

Building Children's Capacity towards Sustainable Future: Making a Case for a Socio-Cultural Approach to Understanding Sustainability

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Abstract : Children's capacity to contribute to social and economic status of a nation has been given more recognition than ever. Global policy priority aimed at ensuring sustainable development has been extended to the developing nations of the world. However, many developing countries have continued to puzzle out the extent and possibilities of exploring sustainability within their socio-economic environment. This paper considers ways in which the theoretical framework of Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999; 2007) and Moss (2007; 2012) that embraces meaning-making, social construction of childhood experiences and democratic perspectives can be used to understand children's capacity for building a sustainable future. This paper presents data collected through interviews and observations from ECCE teachers and children in Lagos, Nigeria. A distinct finding is that children's participation in building sustainable future is a consequence of the knowledge of the workings of their social, economic and cultural nuances and not a matter of economic wealth per se. It further argues that sustainability is situated within a complex network of local and global contexts. It thus challenges the present neo-liberal approach and advocates a democratic approach to preparing children for a sustainable society. It concludes that sustainability cannot be built on what may be seen as decontextualized responses by relevant stakeholders to the needs and experiences of the "whole child".

Keywords : children, ECCE, sustainable development, Nigeria

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