial powers and fulfil the master’s needs. The colonised had simply to comply by constantly “aping” and benchmarking their development and progress on how compliant they were with their former colonial rulers.

In Nigeria, the first indigenous licensed Higher Education institution in 1960 – The University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) - chose as its motto: “*TO RESTORE THE DIGNITY OF MAN*” – in itself - a purpose-driven and values-driven agenda as motive and therefore an ethical pilot. The Founding fathers reflected the contextual application of the United Nations Universal Charter and Declaration on Human Rights of 1948.

This declaration is grounded on the intrinsic and basic principle that all human beings are born free and equal with dignity, freedom and integrity; that truth exists and that all are able to know and reach this truth, despite the attempts at relativism; that faith and tolerance are virtues possible for human beings within the multiplicity and diversity of cultures; and that imbued with an immortal soul, given freely by a Supreme Being who is generous and kind as creator (*Okike*), all human beings have rights and duties imposed upon them in conscience upon which right usage they would obtain salvation in their circumstances.

The University of Nigeria placed therefore HUMAN DIGNITY as its *raison d’être* and vision at its founding. This vision which is part of its mission would help the conduct of research, teaching and training of youth for leadership roles in a continent which had suffered, slavery for four hundred years,

colonialism for 100 years and the challenges of neo-colonialism and ideological contradictions. The Second World War ended in 1945 and brought with it a positive side-effect – the beginning of the decolonization and emancipation of previously held colonies by European powers. Britain, France, Spain and Portugal which themselves were tottering after the seven year war (1939 – 1945 triggered by Austria and Germany needed to give up extra baggage of indigenous African territories and focus on their own self-survival. Political decolonization was the way to go, while retaining economic posers in the colonies. Thus Ghana obtained independence in 1958 and Nigeria in 1960.

The University of Nigeria Nsukka has as its motto **“To Restore the Dignity of Man”**.

This restoration of Human Dignity is the philosophy and expresses the agenda and mission of the University of Nigeria as lived out to the fullest, thus: **“To seek truth, teach Truth and preserve Truth”**.

**The UNN MISSION STATEMENT** at its founding reads:

*“To place the university of Nigeria, Nsukka in the forefront of research and the development of innovative knowledge transfer and human resources development in the global academic terrain, while promoting the core values which will ensure the restoration of the dignity of man”*. From its philosophy and mission statement, the University of Nigeria Nsukka articulates its values thus:

The value statement defines what the institution holds in common as members of the community, and informs the vision and mission statements.

- *We believe that tolerance and understanding among national, ethnic, and religious groups are essential to the success of Nigeria or any other nation. The University will actively work to instill these values in its students and will itself reflect them in its policies.*
- *We believe that the University, in all of its activities, shall demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and academic honesty.*
- *We believe that freedom of expression is fundamental to any intellectual community and affirm that all members of the AUN community will have the freedom to express any opinion without fear of reprisals of any kind.”*

The following questions emerge as consequence of the Motto and Mission and vision of the University:

\*How much tolerance exists in the university on the basis of gender, religion, ethnic group, state, local government, kindred, clan, etc?

\* When we insist that a VC must come from town, village and social group, are living out the values of tolerance and our philosophy of “seek the truth, teach the truth and preserve the truth”?

\*How transparent are our processes: promotions, employment, etc?

\*Do we encourage freedom of expression in the university?

\*Are we driven by the quest for wealth as members of staff? Are we convinced about other values beyond wealth?

\*Why are we in the university system?

The existence of the University of Nigeria certainly is the largest investment on south eastern Nigerian soil of the Federal Government. It is a space where the future is planted for *“to believe in education is to believe in the future, to believe in what may be accomplished through the disciplined use of intelligence, allied with cooperation and good will.”*(Mark). This sums up the strategic importance of education in the life of any human society.

#### **4. The University as Primary Space for Research to impact human development**

The university and higher education institutions have become spaces for the burgeoning of ideas assisting research and training. They are the primary space for the development of research to impact human progress.

The key enabler of national development in any society is the volume and quality of research in universities. In a knowledge-driven world, national transformation and socioeconomic prosperity is largely determined by how much attention is paid to the production of human capital. The most credible explanation for this gap lies in the fact that “*it is the human resources of a country and not its capital or natural resources that ultimately determine the character and pace of its social and economic development.*”

Clearly a country which is unable to develop skills and knowledge of its people and utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything” (Bogoro, 2019). The implication of this profound and instructive statement by Professor Bogoro, former Executive Secretary of TETFUND is that a country can have all the natural resources of this world but cannot make a breakthrough in national transformation without robust research activities going on in its universities. There is therefore considerable sense in which one can contend that research is the critical enabler of national development. The rich experiences of countries such as Singapore, Israel, China, South Korea and a host of others are instructive.

Investment in research enterprise is critical to the process of national development because it generates new knowledge and ideas to drive transformation. It is unimaginable the fate of nations that have not developed the necessary political will to encourage research in universities. This appears to be the plight of most developing countries that hardly allocate up to 10% of their annual budgets to fund education. These countries have crippled the spirit of research and by implication, science and technology as the veritable vehicle for driving development. It is the research component of the mandates of universities that makes them strategically relevant to the society. Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are expected to connect with government, industry and other relevant stakeholders for the benefit of the society at large (Charles, 2021). This brings to limelight the need for autonomy for university academics to exercise unfettered freedom to interrogate and investigate everything under the sun because this is the foundation for sound and effective teaching. Lack of funds for research means the frontiers of knowledge cannot be extended and this is inimical to the health of the society.

These developments have left some tremendous impacts on people’s lives and livelihoods, on their meaning in life and quests, offering perspectives for some while creating new problems for others. We are thus witness to environmental and ecological disasters occasioning new waves of willful or forced migrations of peoples beyond their natural habitats, fleeing poverty and man-made catastrophes including wars that bring ecological consequences. For once and more seriously, humanity hangs more dangerously on the eve (God forbid) of some cataclysmic nuclear disaster – willful or accidental. We notice that many simple issues have become more complex and their solutions require therefore new thinking that has to consider influences from multiple sources in our world.

Many governments in industrialized countries now realize that new scientific knowledge holds the key to our future wealth and health. New medical drugs and industrial products are products of discoveries made in universities. The industrial hubs in the USA have moved away from the steel Centre of Pittsburgh and the car Centre of Detroit to high-technology companies based around MIT and Silicon Valley companies based around Stanford University and the University of California. If Europe is to compete successfully with China and the USA then it has to focus on high-technology products and the ideas and materials for many of these will originate in our universities. Hence, governments around the world have to focus again their interests intensely in their universities, even if there are funding gaps which solution exist in university autonomy programs and private–public partnerships.

A major concern is the increased administrative burden placed on Universities by government regulation and reporting. There is often some disconnect between the administrative functions of a University and the primary activity of research and teaching. In order to obtain maximum benefit from research effort globally, universities need to adapt their approaches to the management and organization of research and teaching, to foster cross-discipline working and promote global mobility for the next generation of students.

However, the structure of our universities has changed little in the past fifty years. The majority of Universities still tend to have relatively small, independent departments. A key feature of the *University-of-the-future* must be flexibility: we must make it easy for an engineer to learn Chinese or an Indian



language, history and culture without this being an additional burden. Concerning research, we must acknowledge that much of the most exciting and useful research is occurring at the boundaries between traditional disciplines. Many biologists who design new medical drugs to attach to specific protein molecules received training as physicists. Many new materials for next generation mobile phones, computers, cars and planes need be designed and developed by materials scientists who collaborate with colleagues - chemists, physicists and engineers. Currently however, university departmental structures often impede rather than facilitate these kinds of multidisciplinary research.

The problems facing university education can be summarized thus: People receive knowledge during studies that is monolithic and half-baked, learning only in parts but not the whole and therefore lack concrete link of such disciplinary knowledge to other practical aspects of science, the arts, humanities and daily life. Universities graduate students who have certificates but cannot feed themselves. People graduate in disciplines of knowledge with a certificate but lack the link of their knowledge to inter-disciplinarity and even to trans-disciplinarity. The result is obvious – many academics without bread on the table – adding to unemployment increase and lack of innovativeness. Professor Marcel von de Voorde, a former director at the Centre for Nuclear Energy in Geneva writes:

*“Up to now, academic education has been strongly oriented towards specific academic disciplines. It is all too often neglected that most of the problems that research and education are supposed to help us solve are not defined in terms of disciplines, and these problems are precisely the ones that are particularly urgent. Some examples are the environment, energy, and health.*

*There is a dis-connect between the development of problems and the development of disciplines, and this disconnect is growing to the extent that disciplinary development is increasingly determined by specialization”.*

A shift is necessary towards active, transdisciplinary, student-cantered, value-based, contextual and experiential learning pedagogies. It is of note at present that there is no recognized “single” discipline that encompasses biomedical science, information systems, and electronic engineering, but such an approach may be required in the future to address industrial and societal needs. Here lies a challenge for Universities to address this by creating degree programs that do not lose intellectual depth in addressing the range of material required and/or do not lead to multiple pathways to the final qualification that is confusing for both students and academics. That said, the growing fields of nanotechnology, bio-intelligent materials, biomimetic, cognitive informatics and cognitive computing etc., would not prosper without intensive crossover and interaction between disciplines.

The University has to change: because its environment (social as well as institutional and regulatory) is changing, and because science and research, that shape internal structures and processes, are changing. Similarly, many conventional jobs will disappear in the near future, by the time that children currently in primary education have graduated. Others will transform radically and many new jobs will be created. Hence industry, government, and the services sector will, in the future, look to recruit candidates with flexibility and an open mind.

In the words of Professor Marcel von de Voorde in a recently unpublished audience: *“This millennium will see us enter an era of revolutions in a range of technologies from medicine to transport that will have transformational effects on society. With new tools, new insights and understanding, and a developing convergence of the disciplines of physics, chemistry, materials science, biology and computing, we will realize novel and superior products and systems that were, until the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the stuff of science fiction. This will not be possible without collaborative links between disciplines”.*

Furthermore, he adds as example: *Cognitive Information Processing* and *Cognitive Computing* will be important technologies of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and will require the input of researchers from solid state and organic chemistry, biology and medicine, physics and mathematics, information and computing sciences,



and engineering if their potential is to be fully realized. In this context, the need for an inter-disciplinarily approach is often mentioned. However, inter-disciplinarity, a cooperation between disciplines with a finite duration, is not enough. The development of the problems tackled by today's science assumes that inter-disciplinarity is more a short-term approach to a specific issue rather than a fundamental new instrument of science and research.

*“It is not enough to value the links between experiences, disciplines, creativity and ideas. One has to develop methods, strategies and practices that will transform those links into real connections. We have to recognize interdependence in order to actualize it and we have to know how to act once we have developed that recognition.”*

## **5. Problems and crises of Modern higher Education**

The Greek philosopher Plato some thousands of years ago, in *The Republic*, complains that in democratic times a teacher *“fears and fawns upon the pupils, and the pupils pay no heed to the teacher ... or to their overseers either.”* *The youth ignore their elders, while those supposedly wiser and more experienced “are full of pleasantries and graciousness, imitating the young for fear they may be thought disagreeable and authoritative.”*

In the world renowned treatise, St Augustine of Hippo in his *Confessions* written in the fourth century bemoans the intransigence of his students as well as their unwillingness to give back in good responses to questions what they owe to him for his investment of time and energy for their education. Students at the time wanted to play game but not stay for lessons!

The twentieth century Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* contrasts the academic seriousness of Jude Fawley with his classmates, who are not serious with their formation and have no adequate commitment to their education leaving much to be desired.

As Jeffrey Polet, Professor at Hope College and director of the Leadership Forum at the Gerald Ford Presidential Foundation has once said, *the current generation may not have invented academic corruption, but they have gone a ways toward perfecting it. Still, it is worth remembering that every generation has its scoundrels and saints, good and bad students and teachers. In many ways the basics of education haven't changed that much: There are things worth knowing that require much study; those that engage in that study seek to communicate what they've learned; the knowledge gained proves both useful and generative of personal growth.*

What can be said therefore is that the problems with modern higher education are all too familiar. We can think of solutions through issues of policy frameworks in education, improved interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches, critical thinking, capacity building of both the people who teach and learn and of the required resources for deployment in education. Furthermore, values-driven formation and accountability concerns that ensure that policies are followed and persons in responsibility carry out their assignments or face consequences. It is thus possible to say that solutions are closer to hand than one might think. Start with *“do your job.”*

As critical as university education in the enterprise of nation building, it can be boldly said that it has not been accorded the desired attention. The number of universities have grown significantly from 6 in the early 1960s and 1970s to now 220 in the fourth republic comprising 50 federal, 59 state and 111 private universities. This rapid growth in the number of universities in Nigeria reflects the growing demand for access to university education by young men and women who hunger for quality education. Professor Abubakar Rasheed Adamu, the current Executive Secretary of National Universities Commission has in 2020, published a volume on the state of university education in Nigeria. In the publication, he carefully chronicles the challenges of university education to include inadequate funding, poor funding of research as a critical driver of university education, inadequate reference books and periodicals in the library, impediments in the recruitment of quality staff, inadequate infrastructure and laboratory equipment,

disrupted academic activities due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and inadequate e-learning infrastructure to cope, and a host of others (Abubakar, 2020). More challenging for universities especially federal ones is the introduction of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) as payment platform. ASUU has vehemently protested the introduction of this platform for payment of salaries because of its lack of capacity to comprehensively capture the peculiarities of university system. The software/platform cannot accommodate visiting lecturers, sabbatical fellows, external examiners etc which are indispensable to the survival of the university system in Nigeria. These challenges are common to both public and private universities in Nigeria and have conspired to undermine the quality of university education in Nigeria thereby making it difficult for the country to harvest the dividends of its investments.

It is worth noting that while there has been considerable effort made in growing the quantity of universities in Nigeria, there has not been corresponding effort in improving the quality of university education and this is largely attributed to poor funding by government and proprietors. Annual budgetary allocation to education since 1999 has been less than 10% (Odusanya, 2021). This could possibly account for the frequency of industrial actions by university-based unions (Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU); Senior Staff Association of Universities (SSANU); Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU); and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). Strikes by these Unions over a wide range of issues have been anything but salutary. Students have had to overstay on campuses because of the disruptive effects of industrial actions which have within the Nigerian context become annual rituals. Dwindling resources available to universities has compelled most Nigerian universities to compromise quality of services. Mainstream sources of financing universities such as subventions, tuition fees and other charges, research grants and other levies have grossly dwindled coupled with very excruciating prevailing inflation of over 21% in the economic environment.

University education is no doubt gasping for oxygen against the background of the foregoing. Research which should drive teaching has suffered serious neglect due lack of fund to fund it. In the '90s, research grants were disbursed at Central and faculty levels but this is now history. Academic staff seek for grants outside the university because what is available within the university is grossly inadequate to meet their need. This has had non-salutary effect on university education in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A weighty observation by the US National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983, captures vividly the Nigerian experience. It is worth quoting below to help us appreciate the depth of the rot in the system:

*Our nation is at risk, the educational foundations of our society are being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people. If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have, in effect been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament (National on Excellence in Education 1983, p. 5)*

This is a clear description of the reality of state of education in general and university education in Nigeria, in particular. This lamentable state of university education in Nigeria is fundamentally attributed to consistent failure by government to provide appropriate funds for the effective administration of universities. For instance, between 2012 and 2016 in Nigeria, budgetary allocation to education remained less than 10%. Only in 2012 and 2014 was allocation to education between 10 and 10.63%. Within the same period, some selected African countries such as Republic of Benin, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania maintained an above 10% budgetary allocation to education (Ololube, 2016). This is clearly a case of lack of political will by the Nigerian government to appropriately fund education to meet the country's national goals and aspirations.

November 2018, the World Academy of Art & Science and the World University Consortium organized a high profile international conference in Rome in collaboration with Roma Tre University and other partners. The conference brought together a broad array of educational administrators and academicians,

policymakers, government officials, civil society representatives and students and those active in university education. The conference upheld and identified the crisis in education and envisioned the much-needed change. Participants explored the current problems facing the sector, the changes needed to overcome them and the role of universities in the process, calling for a shift.

It is recognised that some universities are running their operation like computers in their teaching and training and research methodologies - they simply garbage in and garbage out academic stuff to clients whether relevant to contemporary society or not and expect students to render them in order to pass exams! Teaching and the knowledge transmitted does not often promote independent thinking, innovation and creativity. It does not help the development of leadership and self-guided continuous learning. And here begins the big crisis in education which is also the reason for lack of progress and advancement for many developing countries particularly in Africa.

There is an urgent need to fill the global leadership vacuum in order to address the complex challenges confronting humanity today. Global developments have progressed in revolutionary steps, starting with agriculture, followed by the industrial and information/communication revolutions. Nanoscience and nanotechnology are the fourth revolution in the 21st century. Many industrial sectors are influenced by this development, causing upheavals and distortions to the ways people previously lived. Using the language of the World Academy of Art and Science, “unprecedented problems call for unprecedented solutions”.

Through education in ethics, the realization of meaning and purpose in society are enabled and beneficiaries are empowered to gain more access to opportunities, resources and power. The evidences experienced in the way humanity is driving the global train has made the assertion necessary that the future of humanity rests on some critical point which is that there can be no sustainable development universally if there are no ethical values integrated across sectors and built within the education industry at all levels. There is no inhibition to integrate our ability to translate powerful motives into action, through the tool and knowledge of ethics for through the learning and living of ethics as a way of life, society retains their original power for realization of their full potentials

## **6. Application of Ethical thinking to Science & Technology issues in Higher Education**

There is no inhibition to integrate our ability to translate powerful motives into action, through the tool and knowledge of ethics for through the learning and living of ethics as a way of life, society retains their original power for realization of their full potentials. It is in ethics, with ethics and through ethics that the rapidly rising expectations for solutions to human and ecological problems that have increased frustrations and tensions that threaten the fabric of global society can find sustainable solutions.

Ethics enhances LIFE in everything and encourages doing Right in Thought and Action, a definition that the Greek sage called the GOOD (Aristotle). ETHICS brings in principles to serve the need for a united global effort to channel the forces of science and technology positively and govern the peaceful evolution of human society. Indeed, the major areas of challenges that present serious ethical issues and must be addressed by academia through Joint Ethics Research Projects include some of the following:

- **From Internet of Things e.g Meters to Internet of Body e.g Microchips.** It does seem that humanity loses true humanism when its products of science play master and the creator of these become a zombie. Are we not condoning a world of robots and trans-humanism without a soul?

- **From Healthcare to Biotech** are we accepting that the destruction and manipulation of human DNA through use of MRNA Technology, nanoparticles, etc. is unquestioned and taken for granted? One would wish to know the fate of human beings in another fifty years. Shall they still remain human or

become zombies? And what is the role of ethics and the humanism we claim in such an agenda for the future?

- **From digital account to Fintech** it does seem that we are losing our financial independence over a controlled monetary system. The loss of authority and power over one's own economic means is the last form of slavery. This is particularly noticeable how the prices of goods and services of items not necessarily useful to locals in their remote villages cut off from every networks, still suffer from the prices of oil and gas sold in Zurich markets, affecting the prices of local groundnut, meat, yams and cassava in the local markets?

- **From Organic Agriculture to Agrotech** we are renouncing healthy food over for artificially produced processed unhealthy and unnatural food & meat in whatever packaging and marketing styles. For Africans who still live in agricultural areas and producing their local foodstuffs while tilling their farmlands, it remains baffling how foreign imported foodstuff become cheaper than local vegetables and staples?

- **From biometric ID to Digital Identity and Passports** populations of people are now fully watched (Big Brother is watching You) and made subjects to a world of absolutely controlled surveillance with intelligence on their entire movements, thought, speech and indeed internal private lives? It does happen that unmanned drones can be sent and have been dispatched to kill thousands of innocent lives on or continent in recent times?

- **From Data to AI** people are giving up all aspects of their life and privacy over to unknown corporations. Instead of Big values, we discuss Big data and instead of Techno-values, people are stuck in technophobia and techno-utopia. Thus trans-human connectedness is replaced by computer technologies which again zombie people with social media PC and telephone software, such that people living very closely are abstract and remote in virtual realities that contradict our entire humanity?

- **From e-learning to distant online education** it does seem that people are losing human interaction and interconnectedness which wisdom is ancient for interpersonal communication (homo Loquens) - voice, space and eye contact – making learning from each other a matter of purpose and meaning. Indeed with due acknowledgment of some advantages to knowledge via e-learning beyond the immediate surroundings, there does not seem to be an authentic replacement for face to face human interaction in the classroom and the teacher and student relationship.

- **From power grid to solar panels** we are creating a greater reliance on heavy extraction and batteries and it does seem that the matters of its environmental impacts are not sufficiently studied, nor are their disposition and waste management transparently discussed, despite many advantages. This goes to reflect the place of Purpose and values driven development models.

- **From transport to green mobility** e.g electric cars, it does seem that the facts are yet to emerge on how relying on heavy extraction, child's labor and high use of electricity are incurred and its environmental impact properly assessed?.

- **From environmental issues to climate change** it does seem that many are justifying the use of geo-engineering which leads to uncontrolled weather modification and consequences and necessarily, such open consequences are hidden?

- **From telephone to communication devices**, useful and indeed necessary as they have become, we are yet to manage authorizing systematic tracking, and surveillance and the challenges they pose to freedom of conscience, privacy and undermining of personalities. It does seem that each person is under intelligence gathered files making unknown thoughts and personal conscience a public domain for use and abuse by externals for political or other charges when necessary?

- **From news to social media**, it does seem that many have acquiesced and are no longer using their sound reasoning and common sense but adhering to malpractices such as censored information and fake news?

Whereas developments in science and technology are supposedly produced for improving the conditions of the world, for the sake of humanity, communication and the planet, have we critically as academics, intelligentsia, ethicists, thinkers and stakeholders engaged on the meaning of it all? On their purpose and end? On their better deployment? On their limitations and possibilities? On the teleology of technology as good servant but not a master of the world? Is it possible that for not asking these questions that we are without knowing it becoming complicit in the reality of destroying each segment and fabric of the society, the people and the planet? A society that is manifestly defined by structural violence, such as poverty, unemployment, hunger, repression and social alienation cannot be said to be enjoying positive peace even when physical violence is not ongoing. Generally speaking, negative peace makes society combustible while positive peace guarantees stable, orderly and progressive social order.

The university community is a complex mix of the good, the bad and the ugly. A university is a melting pot in the sense that it represents the confluence of world civilisations. The gate of the university is accessible to all and sundry and as a character moulding organization, it is expected that the worst person who comes into the university community should leave as a gentle, humble, humane and compassionate person because of the values inculcated in the person. Any person who is awarded the degree of a university must have been certified worthy in character and learning. Emphasis is on character because a first-class graduate in any field without good character is worse than a known criminal in the society. People of good character are known to be peace loving and gentle. They place high premium on fellow citizens and would not want to cause social conflagration in the society. They value peace so much that they would not unjustly hurt a fly.

The university represents a multicultural community and is therefore prone to frequent conflict. The management of this diversity in the university is critical to the peaceful survival of the community. Part of the strategies of fostering peace on the campus of a university is the teaching of General Studies courses to serve as a bridge between the science and humanities divides. The teaching of history of Nigeria's people history and culture, conflict and conflict resolution, science and technology and a host of others is a strategic response to the pronounced diversity that characterizes the Nigerian society in general and the campus in particular. One can see clearly the foundation for peace being erected in the university.

Appreciation of individual's different cultural values through the general courses offered by students in all tertiary institutions is indeed a step towards promoting national unity through advancement of learning and transmission of different cultural values in the country (Abdullahi, 2006). The teaching of general courses in universities is to widen and deepen the civic consciousness of students and orient them towards a peaceful society. Both science and humanities students are taught general courses to enable them appreciate the rich heritage of the country and the need to live in peace and harmony with one another irrespective of their different backgrounds. The strategic objective of teaching general studies courses is to promote the consciousness of students on the country's diversities and how to tolerate and accommodate other people who may be different. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is one of the federal instrumentalities designed to promote national unity in Nigeria.

The nexus between university education and economic development is a clear one in the sense that cutting-edge research by universities can boost industrialization in Nigeria. More so using the triple helix model would ensure that researches in the university are not only responsive to the demands of industries but bring about innovations and new knowledge that can boost economic activities. Triple helix model means the interface between industries, society and universities for the purpose of meeting the needs of the tripartite parties. Universities become more relevant when their research outputs meet the critical needs of not only the industries but the society at large. The interface between industries and universities

is also intended to narrow or bridge the gap between the needs of industries and the curriculum of universities. There should not be a mismatch between these two stakeholders so that the outputs of universities can meet the demands of industries. Industries do easily dismiss most Nigerian graduates as unemployable because of lack of relevant skills they expect young graduates to possess. The expectation of the world of work is often times at variance with the training graduates received while in school.

Armed with appropriate skills and competencies, young graduates can become successful entrepreneurs thereby driving the process of economic development of a nation. Instead of becoming employees upon graduation, they become employers of labour. In the contemporary world of work, university graduates are expected to possess two critical sets of skills: hard and soft skills. While hard skills relate to technical knowledge gained through experience or education career, soft skills relate to personal attributes or characteristics of an individual and how the person works on his or her own and with others (Ibrahim, 2022). Examples of soft skills include complex-problem solving, critical thinking, analytical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, active listening and general social skills. These are relevant social skills that drive the fourth industrial revolution or 4IR. Examples of hard skills include analytical reasoning, artificial intelligence, sales, video production and a host of others.

## **7. Values-driven higher education -**

There is no society without appropriate investment in education that can ever hope to generate immense prosperity for its citizens and make them radiate with happiness and contentment. Here lies the scope and content of values embedded in education.

The Literature guru and poet T. S. Eliot had asked us a century ago:

***"Where is the Life we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"***

To understand the nexus between university education and values-driven integral development, the goals of tertiary education as spelt out in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's **National Policy on Education** which enunciates the following:

- i. To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;*
- ii. To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;*
- iii. To develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;*
- iv. To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;*
- v. To promote and encourage scholarship and community services;*
- vi. To forge and cement national unity; and*
- vii. To promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2004:30).*

The basic questions to ask include the following: Why be ethical? How can we develop good understanding of ethics in both the normative and empirical aspects? What are the pathways to developing a positive work-ethic in the University? And where are tools and methods in identifying and solving ethical issues in teaching and supervision? What are the best practices applied in creating sound



supervisor and supervisee relationships? Do we have possibilities in handling cases of intellectual dishonesty and unethical research practices? Which are these? And how do we find answers to the following questions based on best practices to develop teaching skills in and knowledge of ethics? Inculcating team spirit in research and publications? Research leadership skills for teachers and students? Updating knowledge about research quality and design? Accessing research funding opportunities? Data and information management? Financial sustainability and practical steps to being competitive in a global environment?

*It is therefore acknowledged that values driven higher education seek to:*

- *Strengthening their ethical practices and reputation by supporting efforts to integrate more fully values-based decision-making processes in governance, management and daily practices of staff, management and leadership;*
- *Strengthen the professional ethical awareness and providing support to teachers to help them to be adequately equipped to teach ethical values;*
- *Support students with tools and resources to think and act according to ethical values;*
- *Integrate ethical reflection and action in research, ensuring that research goals are beneficial and that the means are not harmful; and*
- *Raise the awareness of policy makers and stakeholders about the need to integrate values-based policies in education and in research,*
  - *Crystallize the University's Mission, Vision and Values within the overall goals:*
  - *Take steps towards the ethical transformation of leadership, faculty staff and students:*
  - *Re-invigorate quality teaching, research and publications:*
  - *Encourage positive mentoring and prompt graduation of students:*
  - *Assess the effectiveness and use of quality control standards in teaching and management:*
  - *Improve the global ranking and competitiveness of a higher education institution:*
  - *Mitigate and help manage reputational risks of the University within the global academic context.*

## **8. Conclusion – A Postscript dialogue with Obiora Ike - Creating Ethical Leaders with Moral Integrity**

In the 21st century, with the knowledge we have, with the tools we have, with the technology we have, no human being should go at night without food. But we know that human beings are going to bed and children are dying at night without food. Without water. How can a human being leave a small boy to die? Because some people have taken the money that belongs to the common good and kept it for themselves. And they cannot exhaust it. And yet people are in need. So when we learn the principles of solidarity, we learn the principles of respect for human dignity. When we learn the principles of respect for my own life and another person's life, we learn to respect diversity, and we are inclusive. Because people tend to be fanatics. They tend to be close to only the things they know. They tend to be racist, if they're not taught that human beings no matter whether they are white, or black, or green, or red or blue, are all human beings. Because nature makes it so. So we need to grow through education.

We've created a global team of people, a younger group, who will become future leaders, because thought leadership is the challenge of the 21st century. Thinking leaders with moral integrity. Leaders who accept that the way to go is to create a humanity for everybody.



So what is the ethical life? The ethical life is the good. What is happiness? Happiness is the good. You know, all people aspire for happiness. And that happiness is found in ETHICS. AN ACCRONYM...E stands for empowerment. T stands for transformation. H stands for holistic dimension. I stands for integrity. C stands for competence. And S stands for sustainability.

When the past is disconnected from the present, when the present is disconnected from the future, when transmission of knowledge, intergenerational transmission of knowledge is not happening, when intergenerational transmission of value is not happening, when epicenters are set out around the world that do not correlate, that is where you have the problems we are discussing. We have, by virtue of modernity, by virtue of technology, by virtue of globalization, made it clear that this Centre is not holding.

This is why you have disparities and people who are not happy. Look around you, you'll discover that many people are not happy. Many people have access to nothing. Many people don't even find meaning in anything. And there is no value that driving anybody in different parts of the world.

In the past, people lived on specific values, they knew what to hold onto. But today, there is no value you can hold onto, even if you talk human rights, life or whatever topic, there's always this disparity, because there has been a disconnect. Ethics means the moral compass for doing good, which is innate. Human beings have the ability to do good. They also have the ability to do bad because they have freedom, they can choose between right and left, between up and down. Human beings have a wheel that can say yes, or say no.

But ethics is the moment where you say yes or no, based on rational thinking. People don't take a moment to ask why am I doing this, because the market drives you just to buy something for the sake of buying, you are reflecting on action anymore. This is where ethics comes in to say no human beings reflect before you act. So thoughts can rebound an act, an act can repair a habit. A habit can repair character, a character can define a destiny. But first there is the thought. If the thinking is correct, the destiny is correct. If the thinking is not correct, a bad habit is formed. That also leads to the consequences we see.

So ethics is the rationale moment. Every human being has the ability to think, has the ability to ask questions, has the ability to be free to choose. Even if you put me in prison. I may be locked physically, but my mind is free externally. Let us potentialise positively the gifts we have to serve society better.

### **How do you bring ethics into modernity, technology and innovation?**

Technology has brought some technophobia, but also some techno-utopia. Technology has brought possibilities and challenges for the entire humanity. With a click, I can hack a computer. And with a click, I can save lives somewhere very far away. So by bringing ethics into technology, it is the question of how I can make technology serve humanity. As we talk about internet, some people are in the dark net. As we spread information for journalists trying to write about facts, some people spread fakes. So ethics is about making sure that human values, authentic human values are brought into the world of technology, that technology is not a mess, but a good servant. A good servant for people. We do know that human beings in many parts of the world are now dependent on the products which they created. And the ethical question is, who is more important? The product or the maker? The maker is more important because the maker can make other products. But if the product becomes your master, and you become the servant of the product, there is some irrational logic there.

## What recommendations would you then make?

We need to move from big data to big values, and make technology a good servant for humanity and for the planet. We also have to bring technological humanism and [ethics into artificial intelligence](#), because you place human concerns at the centre, and people before objects. When you do interdisciplinary studies around artificial intelligence around technology, you will find its good use. And the good use of technology serves humanity. It saves lives. It encourages evolution, productivity, finance. We need to improve on that and not use technology to destroy. Some people have lost their authenticity. They are now handguns on technology.

The importance of explicit regulatory and legal decision making policies that anticipate ethical consequences of artificial intelligence disruptions, which can happen in production lines, and in supply chains, must be considered. We need to bring in ethicists at the point of production. If you go to Silicon Valley, where the big companies are, and there are no ethicists there, the robots will just move on their own. We need to make sure that a digital new deal that guarantees social equality is possible in artificial intelligence and in technology.

## How do we reconnect to ethics?

The key moment for the radical change is through education, through integral education, whereby people know, and people are impacted to act according to what they know. We call it ethical education. When I go to learn arithmetic, or biology, or physics, or chemistry, or medicine, or engineering, I learn how to do these things. I'll just do them accordingly. But when I learn during studies, that these things are tools, then education will teach me to learn science and behavior. That is why we tell children to say good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. The autonomous individual does not emerge without education. The constructivist theories can ensure that a human being is a tabula rasa. You are always born into a community. In Zulu, we say that **“a human being is human through other humans”**. Or I say it in the words of Professor John Mbiti: **I am because we are. Since we are therefore I am.**

So when I'm learning arithmetic, I will not forget to learn that I am because we are. Arithmetic will teach me one plus one is two, two plus two is four, four plus four is eight. But ethics also teach me that I am a human being, I am not alone. I'm united with human beings all around the world. So education is the moment for transformation of society. And ethical education elevates the quality of this education.

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