Available on: https://gjefm.ep-journals.org/ E-ISSN: 3117-6771, P-ISSN: 3117-6763

Global Journal of Education, Finance and Management

Volume: 02 Issue: 11 November 2026

Transformative Education and Capacity Building: A Pathway to Future Sustainability

Clement C. Uzoanya, PhD
Department of Educational Management, St Augustine College of Education, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria.

Benson P. Irabor, PhD
Department of Educational Foundations, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Published Date: November 21, 2026 **DOI: 10.65150/EP-gjefm/V2E11/2026-05**

ABSTRACT: Over the years, education and capacity building seem to have focused on environmental, social and economic assumptions of endless growth, with little or no connection with a healthy, peaceful and sustainable future. Social, economic and environmental challenges have persisted, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality. The problem is that tertiary institutions have not paid enough attention to these interconnected global challenges that pose threats to society. This paper aims to examine the role of transformative education and capacity building in unlocking the potential of individuals, organisations and systems for building healthy and resilient communities, fostering a sense of belonging to a common humanity and citizenship. The study adopts a qualitative review methodology, based on nine papers published between 2018 and 2026, prioritising peer-reviewed journal articles. The theoretical framework is transformative learning, which explains how people critically question their beliefs, reinterpret their realities, and shift their cognitive frameworks and behaviours. The study finds that transformative education encourages smart, responsible choices that help create a better future and supports environmental health, social equity and economic vitality. The study addresses the gap in literature on limited attention to transformative education and capacity building for sustainability in tertiary institutions. It contributes to knowledge by connecting transformative education, capacity building and future sustainability. It recommends systemic change through reimagining teacher preparation, curriculum design and institutional support structures to incorporate transformative and sustainability components for educational renaissance. The study concludes that transformative education and capacity building are essential for future sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Capacity building, future sustainability, social equity, transformative education

INTRODUCTION

Transformative education and capacity building for future sustainability are in line with UNESCO's continuous quest for education for sustainable development, in which tertiary institutions are to pay more attention to emerging environmental, social and economic issues that pose threats to society and the world. This educational approach encourages people to make smart and responsible choices that help create a better future for everyone. It seeks to transform older and obsolete models of human learning and develop sustainable, diverse and conscientious global citizens with the ability to solve complex issues for a better, equitable and viable world. Capacity building goes beyond traditional schooling or training to build practical skills, shift mindsets, and strengthen the ability of individuals, organisations and communities to solve real world problems and sustain long term growth. The need for such transformation is rooted in the understanding that education should not merely preserve existing knowledge and social structures but should also respond to changing realities and contribute to the reconstruction of society. It is within this context that the philosophy of Reconstructionism provides a relevant philosophical foundation for transformative education and capacity building.

The philosophy of Reconstructionism, propounded by Theodore Brameld in the 1930s, contains two major premises: first, that society is in need of constant reconstruction or change, and second, that such social change involves both a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society (Ozmon & Craver, 1990). Thus, the transformative character of education is closely connected with the Reconstructionist view that education should serve as an instrument for responding to social challenges and bringing about positive change.

Accordingly, Azenabor (2005), describes education as "a continuous reconstruction of experience and the adjustment of the individual to the society, to nature, to his fellow human being." Education is therefore concerned with the moral, physical, mental, societal, cultural, intellectual and spiritual adjustment of an individual. The proposition that education is one of the indispensable tools for national development is undeniable. Irabor (2018) argues that education that shies away from present demands for development is a recipe for disaster. Education involves the acquisition of fundamental knowledge and essential developmental skills needed for technological breakthrough, socio political development and economic growth. A nation's strength largely lies in the quantity and quality of its human resources; education is the pivot on which development rotates and a fundamental means of capacity building for sustainable development. It is one of the indispensable backbones of any civilisation.

The relevance of transformative education becomes even clearer within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 on Quality Education and Goals 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 and 15, which address clean water, renewable energy, responsible

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

consumption, climate action, life below water and life on land. These goals demonstrate the interconnectedness of education, human development and environmental sustainability. Yet, on the journey towards the future, crucial challenges have persisted in our world. Social, economic and environmental issues have been on a steady progression, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality. And, there is limited integration of transformative education and capacity building into a coherent approach for future sustainability. It is against this background that this study examines transformative education and capacity building as pathways to future sustainability.

Excluding this introduction, the paper is divided into six parts. The first part focuses on transformative education and its meaning and relevance to sustainability. The second part examines the principles of transformative education. The third part discusses the place of the teacher and the learner, including the role of educational technology. The fourth part examines capacity building, its levels and methods. The fifth part discusses capacity building for future sustainability and its relationship with the SDGs. The sixth part presents the methodology, findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformative Education

Education is both an instrument of stability and of change: stability in the sense that good traditions are documented, taught, imbibed and practiced, and change because it equips people to meet new challenges (Okeke, 2024). It functions as a dual force engine in society by preserving social order and culture, and by driving innovation, critical thinking and social reform. It empowers people to challenge prejudices and introduce knowledge and skills that modernize society.

Transformative education is a learning process that causes a deep shift in how people think, feel, and act, empowering individuals to make positive changes in themselves and the world. It is an element of quality education and a crucial enabler for sustainable development which empowers learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the interconnected global challenges we are facing, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality. It builds a sense of belonging to a common humanity and help them become responsible and active global citizens in building inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies (UNESCO). Thus, it moves beyond simple memorization to focus on personal growth, critical thinking, and social responsibility

Transformative education is a life-long process and need to be mainstreamed at all ages. Everybody can promote its values, through education, family, friends, the media and much more. This is done by developing learners' knowledge about local and global facts, realities and issues, by developing soft skills such as empathy and appreciation of diversity, but also by providing learners with skills to be able to take concrete actions to act towards building more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies (UNESCO).

Principles of Transformative Education

There are five core principles of transformative education, according to TEF-Global (2026). These are:

i. Human Rights: Transformative education promotes and supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to reinforce the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all nations, races, ages, and economic standing.

ii. Sustainability: Transformative education promotes and supports the practice of sustainable development, meshing economic growth, respect and protection for the environment with social equity and well-being.

iii. Value Systems - Morality, Ethics and Spirit: Transformative education embraces the values, ethics, morality and spirit that have stood the test of time globally because these values recognize and honour the interconnectedness of all life. They lead to a more conscientious global citizen with the understanding that science, technology, engineering and mathematics, without the underlying values of planet and human sustainability, is devoid of meaning.

iv. Diversity: Transformative education promotes the values of diversity, welcomes cultural differences and recognizes heterogeneity as a gift of strength and adaptability and the critical concept in developing viable solutions for sustainability, in a diverse and complex world.

v. Economic and Social Justice/Equity: Transformative education informs, promotes and supports the special situations and needs of developing countries, especially the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable. It addresses the interests and needs of all countries where poverty, racial and economic inequities still exist, and thereby contribute to the prevention and reduction of economic global inequality.

There are other more specific elements that are essential to the concepts of transformative education as it is practiced pedagogically. These are: Peace Education and Conflict Resolution; Holistic Education; Community-Based Learning and Indigenous Wisdom; Simulation/Experiential Learning; Incorporating New Brain Neuroscience and Skills of Critical Thinking; Use of Technology for Greater Connection and; Sanctity of Human Learning and Life. Together, these principles of transformative education are intended to help define a system of education that "transforms" older, obsolete models of human learning to create a sustainable, diverse, conscientious global citizen with the ability to problem-solve complex issues for a better equitable and viable world.

The Place of the Teacher and the Learner in Transformative Education

Teaching

Universities and colleges of education are the institutions in charge of training future teachers, curricula and textbook developers, and education policy-makers. The teachers need to have the knowledge and skills to promote Global Citizenship Education (GCED) throughout their careers. These institutions also have the ability to reach out to large numbers of young people who are at a critical age and are developing their sense of who they are, what role they want to play in their communities, and how they can take concrete actions to change things and build better societies. Thus, there is a critical need in reinforcing the capacity of teachers so as to have a significant influence and impact in the lives of these young people.

Teachers are at the forefront of education and are the most powerful element to convey transformative education for a generation that can transform our relation with the human kind and the planet. They shape our world by guiding young minds, building strong communities, and sharing vital

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

skills. They turn complex ideas into clear lessons which help students grow into smart, kind, and capable adults who can solve tomorrow's global biggest problems. Thus, they are key agents of transformative education.

However, there is no gainsaying that education is moving away from teacher-led instruction toward learner-centred facilitation. Teachers must now act as guides, encouraging dialogue, adapting to learners' needs, and creating inclusive, engaging environments. This facilitative role supports critical thinking, collaboration, and student autonomy (Liu, 2024; EduCorpus, 2025, Wang'ang'a, 2025). Meanwhile, teachers cannot do these alone. They need the support of organizational structures to foster and enable their innovative professional activity (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Vennebo & Ottesen, 2015; Reinius et. al, 2022).

Concerning organizational structures and support, in Reinius' et al. (2022) research, some interviewees mentioned that even after incorporating new knowledge into their own teaching, it was not easy implementing a change in the school. They explained that the school structures or organizational cultures did not always foster innovation activities, and the transformation of the school culture was contingent on institutional support. However, teachers saw the development of their professional competencies as an important motivational factor, which obviously aids transformative education.

Learning

Central to the inclusive and quality education vision of the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals is transformative learning, which is a holistic, learner-centred approach that empowers individuals to critically examine prevailing social norms, challenge entrenched assumptions, and cultivate the competencies necessary for building just and all-inclusive societies.

In today's high-tech times, the traditional perception of tutors as sole authorities on knowledge is absolutely outdated. Rather than being the exclusive source of information, educators must take on the role of supporters who mentor and direct learners. However, this shift is not reflected in how most tutors have been trained over the years. There remains a significant discrepancy between modern research on effective 21st-century learning environments and prevailing scholarly methodologies. To bridge this gap, there is an urgent need to replace the outdated transmission-based model of lecturing with a transformative pedagogy that enforces involvement and analytical thinking (Bell, 2016; Wang'ang'a, 2025).

Transformative learning inspires students to reevaluate worldviews together with the sense of identity, enforcing an in-depth comprehension of self and society. Rooted in Jack Mezirow's ideology of transformative education (1978), the approach prioritises analytical self-contemplation and compels individuals to reassess longstanding beliefs shaped by cultural and communal influences. Transformation occurs when people undergo circumstances that prompt them to critically question their beliefs and reinterpret their realities, thereby shifting their cognitive frameworks and behaviours (Mezirow, 2000; Arbeiter & Bucar, 2021; Wang'ang'a, 2025). Skills like analytical thinking, flexibility to change and appreciation of heterogeneity are vital proficiencies that facilitate transformative learning. They are crucial for addressing societal and global issues.

Jack Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning

Jack Mezirow's theory of transformative learning states that adults make meaning of their experiences and change their deep-seated worldviews – called frames of reference – through critical reflection and rational discourse (Pace, 2026). Rather than just adding new facts, learning involves shifting how people think, feel and act. For him, transformative learning is . . . "the process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of our psychocultural assumptions has come to constrain the way in which we perceive our world, of reconstituting that structure in a way that allows us to be more inclusive and discriminating in our integrating of experience and to act on these new understandings" (Mezirow, 1985, p. 22; Fleming, 2018, p. 123).

Learning is rarely just about memorizing facts or acquiring basic skills. Sometimes, the educational process does something much deeper – it completely changes how you view yourself and the world around you. When a learning experience shifts your core beliefs and perspectives, you are experiencing transformative learning. Today, it remains a cornerstone of adult learning principles, emphasizing that the most profound education happens when our very foundation of reality is challenged (Pace, 2026).

At its core, Mezirow's theory explains how individuals change their perspectives through critical reflection and experience. Thus, transformative learning occurs when an experience is so powerful or disruptive that you cannot simply ignore it. When your current perspective fails to make sense of a new experience, you are forced into a period of critical reflection. You must take a hard look at your underlying assumptions, figure out why they failed you, and rebuild a new, more inclusive perspective (Pace, 2026). This shift is not a minor adjustment. It is a fundamental evolution in how you make decisions, evaluate information, and interact with others.

The Philosophy of Reconstructionism

The philosophy of Reconstructionism contains two major premises: first, that society is in need of constant reconstruction or change, and second, that such social change involves both a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society (Ozmon & Craver, 1990). Thus, the transformative character of education is closely connected with the Reconstructionist view that education should serve as an instrument for responding to social challenges and bringing about positive change. This perspective is reechoed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which recognises education as a fundamental human right and a key driver of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2015). Iroegbu (2005) further describes education as informative, formative, and reformative because it communicates knowledge, shapes character, and transforms individuals and society. These perspectives reinforce Plato's conviction that education should develop the whole person rather than merely prepare individuals for economic productivity. UNESCO (2021) similarly emphasises education as a means of promoting human dignity, inclusion, justice, and sustainable development. In the philosophy of Reconstructionism, the teacher acts as an agent of change and democratic facilitator, who guides students to critically examine society and work toward real-world reform.

Challenges of Transformative Education

The challenges to implementing transformative education are: resistance from educators, especially those reluctant to engage in professional development. Furthermore, costs associated with digital education are often underestimated, and there are infrastructure gaps, especially in Nigeria, and Africa at large, which hinder equitable access (Cole, 2024; Annerose, 2025). Public schools in Nigeria face challenges such as inadequate funding and rigid curricula, unlike private schools that enjoy more flexibility. Teachers are often enthusiastic but lack the institutional support needed to adopt transformative practices (UNESCO, 2022; Omojemite, 2025; Wang'ang'a, 2025).

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

The Importance of Educational Technology in Transformative Education

The educational landscape, according to Uzoanya (2025, pp. 178-179), has "evolved from traditional classrooms to virtual and hybrid learning environments. It is developing rapidly, demanding that instructors and learners stay abreast of and adapt to innovative and technological strategies. Failing to do so makes it challenging for both educators and learners to integrate seamlessly into the evolving educational landscape."

Educational technology is a learning strategy that enhances the learning experience by using resources such as video, audio, and interactive learning to aid students in learning in many different ways, and teachers can find creative ways to teach their students in an engaging manner, guiding them intellectually without much strain. It incorporates digital technologies in innovative and transformative ways, requiring creativity and significant expertise (Dhal, 2019; Uzoanya, 2025). In addition, technology has changed the learning environment so that learning is more possible and more interesting. The use of technology in learning reduces the burden on teachers and their teaching becomes more effective.

The advent and subsequent usage of emerging technologies, such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and Cloud Computing in teaching and learning systems, have led to more dependable and effective learning environments. Everyday living involves using new software and technology, and being digitally literate is essential for participation in today's society and economy (Almufarreh & Arshad, 2023; Uzoanya, 2025). Due to its potential in education, digital technology has sparked a greater interest. Theoretical frameworks for teaching and learning are challenged by learning in a world of new technology. A significant paradigm shift, enabled and driven by technological advancements, is the shift from teacher-based instruction to learner-centred facilitation.

Research by Fullan (2016; Maxwell, 2024) emphasized the transformative potential of technology in education, noting its capacity to enhance teaching and learning practices. The concept of education technology capacity emphasizes not just the presence of technology but the ability of educators and institutions to leverage it effectively for improved outcomes. In addition, incorporating technology into the curriculum not only prepares students for the demands of the 21st century but also enhances their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This aligns with the growing recognition that digital literacy is a crucial aspect of contemporary and transformative education (Fink, 2013; Ige et al., 2022; Maxwell, 2024).

Capacity Building for Future Sustainability

Capacity building

Capacity building is the "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world" (United Nations). An essential ingredient in capacity building is transformation that is generated and sustained over time from within; transformation of this kind goes beyond performing tasks to changing mindsets and attitudes.

In development and education discourses, "capacity building" is often thought of as a process or approach to improving education practices, systems and structures. Capacity building as education is a transformative process. It goes beyond traditional schooling to build practical skills, shift mindsets, and strengthen the ability of individuals, organizations and communities to solve real-world problems and sustain long-term growth

Capacity building in education remains incomplete without curriculum. Thus, curriculum enhancement as a strategy for capacity building in the pursuit of quality and transformative education reveals a rich and evolving landscape. Scholars consistently emphasize the fundamental role that curriculum plays in shaping the educational experience and influencing student outcomes. Research by Wiggins and McTighe (2005; Maxwell, 2024) underscores the importance of a well-designed curriculum that aligns with educational objectives, standards, and student needs. Curriculum enhancement, according to their findings, involves the intentional revision and enrichment of instructional materials to improve learning outcomes. Tilbury (1995; Yang et. al, 2024) suggests that educators with a comprehensive understanding of sustainability not only recognize the importance of education for future sustainability but also exhibit a readiness to adapt their curriculum and instructional methods in consonance with the principles of sustainable development.

Levels of Capacity Building

There are three levels of capacity building, according to PolSci Institute (2025). These are:

(a) The individual level: This concerns the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies of individual people, such as a teacher who needs to update or learn new pedagogies. Building capacity here means more than information transfer. It involves changing how people think and behave so they can apply what they learn. It is about developing the right attitude, skills, and knowledge together rather than focusing on technical training alone.

(b) The organisational level: An organisation is more than the sum of its employees. This level addresses internal structures, processes, procedures, decision-making systems, and resources that allow an organisation to function. A school can have well-trained teachers and still fail if it has no clear division of responsibilities, and no reliable way to manage resources. Organisational development tackles these systemic weaknesses so that individual skills can actually be put to use.

(c) The enabling environment: This is the broadest and often most neglected level. It includes the policies, laws, regulations, power relations, and social norms within which individuals and organisations operate. Even the most capable local institution cannot function if the law does not give it real powers or if funds are not allocated. Without supportive strategies, policies, laws, and procedures, well-functioning organisations and skilled people lack the foundation to plan and implement programmes. The enabling environment determines whether the other two levels can deliver results.

Methods of Capacity Building

Capacity building uses a range of methods, and effective programmes usually combine several rather than relying on any one. The choice depends on the level being targeted and the needs identified at the start (PolSci Institute, 2025). The common methods are:

i. Training and workshops: Structured training remains the backbone of most capacity building efforts. Workshops, classroom sessions, and module-based courses transfer specific knowledge and skills to participants. A particularly important variant is training of trainers, where a small group is equipped to teach others.

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

ii. Exposure visits: Sometimes, the most convincing learning happens by seeing a successful example in person. Exposure visits take participants to places where a particular approach is already working well. Witnessing a well-run educational institution in another environment can shift attitudes and build confidence in ways that no lecture can match.

iii. Mentoring, handholding, and digital learning: Newer methods extend support beyond the classroom. Handholding support guides officials through real tasks as they perform them, and pairing experienced practitioners with newcomers facilitates learning. Also, digital platforms make learning materials accessible anytime and anywhere, offering flexibility and the ability to reach enormous numbers of learners simultaneously.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the quality of using resources in a way that meets current needs, specifically through environmental health, social equity, and economic vitality, without harming future generations or depleting the planet. In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." And, sustainable frontiers refers to the next boundaries or cutting-edge areas in environmental, economic, and social development where societies push beyond traditional limits to create long-term ecological balance and resource renewal. It represents new horizons in innovation, policy, and human behavior aimed at living within planetary boundaries. It pertains challenging old environmental, social and economic assumptions of endless growth and building a harmonious connection with nature.

Capacity Building for Future Sustainability

Capacity building for future sustainability is the long-term process of improving human skills, strengthening organizational systems, and building supportive laws so that communities can solve problems and thrive on their own (PolSci Institute, 2025). It focuses on three core levels as mentioned above, that is, individual, organization and environment. Capacity building does not happen in a vacuum. It exists within a larger institutional and social context, which means a skilled official cannot perform well inside a broken system, and a well-designed system cannot function without skilled people. This interdependence is why the concept is best understood as operating across several levels at once.

Capacity building activities are also aimed at strengthening and maintaining the capabilities of states and societies to design and implement strategies that minimize the negative impacts of current social, economic and environmental crises and emerging challenges. Capacity building cuts across nearly all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from health and education to clean water and good governance, because each requires institutions that can plan, implement, and review their own programmes. As a cross-cutting entry point, capacity building activities promote the integration of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into national sustainable development planning frameworks (United Nations).

Future sustainability is impossible without capacity, because development that depends entirely on outside experts or temporary funding collapses the moment that support is withdrawn. Capacity building is what allows communities and governments to keep delivering results on their own. (PolSci Institute, 2025).

Furthermore, capacity building for future sustainability is the ongoing process of strengthening individuals, organizations, and societies to build skills, adapt to environmental or economic changes, and manage resources so they can meet long-term goals without harming future generations. It strengthens individual, organizational and system capability to assess organisational effectiveness, improve institutional structures, strengthen workforce capability, and implement initiatives that support long-term development objectives.

Capacity building for future sustainability must address issues at the micro level (individual); meso level (organizational) and macro level (system). At the individual level are issues such as: education and training, mindset shift and, leadership growth. At the organizational level are issues such as: strong systems, resource management and, strategic continuity. At the system level are issues such as: supportive policies, partnerships and, equitable access. Thus, the importance of capacity building for future sustainability are: self-reliance, which basically involves helping communities fix their own issues without outside help; resilience, which has to do with preparing people to survive sudden shocks like climate change or money crises and; equity, which involves sharing knowledge and fair chances across different groups and future generations.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper utilized the qualitative research approach through the review of relevant sources such as books, journals, Google Scholar, using keywords such as transformative education, capacity building, sustainability, sustainable frontiers, education technology, emerging techniques in teaching, innovation in teaching and, learner-centred education. Nine academic papers were consulted and reviewed, published between 2018 to 2026, among other materials, prioritizing peer-reviewed journal articles. Data were analyzed thematically with themes derived from the literature review, including transformative education, principles of transformative education, education technology, sustainable future, capacity building for future sustainability.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Transformative education is critical to achieving capacity building, sustainability and other SDGs. Educational institutions at all levels should be positioned to operationalize capacity building and sustainability across all educational formats. Transformative education for future sustainability empowers people with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviors to live in a way that is good for the environment, economy, and society. It encourages people to make smart, responsible choices that help create a better future for everyone. Yet, on the journey towards the future, crucial challenges have persisted in our world.

In a world facing concerning social, economic and environmental issues, including catastrophes such as pandemics, conflict, and climate change, transformative education that unlocks the potential of individuals, organizations and systems is vital for building healthy, peaceful, and resilient communities. This vision, according to Bell (2016; Wang'ang'a, 2025) demands systemic change across all educational formats, including formal, informal, and non-formal. Capacity building for future sustainability involves educating and empowering learners with the skills, values and knowledge to address interconnected global challenges. It includes empowering learners to make informed decisions and take action to change society and care for the planet. Thus, to fully harness the all-inclusive potential of transformative education, systemic change is essential. This

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

includes reimagining teacher preparation, curriculum design, and institutional support structures. Tutors, in particular, play a pivotal role and must be empowered through continuous professional development, reflective practice, and peer mentorship.

The concept of capacity building emerges as a strategic tool of transformation. Capacity building, in the context of Nigeria's education landscape, according to Okeke-Uzodike & Ezegbe (2018; Maxwell, 2024), represents a dynamic and forward-thinking approach to overcoming the multifaceted obstacles that have long hindered the delivery of quality and transformative education. It is the key that opens the door to a new era of educational mindset, socio-economic growth and excellence. Viewing capacity building as transformative education has the potential to reinvigorate the revolutionary roots of the concept and practice of capacity building, breathing new life into ways in which we share knowledge and strive together for shared futures through learning (Emmerton & Guevara, 2024). In addition, this strategic tool is not a one-size-fits-all solution but a holistic and evolving process. It encompasses the enhancement of the knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and governance structures that underpin the entire education ecosystem. From teachers in classrooms to policymakers shaping the educational visions, capacity building touches every aspect of the education sector.

This paper corroborates the research of Maxwell (2024) in stating that in the journey of future sustainability, capacity building is an essential transformative force that empowers teachers, inspires students, and uplifts communities. It should be a testament to our enduring spirit and commitment to education, and with each step forward, we should advance toward a future where transformative education and capacity building for sustainability is not a distant dream but a vibrant reality for all. A critical implication is the need to review and adapt teacher-training and the current curriculum to explicitly incorporate transformative and sustainability components for educational renaissance. This adaptation and paradigm shift should not only focus on theoretical knowledge but also on practical aspects that help teachers prepare for sustainability teaching and functional and adaptive curriculum to address future global issues.

CONCLUSION

Transformative education for future sustainability empowers people with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviors to live in a way that is good for the environment, economy, and society. Transformation occurs when people undergo circumstances that prompt them to critically question their beliefs and reinterpret their realities, thereby shifting their cognitive frameworks and behaviours. Transformative education encourages people to make smart, responsible choices that help create a better future for everyone. This educational approach is the key that opens the door to a new era of educational mindset, socio-economic growth and excellence and, this significant paradigm shift is enabled and driven by technological advancements. Thus, to fully harness the all-inclusive potential of transformative education, systemic change is essential. This includes reimagining teacher preparation, curriculum design, and institutional support structures. And, future sustainability is impossible without capacity, because development that depends entirely on outside experts or temporary funding collapses the moment that support is withdrawn. Capacity building activities are aimed at strengthening and maintaining the capabilities of individuals and societies to design and implement strategies that minimize the negative impacts of current social, economic and environmental crises and emerging challenges. It is what allows communities and governments to keep delivering results on their own. Thus, all hands must be on deck in advancing toward a future where transformative education and capacity building for sustainability is not a distant dream but a vibrant reality for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i. There is a need to harness the critical role of transformative education to unlock the potential of individuals, organizations and systems in building healthy, peaceful and resilient communities; having a sense of belonging to a common humanity and; helping people become responsible and active global citizens.
ii. There is a need to reimagine teacher preparation, curriculum design, and institutional support structures to facilitate future sustainability.
iii. Since future sustainability is impossible without capacity, people should be trained so that development does not depend entirely on outside experts, but from within.
iv. Transformative education and capacity building for future sustainability should not continue to be a distant dream but a vibrant reality through a well-intentioned collaboration and harmonisation between the individual, organisations and systems.

REFERENCES

1) Emmerton, A. & Guevara, J. R. (2024). Reclaiming Revolutionary Roots: Capacity Building as Education for Transformation. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/reclaiming-revolutionary-roots-capacity-building-education-transformation
2) Fleming, F. (2018). Mezirow and the Theory of Transformative Learning. In *V. Wang (Ed.),*
3) *Critical Theory and Transformative Learning* (pp.120-126). 1st Edition: Publisher: IGI Global.
4) Irabor, B.P. "Entrepreneurial Studies for National Development: A Pesalozzi-Deweyan Groundwork" Ekiti Educational Conference, 2018.
5) Iroegbu, P. O. (2005). "Philosophy of Education: Ethics of Teaching Profession." In P. O. Iroegbu & A. Echekwube (Eds.), *Kpim of morality: General, special and professional ethics.* Heinemann Educational Books.
6) Maxwell, D. (2024). Capacity Building as a Strategic Tool for Attainment of Quality Education in Public Schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education (IJSRE).* Vol. 17(1), 111-126.
7) National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2022). Education and Capacity Building. *Operationalizing Sustainable Development to Benefit People and the Planet.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/26654.
8) National Council of Nonprofits: What is Capacity Building? https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/running-nonprofit/governance-leadership/what-capacity-building (Accessed: August 10, 2026)
9) Okeke, E. P. (2024). Capacity Building in Higher Education Institutions for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research and Policy Making IJERPM.* Vol. 7 Issue 1, 2024, pp. 1449-1458.

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

10) Ozmon, H. & Craver, S (1990). Philosophical Foundations of Education. 4th ed., London: Merrill Publishing Company.
11) Pace, K. (2026). What Is the Transformative Learning Theory? A Complete Guide. Western Governors University https://www.wgu.edu/blog/what-transformative-learning-theory2007.html
12) Paiva, T., Maximiano P. Ribeiro, M. P., Coutinho, P. (2022). Capacity-Building Model to Promote Innovation and Sustainability in the Portuguese Agro-Industrial Sector. *Sustainability*, 14(23), 15873; https://doi.org/10.3390/su142315873
13) PolSci Institute (2025). The Role of Capacity Building in Sustainable Development. *Civil Society, Political Regimes and Conflict*. https://polsci.institute/civil-society-political-regimes-conflict/capacity-building-sustainable-development/#
14) Reinius, H., Kaukinen, I., Korhonen T., Juuti K., Hakkarainen, K. (2022). Teachers as Transformative Agents in Changing School Culture. *Elsevier: Teaching and Teacher Education* 120, 3-12.
15) TEF-Global: Principles of Transformative Education: Transformative Education Forum: https://tef-global.org/principles-of-transformative-education/ (Accessed: August 12, 2026)
16) Wang'ang'a, A. W. (2025). The Role of Transformative Education in Fostering 21st Century Inclusivity. *East African Journal of Education Studies.* Volume 8, Issue 3, 455 – 463.
17) UNESCO: Education for Sustainable Development https://www.unesco.org/en/fieldoffice/beirut/transformative-education
18) UNESCO Greening Education Partnership https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/education/greening-future
19) United Nations (2023): Capacity Development *Department of Economic and Social Affairs* https://sdgs.un.org/topics/capacity-development United Nations: Capacity Building https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/capacity-building
20) United Nations. Sustainability. https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/sustainability
21) Uzoanya, C. (2025). Emerging Techniques and Innovation for Teaching, Learning and Research *Education, Employability and Sustainability: A Triple Helix for Development.* Ed. Olaniyan et. al. His Lineage Publishing House, Ibadan. Pp. 178-188.
22) Yang, W., Chinedu, C.C., Chen, W., Saleem, A., Ogunniran, M.O., Ñacato Estrella, D. R., Vaca Barahona, B. (2024). Building Capacity for Sustainability Education: An Analysis of Vocational Teachers' Knowledge, Readiness, and Self-Efficacy. *Sustainability* 16,3535. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16093535

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Corresponding Author: Clement C. Uzoanya, PhD