YOUTHS AND CAPACITY BUILDING: CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Julius Ajah, PhD
Plot 43 Paradise city layout, GRA Enugu

Ralph C. Nwokedi, PhD
Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu Nigeria

Abstract
Youth unemployment has been a decimal issue in Nigeria and has provoked a lot of researches. It is not an overstatement to say that the rate of youth unemployment in the contemporary Nigeria has grown in geometrical progression in the recent years. Therefore, this paper examined relevant issues buffeting youth employment. It identified the areas of gap and offered recommendations. The paper also suggested various ways unemployed youths could engage themselves in profitable ventures. Government as identified in this paper should play a vital role in creating enabling environment to ensure that the youths who are in private business, are not unduly harassed by thugs hired by Government in the name of revenue generation. It is also the position of the paper that “tax holiday” should be granted to youths who are engaged in micro businesses for a reasonable period of time.

Keywords: Youth, capacity building, self-employment, entrepreneurship

Introduction
The concept of youth was a subject of debate in Nigeria for so long. It was finally determined by age-range. Every new administration decides what age-range would be in the youth category. Age 7-30, age 12-30, age 18-20. It has been agreed as a matter of convenienem that 30 which features in the National Youth Corpse Decree, is the limiting age for youth in Nigeria (Njoku, 2009). Those above the age of 30 maximum, according to the National Youth Policy for Nigeria, may be accepted to play the roles of youth leaders, youth organizers, youth animators, etc. The National Youth Council of Nigeria got this clause enshrined in the youth policy.

What is capacity building?
Capacity building often refers to assistance that is provided to entities, usually societies in developing countries, which have a need to develop a certain skill or competence, or for general upgrading of performance ability. Most capacity is built by societies themselves, sometimes in the public, sometimes in the non-governmental and sometimes in the private sector. Many international organizations, often of the UN family, have provided capacity building as a part of
their programs of technical cooperation with their member countries. Bilaterally funded entities and private sector consulting firms or non-governmental organizations, called NGOs, Professional bodies, have also offered capacity building services. Sometimes NGOs in developing countries are themselves recipients of capacity building (Clark, 2014)

Capacity building is, however, not limited to international aid work. More recently, capacity building is being used by government to transform community and industry to social and environmental problems.

**Capacity building is much more than training and includes the following:**

(a) Human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively,

(b) Organization development, the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organizations but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community).

(c) Institutional and legal framework development, making legal and regulatory changes to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities (Wiki, 2012)

(d) Capacity building is the elements that give fluidity, flexibility and functionality of a program /organization to adapt to changing needs of the population that is served.

(e) It increases the capacity of any developed or developing society to improve trade, employment, economic development and quality of life. It is also true that where institutional capacity is limited, infrastructure development is probably constrained.

**Gangs**

Lewis Yablousky (1969) classified gangs into three:

- the social gang
- the delinquent gang and
- the violent gang

(a) **The social gang:** This relatively permanent organization of youths that hang around stores, clubs, etc. The members intimately know one another with sense of we-feeling. What they engage in is directed towards their benefit and is acceptable to the society. Leadership in the gang is based on popularity and constructive leadership qualities. They don’t engage in delinquent behaviour typical examples are the youth gang in some of the neighborhood.

(b) **The delinquent gang:** This is a group that comes together to carry out one illegal act or the other like burglary, assault. It is made up of small number of youth. Too many of them will spoil the intimacy required for cohesion. They train themselves to act out illegal behaviour.
© The violent gang: These are groups organized around violent activities. They act in accordance with the emotional need of their members. The members get charged at the least provocation. They are known to be hostile and aggressive.

The Enabling Environment

The Government has a great role to play in creating the enabling environment for survival of the unemployed youths. The Government should among other things give at least 5 years tax holiday for young entrepreneurs, ensure that the young entrepreneurs are exempted from Local government, state business premises collections, ESWAMA and Board of Internal Revenue collections. Steady power supply has to be ensured to reduce the use of “I pass my neighbor” generating sets in running micro businesses.

For the youth to develop a responsible citizen, patriotic and forward looking, certain conditions or requirements must be in place. Good education is the sum total of such requirements, good or sound education is the development of the whole man or woman, body, psyche, mind and spirit (Ugorji, 2013). Any educational policy that neglects any one of these constituents of the human personality is doomed to failure and as such would produce human beings who would be anything but what man was meant to be:

(a) The body is developed through physical education, health-care, good food and water, cleanliness, good housing and ventilation etc.

(b) The psychic life is developed through good social interaction in the family, in the school or age-grade, in the religious gathering, in the wider society. The emotions are controlled and channeled along the avenues approved by culture and custom.

© The mind is trained through formal and informal education. The arts and science disputation and argumentation, more elaborate training in scientific and other research programs – all these help the mind grow and expand.

(d) Spiritual Training is more complex and very often neglected. That man is a spiritual being is evident in his ability to conceive of and possess abstract ideas or concepts like beauty, infinity, patriotism, originality etc. Such ideas are in-tangible, non-material, abstract. They are as such spiritual. They exist beyond the ability of sense perception. That faculty or power in us, which produces and harbours or keeps such abstract concepts or ideas, must have the part of that which is perceived and harbored. An Igbo adage has it that ‘agwo adi amu ife di nkeke’ (the snake’s offspring cannot be short). A spiritual or abstract concept in man’s mind is proof that man is spiritual at the core of his being. This aspect of man’s nature is very often neglected in educational policies and the so-called educated man ends up parading himself as a glorified animal. He or she does not aspire for happiness above what the senses can enjoy. Outside eating, drinking, sleeping and mating, like any other beast or bird, there is nothing higher to aim at.
Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

The Nigerian society is facing all forms of social disorder as a result of many atrocities like youth unemployment. Every day, there are reports of robbery, burglary, car snatching, forgery, impersonation, rape, kidnapping, boko haram activities and other vices. There is a general belief that most of the acts are carried out by unemployed youths and youths that are not stable in their employment. In most of our streets and public places, the unemployed youths wonder about. This is mostly because they find themselves without any means of livelihood. In the circumstances, the alternative is to devise some means to survive.

The problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria has become in Nigeria argue Chukwuemeka and Onudugo (2009) is a Herculean task. According to Ude (2010) the quest for white collar jobs has also led to unemployment. Owing to societal expectations, many jobs are looked down upon. Imagine a situation where undergraduates in the various facets of education would vow Never to hold a piece of chalk. Kingsley (2004, Chukwuemeka, 2010) are of the view that unemployed graduates sometimes indulge in drug abuse because they want to be far removed from society. They want to visit fantasy land where there is no gnashing of teeth. It could still force a graduate to contemplate suicide and actually go ahead to commit it. The basic problem is how to create or provide adequate employment opportunities that will create employment for the millions of unemployed youths, so as to fend for themselves, and ensure that the youths accept to adjust with the available employment opportunities instead of pressing on or desiring a particular type of employment.

Youth Empowerment

Youth development argues Eze (2010) is the process of continuous improvement of the youth development. Structures, institutions and programs in order to create a social condition, the rights of the youth are advanced and protected, their welfare enhanced, and their effective functioning and self actualization ensured. Youth development is a sine-quo-non for youth empowerment. car snatching, forgery, impersonation, rape, murder, kidnapping other vices, There is a general belief that most of the acts are carried out by unemployed youths and youths that are not stable in their employment. In most of our streets and public places, the unemployed youths wonder about. This is mostly because

Components of Youth Development and Empowerment

(1) Youth employment – employment opportunities should be provided by the ruling elites to gainfully employ and empower the youths who incidentally are the future leaders. Where there is insufficient paid employment, the ruling petit-bourgeoisies should create enabling environment to sustain entrepreneurship and operation of small scale ventures.
(2) Youth education and training – education is power, it is one of the major indicators of measuring development. Therefore youth training programs including vocational training through talent/skill assessment inventory.

(3) Entrepreneurship skill acquisition should be inculcated in the educational curriculum to cut across all specter of educational system in order to position the youths in act of management, analysis and effective operation of business.

(4) Research, evaluation and publication of such researches, especially those that relate to skill acquisition would foster youth development.

(5) Liaising with state youth departments and international organizations

(6) national Youth Award scheme

(7) International youth exchange program

(8) Youth holiday program

(9) National youth camps and

(10) Coordinating activities of national voluntary youth organizations.

(11) Youth mobilization – Political and social mobilization agencies should be set up and their services should be complemented by non-governmental organizations. They will handle youth mobilization, business and political education. Funds should be made available for effective running of such outfits.

(12) Establishment of coordinating bodies to monitor and evaluate government programs and policies as they relate to the youth.

**What do we do when there is no paid employment?**

First and foremost we should think enterprise. Entrepreneurship is a career and not an event, like any other career, it has a process (Okezie, 2007).

**Entrepreneurial process**

- Develop an enterprise mindset - survey the business environment
- Generate business ideas
- Identify the idea that gives you a business opportunity
- Create a vision of the business you plan to start
- Ask for business development and support services help
- Prepare your business plan
- Handle legal/regulatory issues
- Source fund and assemble other resources
- Start up

**Business Idea Generation**

Many people march past business opportunities daily and ignore them, Reasons being that they lack the knowledge and enterprise mindset. You can generate wonderful business ideas in the following ways:

- Innovation
- Keying into the fast growing industry
- Identifying service gaps
- Taking advantage of government policies
- Identifying possible needs of a business cluster
- Playing with possibilities
- Creative thinking – thinking out of the box
- Identifying product/service needs of women
- Identifying product/service needs of youths
- Identifying product/service needs of children
- Acquired skills
- Studying the problems of the economy to find marketable solution.

**Typical examples of some business ideas that were formulated and executed by some people and they are living big today are:**

(1) Computer ‘maka ndi afia’
(2) The Ore Express toilet facilities
(3) The palm kernel oil extraction cluster equipment fabricator
(4) The Aba Garment Makers cluster accessories suppliers
(5) The Abakaliki Rice millers de-storing machine service provider
(6) Book keeping services for micro, small and medium scale enterprises
Environmental Scanning

- Business operating environment is risky, harsh and unpredictable; you need therefore to scan the environment before packaging your business plan.
- Critical questions you need to address are:
  - (a) How promising is the industry I am going into?
  - (b) What is the level of competition there?
  - Who are my competitors?
  - (d) What opportunities do I have in the market place?
  - (e) Are there possible threats to the planned business?
  - (f) What are the key success factors in this type of business?
  - (g) What is the state of infrastructure in your planned location?

Other self-motivated alternatives towards youth empowerment are presented as follows:

(a) Youths should embark on bank savings no matter how little.
(b) Youths should form “isu” group contribution which could be done on monthly basis. 10, 15, 30, 35 or more people can come together and form one. Funds generated from such contributions should be lodged into the bank en-bloc or put into productive investment or loaned out on interest basis.
(c) Youths should engage in trades, stead farm, poultry or other micro businesses to enable them generate capital for large scale business.
(d) Youths should also form cooperative combines. It could be agricultural, production or trade based.
(e) Youths should also avail themselves of agricultural loans. Such loans should be judiciously utilized for fruitful ventures towards capital mobilization.
(f) Spare time should be used to learn soap and detergent making, meat pie making etc.
(g) Establishment of home stead fish production
(h) Establishment of low acreage vegetable production farm for easy management
(i) Plantain chips, pea nut, cashew nut processing

References


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