

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In the developed nations, entrepreneurship education has been, and would continue to be a great economic stimulator. Entrepreneurship benefits cannot be overemphasized in any society that desires sustainable development, because it creates new technologies, production and services; encouraging improved productivity and rapid economic growth. Economic growth will invariably have positive influences on the health, thereby leading to sound body systems, increase in the life span, improvement in social status and standard (condition) of living. Embracing and judicious application of entrepreneurship education principles will in no small measure propel Nigeria to the much desired enviable development level which she is currently yearning for. The focus of this paper is to discuss entrepreneurship education with particular attention to its concept, nature, objectives and development approaches.

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious to all and sundry that unemployment has become a serious socio-economic problem in Nigeria. Equally obvious is that the country's educational system had only succeeded in producing a junk of unemployable youths. The inherited colonial educational policy and subsequent reforms after independence had not been able to equip most of our school products to become self-employed or employable.

Daini (2006) referring to Ndu (1999), while advocating for education reforms in the country, asserted that:

“A lot of what we have taken as Nigerian system of education is still bookish, examination ridden and somewhat of a mismatch with the social and economic situation of today. A lot of changes have come into society but the education system has not kept pace with it. The abstract and highly bookish curriculum needs to be modified to include other things that are needed in the world of work that

are not yet presently focused on” pp252.

Entrepreneurship education has been identified as a major means of assisting our youths and even adult to acquire desired skills and capacities to be self-reliant or self-employed, particularly to prepare them to be able to set up their own ventures and manage them profitably. Entrepreneurial role has been recognized since the day of industrial revolution. There is a continuous migration of people from rural to urban in search of almost non-existing job opportunities. In a study by Anyanwu (1991), he found out that migration from rural environment to urban areas in Nigeria was 53%, while to rural stood at 2.6%.

Entrepreneurship is a form of education, a move towards self-reliance, a reasonable channel that will greatly assist in curbing the employment problems. This is because its emphasis is on the acquisition of skills and capacities to be self-employed. Entrepreneurship activity being a dynamic process of creating incremental wealth, wealth created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and/or career commitment or provide value for some product or service (Hisrich & Peters, 2002). The socio-economic rationale for the drive to pursue careers in entrepreneurship are:

- ☐ Stimulation creativity in all spheres of socio-economics life;
- ☐ Employment generation;
- ☐ Creation to wealth;
- ☐ Democratization of socio-political development, particularly from public-control to private control; and
- ☐ Dispersal of business activities.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Development in its simplest term is synonymous with growth. In the context of society, it is the sustained elevation of an entire society and social system toward a “better” or “more humane” life. Ikwuako (2001) referring to Smelser (1966) stated that when the term “development” is employed, four distinct but interrelated processes are usually borne in mind, namely:

- ☐ A developing society is changing from simple and traditional techniques towards the application of scientific knowledge at the realm of technology;
- ☐ The developing society evolves from subsistence farming towards commercial production of agricultural goods;
- ☐ The developing society undergoes a transition from the use of human and animal power to industrialization; and
- ☐ The developing society moves from the farm and village towards urban concentrations.

In the words of Pearson (1970), “development is partly a process whereby a country achieves reasonable self-sustaining growth, process which facilitates and enhances industrial and technological process in the interest of its people”. Todaro and Smith (2006) quoting Seers (1969) on basic questions about the meaning of development stated that:

“The questions to ask about a country’s development are-what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result

“development” even if per capita income doubled”. Pp 11.

The World Bank, which during the 1980s championed economic growth as the goal of development, joined the chorus of observers taking a broader perspective when in its 1991 World Development Report, asserted:

“The challenge of development ... is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world’s poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes-but it involves more. It encompasses as ends in themselves, better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and richer cultural life”. pp4

CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Consortium of Entrepreneurship Education (CEE, USA) defined entrepreneurship education as a form of education that is out to seek for the preparation of people, especially youths, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who will contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. Salleh and Gibbs (1990) conceptualized an entrepreneur as someone who exhibits a distinctive set of enterprising attributes. According to Salleh and Gibbs, these attributes embrace a number of skills, personality traits, acquire experiences and attitude. The enterprising attributes therefore, include creativity, initiative taking, analytical ability, high autonomy and achievement motivation.

A USAID-funded research by McBer and Co. and Management Systems International identified fourteen (14) personal entrepreneurial characteristics which appeared to be common behaviours of a successful entrepreneur as itemized by Manu and Brown (1987):

- ☐ Take initiative;
- ☐ Sees and acts on opportunities;
- ☐ Is persistent;
- ☐ Personally seeks information;
- ☐ Is concerned for high quality;
- ☐ Is committed to fulfilling contracts;
- ☐ Is orientated to efficiency;
- ☐ Plans systematically;
- ☐ Solve problem in original ways;
- ☐ Demonstrates self-confidence;
- ☐ Take calculated risks;
- ☐ Is assertive;
- ☐ Is persuasive; and
- ☐ Use influence strategies.

Nsowah (2004) referring to Nsowah (1996) identified three important components of entrepreneurship.

1. Entrepreneurship consists of basic personality characteristics which mix together values, abilities and motivation. These include: creativity, assertiveness, which are somehow innate to the individual.
2. Entrepreneurship is viewed in terms of enterprise attributes like planning systematically, seeking and acting on opportunities etc.
3. Entrepreneurship goes beyond individual attributes to the performance of an economic or

social role like managing a small business, ranging from wayside workshop to a high technology company.

Entrepreneur refers to a person as a leader, planner, programmer, motivator, risk-taker, creator, innovator, technocrat,; while entrepreneurship refers to a process of leadership, planning, motivation, risk-taking, innovation, and decision-making. To an economist, an entrepreneur is one who brings resources, labour, materials, and other assets into combinations that make their value greater than before, and also one who introduces change, innovations and a new order. To a psychologist, such a person is typically driven by certain forces-the need to obtain or attain something, to experiment, to accomplish, or perhaps to escape the authority of others (Hisrich & Peters, 2002). Entrepreneurship is the process of crating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary, personal satisfaction, and independence (Nelson, 1996).

BASIC ASPECTS OF AN ENTREPRENEURS

Regardless of the field, there are four basic aspects of being an entrepreneur:

1. Entrepreneurship involves creation process, creating something new in terms of value; value to the entrepreneur and value to the audience for which it is developed. The audience could be the market of buyers in the case of business innovations; prospective students in the case of new course, or the constituency for a new service provided by a non-profit agency.
2. Entrepreneurship requires the devotion of the necessary time and effot.
3. Assuming the necessary risks in entrepreneurship, with particular reference to financial, psychological and social areas.
4. Rewards of being an entrepreneur, with regards to independence, personal satisfaction and monetary rewards.

Entrepreneurship education has the inherent ability to create a change in the mental orientation form the “take-job-syndrome” to the “make-job-syndrome” mentality because it is a carefully organized process that leads to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences through the teaching of entrepreneurship courses, training and giving certificate for education, economic developers, business counselors and prospective entrepreneurs. The knowledge so gained will enhance the ability to set up a gainfully productive business for self-employment as against being employed. It is about willingness and ability of individual to find out investment opportunities ready to bear attendant risk(s) in order to have successful enterprises. Entrepreneurship education should be fashioned in such a way to encourage everybody generally and youths in particular by equipping them with entrepreneurial approaches.

Valued Assumptions in Entrepreneurship Education

The following basic foundation assumptions as identified by Alebiosu and Akintayo (2006) are important for entrepreneurship education:

- ☐ Entrepreneurs are not “born”—they “become” through the experiences of their lives.
- ☐ Entrepreneurs have a great diversity of personal characteristics, the common one being willing to take a risk in turn for a profit.
- ☐ Anyone can be an entrepreneur at anytime of ones life.
- ☐ Although there is no educational degree requirement to become entrepreneur, it is helpful to have developed good support skills including communications, interpersonal activities, economic understanding, digital skills, marketing management and

mathematics/finance skills.

- ☐ Entrepreneurial ventures are the major sources of new jobs in the economy.... For the owner and for new employees.
- ☐ Entrepreneurship is NOT learned by reading a textbook and then taking a test to prove that you are one.
- ☐ Young people can build confidence in their abilities to become entrepreneurs in their future as a result of a variety of entrepreneurial activities provided through education.
- ☐ Entrepreneurship education activities are a real-life vehicle for developing academic skills.
- ☐ Entrepreneurship education enables employees to be more successful as a result of understanding the operations of a small business and the problems of their boss.
- ☐ Entrepreneurship are found in every occupation or career cluster.
- ☐ Entrepreneurship education opportunities are important at all levels of education, from experiences for elementary school children, though skill development for existing entrepreneurs.
- ☐ The definition of entrepreneurship success varies with reaching the goals of the individual, from part-time income to fast growing corporate structure.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship training is meant to sensitize both the literate and illiterate so as to change mental orientation of “job-seeking” to “job-giving”; also to modernize and inject new ideas and technologies to enhance national socio-economic development. Today many approaches abound to entrepreneurship development programmes, such as:

- i. Training programme for start-up/would-be entrepreneurs.
- ii. Junior achievement programme
- iii. Business advertising centres
- iv. Entrepreneurship Development Institute
- v. Start Your Business and Improve your Business Training packages.

The training programme for start-up/would be entrepreneurship would be discussed in this paper. This should be offered at two levels (i) the Pre-start-up or Awareness stage and (ii) The start-up stage (Asante Firmping (1994). Nsowah (2004) explained that at the Pre-start stage, training or stimulatory activities to inspire attitude towards business ownership are to be emphasized. Specifically, trainees are made to assess their capabilities in starting or setting up business and are also introduced to business opportunist available. Such programmes are organized through what is referred to as “Awareness Seminar” with duration of one to three days.

In addition, the Entrepreneurship Development programmes which are made up of special course, “specially designed for potential entrepreneurs, who may be unemployed at a time, or working for a employer as distinct from working for themselves” (Nsowah 2004). The target populations therefore, are unemployed or retrenched workers, civil and public servants.

The content should incorporate four components in which the:

- ☐ Potential entrepreneurs are identified and selected. This should involve the use of psychological tests.
- ☐ Trainees are to be taught some rudimentary techniques of business management; apart from marketing and book-keeping, emphasis to be on sources of finance, project preparation and other aspects of starting a new business.

- Achievement Motivation Training (AMT) as a central concept with the design of training the clients to think and act in an entrepreneurial way.
- Trainees to do a feasibility study of their business idea and prepare a business plan for sourcing financial assistance,

The trainer and training methods

It is very important to have trainers with entrepreneurial credibility. In the words of Manu and Brown (1987), quoted by Nsowah (2004), “it is not enough for the trainer merely to know the subject, he/she also needs to have credibility with the trainees in respect of entrepreneurial attributes”. Trainers with formal academic qualifications in management subjects are not necessarily the best people to run programmes for start-up or existing small scale/medium business owners or managers. The trainers therefore should be professionals in business community; experts from government departments, technical consultancy organizations. The coordinators too should be specially trained.

With regards to the choice and use of methods for the training, they should apply case studies, role playing, simulation exercise, field-trips and market research. The professional (trainers) are to produce hand-outs or write-ups on special areas/topics supposed to be handled by each of them. The reading materials are to support what is learnt in the lecture room.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed basic management training packages for business start-ups and owners/managers of small business. Two of these are the Start Your Business (SYB) and Improve Your Business (IYB) manuals. These packages would be of great assistance in the training of would-be entrepreneurs. The SYB and IYB originated from a programme developed in Sweden and adopted by the ILO to meet the needs of people running small scale business in developing countries. The SYB is for start-ups and IYB is for existing entrepreneurs.

Awori (1995) commenting on these packages contends that the challenge in assembling relevant teaching materials for small business entrepreneurs, particularly women, with low levels of literacy, is that of simplicity. The SYB and IYB constitute separate sets of manuals each one providing information and exercises around a topic. The manuals use active, problem-centered learning approach to small business management through short cases and cartoons. A Trainer’s Guide accompanies each manual.

Entrepreneurial training and development should be pragmatically handled in Nigeria. Some developing countries such as Ghana and India have accorded entrepreneurship a respectable “status”. This is necessary because “unless entrepreneurship or working in a small business is perceived as a respectable and serious career option, efforts at youth entrepreneurship will be in futility” (Salleh & Gibb (1990). Based on these principles, Abaka (1995) identified the following six objectives to promote entrepreneurial activities:

- Develop students’ personal qualities (creativity, risk-taking, self-confidence, initiative, networking, opportunity seeking) for future roles as entrepreneurs and employees;
- Develop in students an appreciation to the role of entrepreneurial activities in economic development;
- Help young to make better informed decisions about careers and further education;
- Provide experiential learning opportunities for young people in the operation of a business;
- Develop student’s skills in planning, starting and managing a small business;
- Create a partnership between the business community and the education community for

the training of young people.

CONCLUSION

Man is created with certain potentialities. The main objective of development is to create an environment in which all can expand their capabilities, and opportunities can be enlarged for both present and future generations. Without sustained and continuous economic progress at the individual as well as societal level, the realization of human potential would be a mirage.

We are in the era of entrepreneurial development. Realizing the inadequacy in our educational system, the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) recommended that "Entrepreneurship Studies" be made compulsory at the tertiary level; same should be extended to other levels of our education. Economic growth is a function of individual activities in society. Gupta (1990), asserted that the need for achievement can be developed and reinforced, growth can be accelerated by influencing the behaviour and supply of a country's entrepreneurs, hence, entrepreneurship training and development programmes to enhance socio-economic growth should be vigorously pursued.

The private sector could be described as the "engine" of growth, because it plays very prominent role in the overall national development. A vibrant, buoyant, responsive and well-developed private sector will enhance and accelerate the much desired development of the Nigerian economy. '

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