

# POETRY AS A VALUABLE TOOL FOR CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

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## ABSTRACT

Climate change education is vital for preparing communities, countries and continents for the impacts of climate change and to learn how to adapt and mitigate effectively for global sustainability. Poetry has been discovered through our literature and participant observation as a valuable tool for climate change education which will enable us to achieve the sustainable development goals. This study explores how poetry can be effectively and efficiently used in climate change education which in turn brings about sustainable development. This paper is therefore, a clarion call for us to rise to our responsibility for global sustainability using poetry as a valuable tool for climate change education.

*Keywords—* climate change, education, global sustainability, poetry

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the bedrock of the society and the wings on which we can achieve our sustainable development goals. Education for global

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sustainability will certainly require lifelong learning. Both young and old, male and female, black or white, need education which may be formal or informal to help them achieve their life goals and collectively achieve the United Nations sustainable development goals.

From the peasant farmer to the university professor, everyone must embrace lifelong learning for continuous improvement and development. There is need for lifelong learning to help address the ugly situations such as climate change which is threatening our global sustainability today. It is therefore vital for us to learn about the valuable tools which we can use in our 21<sup>st</sup> century for climate change education which in turn help us to achieve our sustainable development goals. Climate change education is vital for every community, every country and every continent on our planet today for global sustainability.

## UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change defines climate change as statistical variations that persist for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Weather reflects short-term conditions in the atmosphere. Climate, on the other hand, refers to the average temperatures and precipitation rates over an extended period of time. When these rates change over time, it can result in profound impacts on our planet. Impacts like rising sea levels, more extreme weather events, like droughts and floods, melting glaciers, shifts in ecosystems, etc.[7][5]

Climate change brings about changes in precipitation levels, a rise in sea level, and more frequent and intense weather events. And it can threaten our access to such basic needs as food, water, health and shelter. It also has a profound impact on our educational sector. Of the many problems generated by our economic and industrial progress, climate change is one that dominates media headlines in recent memory. The current

warming trend of the Earth's atmosphere that started with the industrial revolution has given scientists, educationists, politicians, and individuals around the world cause for great concern. Dramatic reductions in seasonal sea ice at the Earth's poles, rising sea-level, shifts in precipitation patterns leading to extended droughts or flooding, and more frequent extreme weather events are just some of the effects of climate change.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Poetry is a vital and effective tool which can be used in the global response to climate change. It has the capacity to help people easily understand the impact of climate change and global warming, encourages changes in their attitudes and helps them mitigate and adapt to climate change for global sustainability.

Through its Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development (CCESD), UNESCO aims to make climate change education a more central and visible part of the international response to climate change. The programme aims to help people understand the impact of global warming today and increase "climate literacy" among young people [6].

The use of poetry in climate change education encourages creativity and increases climate literacy amongst the students and teachers. It also enhances innovative teaching approaches to climate change education in primary schools, secondary schools and in the Universities.

## **THE BENJY POETRY AND MUSIC GLOBAL CONCEPTS**

The Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts is one of the new companies in Nigeria which among other things is very passionate about climate change education. This passion to see the environment kept clean and green has led to a lot of study and research work on climate change education, adaptation and mitigation. This has also engineered the writing of climate change poems to help promote the right attitudes and behaviors needed to safe-guard our environment.

According to Victor Pinchuk, a Ukrainian businessman and philanthropist, "Art, freedom and creativity will change society faster than politics" [8].

Below is one of those climate change poems advanced by the BENJY POETRY AND MUSIC GLOBAL CONCEPTS:

### **PLANT A TREE**

Trees provide us with oxygen.  
Trees help keep the environment clean.  
Trees help to purify the air;  
Increasing moisture as they transpire.

Trees help to prevent water pollution.  
Trees help to prevent soil erosion.  
Trees conserve energy.  
It is so beautiful to plant a tree.

Trees absorb odors and pollutant gases.  
Trees provide shade for the masses.  
Trees cool the streets and the cities.  
Trees create economic opportunities.

Trees are like the lungs of the planet.  
Preserver and greener of the earth.  
Trees matter beautifully and truly.  
Be dutiful to plant a tree.

Trees provide a canopy.  
A shade for the hungry.  
A shade from the raging heat.  
A beautiful place for retreat.

Trees provide food.  
Trees provide wood.  
Trees combat climate change.  
When properly managed.

Trees slow runoff and hold soil in place.  
As beauty and bliss, they embrace.  
Trees help us appreciate nature.  
Plant a tree for the future.

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## **CASE STUDY: POEM "PLANT A TREE" REVIEW BY JAMES HOPE**

Benjamin Anabaraonye's poem "PLANT A TREE" has ignited the global call to everyone to plant a

tree. His call to plant a tree is in line with the mandate of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The impact of man on the environment has been seen as a primary cause of climate change (global warming). In the poem, greater emphasis was made on the importance of having trees in our homes and societies. He can't agree less with Richard ST. Barbe Baker when he said that "It is not merely that the world is bettered by saving, replacing, and multiplying trees. It is that an aim of this kind becomes an impulse towards developing a mood and an outlook which will increasingly make it natural to think for the future, for other people, for generations yet unborn. Planting a tree is a symbol of a looking-forward kind of action; looking forward, yet not too distantly"[3] Each nation has that responsibility and obligation to ensure that the environment is protected and sustained against further damages and destruction. He made this call by using the following poetic technique:

1)THEME: The central theme of the poem is centered on planting a tree for the betterment of the world and curbing the menace of climate change.

2)TONE: The tone of the writer is approving, hopeful and demanding.

3)MOOD: The writer's mood is inviting, candid, urging, emotional and very passionate about the subject matter.

4)IMAGERY: Imageries were also used, such as "Trees help to purify the air" "Trees provide shade for the masses"

5)STYLE: The poem contains seven stanzas with each having an end rhyme of AABB. The poet exhibited a style of capitalizing each beginning line.

6)TECHNIQUES: The use of Simile ,,,"Trees are like lungs of the planet" The use of so many **Personification** "Preserver and greener of the earth" ;The use of **Repetition** "trees" ; The use of **Hyperbole** "lungs of the planet". The use of **Conjunction** "Trees absorb odors and pollutant gasses."

For the call to combat climate change in the international world, He aligned himself with this stanza:

"Trees provide food  
Trees provide wood  
Trees combat climate change  
When properly managed".

This poem is a way of encouraging the participation, co-operation, and understanding of the population towards combating climate change problems. The education of our youths and children about the values of sustainability is our most important ally for the huge cultural change we seek in the world today. Thank you for adding a voice to this[4].

Below is a second poem advanced by the BENJY POETRY AND MUSIC GLOBAL CONCEPTS which further helps to illustrate how poetry can be used efficiently and effectively in educating communities, countries and continents about climate change adaptation and mitigation for global sustainability. Do enjoy the poem:

#### **GO GREEN, KEEP CLEAN**

**Go make the world a better place  
Beautifully occupy your space  
Go spread joy and beauty everywhere  
Spread like a breath of fresh air.**

**Go green, Keep clean  
Keep the simple laws of hygiene  
Our planet is our responsibility  
Our vision is to make it green truly.**

**Go green, Keep clean  
Stay cool, Stay keen  
Keen to put in your very best  
To clean and tidy our environment.**

**Go make the world a better place  
As beauty and bliss sweetly embrace  
Go spread joy and beauty everywhere  
Spread like a breath of fresh air.**

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## **INCLUSION OF CLIMATE CHANGE POETRY INTO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

There is no doubt, therefore, that poetry can be used as a valuable and viable tool to convey the message of climate change in schools, universities and institutions around the world in a very profound way.

Poetry is beauty and beauty attracts. Poetry has a unique way of communicating to the listeners and readers the message of hope, beauty and love that enables them to seek creatively ways to preserve our planet from global warming.

Poetry for climate change education with its healing and therapeutic benefits can be used with mothers, fathers, children, and adolescents; battered women, the elderly, the depressed, the suicidal; those living with terminal illness, the bereaved, those with HIV, the mentally ill, and even hurricane victims and soldiers returning from war who suffer post traumatic stress. Poetry can give students a healthy outlet for surging emotions. Reading original poetry on climate change aloud in class can foster trust and empathy in the classroom community while also emphasizing speaking and listening skills that are often neglected in high school literature classes. Climate change poetry can help in language development, creative language skills, creativity, writing skills, self-expression, and in the development of natural rhythms while helping to educate the community on climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation.

Poetry is fun and exciting and beautiful and can be used effectively for climate change education for global sustainability. Inclusion of climate change poetry and anthologies into our educational system which includes the primary schools, secondary schools, vocational institutions and universities will make it easy for our youths to learn about climate change impacts and how to adapt and mitigate effectively. Poetry helps to make the message of climate change adaptation and mitigation easily accessible and memorable to the young and old alike.

Climate change poetry also helps to bring about the promotion of peace, love, unity, beauty and other attitudes needed to safe guard our environment from global warming and pollution in order to ensure global sustainability.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is our recommendation that poetry should be used as one of the valuable tools in climate change education which will also enhance mitigation and adaptation. Climate change poetry should be included in the curricula for both primary schools,

secondary schools and even our Universities because of the many benefits which we have listed above.

Our youths should be encouraged towards creativity and excellence in acquiring relevant artistic skills in poetry for the purpose of climate change education for sustainable development. It is good to know that through our study, we have discovered that climate change education, mitigation and adaptation is loaded with entrepreneurial opportunities and has the capacity to provide employment for our teeming unemployed youths globally. Children and youths must be well educated on the issues of climate change and encouraged to deploy their skills and talents which should be used effectively to help overcome the economic challenges facing the world today. Poetry is one of those valuable tools which can be used to educate our young ones. As we are made to see, no one is too small to make a difference.

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